



Securing Women Land Rights – Transforming Power Relations

VISION

A land governance programme that works with people of all genders to challenge and transform structural inequalities and social norms. Together we can strive for equal life prospects!

BACKGROUND

We – the GIZ Global Programme Responsible Land Policy (GPRLP) – aim to improve access to land, especially for women and marginalised groups in our intervention countries.¹ Access to land is a key prerequisite for poverty and hunger reduction in rural areas.

Our programme promotes gender equality as both a fundamental human right and as an essential to improve women's access to land.

In practice, this means providing equal access for women to trainings and documented land rights. Yet, we do not stop at the registration of women's land rights, either jointly with their husband or individually, but support women to generate value from their documented land rights (i.e. through use, sale or renting-out).

FROM CRITICAL THINKING TO ACTION

By the end of 2020, the GPRLP found itself in its 5th year of implementation, with another five years ahead. In order to critically assess where the programme stands on gender transformative approaches, we developed a Gender Roadmap and took stock of the project's gender related aspects, achievements, and shortcomings. It became clear that the initial programme design from 2015 did not include gender transformative approaches. However, projects within our various countries involve women particularly and ensure that they are the main beneficiaries of our activities implemented.







To account for the barriers hindering women's empowerment and the transformation of gender norms in different contexts we agreed to develop country specific assessments and recommendations. Our country teams develop Gender Action Plans with clearly resourced priority actions, to be undertaken together with government partners in the upcoming years.



MOTIVATION

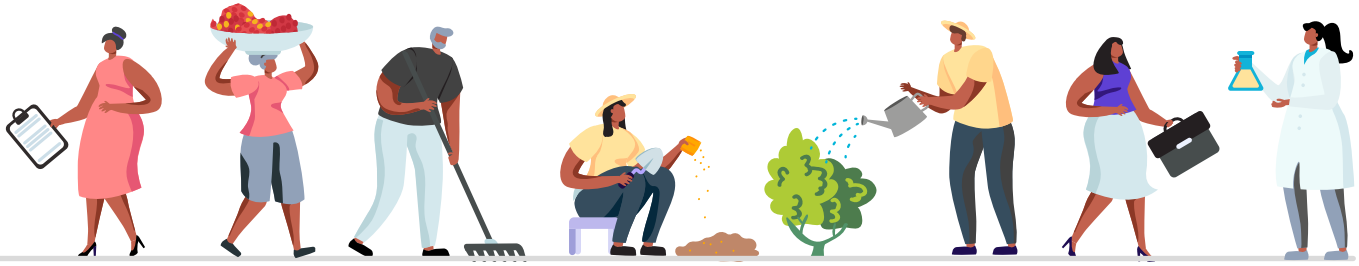
The ambitious aim to realize gender equality and women’s empowerment is clearly set out under Sustainable Development Goal 5 “which calls for “achiev[ing] gender equality and empower[ing] all women and girls.” More specifically, FAO’s Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the

Context of National Food Security (VGGT) call upon states to “ensure that women and girls have equal tenure rights and access to land, fisheries and forests independent of their civil and marital status.” In fact, the VGGTs point out how gender equity in land tenure is a prerequisite for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals!

THE STATUS QUO ...	THE CHANGE WE WANT TO SEE ...
 <p>Worldwide, women hold less than 15 % of land titles despite carrying out more than 40 % of agricultural work.</p>	 <p>Women in our intervention areas hold 50 % of land titles (individually or jointly with their husbands).</p>
 <p>Often men alone hold the land rights in the household and in many cases their families do not benefit as the income is spent on personal goods.</p>	 <p>Women with secured land rights improve their and their families’ socio-economic situation. Allocation of resources and land matters are therefore jointly decided.</p>
 <p>In many countries, social norms and laws (i.e., inheritance laws) prevent women’s formal access to land.</p>	 <p>Female led and focused trainings promote women’s participation and knowledge about land matters. This leads to female empowerment, increased tenure security for women and the transformation of discriminatory social norms.</p>

For too long, gender equality and women’s empowerment have been treated as by-products or cross-cutting issues rather than the driving factors for sustainable development outcomes. In most of our project countries, women comprise the majority of the labor force in agricultural value chains but their contribution and labor force is not adequately valued, which is particularly reflected in their insecure access to land.

Evidence demonstrates the positive impact women’s secured land use rights can have: For example, they can improve women’s socio-economic situation and standing, promote women’s right to co-determination in the household and autonomy outside of the household. In Uganda, 75 % of women and men began to jointly decide land matters when land certificates were issued in the name of the family instead of the household head.

