



Women and Community Land Rights

Investing in Local Champions



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Glossary

aimag	region or province (Mongolia)
ALAMGAC	Mongolian Government Implementing Agency for Land Administration and Management, Geodesy and Cartography
bagh	administrative sub-division within a soum (Mongolia)
Baraza la Ardhi	Village Land Council (Tanzania)
CCRO	Certificate of Customary Rights of Occupancy (Tanzania)
CSR	corporate social responsibility
GBV	gender-based violence
Ilaigwanak	Maasai Council (Tanzania)
khural	parliament (Mongolia)
kijiji	village, an administrative sub-division of a rural ward (Tanzania)
kitongoji	administrative sub-division of a village (kijiji), usually described as a hamlet in English (Tanzania)
PCC	People Centered Conservation
soum	administrative sub-division within an aimag outside of the capital city (Mongolia)
UWT	Umoja wa Wanawake wa Tanzania (women's wing of the ruling political party)
WOLTS	Women's Land Tenure Security Project

Introduction

For more than five years, the Women’s Land Tenure Security (WOLTS) Project has been investigating the intersection of gender and land relations in mining-affected pastoralist communities in Mongolia and Tanzania. The aim has been to develop a methodology for long-term community engagement and capacity building to protect and support the land rights of all vulnerable people – thus to fully mainstream attention to gender equity in land tenure governance within a framework that would facilitate improvements in community land rights across the board.

The project has demonstrated that investing in a diverse group of gender and land champions, women and men, can be a game changer both for women and for the wider community. The local champions nurtured through the WOLTS training programme are delivering change – reinvigorating local power structures to strengthen and protect the rights of women and other vulnerable groups and delivering real improvements for women’s land rights and community land rights alike. The evidence to date demonstrates that the WOLTS methodology can help to empower communities to combat entrenched patriarchal norms and challenge land grabbing more broadly across the Global South.

What is WOLTS?

Women’s Land Tenure Security (WOLTS) is a long-term strategic and practical action-research project on gender and land, designed from the start with the aim of developing a methodology for long-term community engagement and capacity building to protect and support the land rights of all vulnerable people. Crucially, WOLTS is founded on the principle that better understanding of women’s land rights benefits the whole community.

What did we do?

Stage 1 began in October 2015 and saw the WOLTS team carrying out in-depth participatory research on land, gender, mining and pastoralism in two pilot communities each in mineral-rich areas of Mongolia and Tanzania; a fifth community was added in Mongolia in 2017. The team undertook rigorous research in each community, with a baseline survey, a phase of participatory fieldwork (structured focus group discussions and biographic interviews), and results validation in community feedback meetings. A key outcome of Stage 1 was the demand for relevant skills and information, the latter in clear, understandable formats, to empower communities to defend their rights and take charge of their own land and natural resource governance.¹

With solid buy-in from the communities and local governments, Stage 2 was initiated in February 2018. A consultative approach was devised to select

a group of locally respected men and women willing to become trained champions for land rights and gender equity in their communities. An inclusive, iterative and highly participatory training programme was then rolled out over four main steps across the first four pilot communities (Round 1, 2018-19), with men and women taking part jointly and equally. Round 2 followed from the end of 2019 in two of these four communities, with existing champions participating as mentors to a cohort of new champions nominated by their peers.

Figure 1: WOLTS Process



Who are the champions?

The men and women selected in each community to take part in the gender and land champions training programme are a mix of ordinary community members and traditional leaders, women and men of all ages, income groups and education levels. They were chosen after an in-depth nomination, interview and selection process, drawing on recommendations from across each community. A large proportion of the champions had held some form of local leadership position before starting the training, but currently serving government officials were excluded to avoid any conflict of interest. Champions signed up to take part in the training on a voluntary basis, on the clear understanding that they would be expected to share what they learned with their communities and develop their collective identity through the training programme as an influential group of land and gender 'advisors', willing and able to support ordinary people and local governments alike.

What was the goal?

The overall goal of the gender and land champions training programme was to raise awareness and empower men and women to share knowledge and support their fellow community members and leaders to strengthen gender equity and the rights of women and vulnerable groups, not just in

matters of land tenure governance but also in relation to broader gendered social norms.

What did the training involve?

The WOLTS team used a diverse range of methods to engage local communities and identify and train the gender and land champions. In Round 1, a replicable format across all four communities included tailored content to meet local needs and address key issues that had emerged during the WOLTS Stage 1 research.

Facilitators created a safe and mutually supportive space for the champions to grow, with the whole programme carefully designed to build champions' confidence to speak about land, mining and natural resource issues in a gender-sensitive way. Training sessions included vigorous group discussions, in small groups and plenaries, mixed and with gender-segregation. They also included scenario-based role-plays and regular feedback gathering to support the development of subsequent sessions.

Above all, the programme utilised a stepped approach to tackling some of the most sensitive gender issues identified by participants in the WOLTS Stage 1 research, nurturing the champions as they steadily developed a collective vision of themselves as social norm change-makers.



"I really loved the role-plays. They helped us to dig down on the issues we have in our lives. They were fun!"

(B6, middle-aged woman, Mongolia)

"The role-play was amazing. I have never seen such an approach...It was really useful to help us understand."

(B13, middle-aged man, Mongolia)

"I was surprised to learn that I, as a traditional leader, have a role to make sure that there is a practical gender balance in my community...I'm now insisting to give a chance to women in everything we do."

(M9, middle-aged man, Tanzania)



1 Women's participation in land governance has increased

In the five years from inception, the WOLTS Project has delivered a notable increase in women's confidence, knowledge and participation in decision-making on land and natural resource issues in all four pilot communities where the gender and land champions training programme has taken place – as well as an increase in men's support for this. In this relatively short space of time, the project team has observed significant change in three key areas: women champions have become increasingly confident speaking in meetings; more women (and men) champions have been willing to contest elections and seek local leadership positions; and men champions are actively supporting women in these roles, especially men champions who are respected traditional leaders.

What we did

A key objective of the WOLTS gender and land champions training programme has been to strengthen capacity for more gender-equitable land governance at the local level. A number of parallel training elements were designed to achieve this. First, sessions sought to boost awareness of key laws and regulations and encourage discussion about their applicability and implementation. Second, participatory training exercises were utilised to build champions' public speaking skills and their overall confidence to engage in well-informed debate about land, mining and natural resource issues in their communities in an inclusive and gender-sensitive way. Third, using techniques such as role-play, the champions were supported to develop a collective identity of themselves as a team.²

What happened and what the communities said

Evidence of a positive change in women's participation in land governance was seen in all four pilot communities and was reported from the end of 2019, thus within six to eight months of the end of Round 1. In **Tanzania**, champions described how women previously did not exist in the sphere of community discussions and decision-making on land, but the WOLTS training broke through their

silence and contributed to the development of space within public discussion platforms for women's voices to be both heard and listened to. The catalyst for women's confidence to increasingly speak out was the knowledge both men and women gained about women's legal rights, as well as the strong support given by the men champions, especially those who are respected traditional leaders.

