



**Women Leaders from Mwalimu Nyerere Memorial Academy Celebrating the day!**

## Celebrating IWD2024 with Stakeholders

Throughout the Women's Month, Women Fund Tanzania Trust (WFT-T) joined hands with various stakeholders to commemorate International Women's Day (IWD) under the theme, **"Invest in Women; Accelerate Progress."** The celebrations served as vibrant spaces for reflection, knowledge exchange, and advocacy, amplifying the voices of women.

### **Empowering Women From Mwalimu Nyerere Memorial Academy**

WFT-T collaborated with women leaders from Mwalimu Nyerere Memorial Academy to celebrate IWD on 9th March at Nendiwe Wellness Centre.

The event provided an opportunity to reflect on women's rights, mental health, and the journey towards gender equality, fostering dialogue and sharing experiences among participants.

The discourses focused on initiating important mental health discussions and confronting systemic obstacles.

### **Uplifting Women Voices in Extractive Industries:**

WFT-T joined other stakeholders in the PreIWD 2024 Annual VIP event organized by Azurite Management Consultancy on 1 March 2024. Bringing together government officials, civil society organizations, and companies, the event served as a platform to honor and uplift Tanzanian women and their leadership significance within the mining industry. Discussions at the event revolved around the role of the public and private sectors in supporting women's advancement, particularly in senior roles within the mining industry.

### **Collaborative efforts towards gender equality**

WFT-T joined a roundtable discussion organized by THRDC and CWHRD to celebrate Women Directors of Human Rights Organizations. The dialogue was aimed at catalyzing collaborative efforts towards gender equality and economic freedom, and recognizing the invaluable contributions of women human rights defenders in driving social change.

### **Fostering Inclusive and Transformative Leadership**

WFT-T participated in the Women in Management Africa (WIMA) Summit on 8 March and engaged in discussions on sustainable business practices, financial inclusion, and inclusive leadership in the extractive industries. The conversations aimed to address challenges faced by women, particularly in the extractive industries, while promoting their leadership roles in small and medium enterprises.

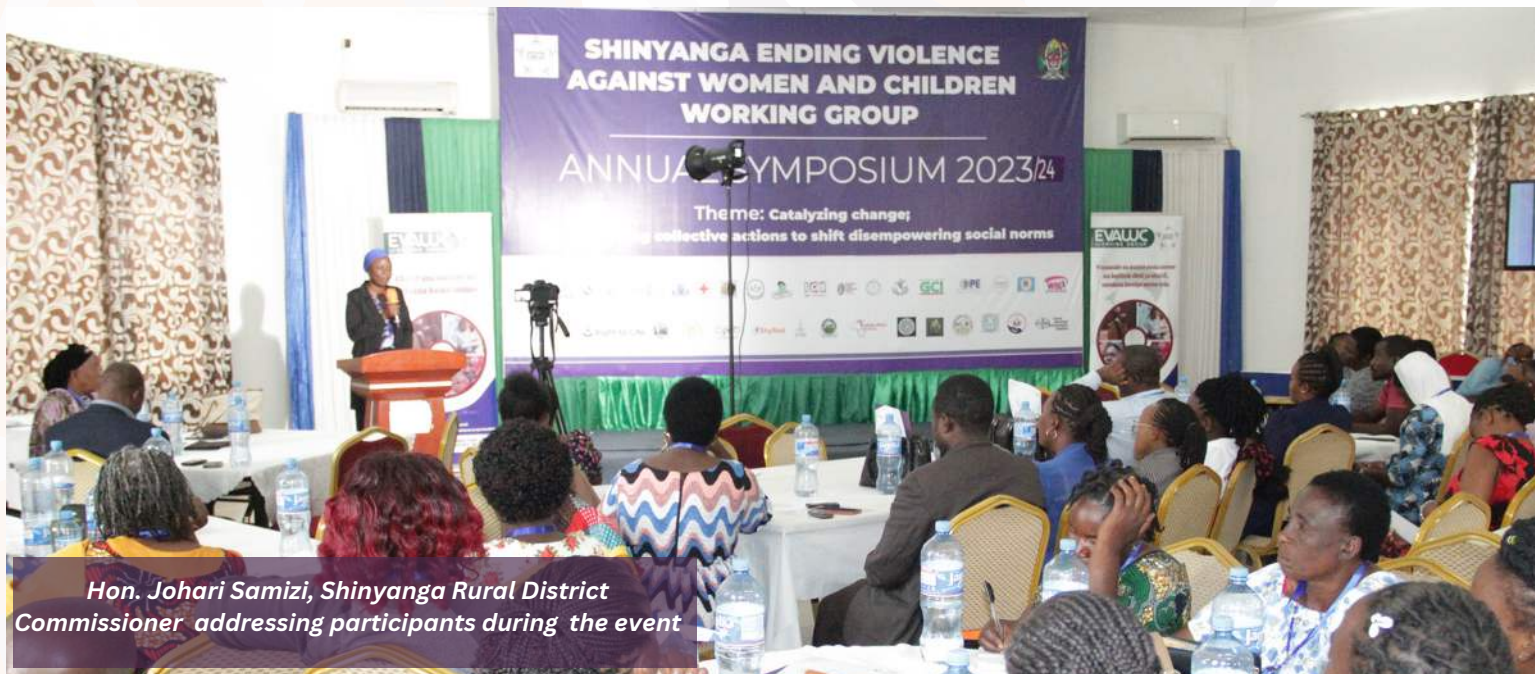
### **Amplifying Women's Voices through Film**