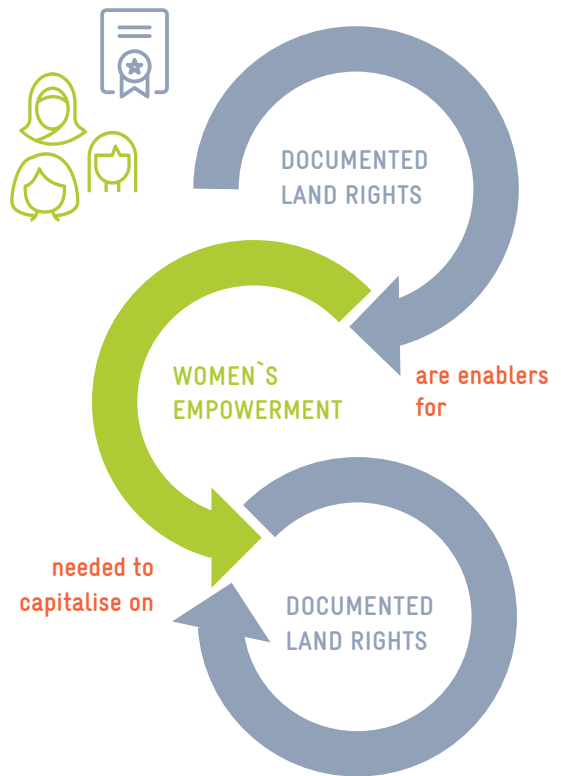


APPROACH

REACH - BENEFIT - EMPOWER

We distinguish between approaches that solely reach women as participants, those that benefit women, and those that empower women: Only reaching out to women is not enough. This is why we secure women's land rights in our partner countries, while fostering an environment in which women can capitalize on their rights.

We believe that secure land rights are a necessary but not sufficient step towards women's empowerment. Obviously, land rights have profound implications on women's ability to enjoy their civil, political, social and economic rights in practice, as well as their ability to escape poverty and social exclusion. Yet, documented land rights alone do not lead automatically to a situation where women can also benefit from their land. Furthermore, empowering women through additional measures that foster/teach technical skills and self-confidence (i.e. trainings, awareness raising, joining forces with other projects in the same area that promote economic and social empowerment) is necessary for women to capitalise on already documented land rights and to ensure the sustainability of our interventions.



Five Malagasy women hold their land registration documents in their hands.

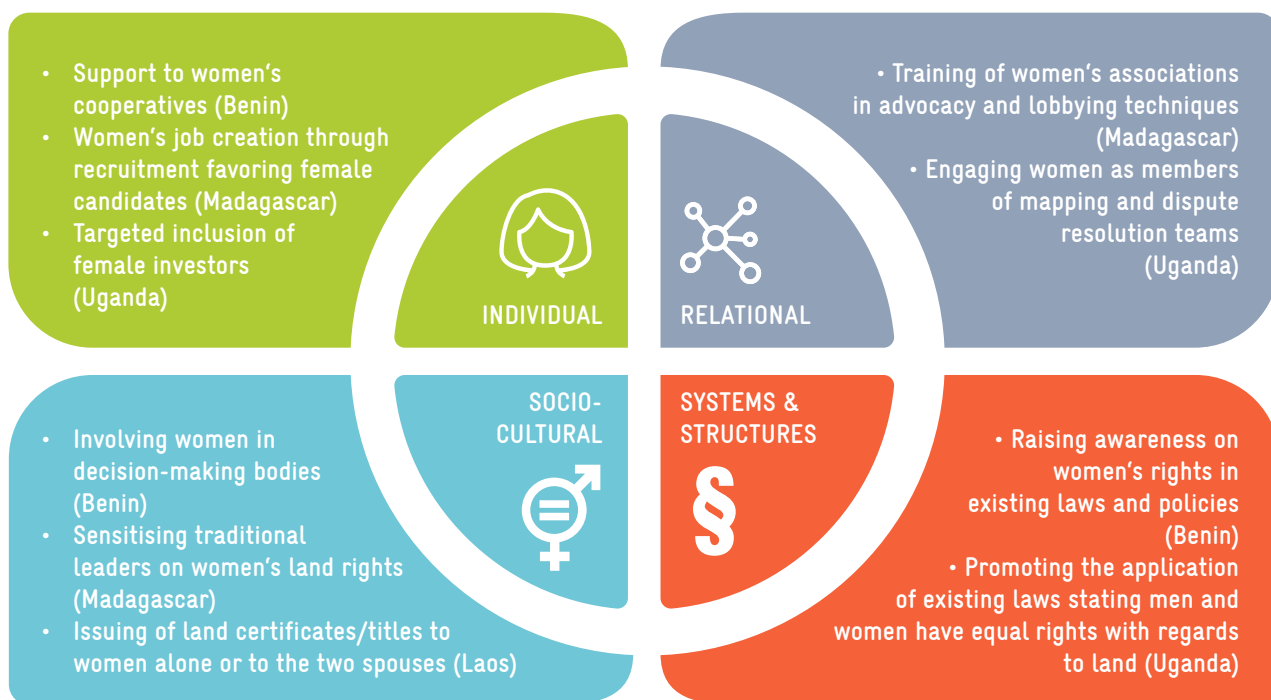


ALLIANCES & HOLISTIC CHANGE PROCESS

At the same time, we – as a programme focusing mainly on land governance – start from the premise that women’s empowerment requires the collective effort of multiple actors. To ensure that women can capitalize on their land rights (e.g. investment in soil improvement and new technologies for increased agricultural production, etc.) accompanying measures beyond our own field of intervention are required. Therefore, we seek cooperation and alliances with other projects, campaigns and actors from Government, Civil Society and Academia.

In addition, we need to consider a holistic change process which recognizes that improving self-belief/agency (**INDIVIDUAL**) and policy and institutional settings (**SYSTEMS & STRUCTURES**) **alone** do not lead to sustainable change. Other dimensions, such as power dynamics and decision-making (**RELATIONAL**) plus norms and stereotypes (**SOCIO-CULTURAL**) have to be addressed as well. We must work with women, but also their husbands, village elders, community members, lawmakers and politicians alike to encourage the change we want to see.

Examples From The Field To Promote Change:



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