Women themselves and men who are gender champions have been in the front line to ensure that women are heard.

(M53, young woman, Tanzania)

In the weekly kitongoji meetings you can now see women contributing to the discussion and sometimes confidently arguing with men if they are not satisfied with the decisions that are made.

(N17, young man, Tanzania)

Women are nowadays confident to speak in meetings, and they defend their rights.

(M3, young woman, Tanzania)

More women have become activists. Their confidence to speak has increased and more of them are now speaking a lot in community meetings. Men are also happy nowadays to let women speak and advise, and to follow women's advice on different local issues. All these things have resulted from the WOLTS training.

(M1, middle-aged man, Tanzania)

By the end of the WOLTS training programme there had been a 26% increase in the number of champions correctly identifying that discrimination between men and women is constitutionally illegal in both countries. 91.2% of champions across all four communities correctly understood this at the



end of Round 2 of the training.³ Furthermore, champions repeatedly and consistently demonstrated their commitment to more gender-equal participation in land governance in their feedback on what they had been doing to share legal information and raise awareness about women’s rights within their communities – and their accounts of this were affirmed in interviews carried out by the project team with local government leaders, particularly in **Mongolia**.

The champions always update us about what they have learned in the training...One soum citizen khural representative talks a lot about gender. He recently recommended to include gender when we make decisions on land issues.
(Head of Soum Citizen Khural, Mongolia)

The champions talk to us a lot about gender...They raise issues related to gender every time we have decisions to make...I had no understanding about gender before. But as the champions talk about it in every meeting, I have more understanding now.
(Soum Land Officer, Mongolia)

It was also clear, following local elections in both countries during 2020, that women (and men) champions are demonstrating a growing willingness to put themselves forward as candidates – often for the first time – even though they do not always win.

I had very shallow knowledge and information and it made me very shy and unconfident. But the WOLTS training brought me big change. I am a candidate for bagh citizen khural leader this year. My husband started to support me a lot and said I can be a good leader. I have become confident to represent 300 households in our bagh and raise my voice for them.
(B8, middle-aged woman, Mongolia)

I noticed a positive change during the local elections this autumn. It was my first time to become a candidate. Because I have confidence, as I was well informed thanks to the training. If I didn’t attend this programme, I would not have become a candidate.
(D16, middle-aged woman, Mongolia)

Many champions became candidates for local elections. It means we got confident in ourselves as a result of the training, and we also learned how to express ourselves.
(D3, young man, Mongolia)

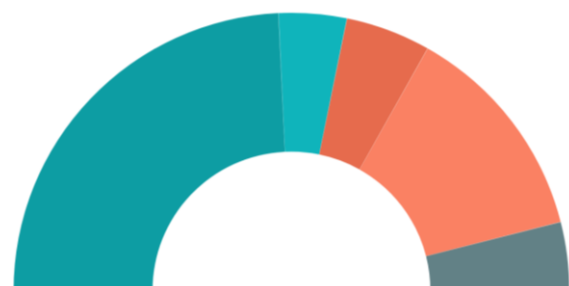
I have personally observed women contributing a lot in meetings. That is one great change brought by the WOLTS training. Many men are also encouraging women to speak up...taking their contributions seriously. Almost all of us are questioning a lot on any new investor...Many women have tried to contest different leadership positions during the elections, although many did not win but at least now they tried.
(N6, young woman, Tanzania)

I think our soum women’s participation has increased. Before, we had three women in the soum citizen representative khural. This year we have seven of them.
(Bagh Governor, Mongolia)

A leadership survey, comparing the number of positions of responsibility held by each champion prior to starting the WOLTS training programme with the number of new positions taken up during the training – after they had become a gender and land champion – further illustrates the changes taking place in the communities.

Chart 1 shows the range of new local leadership positions taken up by the WOLTS champions between them starting the training programme and completing their final feedback surveys in March 2021. Across all four communities, the 125 trained champions have between them taken up 72 new positions of responsibility in their local communities, of which the majority (39 of 72) are specifically local leadership positions, of a variety of types as shown in the chart.⁴

Chart 1: Champions' New Local Leadership Positions



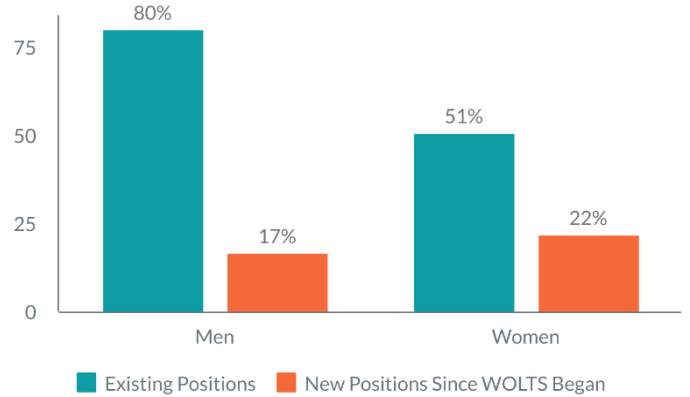
- Village/Soum Level (or Higher) Governance Positions (48.51%)
- Kitongoji/Bagh Level Governance Positions (7.92%)
- School or Religious Position (9.9%)
- Resource Management/Coordination (25.74%)
- Others (7.92%)

Chart 2 contrasts the proportion of men and women champions who held positions of local responsibility before starting WOLTS training (many of which continued on through the training programme), with the proportion who acquired new positions after they had embarked on the training. The top graph in Chart 2 includes all the (more influential and significant) local leadership positions from Chart 1, while the bottom graph in Chart 2 provides the data for all local positions of responsibility, including the local leadership ones. In both cases, it is notable that the proportion of men champions holding positions of responsibility before starting training was higher than the proportion of women, but the proportion of women champions acquiring new positions after starting training was higher than the proportion of men.

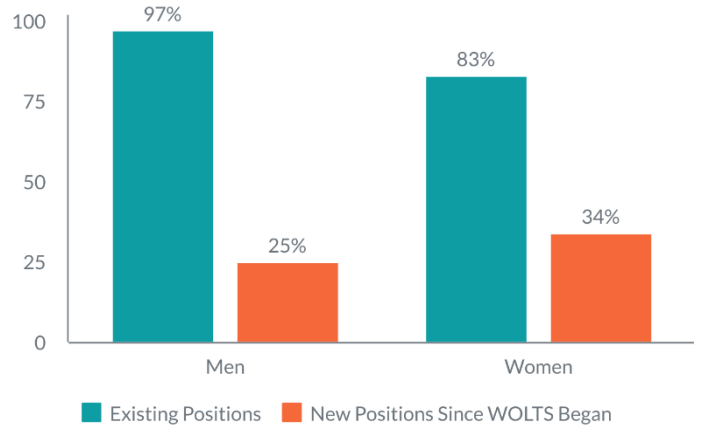
The logic of this evidence is clear – women’s participation in local land governance and community decision-making on land, mining and natural resources has increased relative to men’s, and thus the WOLTS gender and land champions training programme has delivered tangible improvements in gender equity in all four communities where it took place.

