



—  
What Works for  
Women's Land and  
Property Rights?

What we know  
and what we  
need to know

**Scalise and Giovarelli**

JANUARY 8, 2020

---

“Women’s land and property rights are increasingly understood as an important driver of economic growth and social development, as well as being critical to human rights for women. Growing evidence confirms that women’s land and property rights lead to important social and economic outcomes for women and their families.

Yet around the world, women remain significantly disadvantaged with regard to their land rights. Even when they are recognized as the primary users or workers on the land, they often lack ownership or control of the land or its economic outputs.

This review of the available evidence on women’s land and property rights is aimed at identifying opportunities and needs for additional research. It is based on a review of online literature and academic databases and discussions with global and national actors—practitioners, researchers, and activists.

**We propose a way forward for research that will inform practice and ultimately close the gender gap and improve economic and social outcomes for men and women around the world”.**



---

Elisa Scalise



---

Renee Giovarelli

\* Based on available data in January 2020.

# Women's land tenure is secure when land rights are:

## 1 Complete

More rights in the bundle of rights.

- Includes rights to use, transfer, manage, control, collect income from, bequeath, and inherit, among others.

## 3 Durable

Long enough to allow a return on investment, like planting trees and digging wells, and allow for economic stability.

- If not perpetual, then for a secure period of time.

## 2 Robust

Protected if threatened.

- Recognized when benefit/opportunity attached to right arises (e.g., compensation).

- Exercisable freely and without needing permission.

- Nature and scope of rights are certain, known to the right holder, and broadly understood.

- Socially and legally legitimate.

- Inheritable.

A.

## Contextualizing the field

Women's land and property rights is a relatively new area of concentration in international development practice. Development programs are increasingly focusing on women's status in:

- Systematic titling and registration projects (i.e., programs where customary, unrecorded or unwritten rights are formalized);
- Legal reforms related to land, including marital property and inheritance;
- Agrarian reforms, land redistribution, and recognizing and protecting collective, customary, community, and indigenous lands;
- Governance of common resources;
- Urban and peri-urban land management and planning; and
- Human rights frameworks related to women's rights, property, and economic rights.

**There is also growing understanding of the role that property rights can play in economic empowerment and justice for women, and women's land rights are now included in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs).<sup>1</sup>**

Land tenure security is essential to women’s empowerment in their households and communities, and it also enables other social and economic benefits.

Land is the central productive asset for farming and a foundational asset upon which economies are built. Evidence confirms the importance of women’s rights and control over assets for a range of development outcomes, both for women and for their families.<sup>2</sup>

**Table 1:** Potential Effects of Women’s Secure Land Tenure<sup>3</sup>



## Various studies across contexts have shown that secure land tenure can:

- Increase women's ability to invest in land;<sup>4</sup>
- Increase women's ability to enter into agricultural contracts;<sup>5</sup>
- Increase women and girls' empowerment by participating in household decision-making;
- Increase women and girls' ability to act autonomously; and
- Reduce the likelihood of experiencing domestic violence.<sup>6</sup>

Secure land rights are important for the well-being of families, whether a woman is head of her household or lives in a household headed by a man.

**Households where women have rights to land are likely to spend a larger portion of household income on food, education, and their children's healthcare.<sup>7</sup>**

---

## The global gender gap in land and property rights persists.

The current distribution of land ownership is highly skewed toward men in total size and quality in much of Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. In four African countries, the average area cultivated by women ranges from one-third to two-thirds of the average area cultivated by men.<sup>8</sup>

The most recent waves of the Living Standards Measurement Study – Integrated Surveys on Agriculture for six countries in Sub-Saharan Africa – demonstrate that **the gap extends beyond ownership to the strength of the rights over land that women do own.** This includes land management and the rights to sell or use the land as collateral.<sup>9</sup>

## **The gap endures, in part, because women have difficulties accessing land.**

Inheritance is one of the main methods of land acquisition for both men and women and in many contexts women do not inherit at all or their shares are a fraction of those of men. In most customary systems that practice community allocation, women are not allocated land by their natal community because they typically move to their husband's land when they marry.

