

Consolidated good practice to strengthen women‘s land rights

Global Programme Responsible Land Policy

July 2025

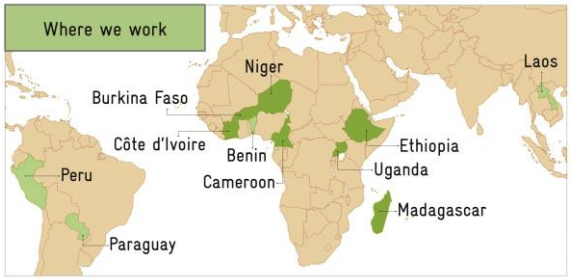
giz Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

Abbreviations

ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolution
CFL(s)	Charte(s) Foncière Locale (Local Land Convention)
CSO(s)	Civil Society Organisation(s)
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH
GPRLP	Global Programme Responsible Land Policy
IPA	Inclusive Peace Agent
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
S2RAI	Support to Responsible Agricultural Investment
WLR(s)	Women's Land Right(s)
ADF	Amazones du Foncier (« Amazons of Land »)

Programme and Project

THE GLOBAL PROGRAMME RESPONSIBLE LAND POLICY (GPRLP) IS PART OF THE SPECIAL INITIATIVE 'TRANSFORMATION OF AGRICULTURAL AND FOOD SYSTEMS' ESTABLISHED BY THE GERMAN FEDERAL MINISTRY FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT (BMZ), WHICH AIMS TO REDUCE EXTREME POVERTY AND HUNGER.



The project aims to create the conditions for sustainable development and food security through secure, fair and responsible land use and land ownership rights in rural areas, especially for women, marginalised groups and indigenous communities. It is implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH in countries across Africa, Latin America (until 2021) and Asia (until 2023).

THE GLOBAL PROGRAMME ADDRESSES THREE FIELDS OF ACTION:

1. Improving procedures to secure land ownership and user rights for rural communities
2. Strengthening civil society
3. Improving the conditions for responsible agricultural investment.

In these fields of action, the GPRLP focuses on promoting gender equality and strengthens women's rights, resources and representation in rural areas.

It aims to support rural women, many of whom face multiple disadvantages: traditional gender roles, often harsh rural living conditions, and marginalisation due to their ethnicity or migrant status. These intersecting identities define their situation in different ways in the cultural contexts of the GPRLP's country modules.

The GPRLP has therefore developed localised approaches that address the specific barriers to women's land (use) rights (WLR). These approaches reach women by building capacities or services that directly benefit them, empower them and improve their position in society, with lasting impact. By following a multi-level approach (local, regional and national), they contribute to various Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) such as SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 2 (No Hunger), SDG 5(Gender Equality), SDG 13 (Climate Action), SDG 15 (Life on Land) and SDG 16 (Peace and Strong Institutions).

Starting point

WLRs are often disregarded in rural communities that adhere to traditional patriarchal customs. In consequence women have less access to the resources that can help them achieve food security, income and wellbeing for their households. They also lack an equal say in family and public decision-making.

Traditional rules on land inheritance often favour men and disadvantage women. Unequal distribution of land rights weakens women's economic position. Without formal rights to land and access only with permission from their male relatives, women are more economically dependent and vulnerable.

In most of the GPRLP's partner countries, several regulatory systems exist in parallel. While many legal systems have been modernised to promote gender equality over recent decades, traditions, norms and cultural behaviours do not always mirror these legal changes, particularly in the customary systems that generally frame social interactions in rural areas.

At the same time, women often lack education and awareness of their formal rights to land. This puts them at a disadvantage in 1) having their ownership, access or use rights documented, 2) receiving advice or support in land disputes or 3) protection against eviction if their family status changes following divorce or death. Widows, in particular, struggle after their husband's death, and this is often compounded by a lack of knowledge about laws and land procedures. The land assigned to them is often poor-quality and more susceptible to expropriation by relatives.

Women are often excluded from household decision-making, although they tend to do most of the agricultural work. Disadvantages based on gender can intersect with women's other identities, for example belonging to an ethnic minority, following pastoral practices in mainly agrarian societies or being a migrant, refugee or internally displaced person. In these contexts, women have less access to land and decision-making processes at different levels.

Against this background the GPRLP supports **gender-transformative approaches to** empower women to make a valuable contribution, not just in agriculture but also in improving food security, income generation, health, education and productivity of whole families and communities.



