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SUCCESS STORY

Building Momentum for Land and Resource Rights Documentation in Zambia



Photo: Jeremy Green

Study tour members observed the USAID-supported process for documenting land and resource rights on customary lands

“The study tour was eye-opening and helpful in the work I am doing with Chiefs. The work that you are doing in helping communities is remarkable.”

- Raymond Kaima, Nyimba District Land Alliance



Photo: Aaron O'Donnell

Community members in Kunkhuli village in Maguya Chiefdom reviewing their village maps as part of an objections and corrections phase

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Telling Our Story

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Civil society and implementing partners in Zambia are increasingly interested in applying inclusive and sustainable customary rights recognition processes piloted by USAID partner, Chipata District Land Alliance. In October 2015, more than 20 civil society leaders and USAID implementing partners from across Zambia visited Chipata District to learn about the community engagement, computer-based mapping, and political processes associated with CDLA's customary land mapping in Zambia. The participants were encouraged to critique the approach and consider whether it is applicable to other contexts.

Gilbert Mwale of Frankfurt Zoological Society said, “The land demarcation process would help local communities in the Game Management Areas around North Luangwa National Park reduce land disputes, develop land use plans to increase investment partnerships around tourism development, and empower communities to negotiate concession terms with the Zambia Wildlife Authority.”

“Mapping and resource inventories have been on the Mwembezi Natural Conservation Society's (MNCS) road map long before we found out about USAID's work. Your study tour to Eastern Province has given us an idea how to do this,” noted Rolf Shenton. Since the study tour, the Senior Chief and the District Development Committee in Mwembezi area have adopted a plan to begin customary resource mapping in 2016.

Further technical trainings are being planned to build on this momentum and to help civil society organizations, USAID partners, and government further pilot the USAID-supported methodologies. These trainings will deepen the capacities for participatory mapping and land use planning that links local communities and chiefs with formally recognized government processes.