

Gender-Sensitive Land Tenure Impact Evaluations

Overview

There is a growing body of evidence that suggests that stronger land tenure security has a positive impact on important development outcomes, such as improved farming practices, agricultural productivity, and, importantly, [women's empowerment](#). While the initial evidence is encouraging, notable knowledge gaps remain. Compared with the positive economic and food security gains seen from land tenure formalization programs in Asia and Latin America, results from similar programs in Africa have been mixed. There is also little evidence on the impact of strengthening customary tenure, and very little evidence that is gender-disaggregated, let alone gender-sensitive.

In this context, [USAID is conducting eight rigorous impact evaluations of programs, primarily in customary land tenure settings, in Ethiopia, Guinea, Liberia, Tanzania, and Zambia](#) to test development questions relevant to empowering women, enhancing food security, and eliminating extreme poverty. These evaluations are using gender-sensitive methods to better understand how these programs may affect women and men differently.

Gender-Sensitive Methods

Household sampling: USAID's land tenure impact evaluations use two main approaches to sample women within large-N quantitative household surveys: oversampling female heads of household and interviewing both the male head of household and the principle spouse within the same household where budget permits.

Household survey: We incorporate a series of questions related to the gendered nature of land and natural resource ownership and management in our household surveys. For food security programs, we also ask detailed questions about a woman's ability to make decisions about the use of her own or her family's land, including which crops to grow, what surplus to sell, and what to do with the profits. We also often include other indicators of women's empowerment, such as the extent to which women and men participate in community decision-making on land.

Focus groups: USAID's land tenure impact evaluations incorporate women-only focus group discussions, including questions on how women and men use land and resources; the extent to which women and men are involved in decision-making related to land and natural resources; the extent to which these decisions are perceived to be fair to women specifically; and the extent to which women and men participate in community-based decisions around land and resources.

E3/LAND IMPACT EVALUATIONS

- 1 and 2) Ethiopia Pastoral Land Project:** Evaluating how a new approach to formalizing land rights of two pastoral communities impacts land management, livelihoods, resilience, and conflict.
- 3) Ethiopia Farmland Rights Projects:** Evaluating the impact of land certification on access to credit, land conflict, land rentals, soil and water conservation, and women's empowerment.
- 4) Guinea Community Land and Artisanal Diamond Project:** Evaluating the effect of secure property rights on livelihoods and land and resource conflict in the artisanal mining sector.
- 5) Liberia Community Land Project:** Evaluating how securing community land rights helps those communities protect their land claims.
- 6) Zambia Community Forest Project:** Evaluating how REDD+ impacts land tenure, livelihoods, and benefit sharing in forested areas.
- 7) Zambia Agroforestry Project:** Evaluating the impacts of agroforestry extension and customary tenure strengthening on agricultural investment and other land use practices, including uptake of climate smart agriculture activities.
- 8) Tanzania Customary Land Project:** Evaluating the impacts of documenting villagers' land rights on tenure security, land investment, youth and women's empowerment, and conflict.



Participatory mapping: Some of our impact evaluations also include participatory mapping, which asks groups of women and men to separately draw key features and locations in their village, including key natural resources and important economic, social, and cultural areas.

Key informants: Where possible, we also include interviews with female community leaders in the community to understand their perspectives on land governance, use, and management.

Data analysis: We test whether being female affects key development outcomes of interest, especially tenure security. Since we have data from women and men in the same households, we can also rigorously assess intra-household impacts.

Reporting: We disaggregate all relevant statistics by sex, and our evaluation reports incorporate sex-disaggregated quantitative and qualitative data to highlight gender-differentiated findings.

DATA

E3/Land's impact evaluations yield rich datasets useful to a variety of sectors. Topics include:

- **Global Climate Change**
 - Land use change
 - Land management
 - Climate smart agriculture
- **Economic Policy**
 - Livelihoods
 - Rental Markets
 - Credit
- **Women's Empowerment**
 - Access to economic assets
 - Influence on household decisions
- **Agriculture**
 - Productivity
 - Food security
- **Governance**
 - Tenure security and documentation
 - Land allocation and expropriation
 - Accountability of local leaders
 - Land conflict and resolution processes

All data sets and related documentation will be posted on USAID's Data Development Library. All data are sex-disaggregated as relevant.

What Are We Learning?

All but one of our evaluations are only at the baseline stage, before program implementation begins, but already we are finding that, in general, female and male heads of household tend to report their customary land rights are, on average, equally secure. However, and importantly, a sizeable minority of people we interviewed report that women are disadvantaged by land allocation decisions in their community and that women are typically less likely than men, on average, to participate in community-based decision-making on land. This implies that there is some room for the programs being evaluated to strengthen women's land rights and empower women to participate more equally in community land and resource governance.

And in Ethiopia, where we have our first endline results from an evaluation of USAID's support to improved farmland certification, we find that a spatially-explicit and digital land certification process had a number of significant positive impacts on female empowerment as compared to an earlier, less rigorous land certification process. In particular, we found an 11 percent increase in the likelihood of a wife possessing land in her name, a small increase in the area of land held jointly by wives with their husbands or individually by female-headed households, and a 44 percent increase in wives deciding what crops to grow on land in their possession. These female empowerment

impacts were among the strongest we found in our first rigorous land tenure impact evaluation, and they suggest that we can expect to see many more positive outcomes for women as a result of other similar land certification programs USAID is evaluating across sub-Saharan Africa.

Learn more about USAID's gender-sensitive land tenure impact evaluations by contacting E3/Land at <http://www.usaidlandtenure.net/data> or emailing us at landmatters@usaid.gov.