

The Transformative Power of Young Women Feminist Leadership

Young women across Tanzania are stepping into leadership and redefining it through courage, collective action, and feminist leadership. Through Msichana Initiative's Sauti Yetu Nguvu Yetu (Our Voice Our Power) project, young women are not only finding their voices, but they are also using it to lead change.

Eleven young women who participated in the project successfully contested and won leadership positions during local government elections in their communities. They now serve in local government political and leadership structures such as villages and wards councils and ward development committees, marking a significant achievement for young women's representation in local government.

These young leaders are applying transformative feminist leadership principles to advocate for issues affecting girls and young women, ensuring their priorities are reflected in decision making spaces. Their leadership demonstrates the growing influence of young women in shaping inclusive and accountable local governance.

One participant, Mariam Rajabu, shared her experience:

"My participation in this program has inspired me to run for the position of Youth Secretary in my Ward. With limited resources, I campaigned tirelessly and won through the support of my feminist sisters from the Sauti Yetu, Nguvu Yetu group. Today, I lead nine branches with over 8,000 youth members in Nia njema Ward and serve on the main meeting committee for Bagamoyo District."

Despite these achievements, young women leaders in Tanzania continue to face challenges, including limited access to leadership skills, mentors and role models and ability to form strong and sustainable constituencies, mentors and role models and ability to form strong and sustainable constituencies, and sustain a consistent agenda for girls' and young women's rights.

In response, Msichana Initiative launched the Sauti Yetu Nguvu Yetu Project in 2022 to strengthen young feminists' capacity to build agency, organize collectively, influence policy, and hold leaders accountable particularly on issues of girls' education, leadership, and gender-based violence.

The initiative engaged 20 young women leaders from Tabora, Dodoma, Dar es Salaam, and Bagamoyo. These leaders went on to mobilize and engage over 240 young women through the community groups they lead, creating a ripple effect of empowerment and collective action.

Over two years, participants took part in intensive capacity building workshops on feminist leadership, leadership strategies, public speaking, and advocacy. They also gained national visibility by speaking on platforms organized by UN Women Tanzania, Tanzania Gender

Networking Programme (TGNP), Women Constitution and Leadership Coalition, and the Annual Girl Agenda Forum.

The success of Sauti Yetu Nguvu Yetu Project highlights the power of investing in young women's leadership. When girls and young women are provided with the right tools and platforms, they amplify their voices, demonstrate their power, and lead meaningful change in their communities and beyond.