Moreover, wives who marry-in to a community are not considered part of the lineage, so they are not allocated land rights.

Other means, such as open purchase on the market or land leasing, are out of reach for most rural women owing to the significant financial resources required and discrimination in lending practices.<sup>10</sup>

**As inequalities in one market reinforce each other over time, women's power as economic actors diminishes. As women are not owners of land and they do not have access to credit, they are less productive and regarded as poorer investments. Significant intervention is required to break this cycle.**

## B.

---

# Strengths, limits, and availability of evidence on interventions and factors that affect women's land and property rights

**Today, the landscape for evidence on interventions is evolving.**

Table 2 shows the availability and strength of evidence on interventions that improve some aspect of land tenure security for women. The strength of evidence connotes the degree of rigor and quantity of studies related to that intervention category. The findings of the evidence connote the degree to which the evidence suggests that a particular intervention is effective, promising, ineffective, or not measured in terms of outcomes for women.

Much of the available evidence does not look at whether an intervention is impacting land tenure security for women, as measured by completeness, durability, and robustness of rights. Also, factors that influence tenure security are not static and results may change over time.

In general, research in this field would benefit from shared definitions and concepts to facilitate aggregation of the lessons from individual studies by outlining key elements that relate to women's land tenure security.<sup>11</sup>

---

**Table 2.** Summary of evidence on interventions and factors that affect women’s land tenure security

▼ Findings in relation to effectiveness of interventions	STRENGTH OF EVIDENCE		
	Fair Evidence The question has been studied in peer-reviewed literature, in three or more studies	Emerging Evidence The question has been studied in less than three studies or is limited in scope or geography	More Evidence needed Evident in practice or in grey literature but not yet rigorously studied
<p><b>Effective</b></p> <p>Found to be effective to improve some aspect of women’s land tenure security</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joint documentation (titles, certificates) of marital property rights (plus attendance at information meetings).<sup>12, 13</sup></li> <li>• Documenting and demarcating land for female heads of households.<sup>14</sup></li> <li>• Reducing gender gaps in knowledge about land rights.<sup>15</sup></li> <li>• Reforming laws on inheritance rights for women.<sup>16</sup></li> <li>• Leveraging existing women’s associations.<sup>17</sup></li> <li>• Establishing legal quotas for women’s participation in land and resource governance bodies (especially with training and support).<sup>18</sup></li> <li>• Mobilizing women to act and advocate collectively for rights to land and resources.<sup>19</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engaging women in community decision-making.<sup>21</sup></li> <li>• Documenting women’s separate rights to land.<sup>22</sup></li> <li>• Establishing clear membership rights for women within groups that collectively hold land,<sup>23</sup> including through formalizing women’s rights to land in the household as a starting place.<sup>24</sup></li> <li>• Incentives for joint titling, such as conditional payments<sup>25</sup> and regulations that allow for reduced fees or use of photographs as proof.<sup>26</sup></li> <li>• Fostering community support for joint titles.<sup>27</sup></li> <li>• Improving legal property rights for women.<sup>28</sup> and positive changes in family law.<sup>29</sup></li> <li>• Challenging male biases in boundary demarcation processes.<sup>30</sup></li> </ul>	
<p><b>Promising</b></p> <p>Found to show promise to improve some aspect of women’s land tenure security or findings not framed in terms of women’s land tenure security but intervention touches on land and findings are related to economic and social outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behavior change interventions related to biased social norms and community land rights.<sup>20</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using Self-Help Groups for agricultural extension delivery.<sup>31</sup></li> <li>• Adopting Adaptive Collaborative Management Approach for community governance of collective forest land.<sup>32</sup></li> <li>• Conducting community conversations about behavioral change.<sup>33</sup></li> <li>• Requiring an explicit record of who will inherit parcel during land tenure regularization process.<sup>34</sup></li> <li>• Focusing agricultural advisory services on women.<sup>35</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthening capacity of female landlords to bargain/contract with lessee.<sup>36</sup></li> <li>• Engaging women in community formalization processes and documenting women’s rights to collectively held lands</li> <li>• Capitalizing on male out-migration.<sup>37</sup></li> <li>• Access to justice on land rights, including judicial/mediators training, paralegals, etc.</li> <li>• Applying global principles and standards on women’s land rights and impact litigation using CEDAW</li> <li>• Training for women in traditionally male fields, such as surveying</li> <li>• Working with police to stop property grabbers</li> <li>• Working with traditional community leaders or local government on securing women’s land rights</li> </ul>
<p><b>Ineffective</b></p> <p>Shown to be ineffective at improving some aspect of women’s land tenure security</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Titling marital property in the name of household head only</li> <li>• Securing collective land rights with only male input</li> </ul>		

