

Exemplars

Rwanda's Land Tenure Regularization Program

"Beginning in 1999, the Government of Rwanda (GoR) passed a series of laws, regulations, and policies designed to reform its land tenure system, with a focus on developing a system that promoted peace, economic development, and paid special attention to gender equality." (Santos et al., 2014) "In 2010 the Government of Rwanda launched a nationwide land tenure regularization (LTR) program, a first time land adjudication and registration process that was imagery-based and low cost (US \$5 per parcel)." (Ali et al, 2015). The World Bank designed a rigorous impact evaluation to determine the short-term impacts of the LTR program on perceived tenure security and women's access to land and land rights.

Additionally, to ensure that the rights of vulnerable groups, such as poor men and women, were fully included in land regularization efforts, Landesa partnered with CARE to "test a scalable model of public awareness and dialog that CARE had piloted in partnership with the NLC, the District of Musanze, and local NGOs." (Santos et al., 2014). The pilot had two objectives:

- "To strengthen the capacity of local officials and their understanding of the legal framework, with particular regard to the LTR process, land rights more generally, and land dispute resolution procedures."
- "To raise public awareness about the LTR process, land rights as established under the Rwandan legal framework, and land dispute resolution options."

Quick facts

Barriers addressed



Prerequisites

[Broader legal constraints >](#)
[Lack of credit history >](#)



Cost

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

Segment focus

1 2 3 4

Geography

Rwanda

Sources

[Ali et al., 2015](#); [Santos et al., 2014](#); [Gillingham and Buckle, 2014](#).

Customer Journey Relevance



Key stakeholders involved

Government of Rwanda
National Land Center
Rwanda Natural Resource Authority
Landesa
CARE
DFID

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Key activities

The GoR developed a nine-step administrative and legal procedure for the LTR program: “1) notification of areas for an LTR program, 2) local information dissemination through public meetings, with a particular focus on informing women and other vulnerable groups about the process, 3) appointment and training of local citizens to serve on Land Committees responsible for demarcation and adjudication, 4) demarcation of land using a participatory process to mark boundaries on photographic images of the area, 5) adjudication, recording personal details of claimants as well as persons of interest, issuing claim receipts, and recording objections and corrections when needed, 6) publication of adjudication records and compilation of a parcel index map, 7) objections and corrections period to finalize the record and disputant lists, 8) mediation period for disputes, and 9) registration and titling when title documents are prepared and issued.” (Santos et al., 2014).

The CARE and Landesa program sought to help the GoR increase outreach to women and vulnerable groups. CARE organized meetings with officials at the District, sector, and cell levels. They also “organized a number of grassroots level events and activities—

—that included village-level meetings, documentary film displays, focus group discussions with community representatives, and radio broadcasts.”

Outcomes/results

- “In less than three years, the Rwanda Natural Resource Authority (RNRA) registered more than 10.7 million parcels (of the estimated 11.5 million parcels of land in Rwanda) and delivered about 6.7 million titles.” (Ali et al., 2015).
- There was a large improvement in “the perceived rights for female to be registered as a claimant (alone or jointly) on parcels owned by married couples, from only 33% in the baseline, to about 94% after the implementation of LTR.”
- “Women’s rights to mortgage, or lease outland also increased substantially (between 9% and 13% for the former, and between 8% and 10% for the latter).”
- CARE’s impact awareness pilot “eliminated gender biases in who attended the LTR meetings. It also led to an increase in women’s presence during demarcation and adjudication activities.” (Santos et al., 2014).

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Key enabling environment factors for the intervention

The 2010 LTR program was preceded by decades of government involvement and efforts to tackle land-related issues. "The adoption of the 1999 inheritance law was a first act that aimed at eliminating traditional bias against female land ownership rights. It was followed by the 2004 land policy and its codification in the 2005 organic land law (OLL) as well as the establishment of national and local institutional structures for overall land management and administration in the country." (Ali et al., 2015).

"Additionally, there was strong political pressure from GoR to conduct the LTR process as a one-off, nationwide activity. Because of the history of conflict, it was requested that all districts had to benefit from LTR simultaneously, and that there had to be an even distribution of work." (Gillingham and Buckle, 2014).

Key design elements and principles that led to successful outcomes

- The LTR program paired legal frameworks with public awareness campaigns to help the program unfold in a gender-sensitive and socially inclusive manner.
- The cost of registering for land parcels and titles was made to be affordable, which helped low-income and excluded populations enter the program.
- The legal frameworks and the information campaigns included community members, which enabled marginalized groups of people to be reached.

Potential for scale/replicability

The LTR program operated at a nation-wide scale. However, Rwanda's situation is unique given the history of conflict and the strong government support to roll out the program nationally. The unique scale and speed of the Rwanda LTR process would neither have been achieved without the legal framework established, nor without strong government ownership. Other countries may benefit from a regional approach versus a national approach.

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Challenges encountered during the program

Evaluations found that the LTR process paid less attention to women who are not legally married. "Perhaps due to a misinterpretation of the original letter and spirit of the law, the names of women who are not legally married are much less likely to have been recorded on land titles." (Santos et al., 2014). "Results also indicate that in very poor households, women are less likely to be named on on land titles and daughters are less likely to inherit land, even though the limited economic means of the family have no impact on whether the husbands' names are recorded on land titles or on the chances that the sons will inherit land. This gender-based difference cannot be explained away on legal or economic grounds, suggesting that the bias results from cultural or social norms."

Recommendations from the research

To better reach women who are not legally married, "there is a need for clear recognition and public acknowledgment of the land rights granted to men and to women, regardless of their marital status." (Santos et al., 2014) "The language, materials, and training of the LTR process need to be updated to reflect this, officials need to receive clear and updated instructions, communities need to be alerted, and titles that have yet to be issued should be revised accordingly." Additionally, addressing cultural and social norms related to women's access to land "requires grassroots level behavioral-change campaigns, in addition to sensitizing officials, legal aid providers, and other service providers to the needs of the poorer households within their target constituencies."