WFT-T engaged in a thought-provoking dialogue during the Nzowa Film previewing session, organized by Media for Development and Advocacy (MEDEA). The session was organized in celebration of Women's Month. The session shed light on the impact of child marriages and discussed strategies to create a supportive environment for female storytellers in the film industry. This cinematic session was also aimed at contributing to the growth of the local film industry, with a strong emphasis on inclusivity and empowerment.

### **Empowering Women's Leadership (WAWA Mentorship Programme)**

WFT-T joined WildAf to celebrate the achievements of women leaders in Tanzania at the closing ceremony of the WAWA (Wanawake Wakurugenzi) Leadership Mentorship Programme. This event marked the culmination of the first cohort of CSO Women Directors' leadership programme and served as a platform to highlight and celebrate their contribution to advancing women's rights in Tanzania. Some of the programme achievements highlighted include strengthening the CSO's Women Directors' leadership skills, improving organizational systems, proposal writing, etc."





*Hon. Johari Samizi, Shinyanga Rural District Commissioner addressing participants during the event*

## Reflecting Progress: Shinyanga EVAWC Working Group

The Shinyanga EVAWC Working Group (SHY-EVAWC) recently held its second annual symposium which is a testament to the collective commitment to address Violence Against Women and Children (VAWC).

The aim was to foster collaboration, share best practices, build capacity, and engage different stakeholders to address societal challenges perpetuating Violence Against Women and Children (VAWC).

Themed *"Catalyzing Change; Strengthening Collective Actions to shift disempowering social norms,"* also aimed at celebrating milestones achieved and strategizing for enhanced coordination and collaboration.

The symposium that brought together participants from various backgrounds, including members of the working group, CSOs involved in EVAWC interventions, representatives from women's forums, Junior Council, Community Change Agents, Individual Activists, survivors of GBV, Traditional and Religious leaders, Government Institutions, and Media featured a mix of activities, including panel discussions, plenary sessions, networking, entertainment, and wellness.

Speaking to participants, the Shinyanga District Commissioner, Hon. Johari Samizi acknowledge significant milestones contributed by NGOs in confronting challenges faced by women and children due to cases of violence and the government is committed to support these collaborative efforts.

Various key stakeholders also expressed word of solidarity, demonstrating how they support the EVAWC agenda and envision the future of Shinyanga through the great work being done by the Movement.

*"Our collective efforts to combat violence against women and children have yielded positive outcomes, leading to a decline in the levels of violence in Shinyanga Region. We believe that we have contributed in reducing early pregnancies from 34% in 2015 to 21% in 2022. These achievements highlight the effectiveness of collective action."* Jonathan Kifunda, Chairperson of the Shinyanga EVAWC WG, said

On the other hand, Musa Ngangala, NACONGO Representative for Shinyanga NGOs said, "Addressing violence is a significant achievement as it changes people's lives, thoughts, and well-being. Let us all stand together in promoting this concerted effort, for it carries great rewards in the eyes of God."

During the panel discussion, participants discussed different perspectives on how to disempower social norms that continue to perpetuate violence, especially against women and children. The head of all Sukuma Clan Chiefs (Mtemi Kidola II) brought the local and cultural perspective on the issue of violence.

Reflecting on the movement's journey and its future, participants raised the issue of sustainability of the agenda and advised on how best to move forward with the initiative.