Chart 2: Existing vs New Positions of Responsibility

Local Leadership Positions Only



All Positions of Responsibility



2 Investing in women’s land rights protects community land rights

Training and nurturing local champions on gender and land is a win-win approach, with improvements in women’s land rights also strengthening community rights. This is increasingly important in the wider context of climate change, with champions better able to support their communities by working with their local governments to protect and manage their natural resources in a participatory and gender-equitable way. It is also important in the face of threats to local natural resources from land grabbing, including from mining investors, who the trained champions have become visibly more active in holding to account.

What we did

A second major objective of the WOLTS gender and land champions training programme has been to develop a win-win approach to improving land rights for women that puts gender equity – fairness – at front and centre of the struggle to protect community land rights. From the very first training sessions, the WOLTS facilitators used games and role-plays to drill down with the champions into what gender equity is and why it benefits everyone. Information about relevant land, mining, investment and gender-related laws and regulations was shared during the training sessions, and men and women champions were encouraged to explore how they could use this information to work together to protect their community’s land and natural resources in a sustainable and gender-sensitive way, leaving no-one behind.

What happened and what the communities said

In all four communities, improved knowledge of women’s land rights and of registration procedures has led to a reported increase in formal land registration by both women and men. At the same time, champions in both countries shared during training sessions and in their final feedback surveys and interviews that they feel more secure in defending their land against mining investments and land grabbers more generally, as a direct result of the WOLTS training.

Laws relating to investment and mining featured in the legal awareness sessions during the training, with investment being a main topic of Step 2 of the programme, and mining of Step 3. Champions engaged strongly in the mining-focused sessions, demonstrating the biggest improvement in legal knowledge on this topic out of the five topics assessed in three perceptions surveys (described

below in chapter 3). Between Survey 1 and Survey 2 there was a 139% increase in the number of champions correctly responding “false” to the statement that “*In Mongolia/Tanzania, if you have the rights to the land, you also have rights to the mineral resources on or under the land*”.

Figure 2: Perceptions Survey Responses (All Champions)



Most of the improvement in legal knowledge took place in the two Tanzanian communities, where the number of champions responding correctly to this statement increased by 248% from before starting the WOLTS training programme to shortly after its completion. The increase in correct responses in the two Mongolian communities was 31%, as the initial level of legal knowledge was higher to begin with.

In **Mongolia**, champions in both communities where the WOLTS training programme took place now feel more confident about negotiating clean-up agreements with mining companies and holding new companies and land developers to account. Women champions were visibly on the front-line in

demonstrations against mining companies in Dalanjargalan during 2019 and 2020, as one young woman champion recounted:

When I and other people in my bagh saw the big truck and that they had started drilling, we went and asked them if they had permission to do that. I took photos and made a video on my phone, showing them drilling. I called the Soum Governor and the Soum Environmental Inspector while I was still standing there, and I sent them the video. Three days later these people gathered up their machinery and ran away.

Our bagh was affected by the smoke produced by a coal mining company. Many people went to hospital with bad headaches. I was sure it was because of the smoke. We gathered together around 30 people from our bagh and went to the mining site to meet the soum leaders there. We demanded that the company stop making smoke and asked for the money to be repaid to us that we had spent on medical treatment. That time the leaders of the mining company were absent. But after a week there was no more smoke. I think we showed the mining company that we can do something for ourselves. Bagh people trust us champions and they think that we know how to talk to the mining companies and what to demand.



Likewise in **Tanzania**, champions shared examples of how they had right away started to use the legal information acquired during the WOLTS training to demand to see appropriate documentation from potential investors and assert their rights to be consulted and to give – or withhold – genuinely free, prior and informed consent.

The new mining sites have followed all protocols and processes that are set out by law. We have pressured them to do this in village meetings – this is shown in the minutes of the meetings. The mining owners attended the Village Assembly and accepted requirements such as a CSR plan.

(M5, young man, Tanzania)

I fought for the rights to land in my kitongoji...the information I got at the WOLTS training helped me defend the land so that it was not taken. We want to keep our land so we can build a school and a hospital on it. It couldn't be taken because of our rights and our ability to defend them.

(M9, middle-aged man, Tanzania)

As these examples indicate, greater awareness of individual and community land rights has led to a more united approach to defending community land from existing and potential investors. Champions have worked together to raise awareness of land grabs and the opportunities to defend land. Including women's voices within these efforts has strengthened the communities' unity and their negotiating position. In another example from Dalanjargalan, during 2020 the champions drove an initiative to bring together soum leaders, citizens and representatives from mining companies to open a dialogue on issues of responsible mining. This approach secured short term wins in the form of retrospective compensation.

The mining companies committed to give each household 100 sacks of hay and 2 sacks of oats for their livestock. I think it is a very initial step to develop responsible mining in our soum.

(D17, young man, Mongolia).

Here mining companies have started working in a responsible manner. We champions learned how to talk to those companies and make requests. I think it is very positive change.

(D20, middle-aged woman, Mongolia).

In both countries, language is another critical factor. Champions in all four communities raised the issue of how investors and land officials sometimes use complex language in an attempt to disadvantage communities. The champions' increased ability to protect their community's land has come from being able to engage in discussions with these typically more confident and better-educated stakeholders based on thorough knowledge of the law – which was achieved by careful introduction and presentation of legal information by the WOLTS team in clear and simple terms.

The land and other laws were explained in a very understandable way. It was easy for us because the trainers used real life examples.

(D12, older woman, Mongolia)

The trainers were good. They talked to us closely and in very understandable way.

(D17, young man, Mongolia)

Community members are now able to defend their land in a more professional way, by quoting legal sections from the land law, unlike before, when investors were using a lot of technical legal words that the community could not understand, given how laws have a very tough language.

(M42, young woman, Tanzania)

My knowledge has improved, so I can share it more confidently to other community members.

Before the training, I hesitated to consult or guide others. Now I know how we can solve the land problems all together.