Despite limitations in the evidence, among women's land rights experts, practitioners, donors, and researchers, there is a shared understanding that more robust, complete, and durable rights for women can be achieved when interventions are focused on the following:

Women must have **both legal rights and social acceptance of rights to land** (individually or as part of a community).

Women must be able to **generate value from the land** (through use, sale, renting-out, collateral for loans, compensation for takings, etc.) in a way that allows women to use the value gained to support **self-directed decision-making**.

Women must have a working knowledge of how to best use and steward the land so **they can maximize the benefit from land**.

Women's interests must **be given equal weight** with men's in exercising rights to land.

Women must be able to **enforce their rights and interests in land** when they are under threat.

**Better outcomes for women from secure land tenure**

**Table 3.** This table shows more detail on what we know from the evidence about common types of interventions on women’s land rights, and linked to the outcomes . Each intervention type addresses at least one of the dimensions of secure land tenure (i.e., rights are more complete, more durable, or more robust.)

► Dimension of tenure security most impacted	COMPLETE					COMPLETE
	DURABLE	DURABLE			DURABLE	DURABLE
	ROBUST	ROBUST	ROBUST	ROBUST	ROBUST	ROBUST
► Type of intervention outcome	Legal rights	Social acceptance of rights to land	Generate value from land and engage in self directed decision-making	Maximise benefit from land	Women and men’s interests given equal weight	Enforce rights when under threat
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Changes in family law and stronger property rights for women associated with a substantial shift in women’s economic activities, including moving to better jobs and fulltime, non-agricultural employment outside home.<sup>38</sup></li> <li>Intergenerational inheritance patterns are demonstrating greater gender equality over time in Latin America.<sup>44</sup></li> <li>In Zambia, secure inheritance rights for widows are associated with higher land investment by married couples, including fertilizer application, fallowing, and use of labor-intensive tillage practices meant to reduce erosion and run-off.<sup>50</sup></li> <li>Viewing native communities only as collective leads to the failure to guarantee women’s equal rights under the law.<sup>57</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Women must know and understand their rights for documentation to make a meaningful difference.<sup>39</sup></li> <li>Female headed households benefit from titling and registration, from mapping and demarcating, and from certification of rights.<sup>45</sup></li> <li>Cash incentives for opting for joint titling of household land increased the choice to jointly title; gender sensitive awareness raising on the value of joint titling also increase the choice to jointly title, but not to the same extent.<sup>51</sup></li> <li>Female-only land titles improved family welfare more than male-only or joint titles.<sup>52</sup></li> <li>Membership in women’s groups associated with more knowledge about land titling.<sup>53</sup></li> <li>Gender quotas in collective lands’ governing bodies can make interventions more effective with regard to conservation outcomes, and lead to more equal sharing of benefits, but also need to address discrimination in attitudes and practices of groups.<sup>58</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Joint titling benefits women in intra-household decision making and increased agricultural yields.<sup>40</sup></li> <li>Women in self-help groups have more input into household decisions on how to use land than women who are not in self-help groups, but not in areas of decision making that are traditionally held by men.