

# Qualitative Impact Assessment Responsible Land Policy

The Global Programme Responsible Land Policy (GPRLP), launched in November 2015, is based on the assumption that secure land rights can

- 1 improve food security and foster investment,
- 2 lead to sustainable land use,
- 3 reduce conflicts and
- 4 improve women's access to land as well as that of marginalized groups.

As the number of people with secured land rights is growing, the questions concerning the impacts of secured land rights become more important. A qualitative assessment of the impacts in Madagascar, Benin and Ethiopia was commissioned to assess whether these assumptions have materialized or are likely to materialize. Results from two earlier impact studies conducted in two regions of Uganda (Teso in 2020 and Central Region in 2021) have also been included to complete the picture. The results of this rapid appraisal serve to orient the future focus of BMZ assistance and there is a need to illustrate the merits of secured land rights in the context of upcoming new global challenges. The assessment was done by the University of Parakou (Benin), CIRAD (Madagascar) and a consulting firm in Ethiopia.

In total, **1085 households** benefiting from the project activities **were interviewed or participated in focus group discussions** (*Benin 244, Ethiopia 241, Madagascar 489*), supplemented by key informant interviews. Furthermore, in Uganda **211 participants were interviewed** in the Teso region, including focus group discussions, of which three to four group discussions per district were also held in the Central Region. **Two villages** each, in Benin and Ethiopia with no project intervention, were used **as control groups**. Almost all households were engaged in agriculture and access to education was limited in all four countries – the majority of households and farm heads have no formal education. Most households are male-headed, with the exception of one village in Benin and Madagascar, where the percentage of female-headed households (*26% and*

*23% respectively*) was well above the rural average. Customary land tenure is a major factor in all four countries and getting access to land inheritance is a key aspect, while access to the respective land markets is less pronounced. Regional and local governments carry major responsibility for land tenure administration. In Ethiopia state ownership of land is significant, while it is not as prevalent in the other countries. German development cooperation supports land rights security in all four countries, resulting in various types of land titles or certificates of ownership as well as land use rights, with the exception of Madagascar and Uganda, where a methodology for securing individual tenure rights (*Land Parcel Inventory, IPSS*) has been developed and piloted, leading to the issuance of Land Inventory Protocols (*LIP*) as the basis for the issuance of land certificates.

## HYPOTHESIS 1

### Land tenure has a positive impact on food security of agricultural households

In all four countries, respondents felt more secure and perceived the procedures introduced or supported by GPRLP as transparent and adequately designed to reduce corruption and enhance tenure security.

In Benin, improvements in food availability are facilitated by increases in the cultivated area, access to credit for the acquisition of inputs (*fertiliser, pesticides, labour*) and improved yields. These factors contribute to an increase in production and food stocks at the household level by reducing the period of hunger. In Ethiopia, focus group participants emphasized that acquiring land rights helps to maintain family labour in households, thus reducing rural-urban migration of young people. This in turn has

a positive effect on food production and availability. These findings are consistent with previous studies in Ethiopia: Holden and Ghebru (2013)<sup>1</sup> found that the land certification led to increased food production and food access for poor, female-headed households who sharecropped their land.

In Uganda the oral culture in customary land management needs to be complemented by written documents to reduce illegal land sales. Clarified land tenure leads to better land use practices, which in turn increases production levels as well as productivity. Better technologies and more farm inputs enhance livelihoods. As a respondent stated: **“This is likely to increase production, because there will be no time wasted in disputes.”**

These findings suggest that tenure security is a necessary precondition for improved food security, but other parameters like conflict resolution may be even more important.

## HYPOTHESIS 2

### Holding a land title facilitates agricultural investments

In Benin, Ethiopia and Uganda land is used as a collateral to gain access to credit, which is invested in increasing agricultural productivity.

**“With the certificate, investments are easy for two reasons: With the paper I know that the area is mine. So, I am no longer afraid to build a cement house out of tin. And my children can inherit it.”** Farmer from Kossou, Bembereke, Benin having an ADC certificate

Three types of investments are recorded among the households participating in this study: in agricultural infrastructure, productive investment and market investment. The productive investments identified include investments in plantations and livestock. In northern Benin, for example, investment in perennial crops (*tree plantations*) is a traditional way of securing land. Almost 90% of households in Benin with land titles have invested in agricultural equipment and materials (*mill, plough, seed drill, etc.*), agricultural infrastructure (*drying area, buildings, etc.*) and irrigation systems (*wells, boreholes, etc.*).