(B4, older woman, Mongolia)

A further positive outcome from the legal awareness element of the WOLTS gender and land champions training programme were the direct gains for women's land rights reported to the project team, particularly in **Tanzania**. Not only did it seem that men and women champions were increasingly contributing to the strengthening of community land protection efforts through their support for registration of individually-held land by their fellow community members, but registration of land used and held by women was also reported to be becoming more commonplace. In both countries champions shared with the project team about tangible successes in their efforts to get their land rights formally recorded, as a result of their participation in the WOLTS training and as a means

to protect both women's land rights and the claims of community members to the community's land.⁵

I have seen many trained champions assisting their fellow community members to apply for land, and especially women. The champions have been sharing their knowledge to the wider community, especially through community meetings, and the village government has been using the champions to assist in resolving land-related conflicts in the community. I know at least seven male champions who have allocated land to their wives or other female relatives after attending the WOLTS training.

(Village Chairman, Tanzania)

One of the women champions helped another woman, her neighbour, who had her land taken away. Women were able to defend their rights.

(M2, young man, Tanzania)

The WOLTS training created awareness on land laws and women rights to land ownership...The training has mobilised many women to apply for plots in the village centre, which is growing rapidly due to the mining.

(M25, middle-aged woman, Tanzania)

Many women are now applying for land from the village government after what they have learned in the WOLTS training. There are many of them visiting the village office seeking to get CCROs for their pieces of land.

(M27, middle-aged man, Tanzania)



3 Knowledge of land- and gender-related laws rose by almost 50%

Across all four pilot communities involved in the WOLTS gender and land champions training programme, correct knowledge and awareness of national land- and gender-related laws increased by almost 50% between the start of Round 1 of the champions training programme and the final perceptions surveys conducted at the end of Round 2. This was the case in the two communities where the second round of training took place with new champions, with mentoring support provided by existing champions, as well as in the two communities where no further training was carried out. It was also the case among both women and men champions, but with a greater increase among women (62%) than among men (37%).

What we did

Raising awareness about relevant national land- and gender-related laws and regulations was a key part of each step of the WOLTS training programme. To assess the effectiveness of this component of the training, the team carried out an individual perceptions survey with each of the champions at three set points in the programme. Survey 1 was carried out with all champions prior to starting the WOLTS training. Survey 2 was conducted with all champions after graduating from the initial programme, and therefore took place for the first cohort of champions at the end of Round 1, and for the second cohort of new champions (in Mundarara and Dalanjargalan) at the end of Round 2. Survey 3 was carried out approximately one year after completion of the initial training programme, with just the original cohort of champions. Thus Survey 3 was for the champions in Bornuur and Naisinyai, where no further training was undertaken beyond Round 1, as well as the ‘mentor group’ of champions in Mundarara and Dalanjargalan, who continued to be engaged with the project team in Round 2 of the training, supporting and mentoring the new cohort of champions in those two communities.

What happened and what the communities said

Overall, there was a 47.9% increase between Survey 1 and Survey 2 in the number of champions correctly responding to five perceptions statements designed to test for correct understanding of the law.⁶ There was a further overall increase in correct responses in both countries between Survey 2 and Survey 3, with slightly higher increases in correct responses among the Bornuur and Naisinyai champions compared with the mentor group in Mundarara and Dalanjargalan. The increases were

greatest in the Tanzanian communities, as can be seen in **Chart 3**, in both relative and absolute terms. This was as expected by the project team, given the higher base of correct legal knowledge in Mongolia that was revealed during Survey 1. The overall increase in correct responses between Survey 1 and Survey 3 was 74.4% in Tanzania and 22.3% in Mongolia.

Chart 3: Country Comparison of Perceptions Survey Results

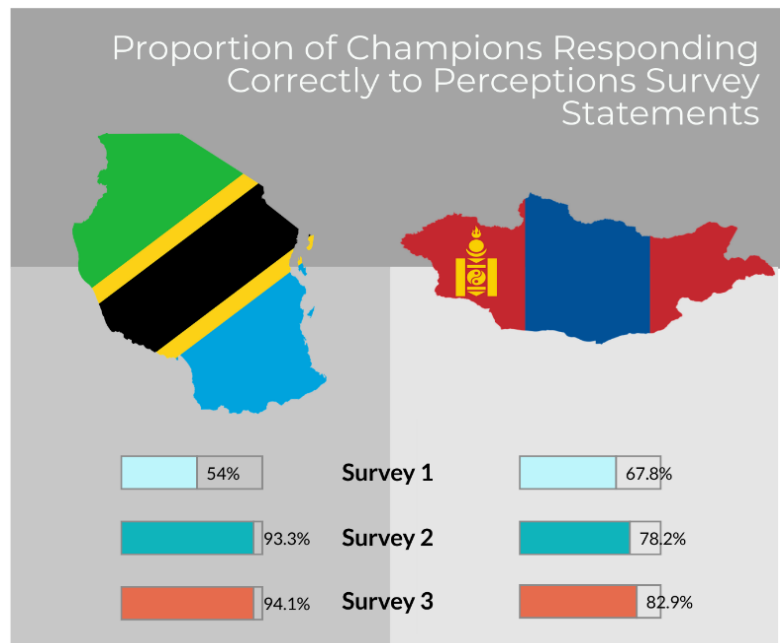


Chart 4 illustrates the increase in knowledge and awareness of land- and gender-related laws among men and women champions in comparison to the level of legal knowledge recorded in the WOLTS Stage 1 community-wide baseline survey. Even though the majority of gender and land champions came into the training programme already holding positions of responsibility in their communities, in many cases directly related to the governance, administration and management of local land and

natural resources,⁷ it is notable that their initial level of awareness and knowledge of the law (as captured in Survey 1) was close to that of the more general community-wide baseline. This clearly suggests that the higher levels of knowledge and awareness detected in Survey 2 and Survey 3 are a direct result of the WOLTS training programme.⁸

The overall increase in knowledge and awareness of national land- and gender-related laws was markedly higher among women champions than men, with a 62% increase across all women champions and a 37% increase across all men champions.