<sup>46</sup></li> <li>Self-help groups may help raise awareness and improve some control over household income but other barriers to women’s empowerment in agriculture remain and are deeply rooted in social and cultural norms.<sup>54</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Involving women in extension services requires awareness of cultural norms related to gendered roles, engaging women as agricultural extension workers and trainers, and a participatory approach.<sup>41</sup></li> <li>For women to benefit from agricultural extension, the project must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– make explicit efforts to reach women;</li> <li>– Design water supplies for use by men and women;</li> <li>– involve women in participatory plant breeding;</li> <li>– Disseminate high-value crops to women that do not require large initial investments or asset ownership; and</li> <li>– Assess how the introduction of new technologies targeted to women will affect gender norms.<sup>47</sup></li> </ul> </li> <li>It is cost-effective in the long run to invest in educating women about their land rights and to improve their technical skills in agriculture, even though it costs more than educating men.<sup>55</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clear membership rights for women within groups who have collective rights to land influences how women participate in land-related decision-making processes. Yet women may not be included in the cultural definition of community – inclusion or exclusion can depend on marital status, marriage residence, and customary tenure rules.<sup>42</sup></li> <li>Forest management groups with high proportion of women on principal decision-making body show better forest outcomes, but women only groups perform less well than mixed groups for adopting forest-enhancing behavior.<sup>48</sup></li> <li>Local resource governance is improved when women participate, in terms of stricter rules, greater compliance with rules, greater transparency and accountability, and better conflict resolution.<sup>56</sup></li> <li>Intervention is needed to help ensure that women meaningfully participate in governing group.<sup>59</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Successful community based legal support requires formal training on law, personalized assistance on handling property rights disputes, involving the local community and leaders, and changing mindsets around women’s rights.<sup>43</sup></li> <li>Paralegals or community based legal assistants should be well-respected and known in the community, and should be both male and female.<sup>49</sup></li> </ul>

## C.

# Recommendations for intervention research

While the evidence base is growing, more research is needed to deepen and broaden our understanding for what is needed to improve women's land and property rights in practice:

- On interventions that **address all three dimensions of tenure security** for women: completeness, durability, and robustness.
- On the value to women of documenting land and property rights **in different tenure systems** (e.g. on collectively held lands) and whether large scale titling is good for women.
- On interventions that improve women's participation in governance bodies of collectively held lands and an examination of **under what conditions inclusion on governance bodies improves outcomes** for women.
- On the **intra-household dimensions** of land rights reforms, especially for women in male-headed households.
- On the **sustainability** of interventions or outcomes, especially through longitudinal studies.
- On the potential for **scaling** specific interventions and positive and negative outcomes of doing so.
- On land tenure interventions appropriate to the experience of **women in different stages of life or with diverse life experiences**, e.g., never married, widowed, disabled, economically poor, rural, urban.
- From a **variety of contexts and regions** to show the effectiveness of intervention types across geography and cultures.
- On how to effectively foster and **support social norm change** to the benefit of both women and men.