In Uganda, secure land rights enhance agricultural investments, and allow for informed and confident decisions on agricultural investments. Through the previous lack of documentation, investors often were not able to receive credits that they could use to improve their agricultural investments. Where initially access to credit restricted productivity, this has now greatly improved.

Households with land tenure rights use a significant proportion of their agricultural income to meet socio-cultural needs like education for children, health care, marriage, etc. This was confirmed by the Ethiopian study, which highlights that households, able to meet their basic food needs, invest in education and health. In Benin, there was a clear difference between households with and without land rights

documents: Households with formalized land rights are more likely to make investments than those without (94% versus 60%), and their investments are of „higher“ quality in the sense that they have long-term impacts, for example in perennial crops such as cashew.

**“We use land titles or certificates of ownership to access credit and rent our land. But this money is not enough to invest well in the land compared to the current price of seeds and fertiliser.”** Farmer from Kersa Warko, Ethiopia

This sheds light on a problem almost all farmers are facing: **“Although we always try to plan for agricultural productivity, our plans have not been fully practical due to lack of supply of best seeds, fertilizer coupled with prevailing inflation. We have never done our agricultural activities without planning, but the problem is that our plans have always been thwarted by the aforementioned problems.”** Farmer from Waze, Ethiopia

In other words, the benefits of access to credit and the ability to invest are being offset by inflation and limited access to inputs, which are putting farmers at risk of over-indebtedness.

In Madagascar, in the context of the project, no documents have yet been issued that can be used as a collateral for credits. However, previous research has shown that land titles do not automatically lead to household access to credit or land, or to increased investment in their land, due to the lack of credit supply in rural areas and the fear of losing their land as a result of over-indebtedness.<sup>2</sup>

The results of the studies support the hypothesis that land tenure titles or certificates facilitate access to credits and agricultural investment in Ethiopia, Uganda and Benin. However, economic conditions such as the level of inflation and the risk of land loss through over-indebtedness limit opportunities.

1 Holden, S.T., Ghebru, H. (2016) *Land tenure reforms, tenure security and food security in poor agrarian economies: causal linkages and research gaps*, in: *Global Food Security*, 10 (2016) 21-28.

2 Rakotomalala, H., Burnod, P. 2018. *La certification foncière au niveau des ménages ruraux à Madagascar, perception & effets: 2011–2015*. Antananarivo, Observatoire du foncier Madagascar.

### HYPOTHESIS 3

#### Securing land rights promotes sustainable land use

Land tenure security was found to be a factor influencing the choice of sustainable land management practices. In Benin, households with land titles invest mainly in agroforestry practices (40%), compared to 10% of households without land titles, as agroforestry requires a lot of financial resources. Land titles were also found to favour fallow land, as one Benin farmer explained:

**“If your land is impoverished and you leave it fallow for several years, people generally think that the land no longer has an owner ... But I am not afraid, because I have my ADC. My land has been fallowed for 3 years; everyone knows that the land belongs to me.”**

Farmers from Ethiopia emphasized that they use their own land and rented land differently.

They “provide maximum effort to protect their secured land, rather than rented land. For instance, they mentioned that they will use traditional compost for their own land, but not for the rented one. They are giving more protection and safeguard for their land, since their rights are secured.” **Focus Group Discussion in Waze, Ethiopia**

In Uganda, documenting and securing the available acreage for tenants has contributed to improved and diversified use of available land to meet short term subsistence food requirements and long-term economic needs, by committing portions to cereal cropping, dairy farming and perennial cash crops including agroforestry.

In Madagascar, there was no evidence of any change in land use patterns as a result of land inventory protocols.

This suggests that secure tenure is a condition to ensure sustainable land use.

### HYPOTHESIS 4

#### Land rights security reduces land-related conflicts

Most land-related conflicts reported are boundary disputes between neighbours, adjacent communities or between migrants and the local population.