Chart 4: Stage 1 Baseline vs Stage 2 Perceptions Survey Results

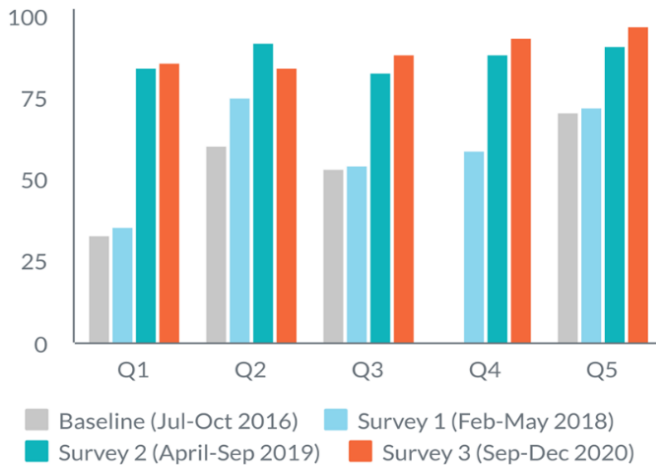
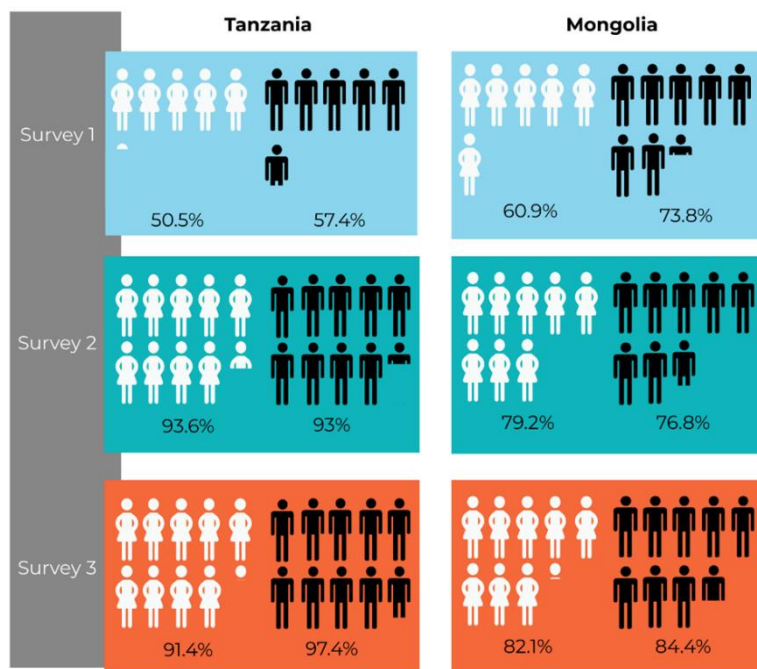


Chart 5 compares the increase in relevant legal knowledge and awareness delivered by the WOLTS programme by gender, showing the proportion of women and men champions providing correct responses to the five legal statements from Survey 1 to Survey 3.

Chart 5: Perceptions Survey Results by Gender



Women now understand that they have rights to own land and have new confidence that leads them to make demands and ask questions when they see something wrong.
(N1, older man, Tanzania)

Women have started to apply for land just as men do...Confidence to speak anytime, anywhere, in the presence of everybody, has increased among women. It was not like that before the WOLTS training. All women were so shy and they looked down when they were asked to speak.
(M20, older man, Tanzania)

The significance of all these improvements in knowledge and awareness of the relevant laws lies in what it empowers the champions to do. As a direct result of the WOLTS training, and as already illustrated, champions in all four communities reported multiple examples of successfully working with their fellow champions and with local governments to help solve land disputes, better protect their community's natural resources, and support their fellow community members and neighbours to get their land rights formally recorded.



4 Ripple effect on gender-based violence and broader gender norms

The WOLTS experience suggests that training local champions on gender and land has a ripple effect on changing other gendered social norms, including attitudes towards gender-based violence (GBV) and domestic abuse. This is a result of patient facilitation and the overall champion-led approach – with the project team waiting for these highly sensitive issues to come up organically through the champions’ role-plays on land and mining disputes, and in their discussions about household and community decision-making, and then using the opportunity to create a safe space for the champions to decide what actions they might want to take.

What we did

Gender concepts and issues were embedded in the WOLTS training programme right from the opening session of Step 1, when we used an ice-breaker exercise to encourage participants to share with their fellow champions why they liked being a man or a woman, or why they might like to be the opposite. The programme was developed from the very beginning to respond to the key challenges facing the pilot communities, as they had emerged in Stage 1 of the research. The demand from the communities was for training and support to build effective local capacity to resolve land, mining and natural resource governance issues in the increasingly challenging contexts of climate change and land grabbing. This was the immediate practical need. At the same time, complex gender issues also came to light during Stage 1, which communities only tentatively discussed during the results validation phase. The strength of gender and other traditional social norms in both countries makes those issues more difficult to address, yet developing safe spaces for communities to explore them was clearly an important strategic need.

The WOLTS gender and land champions training programme thus set out to establish a model of inclusive and gender-equitable capacity building for land and natural resources governance to address the immediate practical need, while at the same time piggy-backing onto this an opportunity to open up space for longer-term change in gendered social norms. Three points were key. First, GBV around the local mining sites and among small-scale rubble collectors emerged in the Stage 1 research as a pressing issue of concern in both Tanzanian communities, so it could not be ignored.⁹ Second, certain categories of very vulnerable men were identified in the Mongolian communities during

Stage 1, who also could not be ignored.¹⁰ Third, gender concepts and issues were introduced gradually and sensitively throughout the training programme, with the WOLTS team facilitators taking cues from the champions around their readiness to publicly discuss difficult and sometimes taboo-like topics. While the project team raised issues of gender equity and equality in the abstract, in terms of legislation mandating women’s participation in land committees, for instance, it was the champions themselves who brought up the specifics of GBV and domestic abuse within role-plays and discussions. The legitimacy conferred by this bottom-up approach then opened the door for the facilitators to share facts, figures, contacts and good practices for the champions to take from as they wished.



What happened and what the communities said

The most remarkable change observed by the project team was in the attitudes towards GBV and domestic abuse expressed by men and women champions in all four communities, even before the end of Round 1, which were very different to those expressed during much earlier phases of the WOLTS research. In **Mongolia**, champions began actively promoting services for women affected by domestic violence, and there is now more awareness of different types of GBV, including specific issues for

men. In **Tanzania**, there are some reports of reduced domestic violence in both communities, and of older Maasai men pro-actively supporting their women family members to get their own land and have more say in their personal lives.

We can see and hear cases of women asking their husbands to grant them land. Some women have applied for land at the village office, and some have been successful while other requests are still being processed. I myself have applied to the village government for four plots, of which three have been granted (one for my mother, one for my sister, and one for my brother).

(M5, young man, Tanzania)

Before I thought that only physical violence is really violence. Now I know even one word can be violence sometimes. And we have to fight against it.

(D35, middle-aged woman, Mongolia)

This was my first time to know that beating a wife is called gender-based violence. Before I just knew that I was disciplining my wife. It is through your WOLTS training that I have known that gender does change and I can do things that the community has named to be done by women.

(M47, middle-aged man, Tanzania)

It was really surprising to me to know that men also experience and are victims of violence. We have learned that there is economic and emotional violence too.

(B6, middle-aged woman, Mongolia)

In training sessions in both countries, men and women champions explored the everyday activities



that perpetuate gender discrimination. In **Tanzania**, for example, women of all ages are expected to give up their seats at meetings and gatherings to men.¹¹ This is an action that had previously gone unspoken and was regarded as customary, but it was debated by champions in Naisinyai during the WOLTS training in 2019 and deemed by them to be discriminatory behaviour and an example of something that they should resolve to end.

