



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

## SUCCESS STORY

# First Systematic Customary Land Certificates Distributed in Zambia



Residents of Mgamphula village with their newly issued customary land certificates and their large-scale village map.



Misozi Phiri and Alfred Banda show their customary land certificate, issued jointly in both of their names.

Photos: Stephen Brooks / USAID

In Zambia's Chipata District, USAID supports the Chipata District Land Alliance (CDLA) to collaborate with traditional leaders in systematically documenting community and household land rights across four chiefdoms. The certificates will help strengthen local tenure security and increase access to land for women and youth. In April 2016, Chieftainess Mkanda of the Chewa tribe distributed the first 200 certificates at a ceremony held at her palace, attended by the Assistant District Commissioner and representatives from CDLA and USAID.

Distributing the certificates publically, Chieftainess Mkanda stressed, "My people now have more peace, and we will have fewer inheritance challenges. I am the one who certifies and will ensure that land is transferred to the next of kin."

Upon receiving his certificate, one landholder from Mkanda village said, "Today I am holding this certificate which was promised. It is indeed a dream come true. My children are now safe from being displaced from my land, because their names are on this certificate."

The certificates are accompanied by land administration tools on low-cost feature phones. These mobile applications to secure tenure (MAST) have the potential to bring land services to rural Zambian chiefdoms. This will increase communication and transparency on land use and allocation between government, community members, and chiefs, who have authority over more than 60% of Zambia's landmass.

Over 6,400 certificates will be distributed and administered by chiefs across Chipata District, with USAID's support covering about 180,000 hectares in neighboring Petauke District. USAID is implementing a randomized control trial impact evaluation alongside this certification process, to understand whether improved land tenure security is linked to increased adoption of climate-smart agriculture investments.

For more information, contact:

USAID COR: Stephen Brooks; [sbrooks@usaid.gov](mailto:sbrooks@usaid.gov)

### Telling Our Story

U.S. Agency for International Development  
Washington, DC 20523-1000  
<http://stories.usaid.gov>