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LESSONS ON GENDER, YOUTH, AND SOCIAL INCLUSION IN ZAMBÉZIA PROVINCE, MOZAMBIQUE

INTRODUCTION

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID)-funded Integrated Land and Resource Governance (ILRG) program is working to improve land tenure security for women and youth as part of broad-based economic empowerment. In early 2020, the ILRG team in Mozambique carried out an assessment of gender, youth, and social inclusion in Zambézia Province to better understand gender and youth relationships regarding land in a matrilineal context and how they influence decision-making related to land access and use within families and in community land associations. The lessons help clarify how activities to secure tenure in a matrilineal context interact with women's and men's land use and tenure and how land delimitation and titling have affected land rights in the area. The information will be used to guide ILRG's activities and to support the development of communications and training materials. This learning note summarizes the key findings and recommendations from the assessment.¹

The assessment involved interviews combined with analysis of data from the two communities of Mucoe and Monegue in Ile District, Zambézia Province, Mozambique. These two communities were selected in order to offer insight into different contexts, challenges, and opportunities related to land issues and gender relationships. Both communities are directly affected by or adjacent to huge concessions granted to Portucel, an international company investing in the production of timber for paper pulp and energy. Mucoe is situated only 20 km from the district town of Errego and has a female community leader. Delimitation of Mucoe community and of family land within the community was supported by the

¹ See the full report at <https://www.land-links.org/document/mozambique-gender-youth-and-social-inclusion-assessment/> for more details.

Department for International Development (DFID)-funded Land: Enhancing Governance for Economic Development (LEGEND) program² in 2018 – 2019. Monegue is much farther from Errego and has only male community leaders. Land delimitation in Monegue was funded by USAID’s ILRG program³ in 2019. The community of Monegue is also interesting because residents agreed to participate in a project co-funded by Portugal and the World Bank to build a small-scale earthen dam and micro-irrigation scheme for use by smallholder farmers.

The assessment involved interviews with 71 women, men, and youth in the two communities, as well as eight interviews with the district government and other local stakeholders. The report compares information from the qualitative interviews with quantitative data from all 25 communities and 13,000 family land parcels that were involved in the LEGEND and ILRG projects.

MOZAMBIQUE’S LEGAL FRAMEWORK ON LAND RIGHTS

Mozambique’s land policy context was established in the 1990 Constitution and built upon in the National Land Policy of 1995⁴ and the Land Law of 1997.⁵ These note that land belongs to the state and cannot be sold, alienated, or mortgaged, but that Mozambican nationals can acquire land rights through inheritance, via peaceful occupation, and through application to the state. Foreign entities can acquire rights to implement land-based projects; the state is obliged to consult all interested parties, including local communities, in the process of land rights allocations. The law allows for the confirmation of rights acquired by local communities and individuals. The use rights, known by the Portuguese acronym DUAT (*Direito de Uso e Aproveitamento da Terra*), can be held individually or jointly.

In practice, the most important day-to-day land administration activities in rural areas are undertaken by communities and traditional leaders. Most rural residents acquire their land rights through occupation based on customary norms and practices (such as allocation of land by the local leaders) or by good faith occupation for at least 10 years. Traditional leaders are vital both to the initial allocation of land to families and in the resolution of conflicts or disputes over land. The traditional leaders are usually older men, with some few exceptions as in the case of Mucoe. These customary channels for acquiring DUAT rights are recognized and protected by the Land Law, regardless of whether they are registered with government. The law also states that rights based on occupation can be legally proven through oral evidence provided by community members.

THE PROJECTS

The Mozambican organization Associação Rural para Ajuda Mútua (ORAM) implemented two projects in Ile District designed to identify rights holders and to publicly map out the boundaries of the land. The projects shared fundamental features designed to strengthen the tenure rights of rural community members. First, they supported the establishment and capacity building of community land associations as legal entities that represent all community members on land and natural resource management. ORAM promoted the integration of women in these associations; however, the associations tend to be male dominated, especially in their leadership.

The projects then facilitated delimitation of community boundaries. This led to the delimitation of thousands of land parcels that had been previously acquired by families or individual community members based on occupation in terms of the Land Law of 1997. This resulted in declarations of land rights emitted by the associations, formally identifying land parcels and holders of the land rights. Finally,

² <https://landportal.org/partners/legend>

³ <https://www.land-links.org/project/integrated-land-and-resource-governance-ilrg/>

⁴ Resolution 10/95 of 17th October, 1995 (Land Policy) [Boletim da República No. 9 - Supp., Series I – 28th February 1996]

⁵ Law 19/97 of 7th October (Land Law) [Boletim da República No. 40 - 3rd Supp., Series I – 7th October 1997]

the associations reviewed current land use patterns and developed land and natural resource use plans to guide future allocation and use.

The main innovation in these projects is the issuance of the declarations of land rights by local land associations. These have the same legal force as a state-issued title but require no intervention from the state. Experience shows that, given some technical assistance, communities are quite capable of identifying and mapping family land rights within their jurisdictions. Once issued, the documents and the maps form a local land register, through which the community association can continue to administer changes to the land rights holdings of its members.