I know all the training sessions you held with us, but the thing I will never forget is when you trained us on what it means by GBV. You know what! Before the training women were giving away their seats in meetings, or in any gathering, but later after knowing that it is also termed as GBV, there is not any woman who gives away her chair unless she decides herself to give it to an elderly man or woman.

(UWT Chairwoman, Tanzania)

Also in **Tanzania**, younger men are reported to be taking up tasks perceived to be women's work, including taking care of children and carrying water. Young men are supporting their wives by going to the maize mill, shopping for food such as onions, potatoes, rice, vegetables and sugar, and carrying water, all traditionally seen as 'women's work'. One traditional Maasai elder from Mundarara explains the significance:

Many men, especially young men, are becoming soft to their wives, they are supporting them by fetching water and when they go herding they bring them big loads of firewood. A few elders are sometimes discouraging young men, telling them not to fetch water or carry firewood, but the young generation are strong and are able to live with their own decisions while respecting the elders. Many champions are putting into practice what they have learnt, it is a good sign that this change will continue to spread to many more people.



Youth are supporting their wives while before it was like a shame for a man to fetch water or firewood, but now after the WOLTS training I see young men supporting their wives and completely proving that it is possible to support each other. This is a surprise because young men are no longer strong as they used to be in the past...I grew up in a community where men are everything, and in case women wanted to contribute anything, be it at the family or the community level, they must kneel down and hold green grass as a sign of humbleness and respect to men.

(M8, older man, Tanzania)

I am actually surprised to see many young men supporting their wives to fetch water and firewood, but I think it is a positive thing because the younger generation will grow up supporting women.

(Kitongoji Chairman, Tanzania)

After the WOLTS training, men have been including their wives in decision-making at the family level, for example in my family.

(N16, young woman, Tanzania)

Last week we had a meeting discussing about truant girls in primary school. Two women champions advised that we should start to question the parents instead of going straight to punishing the innocent girls. Their idea was taken up and the meeting decided to start from that approach as the way to deal with the issue.

(Former Village Chairman, Tanzania)

One of the most practical reports of real impact coming out of the WOLTS gender and land champions training programme came from



Mongolia. One tool employed during the training in both countries was a list of contact details for local organisations that deal with GBV. These details were shared directly with the champions, with the suggestion that they might post them up in public areas where many more citizens could access them. This approach was overwhelmingly supported by the champions in Mongolia, who have shared the details widely, as one older man among the Dalanjargalan champions explained:

I got the flier on A4 from the trainers with phone numbers in case of violence, but it was too small for the elderly people to see. More than 30% of the population of our bagh are elderly people, so I asked the local printing store to make the flier bigger.



As some of his fellow champions told the project team during the next session, having a big poster with large print in fact helps all people to be able to openly see the information without needing to have any fear of being noticed looking at it. Additionally, in Bornuur, where no further training took place after 2019, interviews with local government officials in March 2021 showed how people have been continuing to make use of these contact phone numbers, shared by the original cohort of champions there too.

In our soum we have a team that works against violence. The team works hard on it. People call to the centres from last year already. I am sure they got the phone numbers from your laminated sheets placed in the soum landmarks.

(Head of Soum Citizen Khural, man, Mongolia)

I think this is also thanks to your project. Just since New Year we had four cases of domestic violence. We resolved the issues when people called to these numbers. Even the aimag level Children Protection Center appreciated us.

(Soum Governor, man, Mongolia)

5 Women’s economic empowerment – an indirect impact

Improved understanding of women’s land rights and gender equality issues through the WOLTS champions training programme has indirectly contributed to women’s economic empowerment in all four pilot communities. In the Tanzanian pastoralist communities, where women’s economic position was weaker to start with, a core objective of all training sessions was to build women champions’ confidence to voice their concerns, while at the same time building men champions’ confidence, courage and skills to support women’s empowerment. In the Mongolian herding communities, where some women were already relatively more formally educated and employed, and some young single men were contrastingly very disadvantaged and vulnerable, the parallel core objective was to build both men and women champions’ confidence, courage and skills to voice their concerns and to support each other. One indirect impact of all this has been women’s economic empowerment in both countries.

What we did

Steps 2 and 3 of the WOLTS training programme engaged champions in important discussion about gender roles and relations in the context of practical livelihood issues. As already noted in chapter 2, Step 2 focused on investment and Step 3 more particularly on mining. Interactive activities were based around the real-life scenarios that emerged out of the Stage 1 WOLTS research.



In **Tanzania**, champions grappled with issues around access to rubble collection in the tailings around the ruby mines and learned from the experiences of special guests from a women miners’ association and from the government’s mineral valuation department.

Champions in **Mongolia** learned about rules and procedures around community consent,

consultation, compensation and environmental rehabilitation, and debated strategies they could use to support local government officials in holding prospective investors to account. The emphasis in both countries was on men and women working together to improve their livelihoods and secure their land and natural resources for the benefit of the whole community.¹²

What happened and what the communities said

The most obvious benefits for women’s economic empowerment came in **Tanzania**. As just outlined in chapter 4, many young men have begun to support their wives by assisting with domestic duties that women are typically responsible for, so that women have more time available to pursue cash-income generating activities. This has allowed more women to engage more meaningfully with the economic opportunities proffered by mining in both communities.



Role-play exercises undertaken by the champions confirmed the harsh treatment women are subjected to in the mining areas that had emerged as a key finding of the WOLTS Stage 1 research, as well their unjust treatment by the brokers who hold women to ransom by refusing to buy their pickings from the rubble, except at low prices. In Mundarara, men champions have since thrown their support behind women to ensure they receive higher prices for their gemstones, while women are demonstrating to their husbands that they can receive higher prices for their stones if they are prepared to wait for fair offers and not succumb to the brokers’ price fixing pressures. This is not something their husbands have always been prepared to accept, and it suggests greater gender equity in household decision-making dynamics.

Even before the start of Round 2 of the WOLTS training, from December 2019, men and women champions in Mundarara were reporting that women are now much more confident in price negotiations with traders for stones collected from the rubble piles, and they do so with their husbands' support.

Men should accept that women can't make a lot of money picking through rubble, and we should discuss this reality. Investors should not force women to accept their deals – women's views should be respected.

(M38, middle-aged man, Tanzania)

Female rubble collectors are no longer being swindled by male brokers. They are getting better prices and their husbands are letting them be free.

(M1, middle-aged man, Tanzania)

Women are determined when it comes to defending their issues. Since they now have bargaining powers over the minerals they pick from the mining sites, they will definitely defend their other rights.