## Endnotes

1. Most significantly in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development contains three land-related indicators that track women's land rights: two (1.4.2 and 5.a.1) require collecting data disaggregated by sex, and have a globally agreed methodology and a joint questionnaire for data collection at the country level; and the third (5.a.2) measures progress in the legal framework for women's land and property rights. In May 2012, one hundred and thirty member states adopted the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Lands, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (VGGT), the first internationally negotiated guidance on the governance of land. The VGGT reiterate the principle of gender equality, calling 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."
2. Meinzen-Dick, R., Quisumbing, A., Doss, C., & Theis, S. (2017). Women's Land Rights as a Pathway to Poverty Reduction: A framework and review of available evidence. International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI).
3. This diagram is based on the theory of change put forth in: World Bank (2005), Gender Issues and Best Practices in Land Administration Projects: A Synthesis Report, Gender and Rural Development Thematic Group and the Land Policy and Administration Thematic Group of the World Bank. Evidence on some of these outcomes is strong and for others it is weak. See, Higgins, D., Balint, T., Liversage, H., and Winters, P., (2018) Investigating the impacts of increased rural land tenure security: A systematic review of the evidence," *Journal of Rural Studies* 61, 34-62..
4. Goldstein, M., & Udry, C. (2008). The Profits of Power: Land Rights and Agricultural Investment in Ghana. *Journal of Political Economy*; Ali, D. A., Deininger, K., & Goldstein, M. (2014). Environmental and Gender Impacts of Land Tenure Regularization in Africa: Pilot evidence from Rwanda. *Journal of Development Economics*, 110, 262-275. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdevec.2013.12.009>; Dillon, B., & Voena, A. (2017). Inheritance Customs and Agricultural Investment. Retrieved from <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2913102>
5. FAO SOFA Team, & Doss, C. (2011). *The Role of Women and Agriculture*. Rome: FAO; Croppenstadt, A., Goldstein, M., & Rosas, N. (2013). *Gender and Agriculture: Inefficiencies, segregation, and low productivity traps*. Washington, D.C. World Bank. Development Economics Vice Presidency, Partnerships. Capacity Building Unit.
6. Santos, Florence, Fletschner, Diana, and Capoccia, Angela (2014). *Quantitative Evidence on the Impact of Improving Land Rights or Tenure Security A Systematic and Gender-Sensitive Literature Review*, August 2014.
7. Katz, E., & Chamorro, J. (2002). *Gender, Land Rights, and the Household Economy in Rural Nicaragua and Honduras*. Madison, WI: USAID/BASIS CRSP; Smith, L., Ramakrishnan, U., Ndiaye, A., & Martorell, R. (2003). *The Importance of Women's Status for Child Nutrition in Developing Countries*. International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI); Allendorf, K. (2007). Do Women's Land Rights Promote Empowerment and Child Health in Nepal? *World Development*, 35(11), 1975-1988
8. World Bank. (2012). *World Development Report*. Retrieved from <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/4391>
9. Slavchevska, V., de la O Campos, P., Brunelli, C., & Doss, C. (2017). *Beyond Ownership: Women's and men's land rights in Sub-Saharan Africa*. 2017 World Bank Conference on Land and Poverty. Washington, D.C. World Bank
10. Croppenstadt, A., Goldstein, M., & Rosas, N. (2013). *Gender and Agriculture: Inefficiencies, segregation, and low productivity traps*. Washington, D.C. World Bank. Development Economics Vice Presidency, Partnerships. Capacity Building Unit.