The symposium further celebrated community front-liners, who have done a remarkable job in VAWC prevention and response within a very straining environment, yet managed to prevent and respond to violence. The event was also enhanced by a children's role play that conveyed a message on what children want and how they want stakeholders to act in making them feel safe.

The group also organized a wellness and team-building session for all members of the Working Group to reflect on their personal and working lives and how they are impacted by their work. The session was facilitated by a professional wellness and psychology coach at Saanane Island in Mwanza. The team formulated strong strategies to ensure their well-being while preventing and responding to VAW.

As a way forward, participants recommended some actions, including packaging the annual WP for the movement, mapping key stakeholders who may be ready to support collective actions, thus ensuring the sustainability of the agenda, and continuing to deepen understanding of how to address disempowering norms, while gaining the support of influential traditional leaders.

The Shinyanga EVAWC Working Group Annual Symposium serves as a platform for all EVAWC stakeholders to exchange knowledge and experiences, learn from each other, and collectively work towards a better future for communities.

The SHY-EVAWC was established in 2021 with support from WFT-T. It focuses on strengthening relations and collaboration among stakeholders' interventions toward EVAWC in the region.

# Empowering Young Women Entrepreneurs to Overcome Sextortion

Young women entrepreneurs continue to experience sextortion in their bid to run and scale up their businesses. To make matters worse, most of the cases remain unreported due to lack of evidence, information on reporting sexual corruption cases, and fear of judgment and shame during reporting.

Despite availability of various reporting platforms, many young women entrepreneurs who are victims of sextortion lack information and knowledge to use these resources.

As a result, they choose to remain silent rather than exercise their rights to seek justice against their perpetrators.

Failure to address these challenges has severe impacts on the dignity of young women in Tanzania.

To address the challenges, Her Initiative with support from Women Fund Tanzania implemented a project titled **“Panda Digital Movement: Young Women Entrepreneurs Platform”**. The project had two objectives which were; to contribute towards bridging the rural-urban digital inclusion by promoting skills development equity and effective participation in utilizing digital opportunities, and to break the silence on sextortion by creating awareness and simplifying reporting of sextortion cases among young women entrepreneurs.

Speaking about the project, Tariq Ghusuob, the project focal person, explained that Panda Digital Movement focused on digital exclusion, unemployment among young females aged from 18 to 35 years, and tackling sextortion among young entrepreneurs who do not have access to digital platforms.

He said that when it comes to the objective related to breaking the silence on sextortion, they have integrated sextortion awareness and response strategies into their existing movement through training, education, and economic empowerment initiatives.

**“In the implementation of sextortion awareness, we used three approaches which were; the use of sextortion champions, Haki Haiuzwi online campaign and partnering with PCCB in outreach and education sessions,”** Tariq explained.

Regarding activities implemented, Tariq said they conducted outreach campaigns targeting market areas to educate young women entrepreneurs on recognizing, responding to and reporting sextortion cases.

**“We also recruited and conducted capacity-building to sextortion champions to equip them with essential knowledge on sextortion, including its nature, occurrence, and proper reporting procedures. This empowered them to be able to advocate effectively for prevention and response within their communities,”** he added.



Some of the Sextortion campaign Champions in a group photo during the market outreach activity

Tariq also said that they conducted a comprehensive online campaign against sextortion (HakiHaiuzwi), using social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook Live, and Zoom.

“The campaign was championed by young women and men, as well as social media influencers and it aimed to raise awareness and create conversations around sextortion. Other activities were Offline Support for reporting and legal support in collaboration with PCCB,” he said.

Regarding the intervention results, Tariq explained that as a result of their efforts, young women entrepreneurs are better equipped to recognize and respond to sextortion incidents, thereby mitigating risks and protecting their businesses and livelihoods. Also collaborative approach with PCCB has facilitated swift and effective legal interventions, ensuring justice for victims and accountability for perpetrators.

According to him, another major achievement of the campaign has been breaking of silence surrounding sextortion. By encouraging open dialogue and creating safe spaces for discussion, the campaign has empowered young women to speak out against sextortion and report incidents without fear of stigma or retaliation.

*“This knowledge is important for me as a woman entrepreneur here at Buguruni Market. Knowing about sextortion issues and reporting methods is very important to us. During the conversation, I had the opportunity to share my story, and it is clear that many of us do not know the difference between sextortion and sexual violence. This is a challenge, but through this sessions, I have now been able to recognize and understand better,”* a young woman entrepreneur at Buguruni Market said.

Other achievements included increased awareness about the prevalence and impact of sextortion among young women entrepreneurs, and empowerment of young women in recognizing and responding to sextortion.

