#LandMatters Newsletter

February 2024

Dear Readers,

In this quarterly newsletter, we are pleased to showcase five years of work (2018-2023) under USAID's Integrated Land and Resource Governance (ILRG) program, which concluded in December 2023. ILRG has been instrumental in programming critical interventions that promote more equitable and inclusive land and resource rights across the globe. This newsletter provides resources and links to an array of publications that convey ILRG's research, lessons, impact, and legacy. We also spotlight our most recent Women's Land Rights Champion, Altaf Afridi from USAID/Pakistan. Thank you for your interest in USAID's land rights work!

Sincerely,

Stephen Brooks
Division Lead, USAID Land and Resource Governance Division

Strengthening Women's Land Rights

ILRG's Impact and Legacy
Gender Norms and Land: Identifying and Shifting Harmful Norms to Strengthen Women’s Land Rights

Land and natural resources are critical for rural women’s livelihoods and economic security. Despite progress, challenges persist, with 40 percent of countries worldwide imposing legal limitations on women’s land rights. ILRG’s final report on its work in this space emphasizes the need for holistic, community-led approaches and offers recommendations for advancing gender equality and social inclusion. This work resulted in 277,000 women with documented land rights, 2,600 women elected to land and resource governance structures, and 7,000 women joining commercial land-based value chains.

Strengthening the Capacity of Traditional Leaders to Champion Gender Equality in Zambia: Lessons Learned Piloting Gender Guidelines for Natural Resource Management

The Gender Guidelines, which ILRG launched in 2021 and disseminated to all 288 chiefs in Zambia, offer a framework for integrating gender equality into resource management. This report evaluates their implementation, while offering recommendations to support traditional leaders in leading gender equality efforts in local governance. The report highlights successes such as developing a shared vision to address gender inequalities in natural resource management.
Practical Implementation Guide on Gender Equality and Social Inclusion in Customary Land Documentation in Zambia

This comprehensive guide provides short, practical technical guidance for the whole land documentation process in Zambia and for the specific stages of the process. The target audience is all stakeholders directly involved in customary land documentation, including civil society organizations, community leaders, traditional leaders, and international organizations and donors.

The Business Case for Women’s Empowerment in the PepsiCo Potato Supply Chain in West Bengal, India

USAID and PepsiCo collaborated over four years to empower women in the PepsiCo potato supply chain in West Bengal, India. Through such initiatives as agronomy training and entrepreneurship programs, ILRG aimed to boost women’s participation and business metrics. The data shows positive business results. Over 97 percent of women applied skills gained through agronomy training, positively impacting potato productivity and profitability. Families with trained women had better gross and net yields.

Women’s Land Rights and Economic Empowerment in Cocoa Communities in Ghana

Women play a significant role in cocoa production, but gender inequality persists, with limited land ownership posing a major barrier to women. USAID partnered with global commodity trading and processing company Ecom Agroindustrial Corp. (ECOM) to promote gender equality in Ghana’s cocoa value chain. This final report documents ILRG’s efforts to increase gender-responsiveness within ECOM and pilot initiatives to address systemic challenges and promote inclusivity in cocoa communities. These efforts led to documented improvements in women’s access to resources and shifts in harmful gender norms, including a survey of men and women farmers that showed that agreement that household tasks are mainly a women’s job decreased from 38 to 28 percent among men and from 41 to 33 percent among women.

Lessons Learned: Integrating Gender Equality and Social Inclusion into Customary Land Documentation in Malawi

This brief shares ten lessons from a two-year partnership between ILRG and the Government of Malawi. By integrating gender equality and social inclusion into
customary land documentation processes, the initiative addressed challenges faced by women, youth, and marginalized groups in accessing land rights, offering insights for scaling nationwide efforts. The approach resulted in women being named in 68 percent of land certificates, compared to 38 percent in a “gender-neutral” pilot in the same area.

**Women's Land Rights Champion: Altaf Afridi**

Meet Altaf Afridi, USAID/Pakistan Development Assistance Specialist, who is spearheading the Land Registration in Merged Areas project, Pakistan's first and only activity on land rights. Leaning into his background in international development in the region, Altaf is championing women’s land rights in the tribal regions merged into the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province. Altaf's focus includes capacity building, community outreach, and strategic partnerships to ensure women's equitable access and control over land in a region where women have no role in decision making and virtually no control over land.

More blogs and related resources can be found on the [Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment page](https://www.land-links.org) on Land-Links.org

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**New Research & Resources Available**

*[Exploring an Ingrower/Outgrower Model with Grupo Madal in Zambezia, Mozambique: Activities, Results & Lessons Learned]*

ILRG worked in Mozambique to enhance land documentation, clarify land rights, and develop gender-sensitive extension services on a former estate of one of the country’s largest coconut producers. This final report describes the activities, outcomes, and lessons learned from ILRG's efforts in promoting sustainable land management and fostering community-company relationships.