Two Ugandan women farmers working their field

Land is the most important physical asset in agrarian societies and women provide a significant share of agricultural labour. WLRs are a gateway to promoting a human rights-based focus and transformative, i.e. structural, change. This will be achieved by addressing the root causes of gender inequality, adapting to the context, and collaborating with a wide network of partners who agree on a common overarching agenda and focused interventions. Gender-transformative change is achieved by removing barriers and optimising opportunities for equality, equal access, control and decision-making in

every individual's life and environment, regardless of their gender, ethnicity or other characteristics. A condition for this structural change is the empowerment of women. For that, the approaches must first **reach** women and marginalised groups, then provide real **benefits** for them as a basis for **empowerment**. It is also essential to strengthen **Rights, Resources and Representation (3R) in the four fields of change**: individual, relational, cultural, and systematic/structural. (For conceptual framework see Gender Narrative.)

Approaches



Sensitization workshop for women in Madagascar

Local civil society organisations (CSO) and local and national administrations in the partner countries are key partners for the GPRLP in promoting gender sensitivity in local communities – always in line with the local conditions, needs and opportunities and enriched by cross-country learning.

LOCAL ADVOCACY FOR WOMEN'S LAND RIGHTS TO TRANSFORM SOCIAL NORMS

To address the imbalance in land matters, a proven approach is to train local women's or mixed gender groups that advocate for WLRs. The women first receive training in the regulatory framework and administrative procedures, focusing on how to obtain certificates, land titles or land use contracts. Additionally, they are trained in raising awareness in their communities, with support from local CSOs. Here, the aim is to build their capacities to support other women in securing their land at a later stage. With training, local women have a higher level of self-organisation and are able to engage with customary and community leaders to remove barriers within local land management structures. Often, trained "male champions" complement the advocacy work to underline that equal access to rights benefits the entire community.

The training boosts women's confidence, transforming them from spectators to fully committed stakeholders in land management. In this approach, women are not only a target group: they also become multipliers and trainers. Locally trained groups take on active advocacy roles in their communities and are in dialogue with local administrations and customary authorities. There is evidence that this leads to more land titles being registered in women's names since they are supported in the process by other women from their villages.

The **Inclusive Peace Agents (IPAs)** in Cameroon are an example (find detailed country examples on page i ff). They focus on supporting women as mediators for village land conflict resolution. Communities are sensitised on conflict management and WLRs. CSO partners ensure sustainability and evaluate participation.



Amazones du Foncier approaching other women in Côte d'Ivoire

In Côte d'Ivoire the **Amazones du Foncier** engage in land registration training, which helps women to follow up on the process. They also engage with traditional leaders to promote participation in the granting of land titles within their communities.

In Niger, young people lead awareness groups on land issues; known as **Jeunes Sentinelles du Foncier**. They promote participatory local land management through active monitoring of land conflicts. The local youth is sensitised on cultural barriers to equal access to land, with a focus on the intersection of age and gender hindering access to land. They receive training on rural land policy, land disputes, and land access rights for marginalised groups. Often, these training events targeting the rural youth are paired with training in self-organisation, agronomic or business skills to facilitate access to the economic sphere.

Inter-communal dialogue spaces for women in Madagascar offer a secure space for women to identify and express their needs, allowing them to share their feelings and experiences regarding land rights issues. The women targeted to become change agents include women with a land certificate or title, members of women's associations, heads of families, migrants, and other vulnerable women. The approach supports and reinforces the spirit of existing laws that recognise the equality of men and women regarding land rights and encourages the adoption of more inclusive policies, particularly from the point of view of succession. On a cultural level, it challenges established traditional norms by promoting the role of women in land governance.

WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN LAND ADMINISTRATION PROCESSES

Many approaches in the GPRLP emphasise the inclusion of women in decision-making, aimed at strengthening their representation in land administration procedures and institutions. Land conflict resolution is highly sensitive in this regard: it is proven that women are less likely to seek legal advice or access formal justice when affected by land conflicts. The GPRLP therefore promotes their representation in **Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)**, which is traditionally led by elders, clan chiefs and other respected community members. These ADR committees operate at the village level to ensure broad participation and sustainability. In Uganda, they now have female representatives in all working groups and at all stages of the process.

In Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Madagascar and Cameroon, formal land titles can be issued in women's names, but this is often blocked by social conventions. As a more accepted but equally recognised alternative to formal individual land titles, the GPRLP has introduced local land conventions, known as **Chartes Foncières Locales (CFLs)**. The process of establishing these land use agreements involves women in identifying needs through focus groups and encourages their participation in village assemblies and commissions at all stages. With the CFLs, communities manage the process themselves, ensuring transparency and sustainability. Experts in gender and sociology are consulted to ensure that agreements are needs-based and avoid unintended gender-negative impacts.

