

The Impact of Financial Incentives on Female Land Ownership in Tanzania

"The 1999 Land Act created a legal pathway for both men and women to access formal land tenure rights in Tanzania. However, the reform has had limited reach – even in urban areas, the proportion of land covered by a formal title is less than 15%. This has been due, in part, to the high cost of formalization, which has kept land titles out of reach for the majority of urban poor... Furthermore, self-reported female ownership of land is low. Approximately 70–75% of all land registered with a residential license is done so with a single male name. Researchers partnered with the Women's Advancement Trust (WAT) to conduct a randomized evaluation to investigate whether Tanzanian households could be induced to grant formal land ownership rights to women. Using price incentives, they aimed to address two potential obstacles to women's access to formal land ownership: the high price of formal land titles, and the sole ownership of land titles by men." (J-PAL, 2016).

"The World Bank, in collaboration with the Ministry of Lands, the Dar es Salaam City Council, and the Kinondoni Municipality contracted a private surveying company to survey approximately 1,100 parcels of land in randomly assigned blocks in Mburahati Barfu and Kigogo Kati settlements. These neighborhoods were selected based on their low levels of access to infrastructure and public utilities, as well as their lower rates of female land ownership." (J-PAL, 2016). To the knowledge of the authors, this is the first study to introduce randomized variation in financial barriers to access to property for women.

Quick facts

Barriers addressed



Prerequisites

[Broader legal constraints >](#)

[Lack of credit history \(for credit products only\) >](#)



Cost

[Perceived and/or lack of money >](#)

Segment focus

1 2 3 4

Geography

[Tanzania >](#)

Sources

[J-PAL, 2016](#); [Ali et al., 2016](#).

Customer Journey Relevance



Key stakeholders involved

Women's Advancement Trust,
Ministry of Lands, Dar es Salaam
City Council, Kinondoni Municipality
Mburahati Barfu and Kigogo Kati
settlements, World Bank, Private
surveying company (unnamed)

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Key activities

“Residents in the surveyed blocks were given the option to repay a heavily subsidized cost of 100,000 Tsh (US \$67) in exchange for a land title. Residents in comparison blocks were still able to purchase land titles for the full government price, in excess of 500,000 TSh (US \$335). Within treatment blocks, households were randomly allocated up to two vouchers redeemable for different discount levels on title price:

- Conditional voucher: Roughly half of vouchers were made redeemable only if a female household member was included as an owner on the title application.
- Unconditional voucher: This voucher was a general, unrestricted price discount.

Vouchers took on values ranging from zero to 80,000 TSh (US \$54) in iterations of 20,000 TSh (US \$13). The research team presented vouchers to households after short presentations by WAT about the benefits of title ownership and co-titling at a block-wide information session.” (J-PAL, 2016).

Outcomes/results

Cited from (J-PAL, 2016).

- “Receiving a conditional subsidy increased the probability that households included a woman’s name on their land title by 3–3.3% for every 10,000 TSh (US \$7) increase in subsidy.”
- “Offering price discounts increased resident demand for land titles. On average, researchers estimated that residents were willing to pay between US \$40–50 to purchase a land title. An increase of 10,000 TSh (US \$7), or 10% of the default CRO price, reduced the probability that residents would purchase a title by nearly 3%.”
- “Conditional vouchers raised the number of women listed on titles by nearly twice as much. Nearly all households that received conditional vouchers listed women on titles, achieving near gender parity in land ownership with no reduction in demand for titles.”

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Key enabling environment factors for the intervention

- Legal pathways already exist in Tanzania that enable women to gain access to formal land tenure rights.
- The intervention received interest from local governments in participating in the program design.

Key design elements and principles that led to successful outcomes

- The intervention was designed to take place in areas with low rates of female land ownership and limited access to infrastructure and public utilities.
- The program incorporated presentations and information sessions on the importance of land ownership into the program design.
- The program was made to be affordable through a subsidy pricing model, enabling low-income women to participate in the intervention who had previously been excluded from obtaining land titles.

Potential for scale/replicability

The combined cost of town planning and surveying for the project was considerably lower than the Ministry of Land's estimates, signifying that cost of the program itself might not be a barrier to scale or replication. However, the program did experience delays from the government, which is an issue to keep in mind for future replication projects.

Challenges encountered during the program

Unfortunately, external factors have prevented the actual issuance of tiles to applicants. After flooding in 2011, the Ministry of Lands rezoned the majority of the study area as ineligible for formal land titles. The government also increased the price for the NGO to process applications. However, the results of the study indicate that this subsidy model increases demand among women for formal land ownership, signifying that there is an opportunity for future research to replicate this model and follow through with the land granting process to see how legal land rights impact women's empowerment/livelihoods.

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Recommendations from the research

The research team recommends that future programming and research will consider whether or not changes in land ownership affect women's bargaining power inside the household. Additionally, after witnessing the challenges associated with working with the government, the team hopes that future programs and similar interventions will delve deeper into the challenges in the delivery and enforcement of land rights by the state.

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