(Kitongoji Chairman, Tanzania)



In Naisinyai, women champions are investing in their land, growing produce for sale, and recognising the importance of having an independent income to increase equality and participation in household decision-making, as well as to strengthen their bargaining position and thus reduce their risk of domestic violence. In Dalanjargalan, **Mongolia**, as described in chapter 2, women champions are spearheading the monitoring of new mining investments, helping to

protect the economic interests of the most vulnerable and remote herding households and arguing for local job creation. Likewise, all champions in Mongolia, women and men, reported becoming more aware through the training that protecting their pastureland resources means protecting the livelihoods of all herders – not just those of poor and vulnerable groups, such as widows, but those of all community members.

I think gradually women's participation has increased in our area. Now all have a common understanding that women can participate in all social and economic activities like men. Those who attended training changed their attitudes.

(Bagh Governor, man, Mongolia)

Before the WOLTS training women were fully dependant on their husbands, but as training continued many women have started to engage in different small income-generating activities like local shops and selling fruits and vegetables to the locals engaged in rubble collection. Women are contributing to their family needs and so their husbands are now respecting them. Apart from this, it is important for women to participate in decision-making at different levels. They have realised that this is more possible if they overcome major economic dependency on their husbands. Trained women champions have discussed together that dependency is gender-based violence, therefore the best way to be free is by seeking financial powers which may act as a ladder for them to be respected and have easier penetration of their concerns at the family level.

(Ward Councilor, woman, Tanzania)



6 A proven methodology – ready to scale up

The WOLTS Project’s action research over the past five years has produced a proven methodology that is ready to scale up. Building from Stage 1’s in-depth participatory exploration of key local land and natural resource issues with a gender lens, the Stage 2 gender and land champions training programme fosters diverse local leadership on land rights, involving both women and men. The evidence so far suggests it delivers a sustainable model for improving women’s land rights and community land rights, not only in mining-affected pastoralist areas of Tanzania and Mongolia, but with potential to be applied much more widely too.

What happened and what the communities said

Through strengthening the capacity of a small group of respected local champions to know and use land- and gender-related laws and regulations, the WOLTS experience has demonstrated how sustained improvements in gender equity and women’s rights can benefit the whole community. In both countries and all four pilot communities, men and women champions are now working with each other and with local government leaders to better protect community rights, and this has been accompanied by buy-in and appreciation by those same local leaders. From the very beginning, the WOLTS Project has taken a holistic approach to community engagement. Time has been invested and dedicated to building relationships at local level, and to working with formal local government officials as well as with traditional leaders and elders. By including respected men and women from across each community, and building their team spirit, the WOLTS process has focused on bringing the whole community together for the best chance of addressing the mounting challenges posed by climate change, land grabbing, and broader threats to their land and natural resources.

You set an example to other organisations by fully involving the government and community members since the start to the end of the project.

You have been part of our Mundarara family...I would like to sincerely inform you that we have loved you so much, your project has been of help in my community and people are now aware of land rights, mining procedures, GBVs, etc.

(Former Village Chairman, Tanzania)

Personally, the champions have changed a lot for the better. Now they need to influence other people in the community. I think more and more people need your programme in their local area.

(Soum Governor, man, Mongolia)

A key aspect of the WOLTS process is engagement with local government. This was reflected during the training programme as the project team supported champions to identify practical measures they could undertake to improve land and natural resource governance in their local communities. In one such case, a woman champion in Dalanjargalan, **Mongolia**, described how she has used the training:

I aimed to help bagh governors. They have a shallow understanding about different laws and regulations, as well as finding it difficult talking to their people.

They are top down. I have spoken to my bagh governor and gave some advice on how to organise a meeting in a participatory way. The bagh governor took it in a very nice way and we organised the bagh citizen khural meeting together. People liked it. I think I could even do it in another bagh.



Just this one champion’s support to the local government by herself is an example of how the WOLTS training has contributed to building improved local capacity for more gender-equitable and inclusive land governance.

Through supporting local champions for gender equity and land rights, the WOLTS team also directly supported formal local government officials at a joint training session in the programme’s Step 4. The joint session enabled champions to share

what they had learned in the training and present some of their role-plays to their local officials. This stimulated debate and discussion about how the champions, with their strengthened knowledge and awareness of relevant land- and gender-related laws and regulations, could best support formal government processes and institutions – so as to collaborate in ensuring the most accessible and participatory local land governance, where community members can feel free to express their concerns and know they are being listened to. Although village and soum meetings in both countries have taken place with less frequency since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, informal accounts from both champions and local leaders, especially in **Mongolia**, suggest there has been resultant overall improvement in the way local meetings are conducted. In addition, champions across all the communities gave continuously positive feedback on the WOLTS process of action research, and what they had personally gained from it.

I have attended many trainings. But not many of them were like our training! Some training I attended just for a certificate and was not beneficial at all. But our champions training really encouraged participants! Teachers are all very knowledgeable, and the training methodology is interesting and participatory.
(B13, middle-aged man, Mongolia)

I have learned the benefit and power of collaboration. Before I tried hard alone by myself. Now I can do many things with my fellow community members.
(B22, older man, Mongolia)

I was proud of myself that I was invited to the training as a mentor...Some new champions were quiet during the training. It made me think they were not confident in themselves. But I hope we helped them a bit to open up...I am happy we could make all trainings successful, even though it was during COVID.

(D12, elderly woman, Mongolia)

We women are now decided that all forms of GBVs are reduced in our community. We have decided to join efforts to fight against any practice that oppresses a woman in our community. We are passing the knowledge to our daughters for them to grow up knowing what GBV is and how to deal with it.

(N6, middle-aged woman, Tanzania)

I really like how the trainers conduct the training. They respect us a lot. They often ask our opinions on everything...Before I thought all mining activities are bad. But now I understand that mining can be responsible and does not have to affect the local areas badly.

(D21, elderly woman, Mongolia)

I liked role-plays. They helped us to understand and to remember everything that we did in the training. Because it's like in the movies. People do not forget their best movies!

(D42, middle-aged woman, Mongolia)

One final point of note is that high levels of attendance at all the training sessions were not essential to champions benefitting from their participation in the gender and land training programme, even in terms of their legal knowledge. Those champions who attended more than two-thirds of all sessions scored very highly on the perceptions section of Survey 2, with 90% of them responding correctly to all five perceptions statements. However, champions who attended only a third to two-thirds of training sessions also scored very highly in Survey 2, with 88% correct responses.¹³ This seemed to the project team to be further proof of champions taking their role and their identity as a group very seriously, making sure to pass on and share information from each session with any of their fellow champions who had not been able to attend.

What next?

