

Ruben

Land rights training from FARM-Africa has helped Ruben protect the future livelihoods of the Hadzabe people.

Northern Tanzania is home to many traditional communities living a simple hunter gatherer existence, surviving off the land around them. The elected leader of one such community, the Hadzabe, is Ruben Mathayo - a 40 year old man, who like many others has never been to school. His homestead consists of little more than a bed, a table, two wooden stools, a blanket, a few clothes and a bicycle, which he has acquired as gifts from visiting friends. He lives there with his extended family and depends on traditional hunter gathering activities to feed them all.

As is common amongst rural communities, Ruben's community leadership is based on his traditional experiences and what he has learnt from those around him whilst growing up. This meant that he had little or no knowledge of his community's legal rights to protect and hunt the land around them.



FARM-Africa works with communities like the Hadzabe to provide simple, accessible training in the skills and knowledge that leaders need to protect and improve the livelihoods of their people. As part of this, Ruben received training from FARM-Africa on issues such as land rights and planning the best uses for their land. In particular he learnt about the legal rights of the Hadzabe to occupy the communal land around them.

This has proved to be a lifeline to both Ruben's family and the rest of the community. Conflicts between the Hadzabe and other land users such as farmers and pastoralists have been reduced and different communities are working together to keep their environment as natural as possible.

Simple training in basic land use rights has helped Ruben provide the Hadzabe with a more certain future. His negotiations with a commercial hunting company have left them safe in the knowledge that their land is protected for their traditional hunting and fruit gathering activities. And with his new found knowledge he has applied on behalf of his community for permanent rights to occupy the communal land.