The LEGEND project, financed by the DFID LEGEND Challenge Fund from 2016 through 2019, worked with 20 communities (19 of which were in Ile District, with one in neighboring Namarroi District) affected by or adjacent to land concessions granted to the paper and pulp company Portucel (a subsidiary of the Navigator Company Group). This project delimited over 66,000 hectares of community land, including Mucoe. Over 10,000 family land parcels covering 42,000 hectares were delimited and declarations provided to titleholders.

The USAID-funded ILRG program supported five additional communities in Ile District, including delimitation of 13,000 hectares of community land and the systematic mapping of nearly 3,000 family land parcels covering 6,600 hectares. In all of the communities, including Monegue, Portucel had offered to build small-scale dams and micro-irrigation schemes for use by local farmers as part of the company's social engagement strategy. After the community boundaries and family lands were mapped, the ILRG activity enabled residents and district government to identify the land that would be affected by construction of the proposed dams; this provided rights holders with a foundation for negotiations over adjustment of boundaries and compensation for land lost. (The district government facilitated negotiations between Portucel and community members; ILRG was not involved in this process.)

The community land associations provided a declaration of land rights to titleholders for each family land parcel. These include all the information required for registration in the national land cadaster, such as details of the parcels, the titleholders, witnesses, and community leaders. They also include satellite imagery locating the plots.

Together, the two projects helped 25 community associations to provide written declarations of land rights for over 13,000 family and individual parcels; 70 percent were solely in the names of women and a further six percent were co-titled to a man and a woman. Mucoe community delimited 1,024 family land parcels during the DFID-funded LEGEND project, and Monegue community delimited 219 land parcels under USAID's ILRG program.

STUDY METHODOLOGY

The qualitative study of gender and youth issues used key informant interviews and focus group discussions to understand respondents' perceptions on how gender and generational issues and relationships influence land tenure and land use, as well as decisions about who can be a titleholder. A total of 79 people were interviewed, including 46 women and 33 men. This included 71 community members (37 in Mucoe and 34 in Monegue) and eight staff of government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and companies. Additional quantitative material was drawn from the database of the community and family land delimitations undertaken by the LEGEND and ILRG projects.

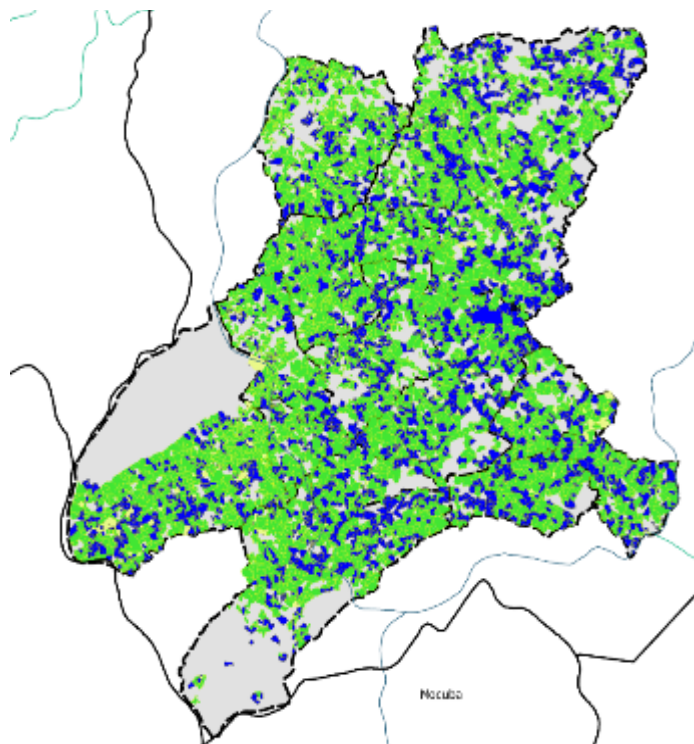
FINDINGS

The assessment was centered around four themes; the lessons learned under each of these themes are summarized below.

THEME I: GENDER AND AGE RELATIONSHIPS AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON DECISION-MAKING ON LAND ISSUES WITHIN HOUSEHOLDS

Matrilineal and matrilocal customs underpin land rights for women:

Ile District is dominated by a matrilineal and matrilocal social structure, which dramatically influences how land rights are understood and acted upon. Social structures define residence patterns and how families distribute land. In matrilineal societies, family land is inherited primarily by daughters; in Ile, the customs are also matrilocal, meaning that the husband usually moves to the wife's home upon marriage. Women are also the main land users; while couples often farm together on the wife's land in peak periods, many men travel periodically for work outside the community, and there is also a high percentage of female-headed households in both communities. Women's birthright to land seems to be largely unquestioned by both men and women in Ile, so land is generally perceived as a resource that belongs to women.



Family parcels in southern Ile District. Parcels in green have at least one female titleholder; blue parcels are held exclusively in men's names

In this matrilineal and matrilocal society, women comprise nearly 70 percent of titleholders under the LEGEND and IIRG activities. The district also has a very young population, with approximately half of inhabitants under 15 years old; nonetheless, only 14 percent of land parcels were registered to anyone 30 years of age or younger. Some land was delimited in the names of daughters, but most parcels were kept in the name of mothers. The land delimitation process has thus made visible and formalized the fact that women are the main land holders and users, and that the older generation has the most power over land division and control.