The evidence accumulated by the WOLTS Project over more than five years demonstrates clear



potential for this approach to building strong local capacity for gender equity and land rights at community level, through investing in local champions, to be scaled up within each country. Already, in **Mongolia**, the project team has collaborated with the national government to develop guidelines for including the participatory and gender-equality focused principles of the WOLTS champions training programme within broader national guidelines on landscape planning for local governments at soum level.¹⁴

The training and development of locally chosen gender and land champions can be amplified across other communities in nearby areas within both Mongolia and Tanzania at relatively low cost, by building on the mentoring process developed by the project team during Round 2 of the programme. In

new regions, further afield, the WOLTS experience suggests that initial baseline and participatory research led by strong local civil society partners, with solid facilitation skills and in-depth local cultural knowledge and sensitivity, would be needed to build community engagement and understanding of the most pressing local land and natural resource issues, and to enable selection of the most effective local men and women champions. The evidence from the past five years also demonstrates that the WOLTS approach can serve as a useful model for other countries too, with potentially much broader applicability across the Global South in helping communities respond to the growing challenges of climate change and land grabbing that put continuing pressure on their land and natural resources.

Guidelines for Public Consultations on Soum Land Management in Mongolia

Under the WOLTS Project, a soum landscape management plan was developed in Dalanjargalan using participatory and gender-equality focused principles in organising consultation meetings with local community members in all baghs and at soum level. This was carried out in close collaboration with local government officials and the National Land Agency of Mongolia (ALAMGAC).

The ‘Gender Guidelines’ developed through this collaboration have been included within the broader national land planning guidelines, which were published and distributed to land agency staff in local government offices nation-wide in April 2021.

The success of this experience demonstrates that the WOLTS approach has clear potential to produce much wider impacts on women’s land rights, beyond the pilot communities – contributing to improved land tenure governance at national level and benefiting communities all over the country.



Endnotes

¹ For the Stage 1 research results see: Daley, E., Lanz, K., Narangerel, Y., Driscoll, Z., Lkhamdulam, N., Grabham, J., Suvd, B. & Munkhtuvshin, B., *Gender, Land and Mining in Mongolia*, Jan 2018, https://mokoro.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/Gender_Land_and_Mining_in_Mongolia_WOLTS_Research_Report_No.1_January_2018-1.pdf; and Daley, E., Lanz, K., Mhinda, A., Driscoll, Z., Ndakaru, J., Grabham, J., Kereri, E. & Mbise, E., *Gender, Land and Mining in Pastoralist Tanzania*, Jun 2018, https://mokoro.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/Gender_Land_and_Mining_in_Pastoralist_Tanzania_WOLTS_Research_Report_No.2_June_2018.pdf. See also E. Daley, *Putting research into action – one muddy step at a time*, 30 Jan 2020 - https://mokoro.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/Jan2020_EDaley-6.pdf

² For more on the use and impact of role-play in the WOLTS training, see E. Mbise, *How role-play changed two Maasai communities*, 31 Mar 2020 - https://mokoro.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/Mar2020_EMbise.pdf

³ Comparison of Survey 1 and Survey 2 results from all champions. See chapter 3 for survey details.

⁴ Positions of responsibility include more influential and significant local leadership positions, as well as participatory positions and non-leadership community roles. Local leadership positions at the village/soum level include membership of a Village Council, Soum Citizen Representative Khural, or community-wide land committee or traditional elders' council, e.g. Baraza la Ardhi or Ilaigwanak. At kitongoji/bagh level, local leadership positions include chairing a Bagh Citizen Khural or kitongoji women's group. Local leadership positions also include school and religious positions, e.g. pastors or school committee chairs, and chairs of resource management groups e.g. herders' cooperatives or water committees. More broadly, positions of local responsibility include participatory positions, held by champions who sit as members of kitongoji/bagh level governance institutions, school committees, or herding cooperatives, but not as the chair. Some champions also had non-leadership community roles, e.g. involvement in organising a local event. The 72 new positions of responsibility taken up since the WOLTS training programme began were spread across 37 champions. Within this total, 24 champions held between them 39 local leadership positions; the remaining 33 new positions of responsibility fell into the two other categories of participatory positions and non-leadership community roles.

⁵ See E. Kereri, *How Anna Letaiko got her land*, 30 Apr 2020 - https://mokoro.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/Apr2020_EKereri.pdf

⁶ 1) In Mongolia/Tanzania, if you have the rights to the land, you also have the rights to the mineral resources on or under the land; 2) Mongolian/Tanzanian national law does not allow women to own, possess or register land; 3) Mongolian/Tanzanian national law says that men's rights to land take precedence over women's and that husbands' rights to land take precedence over their wives; 4) Mongolian/Tanzanian national law allows you (whether a man or a woman) to write a will to leave your property to whomever you choose; and 5) In Mongolia/Tanzania, the Constitution makes it illegal to discriminate between men and women.

⁷ Among all 125 champions, 69 (55%) had held and/or were still holding some kind of (non-government) position of local responsibility before starting the WOLTS training, while 56 (45%) did not.

⁸ No data was gathered on the fourth statement (Q4 on Chart 4) in the Stage 1 baseline.

⁹ See J. Grabham & E. Kereri, *Being a man on a gender project – some insights from the field*, 25 Apr 2018 - <https://mokoro.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/Being-a-man-on-a-gender-project.pdf>.

¹⁰ For more about Mongolia's vulnerable men, see Y. Narangerel, *Left behind – The Mongolian herders living at home with Mum*, 29 Apr 2019 - https://mokoro.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/NY_APRIL19-1.pdf; B.

Munkhtuvshin, *Mongolian herder families are being split between countryside and town*, 30 Apr 2019 -

https://mokoro.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/BM_APRIL19.pdf; B. Suvd, *Young champions – hope for Mongolia's herding traditions*, 27 Jul 2020 - https://mokoro.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/July2020_SBoldbaatar-2.pdf; and

B. Munkhtuvshin, *How COVID-19 is bringing Mongolia's herding families back together*, 1 Sep 2020 -

https://mokoro.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/September2020_Mugi-1.pdf

¹¹ See J. Ndakaru, *Seats of power – women's land rights and chairs*, 25 Feb 2020 - https://mokoro.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/Feb2020_JNdakaru_Final.pdf

¹² For some insights into livelihoods issues in Mundarara, see J. Grabham, *Are rubies undermining Maasai culture?* 17 Sep 2019 - <https://mokoro.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/JGrabham2019-Photo-Essay-FINAL.pdf>

¹³ The Survey 2 data is inconclusive for champions who attended less than a third of the sessions.

¹⁴ E. Daley, J. Batsaikhan & N. Lkhamdulam, *Gender guidelines to be distributed in all 330 districts of Mongolia – pilot study supports national roll-out of participatory land use planning*, 30 Mar 2021 -

https://mokoro.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/Gender-guidelines-to-be-distributed-in-all-330-districts-of-Mongolia_Mar2021.pdf