CLOSE COOPERATION WITH LOCAL ACTORS AND INITIATIVES

All the GPRLP's gender-related projects work closely with local CSOs to create awareness and build capacities within the rural population and the rural administrations. Due to their local

expertise and being part of the culture, they are able to be specific in identifying needs and barriers. This ensures effective targeting of interventions that encourage the intended behavioural changes within their cultural frameworks. A transformation of gender dynamics can be accomplished when underlying assumptions, norms, values and causes of inequality are changed. This does not happen overnight and requires constant awareness-raising. To consolidate dialogue, local drivers of change keep up the momentum and push the agenda. At the grassroots level, as well as in formalised policy dialogue at the national or international level, CSOs have managed to professionalise, self-organise and co-create visions within their networks that advocate for inclusive land governance. They are able to amplify joint voices to strengthen WLRs as one empowerment strategy. The GPRLP supports organisations and alliances that will continue working after the conclusion of the programme's modules.

CSO partners of the GPRLP in Ethiopia help to build **women's entrepreneurship skills**, including critical thinking, problem-solving, and financial literacy. The outcomes show that these women are more likely to start and sustain businesses, contributing to self-sufficiency, local economic growth and job creation. The CSOs are able to accommodate women's needs, schedules and locations, because they know their realities. In their interaction with local and regional authorities they foster a culture of innovation. The CSOs themselves use multi-stakeholder dialogues as a means of raising women's issues, either with investors or officials participating in such platforms. At the national level, bringing these CSOs together, for example in national platforms, allows them to rally around a powerful advocacy message on WLRs based on shared experiences.

Most of these approaches on sensitisation and capacity development for WLRs and enabling women to take decisions in land administration or conflict resolution mechanisms are co-designed with CSO partners in an integrated manner.



Mangai women around a scoreboard, discussing land use and decision- making dynamics in Cameroon