Yet men retain control: However, traditional gender norms are very strong in Ile, resulting in most women having little formal education and restricted physical mobility. This constrains them from meeting a wide range of people, obtaining information, and learning about new opportunities that can improve their living conditions. While men can leave to sell goods or look for jobs, women are expected to stay and farm; child or early marriages⁶ are common because marriage provides the family with needed labor, and it is not socially accepted to be unmarried. Olinda Muquelesse from ORAM, who was brought up in a rural community in Ile, says that many adult women in her community have never even visited the district town. Only primary schools are available in these rural communities; in order to continue studies from seventh grade onwards, pupils must travel to a larger town. This is very difficult for girls, as it is considered to be unsafe for them, much more so than for boys. Also, living in the town with strangers or older relatives is considered unacceptable for girls, as some families fear the girls will get pregnant or not return to the community.

⁶ Early marriages or child marriages are marriages where at least one of those involved is under 18 years old. Despite these unions being illegal in Mozambique and the introduction of improved policies in this area in recent years, the practice persists and is strongly gender biased: 48 percent of girls in Mozambique are married before they turn 18 (<https://www.girlsnotbrides.org/child-marriage/mozambique/>).

Although land is inherited through the female line and women do most of the work on the land, the main decision-maker on land in most families is the man. This includes issues such as land use, division of the harvest between consumption and marketing, and use of income. When a couple lives with the wife's family, the parents have more decision-making power than the younger couple regarding the land.

Women usually keep their land in case of divorce but face other challenges: One significant advantage for women in the matrilineal system is that they stay on the family land with any children after divorce or if the husband dies. A divorced man returns to his place of origin or marries elsewhere; women retain the land. Still, this does not mean that a widowed or divorced woman has it easy:

“The woman is trapped on the land with the children. Not many women send their man away, it is not easy to be alone and it is difficult to find another man, because she already has children with the first one.”

Olinda Muquelesse

Divorce is becoming more common amongst younger generations, but it is not yet widely socially accepted. Divorce may also have negative economic implications for many women, since men are important providers of labor or of cash. If the woman dies, the land is inherited by the children. In some cases, the man can stay on the land, but he cannot marry again if he stays.

While many men benefit from leaving the land to find opportunities elsewhere, women are less able to avail themselves of such options. This is reflected in quantitative data from the 13,405 people who registered to claim land under the two projects. Of the 1,463 who are widowed, 96 percent are women, and women comprise 92 percent of all who are divorced. This is consistent with the finding that men who are divorced tend to leave or remarry (which they can do more easily than divorced women can), or at least do not tend to register land in their names.

Land purchases are increasing: One unanticipated finding is that the matrilineal system may stimulate the sale and purchase of land by men. Since all respondents agreed that land rights traditionally pass to women, some men feel they are in a precarious situation. If they divorce or if the wife dies, the man may have to leave. Some men pointed out that this is an incentive for men to buy land that they themselves can control, and for which they can put their own names on the declaration or title. Purchase of land allows men to delimit it in their names; the man then continues to hold the land rights in case of divorce or death of his wife. Several respondents assume that men will increasingly buy and sell land in the future. In contrast, there were no accounts of any woman having bought land. Nonetheless, the matrilineal tradition in Ile is strong and is generally accepted by men. For example, one man in Monegue explained that he had bought land for himself and his family because he had inherited no land from his parents. He noted that he and his wife registered both their names as co-titleholders, and stated that he would divide the purchased land only between his daughters, while his sons are expected to access land through marriage (see box on page 10).

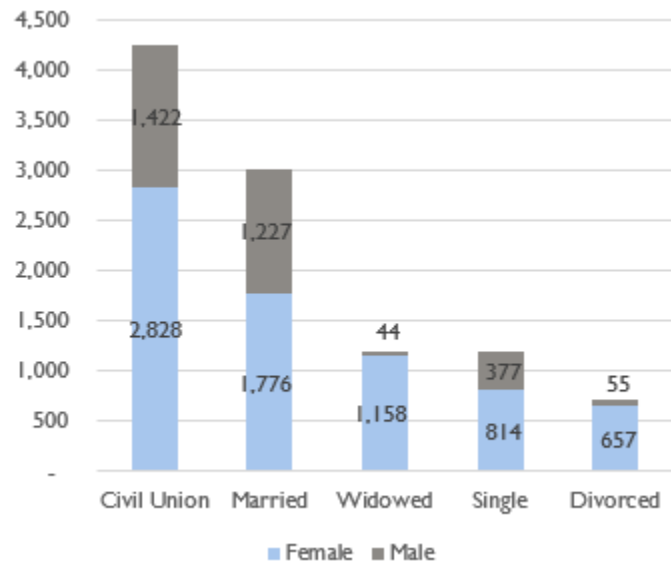
Youth are the majority but are marginalized from land: About 52 percent of Mozambique's population is under 18 years of age, giving it the eleventh youngest population in the world.⁷ Youth are hugely affected by decisions regarding allocation and use of land, as they depend on the family land for their livelihood and may need inherited land to sustain their families after marriage. However, they tend to have very little say about land tenure issues; land rights are predominantly held by older people. Data from the LEGEND project shows that only 13.8 percent of family parcels were registered to a person under 30 years of age. Given the prevailing matrilineal traditions, many young women feel they are likely to inherit some land in future; in contrast, young men can acquire access to land through marriage in the

⁷ Burton, James 2017, 30 Countries With The Youngest Populations In The World, WorldAtlas, viewed 30 March 2020, <<https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/the-youngest-populations-in-the-world.html>>.

future, or control over land if they are able to buy it. These factors could encourage young men to leave the community to find jobs elsewhere.

