

[Click here to view this email in your browser.](#)



LANDLINKS

#LandMatters Research Edition #3 March 2023

Land and Women's Empowerment

Welcome to Land Matters, Research Edition, a quarterly publication that spotlights research that is critical to advancing our collective land and resource governance work. These editions are meant to present research produced and/or identified as critically important by USAID's Land and Resource Governance (LRG) Division, identify ties to policy and programs, and highlight observations about the ways that the land and resource rights field is advancing.



Land and Women's Empowerment

In the last two years, the Biden Administration has released two major policies aimed at improving women's economic security and accelerating women's economic growth worldwide: the first-ever U.S. Government [National Strategy on Gender Equity and Equality](#), published in 2021, and the [U.S. Strategy on Women's Economic Security](#), released in 2022.

Research shows that strengthening women's land rights is critical to achieving these outcomes. Secure land rights can have a striking and positive impact on women's economic security and decision-making power, in turn improving outcomes for families, communities, economies, and the environment. For example, USAID's [Mapping Approaches to Secure Tenure \(MAST\)](#) approach increases the participation of women in the land documentation process, and also increases the rates at which women receive land documentation. Last week USAID spotlighted MAST during a special event, titled [Innovative Approaches for Women's Land Rights](#), showcasing the Agency's work to help women in Mozambique, Malawi, Tanzania and Zambia secure and protect their land and resource rights.

Despite ongoing efforts, less than one-fifth of landowners globally are women, and nearly 40 percent of all countries limit women's property rights in some way, often through local laws and customs. Even when women do have access to land, it is frequently less productive or desirable, by size, location, or soil health. As a result, millions of women miss out on the many social and economic benefits that can result from these critical and foundational rights and are thereby less able to achieve their goals.

While it is generally true that improving women's land rights can lead to positive outcomes, the success of women's land rights programs varies across geographies, cultures, and contexts due to a complex set of variables. We must take into account that programs designed to strengthen women's land rights can sometimes backfire, leading to gender-based violence and other adverse outcomes against the same women these programs seek to empower.

The USAID Land and Resource Governance ([LRG](#)) Division's research and evaluations focus on unpacking the nuances of what works and what doesn't when it comes to securing women's land rights.

Below is a sampling of USAID research and evaluations that have helped us better

understand the complex dynamics between land, land tenure, and women's empowerment:



Targeted Study on the Role of Customary Land Formalization in Women's Economic Empowerment

This report presents the results of a mixed-methods study on the role of customary land documentation in strengthening women's economic empowerment in Tanzania. It helps fill critical knowledge gaps regarding whether and how strengthening women's land rights via formalized customary land documentation affects their empowerment and economic growth, with a specific focus on women's access to credit and other financial opportunities, land investments, and income opportunities. The study was conducted in Iringa District, Tanzania, where USAID provided extensive support for customary land formalization through its Land Tenure Assistance activity.



Gender-Based Violence in the Natural Resource Sector in Zambia

This brief identifies the forms of gender-based violence (GBV) faced by women in wildlife community governance roles and in wildlife law enforcement, describing how violence occurs both in private and public spaces, and is perpetrated by different people and institutions. The brief also describes how the USAID Integrated Land and Resource Governance (ILRG) program has worked to mitigate these GBV risks while empowering women to take on leadership positions in natural resource governance. The findings have helped inform further

ILRG program adaptation and recommendations for donors and agencies working to promote women's participation in the natural resource space.



Gender Norms and Women's Land Rights: How to Identify and Shift Harmful Gender Norms in the Context of Land and Natural Resources

This brief explores the relationship between gender norms and women's land rights, introducing key social norms concepts and tools to identify and shift harmful norms in the context of land and natural resources. The information helps to support USAID Missions, implementing partners, and other actors designing and implementing programs on land tenure and land-based investment to identify context-specific gender norms and design activities to shift harmful gender norms and strengthen women's access to and control of land and resources.



Gender Disparities in Customary Land Allocation: Lessons from USAID Impact Evaluation Data

This report presents the final results of the Gender and Land Allocation research activity. Through empirical analysis of gender bias in land allocation, it aims to inform policy and programming intended to secure land rights for women. The study combined USAID impact evaluation datasets from Ethiopia and Zambia to create a larger sample and also used statistical methods to compare relevant outcomes between female- and male-headed households.



As this body of work demonstrates, while progress is being made, there is still a long way to go to close the implementation gap for women to securely access, use, own or hold land. USAID is working on multiple fronts to address this need—by helping to improve the policy environment, working to shift social norms, and using innovative, participatory approaches to document and secure rights. Taken together, these efforts are making a positive difference in the lives of tens of thousands of women and demonstrating why land matters for women’s empowerment and economic security.

Learn more about our work at the nexus of land and resource governance, and women's empowerment

Many of the LRG Division’s programs and research efforts work at the interface of land and resource governance and women's empowerment. Check out the resources below, or visit <https://land-links.org/issue/gender-equality/>.

- [Landing Page](#): Land Tenure and Gender Equality
- [Reference Sheet](#): Incorporating LRG into Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Programming
- [Blog Post](#): Five Lessons from Using MAST to Advance Women’s Land and Resource Rights
- [Blog Post](#): Zambia’s House of Chiefs Speak Up for Gender Equality
- [Toolkit](#): Intimate Partner Violence and Land



Copyright © 2023 USAID ACE Project, All rights reserved.

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).

