

## DAY ELEVEN: December 5<sup>th</sup>

### **Widows and Property**

*Some traditional cultures ignore a widow's human rights. In practice, especially in some rural areas, it is widely assumed that only men should own or inherit land and that widowhood terminates a woman's social legitimacy. It is common for widows to be isolated and banned from participation in community activities.*

### **Michelle's Story**

When Michelle, 57, was widowed in 2012, she lost more than her husband. Shortly after his death, her in-laws took over the fields she had tilled for decades. They also stole fruit from the trees in her kitchen garden and sold the harvest, leaving her without any livelihood. They further intimidated and insulted her by surrounding her and attempting to chase her away.

Michelle's neighbours advised her that the *Legal Resources Foundation* could help her to protect her inheritance. When this legal aid organisation took the matter to court and Michelle obtained restraining orders against her in-laws, she was able to go back to tilling her fields. But her in-laws continue to threaten her, so she still worries about the future: "*I am fearful and my heart is unsettled.*" (Source: *Human Rights Watch*)

### **Question**

What is your reaction to this true story?

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Women own less than 20% of the world's land, yet more than 400 million of them farm and produce the majority of the world's food supply.

MONIQUE VILLA  
CEO, Thomson Reuters Foundation

### **Global Facts**

- One in seven widows globally (38 million), lives in extreme poverty.
- A significant number of girls are widowed in childhood - a reflection of the prevalence of child marriage and the custom of marrying off young girls to much older men. (Source: *World Widows 2015 Report* published by the *Loomba Foundation*)
- Advocates cite the baffling omission of widows' welfare from the U.N. SDGs as evidence of a critical blind spot in aid efforts. (*borgenproject.org* - 2019)

## LAUDATO SI

Pope Francis decries the situation dominating various relationships today arising from: "*the destructive power in wars, the various forms of violence and abuse, the abandonment of the most vulnerable, and attacks on nature.*" LS 66



pixabay.com : [stevepb](#)

## UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Most of the SDGs reference Women.

**SDG 5.a:** *Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws.*

### **CEDAW**

#### Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

**Article 15 1.2:** *States Parties shall accord to women, in civil matters, a legal capacity identical to that of men .... they shall give women equal rights to conclude contracts and to administer property*

**Article 16 1.h:** *The same rights for both spouses in respect of ownership, acquisition, management, administration, enjoyment and disposition of property ...*

(Suggestion: read the Convention during **16 Days**)

## UN DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

**Article 12:** *Everyone has the right to own property alone and in association with others.*

**Article 17:** *No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of (his) (her) property.*

### **ACTION**

**1. Visit the following website -**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IvADol8C0ak>  
*'Women's Land Rights: giving women the opportunity to change the world.'*

**2. Equal pay for work of equal value - see**

<https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/9/explainer-everything-you-need-to-know-about-equal-pay>

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*Prepared by 'Future We Need' (FWN) a faith-based group with members from the Columbans, Franciscans, Josephites, Mercy, Presentation and Salesians.*

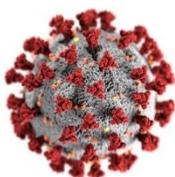
(Updated November 2020)

## **VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

is a systematic and widespread human rights violation. It cuts across age, socio-economic, educational and geographic boundaries.



[www.google.ie/search?q=images+of+orange+the+world+for+free](http://www.google.ie/search?q=images+of+orange+the+world+for+free)



### **BEFORE**

#### **THE CORONA VIRUS PANDEMIC**

**243 million** women and girls, aged 15-49, experienced sexual and/or physical violence by an intimate partner in the past year.

#### **SINCE THE PANDEMIC**

violence against women, especially domestic violence, has increased dramatically.

#### **EXACERBATING FACTORS INCLUDE**

security, health and money worries, cramped living conditions, isolation with abusers, deserted public spaces, limited access to support services.

In some countries, resources and efforts have been diverted from responses to violence against women for immediate COVID-19 relief.

*(unwomen.org)*

**Violence against widows** perpetuates a marginalized status for all women. Alternatively, upholding the rights of widows does much to advance the broader concept of women's human rights.

*(UN Declaration on Violence Against Women)*

**Watch: WOMEN'S PROPERTY RIGHTS**

(ICRW)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hXjArbMIWcU>

**SEE** <https://borgenproject.org/fighting-the-global-burden-of-widows-in-poverty/>



*of Activism  
Against  
Gender  
Violence...*

**DAY 11...**

**5th**

**December**

**WIDOWS AND PROPERTY**



2020 UNiTE Campaign Theme:

*"Orange the World: Fund,  
Respond, Prevent, Collect!"*