Delimitation is reducing conflict, but more productive farming requires more than land security:

The principal immediate effect of land delimitation has been a significant reduction in land disputes among neighbors, which were previously common. The land delimitation process has given many landholders, especially women, a feeling of security that they previously did not have. Increased security gives women more incentive to invest in the land. However, few have access to the inputs and technical knowledge to leverage land security into more productive farming. Agricultural production and productivity continue largely unchanged.



Gender and civil status of land claimants under the LEGEND activity⁸

In this environment where discriminatory gender norms dictate that women and girls have little access to information and knowledge, it is important to also acknowledge that some men may be as marginalized from information and decisions as women and youth. However, the people who do access information and knowledge tend to be men.

THEME 2: GENDER AND AGE RELATIONSHIPS AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON DECISION-MAKING IN COMMUNITY LAND ASSOCIATIONS

Older men dominate decisions in communities and associations: As in the households, men are the main decision-makers in the community. This carries over into male domination in the management of the work of the land associations. Community leaders are the primary decision makers in all aspects of community life, including land access and conflict resolution; in almost all cases, these leaders are older men. The baseline data for ILRG and LEGEND projects show that of 82 traditional leaders at different levels of authority in the 25 communities, only two were women. Youth focus group participants all confirmed that the main decision-makers and community leaders are older men, with the exception of the queen (*rainha*) in Mucoe. Other than her, all community leaders interviewed for the assessment were older men. The young male respondents noted that they are expected to respect the opinions of the older men in the community, and several of them said they find it difficult to be heard and to influence decisions.

Women are generally poorly represented in decision-making in associations and the wider community. The land associations have female members, but not as presidents, and few women seem to have meaningful influence in the associations. The low participation of women in land associations and community decision making is influenced by strong underlying gender biases that are translated into specific constraints for women’s participation. Key constraints include women’s time poverty; lack of support from husbands; low levels of education and pre-existing knowledge; lack of knowledge of the opportunities and benefits of participation; and very limited support from communities for women’s

⁸ The figure is a breakdown of the gender and civil status of the claimants, as registered for putative titleholding. It is not a breakdown of the eventual titleholders.

increased involvement. As stated by one man, “The woman has to stay in the house to prepare the food. The man goes to talk to the others.”

Gender-based violence risks affect community participation: The relationship between a husband and wife can directly limit a woman’s opportunities to engage in community discussions and decisions. Several interviewees noted that participation in an association or in project activities can generate mistrust and can lead to serious domestic problems, including intimate partner violence.

Gender-based violence does not only include physical violence in the household. Another important aspect is the ridicule in the society or in the home that many women mentioned as a constraint to their participation. This sort of attack on a person’s dignity can be carried out by any member of the community, and by women as well as men.

Associations currently have limited influence: The associations played a key role in the delimitation processes in the communities, but the associations are still new and rather weak. Despite ORAM’s repeated awareness-raising meetings in multiple locations in each community, there is little clarity about the purpose and future roles of the associations after the finalization of the delimitation processes. This includes a lack of real understanding even among some members of the two associations themselves. The association members who were interviewed, including the presidents, seemed to lack knowledge on fundamental issues. For example, they could not name a single key element from the Land Law, and when asked about what they do as an association, they tended to refer to agriculture. In fact, many community members, especially women, did not even know that the associations existed in these two communities.

In principle, community land associations could become spaces where women and younger community members learn to increase their participation, access to knowledge, and influence. They could demonstrate their capacity in ways that help convince men that women and youth can and should play more active roles. In particular, the associations could be much more active in reaching out to inform community members about various land-related issues. Some examples include: helping men, women, and youth to better understand key elements of the Land Law, the roles of the association, services for titleholders, and how can they improve agricultural production or access better markets; sharing information from other communities; and identifying other sources of information or resources such as ORAM and other NGOs.

Short-term projects lack time and resources for social norms change and sufficient capacity-building of land associations: The technical process of land delimitation can be done from start to finish in a few months per community, after which the technical team shifts to other communities. In contrast, the social and individual changes involved in capacity building of associations and in transformative gender work requires much longer-term efforts. ORAM tried to address this in the LEGEND project by having parallel teams: a larger team of about 20 people doing delimitation in a sequence of communities, and a small team of three focusing on capacity building of associations and increasing gender equality. However, the entire LEGEND project ran for just 33 months, including the start-up and close-down phases; the ILRG project in Ile took only 8 months from start to finish. This is

Overcoming men’s resistance

Amélia (not her real name) is a 23-year-old married mother of three. She inherited land from her mother and received a land declaration in her name during the ILRG project. Amélia is an active member in her community land association and feels that she has learned a lot from trainings. She is one of the few people who know the content of the Land Law and the rights of the community to negotiate with external investors.