*Increasing Awareness of Policy Reforms on Gender Equality Issues in Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining in Eastern DRC: Case Study of the Numbi, Nzibira, and Nyabibwe Sites*

An ILRG study aims to fill gaps in research on the dynamics of gender and social inclusion in artisanal mining in South Kivu Province, the Democratic Republic of Congo.
This report highlights women’s significant involvement in the sector, identifies barriers to gender equality, and assesses the impacts of policy reforms.

**ILRG Malawi Final Report: Reflections from Customary Land Documentation Scaling Project Land Rights & Natural Disaster Displacement in Sofala Province, Mozambique: Results & Lessons from the Lamadi Activity**

A new report details USAID’s partnership with the Government of Malawi to document customary land rights. It highlights the challenges and successes of implementing large-scale documentation processes, emphasizing the need for low-cost digital tools, clear procedural steps, and efficient oversight structures to achieve comprehensive land tenure coverage.

**Lessons on Forest and Wildlife Sector Integration in Zambia**

This report documents the lessons learned from the ILRG efforts to strengthen integration and coordination of community based natural resource management implementation across wildlife and forest sectors in Zambia.

**Sustainable Landscapes & Land and Resource Governance: Experiences from USAID Programming (2009–2023)**

This brief assesses the integration of land and resource governance within USAID sustainable landscapes programs, focusing on its impact on program design and implementation. Advocating for local-level interventions to strengthen national land tenure and property rights frameworks, it provides recommendations for improved outcomes.

**Lessons Learned: Private Sector Engagement on Land and Gender**

Through private sector partnerships under ILRG, USAID has generated a series of lessons on approaches to proactively work with companies to strengthen land security for rural populations, offering valuable guidance for program staff and implementers.

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**In Focus: USAID Land and Resource Governance Project Highlights**

View highlights from other land and resource governance activities:
USAID’s Integrated Natural Resource Management activity provides on-demand support services and technical assistance for USAID Missions, Bureaus, and Independent Offices across a wide array of environmental and natural resource management issues, with a focus on gender equality and social inclusion.

Read more in their recent blog post:

- **Inclusive and Impactful: Promising Approaches to Integrate Gender into Climate Finance**

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**Quote from the field:** “Before when a tree died, it was difficult to agree with the landowner to replant. With the land document this is easier now. We sit with the landowner and have a peaceful discussion, pay them a small token, and then you are good to go.”

**Issaka Bukavi** is a tenant cocoa farmer in Ghana. Most tenancy agreements are informal, which leaves tenant farmers with an insecure situation. With support from USAID, landowners and tenants documented their land rights and use agreements in three cocoa growing communities, allowing tenants to better negotiate replanting and cocoa rehabilitation with landowners to improve cocoa productivity.

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USAID/Colombia’s Land for Prosperity Activity supports the Government of Colombia in improving the conditions of rural households who have weathered decades of conflict and violence to achieve licit economic development through secure land tenure. Read more in some of their recent blog posts:

- **Convincing the Public**
Respecting their Autonomy

The Drivers of Deforestation are Closely Associated with Land Issues

Discovering Quality Coffees in Cauca

Beating the Stereotype

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**Quote from the field:** "Land leasing group members are capable farmers; they are in a position to manage farming on their own. Women are more sincere and follow the instructions better than men. They are more sincere in using masks and gloves while spraying pesticides. Women have shown greater loyalty. The project has enabled women to make decisions on how they would spend the money they earned as profit." - Rafikul Islam is a PepsiCo vendor in his Muslim-majority community in West Bengal, India. Under a partnership between USAID and PepsiCo to increase women’s participation in potato value chains, Rafikul helped his wife Shamina and her self-help group lease a plot of land to collectively farm and enter PepsiCo’s supply chain as independent suppliers. USAID supported seven women’s land leasing groups to access land under this partnership.

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In the northern and western regions of Côte d'Ivoire, USAID’s Improving Land Access for Women activity increases social cohesion, reduces land conflicts, and empowers women to contribute to their communities economically by strengthening their legal access to land. Recent publications include the following:

- **Lessons Learned from the First Phase of Gender Action Learning Series and Social Dialogue**
- **Workshop Report: Gender, Land, and Conflict (November 2022)**
Quote from the field: “The heads of this community did not ask for the community's opinion when they wanted to sell the eucalyptus, but with all we have learned today, we cannot be afraid to defend the plantations because they are ours. So, we will go to the camp to stop the cutting or have the leader return money he received for the trees to the community.” – Inácia Estevão is a member of the land association in her community in Zambezia, Mozambique.

Under a partnership between USAID and agroforestry firm Green Resources AS, the company relinquished its land use rights to 230,000 hectares of underutilized holdings, allowing communities to register their rights over the land. In addition to delimiting community boundaries, USAID helped communities elect land associations to help govern shared natural resources, including negotiating with government and outside investors over benefit sharing and use rights.