Positive changes

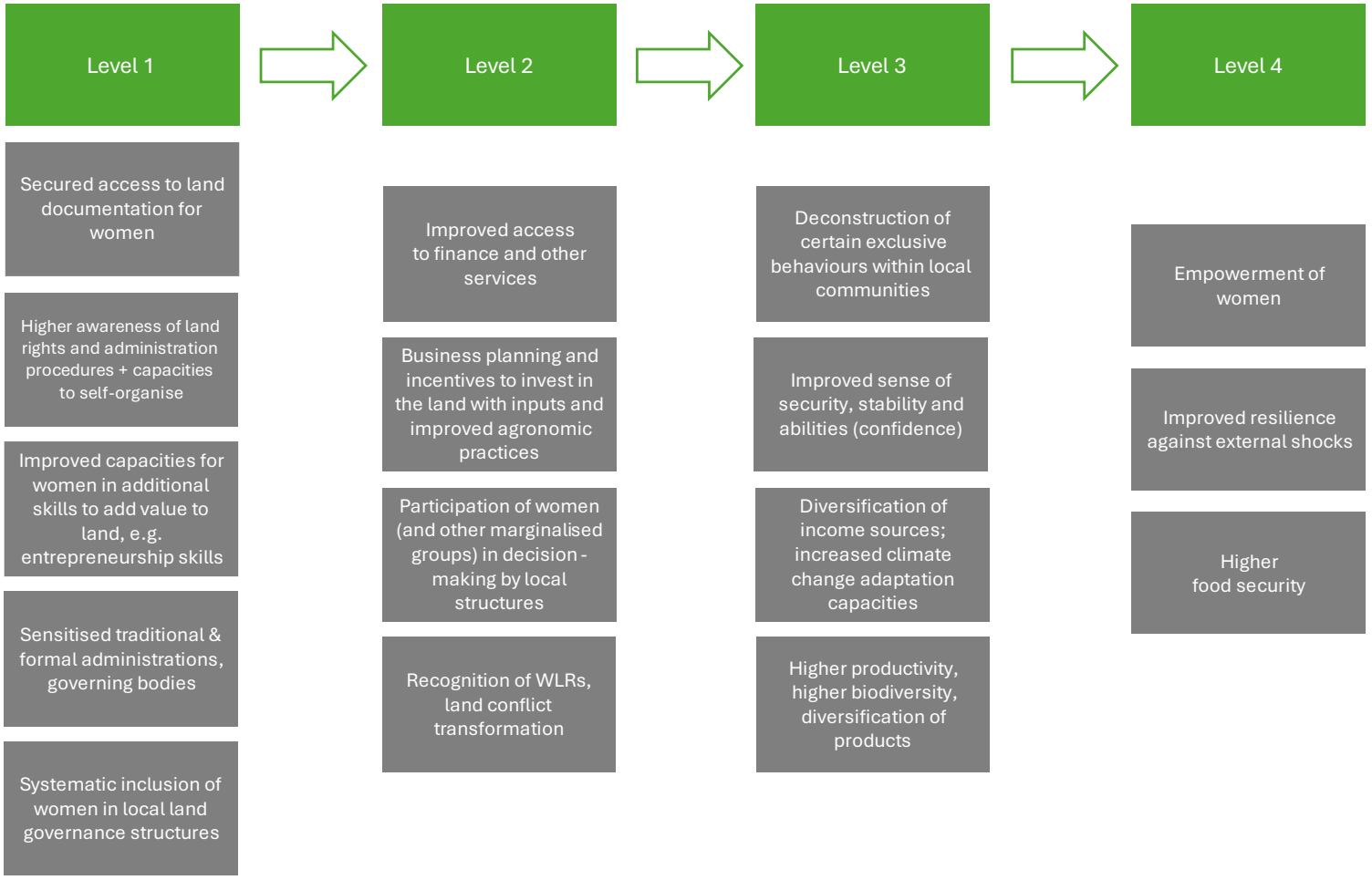


Figure 1: Impact Narrative towards women empowerment in the context of land governance

The Impact Narrative in Figure 1 shows that subsequent empowerment can be achieved by approaches that tackle structural dynamics and underlying power relations reinforcing inequality. The approaches aim to enable women to make strategic life choices and put those choices into action. The recognition of WLRs helps to remove barriers and optimise opportunities. At the intersection of other areas in the lives of rural women, WLRs lead to more equality, equal access, control and decision-making over one's own life and environment, regardless of gender, ethnicity, and other markers of difference.

At the **individual level**, women have easier access to various resources based on their secured land rights. Through the entrepreneurship skills training in Ethiopia, which reached 416 participants, women are able to access loans from financial institutions more freely.

The approach from Burkina Faso secures women's tenure rights through collective engagement. Their resources on a **relational level** are increased by their membership of collectives. This gives them more control over their crops and enables them to manage their production and agricultural resources. As of today, the CFL in the project intervention communes helps to protect access rights in 8,378 households, encompassing a total of 22,480 women and girls. The awareness and knowledge of their tenure rights then become a resource they can share with other women and with the general rural population.



Alternative dispute resolution in Uganda involving direct women's participation

Women's increased participation in decision-making and conflict resolution through their involvement in the ADR committees in Uganda is part of women's empowerment on the **relational level** and strengthens their representation and agency. The ADR measure has to date solved more than 3,700 conflicts (out of more than 4,500 reported incidents). The beneficiaries include families, women, young people and marginalised groups who have gained improved access to justice and land rights through the gender-sensitive dispute resolution mechanisms.

In Côte d'Ivoire, effective representation of women on local administrative committees has increased and more women are mobilising to demand their rights: Over 110 contracts and 90 individual land certificates issued in women's names and more than 1,400 collective land certificates with a woman as the lead name have been registered since the start of the ADF's intervention. Their actions lead to more inclusive land management, particularly through diligent reporting of blockages and conflicts while considering women's interests. Consequently, the benefits, including cohesion and social justice, extend to the entire community.

Socio-cultural changes are achieved in Burkina Faso, Madagascar and Uganda by targeting men in campaigns and raising their awareness of women's tenure rights. Regarding resources, women's role in the management of agricultural production has changed toward more inclusion. They control the choice of which crops to use and the management of the fields. Cultural change is noted as their control over the agricultural resources is no longer questioned. The Ivorian approach shows that, by using theatre and creative/participatory methods, otherwise difficult discussions on gender and power relations can be addressed and worked on. This leads to the proposal of context-appropriate solutions. The approach from Madagascar increased women's economic and social

autonomy through their inclusion in land governance institutions at various levels.

Structural, systematic change is achieved through the institutionalisation of equality and equity measures in legislation. In Burkina Faso, there must be a women representative on the committees that initiate and manage local land conventions. Local authorities are empowered to manage the establishment of local land conventions without expensive external consultants. Instead, local teams made of both men and women receive training and learn to raise awareness of women's tenure rights within local land administrations. Based on the subsequent land tenure security for women, their voices become more powerful in decision-making bodies.

The IPA measure in Cameroon reached around 300 women in the pilot villages where women are actively involved in land management and conflict resolution processes. These beneficiaries include agricultural and pastoral women who have taken part in training courses on land management, land rights and conflict resolution. Thanks to these actions, they have been able to access essential information, build their capacities and play a central role in land-related decisions within their communities.

So far 374,000 documented land property or land use titles in a woman's sole name or jointly with a family member have been registered and are recognised by the state or traditional authorities.



Ethiopian woman, holding her Land Use Certificate

Lessons learned and recommendations

The **analysis of barriers** that limit women's rights, access to and ownership of resources and their representation in decision-making processes is the prerequisite for any targeted intervention. It is therefore important to identify the **actual behaviours and cultural norms which create these barriers**. This helps communities to work towards behaviour change without calling existing culture into question. Rather, the excluding elements will be deconstructed. Often, discriminatory behaviour is disguised as part of a community's culture, even though it is not rooted in cultural norms as such.

