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## MOBILE APPLICATION TO SECURE TENURE

### Sharing Lessons Learned from USAID's MAST Pilot Project



Photo Credit: Karol Boudreaux / Cloudburst

**In Tanzania, USAID used mobile technology to help villagers secure their most important asset: the land.**

#### Telling Our Story

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The Mobile Application to Secure Tenure (MAST) Pilot project in Tanzania came to end during this quarter. The pilot tested a new technology designed to assist local people and local government officials in the process of demarcating parcel boundaries, collecting demographic and tenure information, and then issuing formal documentation of land rights in a more transparent and participatory manner. The MAST pilot operated in Iringa Rural District in rural Tanzania, training local youth to use GPS-enabled smartphones to collect information to support community-driven land adjudication. The pilot also trained local officials and villagers on the formal land laws in the country, including the rights that women hold under these laws. These formal legal provisions can, in certain contexts, be at odds with local customary norms and practices that restrict women's ability to use, own, inherit and transfer lands in their own name.

Over the course of the pilot, hundreds of local people in three villages received this important training. Also important, formal documentation of land rights for thousands of land parcels was printed and delivered. In the initial pilot village, Ilalasimba, 910 parcels were mapped, registered and recorded. In the second village, Itagutwa, 1139 parcels were mapped, registered and recorded while in village three, Kitawaya, 1886 parcels were mapped, registered and recorded. Working closely with the Iringa Rural District Land Office, local villagers and the national government, USAID helped people secure land rights to just under 4,000 parcels during this effort.

Among the people whose land rights were recognized, a significant percent were women. Across the three villages nearly 29 percent of parcels were titled in the names of women only (single occupancy/female). In addition, nearly 18.5 percent of other parcels were jointly titled, meaning men and women were listed as co-owners. Interestingly, the process also helped to identify parcels that needed to be transferred from a deceased individual to heirs, a process that can help address intra-familial conflicts and also put lands into more productive use once ownership claims are resolved. Through the MAST pilot project USAID was able to bring greater clarity, enhanced security and stronger incentives to invest to rural Tanzanians—which should help to support goals of enhancing food security, empowering women and reducing conflicts in this important partner country.