11. See Doss, C., & R. Meinzen-Dick. (2018). *Women's Land Tenure Security: A Conceptual Framework*. Seattle, WA: Resource Equity. <https://consortium.resourceequity.org/conceptual-framework>
12. Persha, Lauren, Greif, Adi, and Huntington, Heather. "Assessing the Impact of Second-Level Land Certification in Ethiopia," Paper prepared for presentation at the "2017 World Bank Conference on Land and Poverty" The World Bank, Washington DC, March 20-24, 2017; Wiig, H. (2013). Joint Titling in Rural Peru: Impact on Women's Participation in Household Decision Making. *World Development*, 52, 104-119; Newman, C., Tarp, F., and Broek, K. (2015). "Property Rights and Productivity: The Case of Joint Land Titling in Vietnam." Vol.91(1), pp.91-105.
13. Melesse, Mequanint B., Dabissa, Adane & Bulte, Erwin, (2018) Joint Land Certification Programmes and Women's Empowerment: Evidence from Ethiopia, *The Journal of Development Studies*, 54:10, 1756-1774; Holden, S.T, and Bezu, S. "Joint Land Certification, Gendered Preferences, and Land-related Decisions: Are Wives Getting More Involved?" Centre for Land Tenure Studies/School of Economics and Business Norwegian University of Life Sciences, AS, Norway (October, 2014); Holden, S. and Tefera, T., "From Being Property of Men to Becoming Equal Owners? Early Impacts of Land Regulation and Certification of Women in Southern Ethiopia," FINAL RESEARCH REPORT (UN-HABITAT and GLTN, January 2008).
14. Persha, Lauren, Greif, Adi, and Huntington, Heather. "Assessing the Impact of Second-Level Land Certification in Ethiopia," Paper prepared for presentation at the "2017 World Bank Conference on Land and Poverty" The World Bank, Washington DC, March 20-24, 2017. Goldstein, M.; Hounbedji, K.; Kondylis, F.; O'Sullivan, M.; Selod, H. 2018. Formalization without certification? Experimental evidence on property rights and investment. *Journal of Development Economics* 132 (2018) 57-74. Goldstein, M.; Hounbedji, K.; Kondylis, F.; O'Sullivan, M.; Selod, H. 2016. Securing Property Rights for Women and Men in Rural Benin. *Gender Innovation Lab Policy Brief*; No. 14. World Bank, Washington, DC. Ali, D.A., Deininger, K., and Goldstein, M. (2014). "Environmental and gender impacts of land tenure regularization in Africa: pilot evidence from Rwanda." *Journal of Development Economics*, vol. 110, 2014, 262-275
15. Quisumbing, A., & Kumar, N. (2014). *Land Rights Knowledge and Conservation in Rural Ethiopia: Mind the Gender Gap*. IFPRI; Cherchi, Ludovica; Goldstein, Markus; Habyarimana, James; Montalvo, Joao; O'Sullivan, Michael; and Udry, Chris, "Incentives for Joint Land Titling: Experimental Evidence from Uganda," 2018 World Bank Conference On Land And Poverty, The World Bank - Washington DC, March 19-23, 2018
16. Dillon, B., & Voena, A. (2017) *Inheritance Customs and Agricultural Investment* (January 18, 2017); Roy, S. (2008), *Female Empowerment Through Inheritance Rights: Evidence from India*, Department of Economics, London School of Economics, September 16, 2008; Peterman, A. (2011) *Women's Property Rights and Gendered Policies: Implications for Women's Long-term Welfare in Rural Tanzania*, *The Journal of Development Studies*, 47:1, 1-30; Dancer, Helen (2017) *An equal right to inherit? Women's land rights, customary law and constitutional reform in Tanzania*. *Social and Legal Studies*, 26 (3). pp. 291-310. ISSN 1461-7390; Deininger, K., Goyal, A., & Nagarajan, H. (2013). Women's inheritance rights and the intergenerational transmission of resources in India. *The Journal of Human Resources*, 48(1): 114-141; Harari, M., (2016). Women's inheritance rights and bargaining power: evidence from Kenya. The Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania; Sapkal, R. (2016). From Mother to Daughter: Does Equal Inheritance Property Laws Reform Improve Female Labor Supply and Educational Attainments in India? *Asian Journal of Law and Economics*, 8(1)