An **intersectional lens** in the context of assessment, conceptualisation and implementation is needed for holistic gender approaches. This ensures that they do not lose sight of the fact that a lack of access to rights, resources or representation is often caused by multiple factors. The approaches will need to address systemic discrimination. Such intersectional concepts can **foster the rallying of different interest groups** behind one topic, e.g.

women's access to land. This includes powerful campaigns that create benefits and networking opportunities for multiple stakeholders at different levels, including at a global scale.

One barrier faced by many women – particularly in rural areas – is the lack of knowledge of their rights or regulations supporting them. Limited capacities to access (legal) pathways for enforcement of those rights are also common. Formal rights, as elements of the statutory land governance framework, are overwritten by by-laws. These are often male-favoured interpretations of traditions and customs that fall short of acknowledging women's legal rights. One key learning is that **women and men alike need awareness of this parallel existence of the cultural norms and formal regulations – and gaps that might exist**. Women in particular need the capacities to engage in this negotiation process between traditional authorities and institutionalised governance structures on how to interpret, monitor and enforce the rules. Therefore, most of the GPRLP's approaches focus on training and access to (legal) advisory services for women. Traditional leaders and actors within the local governance structures also benefit from **capacity-building, enabling them to better navigate parallel statutory and customary rules**.

Inheritance rules are a classic example where women may be marginalised, not necessarily by law but by the traditional ways of passing on land within families. Decision-makers need to be made aware of the implications and interlinkages when formulating policies and laws to promote WLRs. At the same time, true gender-transformative approaches should be **community-based to root the inclusion of women in the local dynamics**. They should take cultural norms into consideration and embrace the opportunities within communities, thus increasing the likelihood of social acceptance of the changes that result.

Interventions inspiring behavioural change are particularly successful when they **target gender issues in the context of improving livelihoods for all**, are open to women and men, young and old, and migrants and host communities, and reflect on societal roles, constraints and opportunities. The early **involvement of different stakeholders in the design** of suitable interventions to close the gender gap fosters their cooperation and ownership. The discussion on gender is often negatively portrayed as "promotion of women" instead of "promotion of equality". However, women's empowerment is largely dependent on men's participation in household or community decision-making processes. Moreover, technical teams supporting gender-responsive approaches need gender capacities themselves to enable a gradual shift from reach to empowerment.

Complementary action needs multiple inputs from gender-aware experts to tap into existing potential in each area. This can happen either within project structures or in **synergies with others**, particularly when it is **formulated as a goal in programming**.



Beneficiary of GPRLP in the Diana region in Madagascar

In Madagascar, progress is made possible through support from the GPRLP and other GIZ Madagascar projects. For example, the GPRLP can help a woman obtain a legal document securing her access to land, while ProSol rehabilitates her soil to improve her harvests. This collaboration promotes the economic empowerment of rural women and offers great potential for scaling up, as the approach is cost-effective and supported by local authorities.

Further information from the countries

BURKINA FASO – CHARTES FONCIÈRES LOCALES



Women farmers working together in a field in Burkina Faso

In Burkina Faso, the project supports the application of the law by strengthening institutional frameworks and improving land security procedures. The GPRLP Burkina Faso involves civil society in the implementation of responsible land policies and the resolution of land conflicts. The project raises awareness of responsible land policy among agricultural investors and other economic actors.

The GPRLP Burkina Faso included a gender dimension in the establishment and promotion of **CFLs**. **The approach aims to include women as active agents in land use agreements**. Women are given the same status in these agreements as in any other property documents. The agreements may be established at various community levels, e.g. by a family, clan, village, or several villages, and relate to specific public resources such as land, sacred sites, forests, villages, pastoral zones, and grazing land. Training and technical support are provided for local staff so that they are able to establish the CFL, which must include a female representative.

Women actively participate in the decision-making and operational levels of the CFL process. They are sensitised as part of the initiative committee and take part in village information assemblies, diagnosing needs through focus groups specifically with women. Women are also members of Village Land Commissions and Village Land Conciliation Commissions, receiving training on the relevance of secure access to land for women and on non-violent communication with local and communal authorities.

The direct benefits for women include legal access to and proper documentation of land through the local land charters. This does not interfere with customary arrangements that see men as a direct link between the land and the community. In most cases, they still hold property titles, but women are now represented to a greater extent through the local land conventions that are an alternative to land titles. This secures their land use rights, allowing women to generate revenues. The CFL process enhances the resilience of rural women at all levels. Widows benefit greatly from this, as do women's cooperatives and young women seeking to establish themselves. The implementation of this inclusive approach is sensitive to the needs of rural women and responds to the challenges they face because of their gender.