Amélia explains that very few women are active in community decision-making. Women tend to be timid and afraid of speaking up, with limited time and sometimes little support from their husbands - Amélia’s own husband did not want her to participate in the meetings. It takes someone with special courage to be active in an association, she says.

ILRG staff had conversations with families to generate more support for women’s participation in the associations.

insufficient for addressing complex gender norms or capacity building of new institutions. Also, short time frames tend to push field staff to focus on the more visible and quantifiable aspects of delimitation and handing out declarations, to the detriment of gender equity, social justice and long-term capacity.

Land associations lack a clear ongoing sense of purpose: If associations are to be meaningful institutions, they need to have a clear, ongoing, useful purpose. After the initial processes of delimitation and development of land use plans is concluded and declarations of land rights are distributed, the associations currently have no obvious ongoing role. It is hoped that subsequent funding will allow for (perhaps annual) opportunities to delimit outstanding parcels and to update parcel boundaries or changes in ownership. These would be valuable, if intermittent, functions. Until this happens, however, the work of the associations is mostly dormant for the moment.

Whereas project staff initially thought that the associations would assume important decision-making power over land, the reality is that the associations serve more of an advisory role. Traditional leaders (mostly older men) retain the real power over the most frequent community decisions on land and natural resources: allocation of land for new uses (including allocation to families for personal use) and resolution of conflicts (usually among neighbors who dispute the location of parcel boundaries).

Without a clear purpose and widely accepted ongoing function, associations do not really serve as fertile grounds for women and young people to learn, practice and demonstrate community leadership. Even if they have a clear and widely acknowledged sense of purpose, community associations of any sort would benefit from some on-going support after the life of a short-term donor-funded land rights project.

Local institutions tend to perpetuate gender inequality: There are various opportunities for those who have delimited their land to make better use of it. Examples range from agricultural development to external investments to public infrastructure. Unfortunately, men's control over community decisions is reinforced by multiple institutions. The district agricultural extensionists target one male farmer per community, who then works largely with other men. Portucel, a major investor, works mostly with men as their local representatives.

There are community-based women activists in some communities connected to a national women's organization, Organização da Mulher Moçambicana (OMM). While these activists are seen by many community members as important support for families, there are several indications that they reinforce negative gender stereotypes, emphasizing the role of women as home-based workers who should be subservient to their husbands. These representatives always encourage couples to stay together despite of unfaithfulness and conflict, because it is their belief that the life for a woman without a man to help on the land and take care of the children is just too difficult. Community leaders in Monegue say that the main function of these women's representatives is to help women become better at conducting their household duties, such as sweeping and cleaning the latrine.

Many community members, men as well as women, know that external investors may want their land, ranging from billion-dollar international investments in plantation timber to smaller but still very substantial (e.g. over 2,000 hectare) agricultural schemes proposed by Mozambicans. Many fear that investors will "steal" their land but have limited actual knowledge of the risks and opportunities; the little available information is concentrated among men, and the predominantly male community leaders tend to make the decisions regarding investors. Women land rightsholders are generally unaware of the transactional value of their land; only a few men who have themselves already purchased land have an idea of the value it has. This value is not limited to the money they might earn from selling land or trading land in exchange for promises of employment; community members can also propose options that allow them to keep their land while earning more from it, through arrangements such as contract farming or joint ventures. ORAM, with support from the Columbia Center for Sustainable Investment and from TiNdzila – Centro de Pesquisa sobre Governança de Terras e Desenvolvimento Local (a national NGO), trained associations in the basics of preparing to negotiate with investors.

Unfortunately, it takes more than a couple of workshops within a short land delimitation project to level the playing field with professional investors.

Even if companies want to engage with women, companies lack the knowledge and tools needed to challenge norms and stereotypes that exclude women in the communities, as their skills run more towards technical issues than to social norms change. Portucel tried to work directly with women in Ile District but had little success, especially because women beneficiaries experienced conflict and violence at home. Therefore, the company reverted to using men as their community liaisons. As noted by a senior manager:

“Portucel has a gender policy and an intention to benefit the women specifically, but we cannot go against the traditions... even if the woman has an individual DUAT, there is always a man who has more power than her, there is always a man.”

Respondents noted that they feel more secure about their land tenure due to the LEGEND and ILRG projects and would now like to improve their agricultural production and generate income. Beyond secure land, they need better inputs and new technical skills; however, there is very little support, especially for women. Agricultural extension services are limited to working with one lead farmer per community (*productor líder*) who is supposed to then pass on information to others. These lead farmers tend to be men, because they need a preexisting level of knowledge and must be able to travel to trainings. They may need to speak Portuguese with extensionists who do not speak the local language. Those few men involved are likely to socialize with other men, reducing the chances that women benefit from extension network. A district agriculture extension agent expressed his opinion that it is hard to transmit information to women; he feels that women do not easily capture information and that it is easier to train men. These types of gender biases are very prevalent and seriously limit women smallholders' access to knowledge and inputs that can improve their production and income.

