

RESEARCH PROGRAM BRIEF

Securing Women's Land Rights in Africa

Scaling Impact in Senegal, Kenya, Malawi and Mozambique



Background

In Africa, gender discrimination in land ownership, rights and access prevents women and their communities from realizing their full potential and contributing to sustainable development.

- *Women own less land, and often only have access through male relatives or joint ownership with reduced decision-making power*
- *Women have reduced ability to inherit land in case of divorce or death of a male family member*
- *Women who are young, single or less educated are especially disadvantaged*

This is despite the many benefits that can be derived from strengthened land rights.

- *Women with stronger property rights earn more money, have more savings, and are less likely to experience domestic violence*
- *Women who own land have more resilient families; more money is dedicated to education, and children are less likely to be sick and severely underweight*

In light of these benefits and the implications for equitable development, there is a growing momentum to further strengthen women's access to and control over land and natural resources.

Program objectives

- **Collect women's voices & ideas** *Use participatory and action research to collect information and women's testimonies*
- **Scale-up promising initiatives** *Provide logistical, financial and technical support to equitable initiatives: women's grassroots movements, female leadership*
- **Raise awareness and build capacity** *Disseminate research findings and promote knowledge exchange*
- **Bring together diverse stakeholders** *Hold final Learning Event with diverse participants from regional and local governments, NGOs, farmer organizations, rural women's leaders, and researchers among others to share research findings, experiences and lessons*



About LANDac

LANDac, the Netherlands Land Academy, is a partnership between Dutch organizations and their Southern partners working on land governance for equitable and sustainable development. LANDac was formed in 2010 as one of the IS Academies, a series of five-year programs designed by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs to strengthen the role of knowledge and research in sustainable development, poverty alleviation and international cooperation. LANDac has now entered its second phase, where partners who share a concern for understanding and addressing new and existing types of land-related conflicts and increasing land inequality will continue to work together to promote equitable and sustainable development in the Global South through robust and inclusive land governance – the rules and practices on access to land.

The LANDac network brings together actors, conducts research, and distributes information, focusing on new pressures and competing claims on land and natural resources.

Contact

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This growing momentum is evidenced by the Kilimanjaro Initiative **which has mobilized rural women from 22 countries across Africa**, the African Union Declaration on Land Issues and Challenges in Africa and the Framework and Guidelines on Land Policy in Africa; land issues are also now being addressed under the SDGs to help eradicate poverty and ‘leave no one behind’ (see Box 1). Within this context, opportunities exist for scaling proven approaches and providing much-needed evidence to further support the women’s land rights agenda. Toward this end, LANDac and African partners, funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, are implementing a year-long action research program, *Securing Women’s lands rights in Africa: Scaling Impact in Senegal, Kenya, Malawi and Mozambique*, or WLRA.

Program snapshot: At the grassroots

Senegal: Enda Pronat

- Action research, focused on agroforestry, with 5 rural federations in 4 agro-ecological zones
- Workshops to strengthen peasant leaders and farmer federations
- Women’s training workshops and community radio broadcasts
- National-level advocacy workshop with national network of rural women

Kenya: GROOTs Kenya

- Community-led land mapping of women’s land access, ownership and control in two counties
- Women’s testimonies collected with report delivered to ministries
- Regional forum with land rights champions, watchdogs, paralegals, and government officials from five countries in East and Southern Africa

ActionAid Kenya

- Social action study, led by women, on access and natural resource governance
- Implementation framework for Rural Women’s’ Land Rights Charter (LRC) developed with Ministry of Lands, CSOs and rural women
- Rural women with CSOs develop tools to track and monitor LRC implementation
- National forum with CSOs, rural women and government

Malawi: Oxfam

- Land ownership survey through 'Follow the woman' approach: 60 women followed in three districts across the three regions where customary estates will become planning areas
- Trainings for staff, CSOs, and women's leaders on land rights and the Customary Land Act
- Community awareness meetings and mobilization of 60 women into forums

Mozambique: ADECRU and Fórum Mulher

- Evidence collected in Nacala and Beira Corridors on land conflict, human rights violations and impacts of land-based investments
- Community workshops to discuss demands, agenda and priorities
- Registration list, photographs, short videos and articles created
- National conference and post-conference declaration
- 40% of DUATs under the program safe land 'Terra Segura' given to women

LANDac

Participatory research in all four countries on LAND+ agenda: Women's ideas and actions, opportunities for enhanced agency and empowerment

Box 1. Land and the SDGs: Making indicators count for women

Understanding of the importance of women's land rights is gaining traction and great strides have been made by the land community to have gendered land indicators included in the SDGs:



Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere

Indicator 1.4.2: Proportion of total adult population with secure tenure rights to land, with legally recognized documentation and who perceive their rights to land as secure, by sex and by type of tenure

Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Indicator 5.a.1 (a) Proportion of total agricultural population with ownership or secure rights over agricultural land, by sex; and (b) share of women among owners or rights-bearers of agricultural land, by type of tenure

Indicator 5.a.2: Proportion of countries where the legal framework (including customary law) guarantees women's equal rights to land ownership and/or control

One current challenge is to define suitable methodology for measuring their implementation. This is difficult given the complexity of land tenure, differing definitions, units and measurements as well as a lack of comparable data – especially disaggregated data for sex and tenure type. As part of the WLRA

program, LANDac joined over 40 gender and land rights experts in New York City on July 8 and 9, 2017 for the Expert Group Meeting (EGM) 'Securing Women's Land Rights in the SDGs Monitoring Framework: Towards a More Harmonized and Coordinated Global Approach.' Organized by the Global Land Indicators Initiative (GLII), Huairou Commission, Landesa, Oxfam, and UN Women, the EGM took place prior to the United Nations High Level Political Forum (HLPF) held from July 10 - 19, 2017. The HLPF is an annual intergovernmental meeting focused on the progress and challenges of SDG implementation; SDG indicators – many of which need to be disaggregated by income, gender, age, and other social identity aspects to realize the 2030 Agenda of 'leaving no one behind' – form the basis of reporting, monitoring and mutual accountability. The theme of HLPF 2017, *Eradicating Poverty and Promoting Prosperity in a Changing World*, focused on a selection of SDGs including Goals 1 and 5 which feature the above land-related indicators.

The goal of the EGM was to examine these land indicators and find ways to strengthen their responsiveness as well as to promote meaningful, harmonized, and coordinated approaches to monitoring women's land rights issues at all levels. Toward this end, a diverse group of participants – including activists, statisticians, surveyors as well as UN and government representatives, among others – discussed over two days the need for common definitions and the importance of legal and policy frameworks, social norms, and women's voice; likewise, it emerged that viewing women as dynamic rather than a homogenous group is crucial to understanding their needs and further defining an equitable and sustainable land governance framework that works for, and not against, women and their communities. In terms of data and methodologies, the discussions centered on issues of cost, accessing resources and support, and data gaps as well as controlling data quality, household-level data collection limitations, data relevance, and the need to focus at the grassroots. Participants also stressed the need to extend the focus beyond narrow economic empowerment objectives to more holistic conceptualizations of present and future well-being. Key messages and recommendations were brought to UN member states at the HLPF, including the need for member states to support the adoption of the proposed methodologies at **the 6th Meeting of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators** to be held in November 2017 in Manama, Bahrain. Outcomes will also feed into on-going processes of developing the methodologies and result in specific recommendations for the custodian agencies.

LANDac and the WLRA program continue to support the women's land rights agenda by joining diverse stakeholders and by generating awareness and contextualized, grassroots data for stronger evidence and advocacy.