Guaranteed usage rights empower women to plan and organise their agricultural production, both individually and collectively within cooperatives. Official access to land facilitates more transparent management of incomes within

families, allowing widows to refuse levirate marriage and enabling them to provide for themselves and their children. Transforming customs into rules with inclusive provisions for vulnerable groups is a crucial element of cultural change. The transparent and participatory aspects of the process strengthen the agreements, and the empowerment of communities in steering the process ensures sustainability.

CAMEROON – INCLUSIVE PEACE AGENT



Workshop on peaceful cohabitation between indigenous and Mboroos women in Tibati

The GPRLP project in Cameroon contributes to strengthening land use rights in the Centre Region, safeguarding the livelihoods of the rural population while promoting the protection and restoration of forest-rich landscapes. It supports sustainable access to land, particularly for women, young people and marginalised groups (e.g. Mbororo pastoralists and internally displaced persons), as well as the resolution of land conflicts, especially of an agropastoral nature.

The GPRLP Cameroon promotes the inclusion of women in land-related decision-making by integrating a gender equity dimension into local land management and contributing to peaceful land conflict resolution in culturally diverse contexts. The **IPA approach starts by conducting socio-anthropological studies and sensitising communities on conflict management and WLRs, linking these efforts to other marginalised groups.** Capacity-building for women, e.g. on land tenure security, is provided, along with the deployment of the IPA; they focus on supporting women as mediators for land conflict resolution in the local communities. The initiative also includes evaluating and ensuring sustainability in cooperation with local CSOs.

Training programmes for women and men cover the land rights of women and marginalised groups, such as the Mbororos and internally displaced people, as well as mediation processes and conflict resolution. They are responsive to inequalities and aim to promote knowledge-sharing within the rural population. In inclusive dialogue formats, women share information on land-related issues, improving communication and involving traditional leaders. Women's associations have been created, and there is close cooperation with local actors, public authorities, and implementing partners to ensure equal representation of women in decision-making bodies dealing with land management and conflict resolution.

The approach focuses on making this awareness-raising and support accessible to women and marginalised groups, actively including them, and providing education and training, especially in rural settings. CSOs that organise and deliver training also receive guidance on women's specific needs and societal positions to ensure a participatory process.

In some instances, benefits include education and capacity-building for women and documentation of land rights. Structural and relational power dynamics are addressed. Specifically, training programmes aim to include women in decision-making bodies, giving them new roles in strategic positions. Women are actively included in decision-making spaces, challenging existing social and cultural customs and sensitising traditional leaders. Systematically and structurally, the initiative integrates women's rights into the political landscape of land management at both national and local levels.

COTE D'IVOIRE – AMAZONES DU FONCIER



Civil society representatives in Côte d'Ivoire, working at grassroot level

Aware of the issues affecting land management in Côte d'Ivoire (the law calls for large-scale documentation, but governance tools for rural land are currently lacking), the GPRLP Côte d'Ivoire works alongside the government, civil society and the cocoa industry. It has developed innovative approaches to rural land governance, including socio-economic engineering to bring communities closer together and prepare for technical operations to demarcate plots, empowering village committees to draw up farming contracts, and involving young surveyors to help document land rights at village level.

Women face significant challenges in securing land rights due to social and traditional norms that position men as the main intermediaries, owners, and guarantors in land matters. Widows, in particular, struggle after their husband's death, compounded by a lack of knowledge about laws and land procedures. To address these issues, groups of 10 women, known as **Amazones du Foncier (ADF), have been formed by the GPRLP Côte d'Ivoire to defend WLRs and enable secure access to land**. These women receive training on land law, e.g. on how to obtain land certificates, and various types of land contracts. Sensitisation campaigns about WLRs and land documentation are also conducted.

The ADF work to empower women regarding land rights. They raise awareness in villages, encouraging rural women to secure their land parcels. These specialists also engage with customary and community leaders to defend women's land records and remove barriers within village land management committees. They also ensure follow-up on land registration applications for certificates or agricultural contracts submitted by women.

Specific outputs of these initiatives include:

- More acceptance among both genders and reduced fears among women.
- Women engaging in public discussions about land access issues.
- Women becoming active agents who follow up on land documentation.
- Numerous new land certificate registrations and ongoing cartographic operations.
- Increased interest and participation of women in village land activities, leading to changes in local dynamics.

The training has boosted women's confidence, transforming them from spectators to fully committed players in land management. Assigning clear missions to the ADFs has augmented their impact, providing a structured and effective framework for action. The availability of appropriate tools from the GPRLP Côte d'Ivoire has facilitated the process of securing land, which has the potential to enhance social recognition of women in land management and reduce inequalities.