Community infrastructure such as roads, basic services, and dams must be sited somewhere, often where families already have land rights. For example, Portucel has funds to build a community dam and micro-irrigation scheme in Monegue; the infrastructure would belong to the community, managed by a community water users association. In this association, only four out of eleven leading members are women. The president is a younger man, while the vice president is an elderly woman. However, when speaking to this woman, it became clear that she was primarily a figurehead and had no significant knowledge of her role in the association, whereas the male president was well aware of his role and among the best informed in the community of the plans regarding the dam.

The initiative would flood about 30 family land parcels. While the landholders have been identified and their assets have been itemized, it is not yet clear what compensation will be paid, or who will get access to how much irrigable land. The distribution of positive and negative impacts of the dam project between men and women is also unclear. Both men and women need more information in order to participate in decision-making. Land associations could be supported to play more active roles in such discussions; however, women and other marginalized community members would need to be integrated and prepared to meaningfully participate in decision-making for these associations to be representative.

If local, national, and international institutions continue to operate in these ways, they will continue to perpetuate and engrain harmful gender norms which reinforce gender inequalities, disempower women and girls, and possibly increase gender-based violence risks for women and girls. It is therefore necessary to challenge these negative gender stereotypes, for example through building the capacity of key stakeholders in gender-sensitive approaches in their dealings with communities.

Women's meaningful participation remains limited: ILRG raised gender issues in community awareness-raising meetings and in capacity building with new associations and encouraged the

associations to include women in leadership roles. When associations are urged to increase women's participation, the result may easily be that women are represented in numbers, but that they never receive the information, support, and practical conditions to actually participate in decision-making. Organizations doing land delimitation may lack the longer-term funding or the skills needed to provide ongoing support in gender equity, capacity building of associations, or other technical themes such as negotiating with investors or agricultural development. This points to the need for thoughtful relationships with diverse partners, including strategic partnerships that are not tied to funding of a single short-term project.

THEME 3: SOLE TITLING VERSUS CO-TITLING

ILRG's experience in Zambia has been that nearly 80 percent of parcels were co-titled, usually with the names of a wife and husband on the title. In stark contrast, 95 percent of the over 13,000 declarations produced with the support of LEGEND and ILRG in Ile District are registered in the names of an individual, 70 percent of whom are women. Of the 606 co-titled declarations, 70 percent are exclusively in the names of women; for example, a mother and a daughter. Therefore, only around 200 parcels are co-titled in the names of men or a man and a woman; this is largely because couples are not seen as co-owners of land.

Further, this low level of co-titling occurs in a context in which only 26 percent of all titleholders for the two projects registered their civil status as formally "married." The rest registered as widowed (13 percent), divorced (6 percent), single (14 percent), or in an informal relationship (41 percent). This fact, combined with the matrilineal nature of society, help explain a much lower level of co-titling compared to other places. A woman who has inherited her land through her mother's family may have little incentive to permanently co-title it with a man to whom she is not married. A better option may be co-titling with sisters or children to clarify future inheritance rights; however, only three percent of women did this in the two projects.

As noted at length above, land is a family asset, usually passed on to daughters in the matrilineal family. Husbands therefore have no automatic right to this land. In this situation, few women decided to break with tradition and include the names of their husbands on the declarations. This practice is widespread but not absolute: some men do inherit land from their parents. In most families there is a strong focus on the children's land rights. There seems to always be a plan for who will inherit – and in Ile District, the daughters almost always come first.

While some other development projects do strongly encourage the option of co-titling, the fact that women can retain titles in their names in matrilineal areas is perhaps a unique opportunity to enhance their control, income, and safety, as they cannot be removed from their own land. It also opens up possibilities that they can use their land in more productive and profitable ways – but this requires additional support on decision-making, access to information, inputs, and marketing.

Most men clearly accept the matrilineal and matrilineal culture even though it means they do not have their own land rights. Other men want to secure their own land and do so by purchasing land and delimiting it in their own names or as a couple. This study did not deeply analyze who tends to sell land

Men are buying more land

João Albino was born in Monegue and is one of few men who met his wife, Joanita Domingos Simone, in another village and brought her to his community to live. According to the matrilineal traditions, his parents had divided their land only between their daughters, leaving him with no land to settle down on or cultivate. He therefore bought land in the community.

However, during the ILRG delimitation activity, he and Joanita decided to co-title the land using both of their names. According to João, co-titling gives him and his wife joint decision-making power over the land.

Even so, in the future, João and Joanita intend to divide the land between their three daughters. Their three sons will not get land, since they are expected to access land through marriage and relocation to their wives' homes.

or for what reason they sell. However, it is the experience of ORAM in Ile that land is bought and sold between men, and that the land parcels that are sold are the men's own inherited land or land that is no longer occupied. There is no indication that cash-strapped women are selling their family land. Understanding the patterns of land purchase and their influence on men's and women's land rights would, however, be a useful topic for future research. Purchased land falls outside the traditional process of inheritance; respondents noted that such land could be registered in a man's name or co-titled with the names of both the husband and the wife. If it becomes increasingly common for men to buy land and register it in their names, this may eventually weaken the matrilineal culture.

