



SNAPSHOT

Reformers at Ministry of Lands Enforce Change

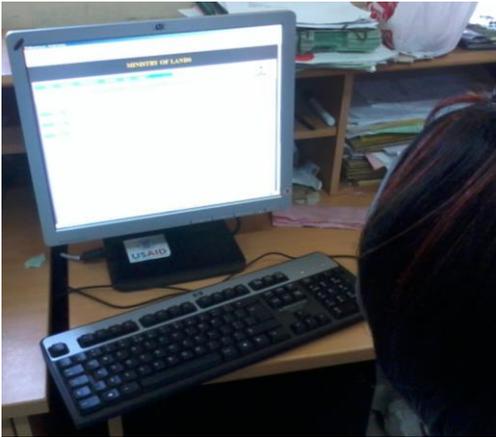


Photo: Ministry of Lands, Nakuru

*Intern working on the database system
courtesy of USAID support*

*Having a digitized way of
documenting our records will
ensure faster service delivery to
the customers. - Catherine
Wangari, Senior Intern, Nakuru
Ministry of Lands Office*

Telling Our Story

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Land reform is at the heart of ethnic conflict in Kenya and was a major factor in the post-election violence that devastated the nation following the 2007 general elections. While the 2010 constitution laid the groundwork for far-reaching land reforms, progress towards implementing the new land administration framework has been slow. Old grievances remain unresolved, and land conflicts remain a potential spoiler for peaceful general elections scheduled for 2013.

Adding to the challenge of effective administration, paper documentation poses a significant problem, as increasing numbers of land records and transactions add to an already-enormous and still-growing pile of poorly organized and stored records. Decades' worth of paper files are haphazardly kept and improperly cared for in most registries, leaving them vulnerable to damage, destruction, theft or manipulation.

In recognition of the need to facilitate a constructive role for Kenya's government in operationalizing the new policy framework, USAID is working with several county-level land registry offices to improve service delivery, facilitate information sharing, and improve their documentation processes and user interfaces.

In 2012, USAID partnered with the land office in Nakuru County, an area known for highly contentious land disputes, by providing technical assistance to facilitate stakeholder engagement and communication, and building the capacity of registry staff on key elements of the new land legislation.

In a matter of months, USAID helped the Nakuru land registry organize and store years' worth of paper records that had been piled up in storage rooms and hallways. Assistance was also provided for an electronic inventory of records to enable the ministry to conduct searches, check title and deed details, and edit records, dramatically reducing the time required to conduct routine land transactions. Following USAID assistance, a 2012 audit report commended the Nakuru Lands Registry for its transformation from an office "historically fraught with challenges of poor record keeping and missing files" to a "well-organized registry."

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