Gender equity is promoted by ensuring that women from different generations and ethnicities from local women's associations are represented on the Comité Villageois de Gestion Foncière Rurale. This diversity in the selection of women enhances social cohesion. The intervention by ADFs partly reinforces the actions of the Comité Villageois de Gestion Foncière Rurale, whose constitution is determined by national laws. The ADFs are trained in land law, security procedures, and various types of land contract. Each village receives a mobile phone equipped with the free

ContraTerre mobile application to report problems quickly. The task of reporting problems is part of the ADF's mandate, ensuring that specific needs of women and possible challenges are considered in conflict management. The ContraTerre app is software that supports applications for various types of inclusive land contracts that benefit women. The project teams, through monthly visits and continuous support, monitor progress and address any obstacles, fostering communal solidarity and social cohesion around women's land tenure.

This approach is responsive to the needs of rural women and transforms the local gender norms by including women at all levels. They are not only the beneficiaries of knowledge and resources; they are also multipliers and trainers. The ADF take on active advocacy roles in their communities and are in dialogue with local administrations and customary authorities.

ETHIOPIA – WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP SKILLS TRAINING



Ethiopian small-scale entrepreneur in her business

The GPRLP's country module in Ethiopia "Support to Responsible Agricultural Investments" (S2RAI) established women entrepreneurship skills training in response to the precarious economic situation of rural women in Ethiopia, a chronically food-insecure country with inadequate documentation of local communities' traditional land rights. The country module aims to improve the conditions and procedures, strengthen civil society and promote cooperation with the private sector.

The gender approach of S2RAI addresses all three fields of action by strengthening small-scale private businesses, cooperating with CSOs, and training and sensitising local and regional authorities on WLRs. It has substantial long-term benefits for individuals and communities. The approach equips its female participants with essential skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and financial literacy, fostering a culture of innovation and self-sufficiency. The women are more likely to start and sustain businesses, contributing to economic growth and job creation. The training boosts confidence and resilience, helping the female entrepreneurs navigate challenges effectively, positively impacting local economies and promoting sustainable development. It significantly advances gender equality, leading to better developmental outcomes, more representative institutions and improved policies.

The training is designed to equip women with essential skills for establishing and managing their businesses, covering topics such as financial literacy, marketing strategies, leadership development, and networking. Sessions are held close to participants' locations to enhance participation and engagement, with timing accommodating their schedules. The initiative uses a Training of Trainers approach, involving women who are implementing and political partners of GIZ, and ensuring a comprehensive understanding of training objectives.

The gender-responsive implementation of the approach was well-received, with improved attendance and engagement in the sensibilisation

campaigns of S2RAI, a nurturing atmosphere for acquiring business skills, and enhanced economic empowerment. Customised training schedules and locations raise effectiveness and productivity, with a primary criterion for participation being the possession of a second-level land certification in recognition of its significance for women.

Empowerment through entrepreneurship skills training builds confidence and self-sufficiency, benefiting personal development, communities and economies. Participants improve their financial management, strategic planning and market connections, fostering greater confidence among lenders. The training promotes better communication, collaboration and networking skills, strengthening interpersonal relationships and creating a supportive entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Additionally, the entrepreneurship training courses for women shape cultural perceptions, promoting adaptability and innovation. Women develop a mindset that values change and diversity, fostering collaboration and creativity. The active engagement of women in income-generating activities motivates traditional leaders to support increased female participation in land ownership. Overall, the training improves systems and frameworks, enhancing the resilience and success of businesses.

MADAGASCAR –DIALOGUE BETWEEN WOMEN WHO ARE POTENTIAL AGENTS OF CHANGE



Malagasy women being trained for their change agent role

In addition to the general fields of activity (securing individual land ownership rights, strengthening CSOs and resolving conflicts, linking land tenure and forest landscape restoration and rural governance). The GPRLP Madagascar focuses on deconstructing social restrictions on WLRs and legal documentation by establishing dialogue spaces, allowing women to express and share their feelings and experiences around land rights issues. The aim is to create a secure space for women to reflect on and express their needs. The targeted women change agents include women with a land certificate/title, members of women's associations, heads of families, migrants, and other categories of vulnerable women.

The women's land voices space was tested and implemented in two communes in the Boeny region following these steps:

- Conduct awareness-raising activities, public consultations and parcel inventories in a gender-sensitive manner to ensure the effective participation of women, which is a prerequisite for setting up the dialogue space.
- Select women change agents at the local level with the participation of municipal officials and local CSOs and encourage other women to join.
- Design a recognition protocol defining the role of the commune and CSOs in supporting the autonomy of the dialogue space.
- Create a monitoring committee to ensure the proper functioning of the dialogue space, consisting of representatives from the commune, CSOs and women change agents.
- Establish the dialogue space through a founding meeting with all stakeholders and sign the recognition protocols.
- Provide training on holding thematic debates and practice sessions with the participation of women.