THEME 4: COMMUNICATIONS, TRAINING, AND IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS AND MATERIALS

ORAM, the organization that implemented the LEGEND and ILRG activities, has materials that they use during two broad phases. The initial process of introducing new projects in community meetings involves multiple meetings in diverse locations around each community, in order to enable more people to participate; this also involves separate groups of men, women, and youth, to encourage all groups to feel more comfortable raising their issues, questions, and suggestions. This is followed by a more intensive phase of establishing and building the capacity of community land associations. The association-building phase involves repeated sessions over a period of a few months; while every community member is legally a member of the association, these training sessions in practice tend to involve 10 to 15 participants, of whom fewer than half tend to be women.

ORAM addresses similar themes in general awareness-raising in community-wide meetings and in intensive training for associations, but they get into more detail with associations. Major themes include

Education and training increases women's opportunities and create positive female role models

Olinda Muquelesse is 26 years old and comes from a community in Ile. Her parents were supportive of her education, so contrary to many of her peers, Olinda was able to go to town to study, and she continued studying until the 12th grade.

In 2018, when ORAM needed community-based auxiliary staff to facilitate the land delimitation process, she applied and was selected. Her educational level and proficiency in Portuguese were fundamental for her to get this opportunity. She received training and has afterwards continued working for ORAM as motivational staff in communities in Ile; among here tasks is training of land associations. Olinda dreams of studying more and becoming an agronomist

Through working with ORAM, Olinda was able to learn new skills and gain important experience, and she has combined her knowledge from her own community with her new training to become a good technician for ORAM. She feels that she can be an inspiration to other women in the community where she works. When they see her working as a technician and driving a motorcycle, some women are inspired to also become more active. In Ile district, 3 out of 6 ORAM community motivational technicians are women, and this is very important for the work to be successful, according to Olinda.

land rights for men, women, and youth (including options for individual and co-titling); the establishment and functions of associations; the technical process of land delimitation and the role of declarations of land rights; and preparation for negotiations with potential investors. ORAM has some handouts and visual materials, and most training is conducted in the local language. ORAM has also been successful at training and using female community-based auxiliary staff in land registration and capacity-building activities. This has enabled these women to access economic opportunities and education, while at the same time serving as important female role models in the communities where they work (see box below).

Despite these efforts, several respondents noted that they are not clear about the Land Law, or even about the purpose of the delimitation process that was carried out in their communities. Even some association members were unable to provide a clear explanation of the law or of the role of the association itself. It seems that the communications and training efforts being

made are important, but so far do not sufficiently get to the majority of people, either men or women, in communities. They do not sufficiently address gaps in information or constraints encountered by some people, such as women's unequal access to information and ability to attend meetings. So far, there is no systematic effort to influence other institutions that also engage with the same communities (and which at times work at cross purposes to gender and age-equitable land rights).

RECOMMENDATIONS

ILRG and others can help strengthen the gender and age sensitivity of their interventions and build capacities to promote gender and youth equality and women's empowerment. The key recommendations include:

FOR WORK WITH COMMUNITIES:

- a. **Ensure equal gender and age representation in the associations, both in terms of active membership and in key positions such as presidents.** This can be done by introducing specific requirements for the composition of the associations and adopting a minimum percentage of women in leadership and general membership, combined with training of women to enhance their meaningful participation and facilitation of discussions in the associations of the advantages of a gender and age inclusive association.
- b. **Build purpose and capacity of community associations:** Training and ongoing support can build land associations' awareness on gender equality and social inclusion, strengthen their influence generally, increase their capacity to represent men and women of different age groups in communities and establish measures to ensure that female members have real influence in the associations.
- c. **Work with powerholders and the marginalized:** Materials must be designed for and used with men and women of different generations. Effective programs must work with both those out of power (e.g., youth and women) and with those who currently control decisions and allocation of land and other resources, in families and in communities. Work with traditional community leaders to build constructive partnerships with the land associations and ensure a clear definition of roles and responsibilities.
- d. **Enhance access by women to information and other valuable inputs:** Increase women's and youth's access to valuable information on land rights, land value and options on how to use it, and improved agricultural production, in order to help rightsholders to better realize the potential of their land titles. While all community members should benefit from future activities, special emphasis should be placed on reaching women and youth.
- e. **Sensitize communities regarding harmful gender norms and gender/age inequalities:** unequal gender roles and discriminatory practices, including differential access to opportunities of different age groups, creates power imbalances and marginalization of women of all ages as well as younger men, as the power and influence stays with a small elite of older men. Helping both women and men understand how these issues negatively affect people's lives and the decisions made in the communities can improve equal opportunities for all.
- f. **Apply contextualized approaches to sole vs. co-titling:** Promoting co-titling between spouses may be a good way to promote women's land rights in some areas, but not in others. Projects should not assume that co-titling is the best solution for enhancing gender equity in all situations. Factors such as marriage patterns and social systems (e.g. matrilineality vs. patrilineality) may mean that co-titling could even have negative results for women. The experience from Ile shows that women's land rights are strong, but their influence on decision-

making is very limited. An increase in co-titling could reduce women's already scarce economic opportunities. Understanding the specific context is crucial for applying responsible and gender-responsive land registration practices.