**“It’s because there was a border problem with my neighbour. We have gone more than five times without greeting each other. I left the place for fear that his children would raid my field. But now that the problem has been solved and everyone knows the boundaries, I have been able to clear the place to plant my field.”** **Farmer from Kalalé, Benin**

In addition, one of the main sources of conflict in Benin is between cattle herders and farmers. Respondents indicated that women are particularly vulnerable to this type of conflict, because women’s land is more open to encroachment by pastoralists. The project is addressing herders/farmers conflicts by supporting local authorities to define cattle corridors.

**“Securing the pastoral areas was a relief for us. We understood that in reality, cases of violence in rural areas, especially rape, killing of men, especially young men and women, poisoning of cattle, destruction of fields, confrontations between actors, etc., are due to conflicts over pastoral resources. For example, to take revenge, the farmer poisons the transhumant herd. The latter slaughters him or has his wife kidnapped, etc. As you can see, women are particularly vulnerable and are even afraid to go to their fields. Since the pastoral areas are secured, we have seen a drastic reduction in cases of violence.”** **President of local committee in Bouca Worou, Kalalé, Benin**

In Uganda, growing population trends lead to scarcity of land – fuelling conflicts all over Uganda. In Teso, respondents reported that certificates of customary ownership (CCO) have significantly reduced fear of neighbourhood disputes. 70% of the respondents reported improved social

relationships. 89% of the respondents noted that conflicts have been resolved through “out of court” informal structures at village level. Only 11% of conflicts were solved by formal Institutions. As a testimony illustrated: “... we lived in fear knowing that in case our mother dies, we would lose everything including our land. But right now, if our mother dies, we are sure that nobody will ever take our land again because of the documents that prove that we are the legitimate owners of the land.”

In Madagascar, too, the positive impact of land demarcation on the resolution of boundary disputes has been emphasized by respondents, as has the impact of demarcation on the resolution of boundary dispute. **“Recently, an influential person bought 2 hectares in our locality and then recruited labourers to cultivate 20 hectares. Now he is claiming the whole 20 hectares, but it is encroaching on our land. We hope that the documents produced during the demarcation process can help us defend ourselves in this ongoing conflict and prove that we are the owners.”** **Farmer from Madagascar**

The impact assessment clearly showed a positive impact on conflict prevention and conflict resolution.





## HYPOTHESIS 5

### Security of land rights improves women's access to land

Although there are major cultural differences between and in the countries, in many cases women do not own land under customary land tenure; they access it through their husbands and sons. Other limiting factors for women owing land include high levels of illiteracy, lack of access to information and networks, and the use of gender-based violence to control women's behaviour. These factors have an impact on women's ability to benefit from the land they have access to. In Uganda, 55% of the respondents confirmed that a certificate brings certainty that women in a family have land rights. Previously, people abused customs and denied women their land rights. With the issuance of certificates of customary ownership, many girls and women have their names recorded on application forms. The land documentation process culminates into joint ownership parcels of lands. The majority of the respondents mentioned a change in decision making. 75% of the respondents indicated that men and women make decisions on land use together now, and 64% responded that decisions on selling land are done together.

**“The sensitization and the land registration have enabled me to know my land rights as a woman and it has empowered me to make decisions on land management and use.”** Ayigo Josephine, Aputon Village, Katine Parish, Katine Sub-county, Soroti District

In Madagascar, the land inventory notably included single female-headed households, non-literate households and migrant households.

In Benin, the customary certificate ADC was found to have strengthened the role of women. Their access to land is mainly through renting and buying, and thus changing traditions – women increasingly inherit land too nowadays. **“Since her husband has been dead for a long time and she is so weak, she has been renting her land by using her land certificate as a reference. So, she said that this is a good opportunity created by the land certificate ownership right, so she has benefited from it.”** Focus Group Discussion Burafer village, Ethiopia

However, in economic terms, the average annual turnover of female-headed households is half that of male-headed households, mainly due to smaller plots and lack of available labour and women still own less fertile land.

Although all four studies conclude that securing land tenure rights has improved the situation and decision-making power of women and particularly for female-headed households – they differ considerably on the (*perceived*) impact of joint titling on women, particularly in polygamous marriages.

There is little evidence that land tenure improves the economic situation of female-headed households; however, the perceived level of security provided by land ownership documents is higher for women than for men.

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