The approach aims to enhance the visibility of women and position them as key drivers of development within the commune. Positive changes have already been observed, including increased social acceptance of women owning land property documents, facilitated by awareness sessions conducted by a CSO partner and local officials, and the inclusion of women in technical teams.

Political partners have actively participated in sensitising men through sessions on positive masculinity. Women holding key positions in the commune have engaged fully in communication sessions with the public on women and land. CSOs have led support, advice and legal guidance sessions focused on land rights, family rights, and fundamental rights for vulnerable groups, including female heads of households, widows, single mothers and orphans.

Throughout the process, stakeholders have actively collaborated in public consultations. Social acceptance of women holding legal property documents is a major achievement, allowing women to make decisions regarding the use of their land, from crop selection to seed acquisition and enjoyment of the benefits. In the final phase, a dialogue space will be established and sustained through land and women's colleges within the local consultation structures in each commune.

The process ensures that women are reached by organising accessible and safe sessions suited to their daily commitments, encouraging active participation. It benefits women by providing a platform for land rights issues, leading to immediate or higher-level resolutions. Depending on the needs expressed, the women involved in the dialogue forum hold discussions on issues that they consider to be hindering the development of their land holdings.

Depending on their impact, these issues will either be resolved on the spot within a social or institutional framework, or they will be raised via the CSOs to higher levels to be debated and resolved by legal bodies. Empowerment is achieved on multiple levels: individually, by enhancing women's ability to defend their rights and access economic opportunities; relationally, by fostering women's networks for mutual support and local decision-making influence; culturally, by challenging traditional norms; and structurally, by supporting laws and policies promoting gender equality in land rights.

NIGER – JEUNES SENTINELLES DU FONCIER



Community sensitization and awareness-raising meeting in Niger

The GPRLP Niger's objective is to improve the legal protection of access to land for certain demographic groups, notably women, young people, and pastoralists in specific communes of Tillabéri, Tahoua and Agadez. To achieve this, the project focuses on three main fields of activity. It aims to improve the institutional framework and procedures for securing land use and land ownership rights for smallholder farmers and livestock households. It seeks to increase civil society participation in the implementation of national land policies and the reform of land legislation. And it ensures that private agricultural investors and state and local actors are aware of the main contents of the national rural land policy.

The Jeunes Sentinelles du Foncier - youth-led groups that raise awareness of land issues - promote sustainable and participatory local land management through active monitoring to prevent land conflicts. The initiative focuses on youth inclusion on land-related issues and offers an intersectional entry point for women's participation. The GPRLP Niger established 10 committees of young sentinels (both girls and boys) in 10 villages (with the aim of gender parity, although this was hindered in some cases by cultural perceptions).

The sentinels' role is to monitor land holdings and conflicts. With their training in land conflict monitoring, rural land policy, land disputes, and land access rights for marginalised groups and women, local young people build skills that will also be useful for their entry into the economic sphere.

Awareness-raising sessions involve village chiefs and use inclusive methods such as role-playing, addressing topics relevant to women and ensuring schedules and locations are suited to their family responsibilities. Cultural aspects of gender equality can thus be addressed in a more open way. This approach resulted in significant participation by young women. As this approach is being implemented fully in 2025, expected outcomes include better-informed young people, strengthened technical capacities in management of land issues, and inclusive participation formats.

UGANDA – ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION



Ugandan women holding Certificates of Occupancy on Mailo land

The GPRLP in Uganda bridges the policy and implementation gap in the National Land Policy and is designed to promote land rights by supporting continuous awareness-raising and information-sharing on land rights, resolving land conflicts through ADR using community resources (capacity-building within the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development, and CSOs to support systematic mapping of land using a fit-for-purpose approach. **The community-based ADR committees facilitate fair, accessible and inclusive land dispute resolution, ensuring that all voices, especially those of marginalised groups, are heard.** The ADR process includes community-based mediation, inclusivity and representation, education and awareness-raising, negotiation and consensus-building, documentation and referral, and trust and enforcement.

The ADR process consists of two fora at different administrative levels: the Village Dispute Resolution Team and the ADR Committee at the sub-county level. Women's inclusion is a key feature of both, requiring the presence of female representatives. This setup benefits women by providing education on land rights, land laws and policies, and by enabling them to take on decision-making roles within the committees. Women also benefit directly from land documentation. The approach to establish ADR processes that are automatically inclusive is responsive to, and has the potential to transform, gender dynamics.

The ADR process empowers women in three fields of change. Accessibility is ensured by conducting village-level sessions and scheduling them strategically to enable broad participation. Equity is achieved as women actively engage in ADR, benefiting from legal documentation and community validation. Sustainability is supported through ADR by enhancing long-term governance improvements and conflict resolution mechanisms.

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