FOR WORK WITH ORGANIZATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS:

- a. **Develop long-term partnerships with specialists in norms and behavior change:** Land delimitation specialists should partner with those who have expertise in social change, such as specialists in gender and social norms change and in capacity building for associations. As noted above, social change involves long-term institutional capacity building as well as gender-responsive approaches, with longer-term funding than is available for short-term land delimitation projects. These specialists need to be involved with communities for extended periods, so the relationships should involve strategic partnerships that go beyond individual funded projects.
- b. **Build capacity of implementing partners and external stakeholders in gender equality and positive youth development approaches:** Implementing partners and other external stakeholders (government, investors, and civil society) should be encouraged and supported in analysis of their own work, and provided with tools and practical approaches to address gender and age inequalities in their work. These institutions should enhance gender and age equality rather than maintain harmful gender norms. Implementing agencies of each land rights activity should carefully consider their engagement with other institutions; they may have the necessary skills, but in many cases, this support to other institutions would best be provided by third-party specialists.
- c. **Train extensionists and other district technicians in gender and land issues** and offer them basic gender tools to use in their work, such as flashcards, educational videos, and guidance on how to plan activities that women are able to attend. Sensitize extensionists to reduce the negative impacts of social norms in their work.
- d. **Work strategically with external investors in the district to enhance their gender and age sensitivity** and help them to develop specific guidelines and tools to increase women's access to smallholder agriculture support, job opportunities, negotiation, training, and markets. As jobs are very scarce, creating employment for women only can create conflict, if it is not combined with additional incentives to families as well as norms change approaches in communities.
- e. **Collect sex- and age-disaggregated and gender specific data to inform strategic and efficient activities:** Collect and analyze basic data on, for example, gender balance in land associations, young people's influence in associations, cases of gender-based violence related to land issues, access to training/extension, and knowledge of land rights.

FOR FUTURE COMMUNICATION AND TRAINING EFFORTS:

- a. **Ensure everyone has access to information:** Ensure that technical training, new skills, and agricultural inputs are accessible for various types of community members, taking into account the limited availability and mobility of women and some men; for example, conduct group trainings in communities, in the local language, and at times when female farmers are available, offering child care, travel stipends, and other measures that enable women's participation .
- b. **Create comfortable spaces for engagement:** Use sex- and age-specific small groups and ask women and youth to share their opinions, perceptions, and questions.
- c. **Address gender norms, including power dynamics and gender equality with men:** Discuss gendered division of labor with communities, for example by conducting interactive trainings to

visualize a typical day in the life of a man and a woman in the community. Train men in communities as well as community leaders in issues such as the unequal division of labor, lack of equal access to education and knowledge, gender-based violence, and male-dominated family decision-making structures.

- d. **Use materials for people with low literacy:** Images, videos, and flash cards can better transfer complex messages to people with limited literacy and encourage broader participation and acknowledgement that less literate people can also participate and make decisions.
- e. **Use existing positive female role models:** The queen (*rainha*) in Mucoe and women who work as technical staff from ORAM can serve as positive gender models and showcase the opportunities that exist for women, educated as well as uneducated.
- f. **Use gender-responsive training materials:** Training materials should emphasize that family decisions concerning land rights should involve men, women, and youth, and address negative social norms. ILRG-supported teams should work with specialists in gender, youth, and development of community associations to review communications and training material as well as the process of using them.

FOR ALL STAKEHOLDERS:

- a. **Implement specific actions to prevent and respond to gender-based violence:** Raise awareness about gender-based violence within communities and among agencies that work there. This should call attention to the risks of inadvertently increasing gender-based violence, whether physical or psychological, and provide ways of mitigating and reducing this risk.

CONCLUSION

Although land in matrilineal areas like Ile District is still usually passed through a mother to her daughters, and nearly 70 percent of land declarations are registered in the names of women, having one's name on a land declaration or title doesn't necessarily translate into control – and the main household and community decision-makers on land are usually men. Youth also have limited access to control and decision-making over land. While strong gender and age biases limit women's and youth's access to information and knowledge, it is important to acknowledge that some adult men may be as marginalized from information and decisions as women and young people due to age, health, social status, or other factors. However, the people who do access information, knowledge, decision-making and opportunities tend to be older men, so extra efforts must be made to provide opportunities for women and for youth.

Efforts to improve gender equality and social inclusion should be made both within families and at the level of land associations and communities. The example of Olinda Muquelesse shows that when families are supportive, girls can obtain educations and get jobs, control their own land, and help other women and youth to gain control of productive resources. Nevertheless, facilitating the social change required to build strong associations, strengthen gender and age equality, and carve out space for youth in decision-making requires special skills and far longer timeframes than are usually involved in short land delimitation projects.

Projects such as ILRG should apply gender-responsive approaches throughout all their activities., However, addressing female and youth empowerment needs, changing social norms, and building sustainable capacities of community institutions require longer-term interventions. ILRG and similar projects can contribute to these objectives, for example, through building the gender and social inclusion capacities of key stakeholders, documenting lessons learned and best practices, and developing long-term strategic partnerships for women's and youth's empowerment.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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Further information on ILRG can be found at <https://www.land-links.org/project/integrated-land-and-resource-governance-ilrg/>.

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