For more information about Her Initiative work: <https://herinitiative.or.tz/>



# TUVAAMO's Journey To Education Equity in Mtwara Rural District



**Community awareness meeting on girls right to education**

Life is never easy for many young girls in Mtwara as the road to achieving their life dreams remains uncertain. They face a lot of challenges in their mission to attain education.

Among many such girls are Zaina, Hawa, Swaumu, Farida, and Shani, who are teenage girls aged between 15–17 from Moma Ward in Mtwara Rural District. Just like other children in their community, they attended Primary School and passed their National examinations, qualifying to join Form One at the nearby Secondary School. And, after two years of study, they dropped out of school due to various reasons, including long distance to school (16 kms walking in the forest, 4hrs per day), and lack of essential school supplies.

Life out of school was difficult as they stayed at home, without engaging in any meaningful activities hence faced abuse and violence from their parents and even the community, such as being denied food, shelter, and other basic human needs.

However, life changed for the better for the above-mentioned girls as they are among 40 identified, reached out to, and motivated to return to school by TUVAAMO organisation through a project known as **"RUDISHA MSICHANA SHULE" (Bring the Girl Back to School)**, funded by Women Fund Tanzania Trust.

*"I dropped out of school when I was in form two. The main reason was the long distance we had to walk in the forest. I couldn't bear the suffering anymore, so I decided to quit. I stayed at home for a whole year without doing anything meaningful, and the situation was tough. When TUVAAMO approached us and educated us on the importance of returning to school so that we can able to achieve our dreams, I agreed. Now I am studying through QT to prepare for the National exams,"* explained Hawa

The main objective of the project was to mobilise a huge number of girls who dropped out of primary and secondary schools in Mtwara District to rejoin the formal education system by January 2023. The project was implemented in Nanguruwe, Mbawala, Ziواني, and Moma wards of Mtwara District Council.

The project was important because, despite the government's efforts to ensure that students who dropped out of school return to continue their studies by issuing directives, the statistics of those who returned were still unsatisfactory, particularly for both primary and secondary levels. In Mtwara District, only one girl had managed to return to school by January 2023.

Speaking about the project, Theresia Mpinga-Project officer mentioned that they decided to implement the project after observing that many students in the area were dropping out of school for various reasons, including pregnancy, harmful cultural practices, and misconceptions within their communities, especially in coastal areas, regarding educating girls, long distances to schools, and school-related abuse.

**"We started by identifying girls who had dropped out of school and in these three project wards, we successfully identified 40 girls who are out of school. After identifying them, we convened a joint discussion meeting with all of them. The aim was to understand the reasons behind their dropout and to assess their readiness to return to school".** explained Theresia

*"After the meeting with the girls, we organized a session with their parents to explain the importance of their children returning to school and that they have shown readiness. The goal was to remove obstacles from parents, as some may not be willing to support their children to returning to school,"* she said.

Speaking about other activities carried out by the project, Theresia stated that they held community-level meetings to educate members about Government Education Circular No. 02 of 2021, which directs students and pupils who dropped out of school for various reasons to return to school.

She said that they aimed to change the community's mindset to reduce barriers for girls upon their return to school and to garner support for them. They also encouraged community participation in empowering girls to return to school through working together with them to identify challenges that led to girls dropping out of school and devising strategies to address them.

Regarding the overall success of the project, Theresia said that the project has helped increase parents and community's understanding of Education Circular No. 2 (2021), the importance of girls returning to school, and has raised awareness within the community about the importance of education for girls.

The project has also facilitated the active participation of government leaders in the project implementation, as well as in planning strategies for monitoring the reintegration of girls into school in 2024.

*"Due to community mobilization, we have observed an increase in the girls interested in returning to school. So far, 10 out of the 40 girls we reached out have already enrolled in QT studies, and are preparing for their exams. We are continuing our efforts to facilitate the reintegration of the others into the formal education system,"* Theresia said.

*"Community members and teachers are changing their negative perceptions towards girls who dropped out of school, they once believed that they were incapable of studying again. We are now receiving many calls from parents informing us that they have children who need to return to school,"* Theresia said.



# From The Media





# Pictorial



*Preparations meeting - Mwami Ntare ii Celebrations*



*Certificate issuing - WAWA leadership programme closing event*



*Panel discussion during the symposium event at Shinyanga*



*Some of the participants following one of the session during IWD Celebrations at Nendiwe Wellness Centre*



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