17. Bayisenge, J. (2018). "From male to joint land ownership: Women's experiences of the land tenure reform programme in Rwanda." *Journal of Agrarian Change*, 18(3), 588-605; Kumar, N. and Quisumbing, A. (2015). "Policy Reform toward Gender Equality in Ethiopia: Little by Little the Egg Begins to Walk." *World Development* 67, 406-23; Holden, Stein T. & Tilahun, Mesfin. (2017) "Land Distribution in Northern Ethiopia from 1998 to 2016: Gender-disaggregated, Spatial and Intertemporal Variation, Norwegian University of Life Sciences, Centre for Land Tenure Studies Working Paper 3/17.
18. Agarwal (2001, 2010), Sun, Mwangi and Meinzen-Dick (2011) and Coleman and Mwangi (2012); McCarthy, N., & Kilic, T. (2015). The nexus between gender, collective action for public goods and agriculture: Evidence from Malawi. *Agricultural Economics*, 46(3), 375-402
19. FAO (Gilmour, D.). 2016. Forty years of community-based forestry: A review of its extent and effectiveness. Rome; Velayudhan, M. (2009). Women's Land Rights in South Asia: Struggles and Diverse Contexts. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 44, pp. 74-79; Brody, C., De Hoop, T., Vojtkova, M., Warnock, R., Dunbar, M., Murthy, P., & Dworkin, S.L. (2017). Economic self-help group programmes for improving women's empowerment: A systematic review. *Journal of Development Effectiveness*, 9(1), 15-40; Tadros, M. (2011) Women Engaging Politically: Beyond Magic Bullets and Motorways, Pathways; Shandra, J. M., Shandra, C. L., & London, B. (2008). Women, non-governmental organizations, and deforestation: A cross-national study. *Population and Environment*, 38, 48-72. World Resources Institute, Q&A with Cécile Ndjebet: Empowering Women is Key to Better Forest Management in Cameroon, Stephanie Ratté, March 11, 2015, available at <http://www.wri.org/blog/2015/03/qa-c%C3%A9cile-ndjebet-empowering-women-key-better-forest-management-cameroon>; Klugman, Jeni; Hanmer, Lucia; Twigg, Sarah; Hasan, Tazeen; McCleary-Sills, Jennifer; Santamaria, Julieth. 2014. *Voice and Agency : Empowering Women and Girls for Shared Prosperity*. Washington, DC: World Bank Group. © World Bank <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/19036> License: CC BY 3.0 IGO." Deere, C.D. (2003). "Women's land rights and social movements in the Brazilian agrarian reform." *Journal of Agrarian Change* 3(1-2), 257-288
20. Klugman, Jeni; Hanmer, Lucia; Twigg, Sarah; Hasan, Tazeen; McCleary-Sills, Jennifer; Santamaria, Julieth. 2014. *Voice and Agency: Empowering Women and Girls for Shared Prosperity*. Washington, DC: World Bank Group. © World Bank <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/19036> License: CC BY 3.0 IGO; Grabe, S., Dutt, A. and Dworkin, S. (2014) 'Women's Community Mobilization and Wellbeing: Gendered Resistance to Social Inequalities in Nicaragua and Tanzania'. *Journal of Community Psychology* 42(4): 370-397
21. McCarthy, N., & Kilic, T. (2015). The nexus between gender, collective action for public goods and agriculture: Evidence from Malawi. *Agricultural Economics*, 46(3), 375-402
22. Newman, C., Tarp, F., and Broek, K. (2015). "Property Rights and Productivity: The Case of Joint Land Titling in Vietnam." Vol.91(1), pp.91-105.; Menon, N., van der Meulen Rodgers, Y., and Nguyen, H. (2014). "Women's Land Rights and Children's Human Capital in Vietnam." *World Development*, 54, 18-31
23. Anne M. Larson, Iliana Monterroso and Pamela Cantuarias, Gender and the formalization of native communities in the Peruvian Amazon, CIFOR, 2019; Aarhus, R., & Dondeyne, S. (2015). Formalising land rights based on customary tenure: Community delimitation and women's access to land in central Mozambique. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 53(2), 193-216.
24. Bose, P., 2013. Individual tenure rights, citizenship, and conflicts: Outcomes from tribal India's forest governance. *Forest Policy and Economics*, Vol 33, pp. 71-79
25. Cherchi, Ludovica; Goldstein, Markus; Habyarimana, James; Montalvao, Joao; O'Sullivan, Michael; and Udry, Chris, "Incentives for Joint Land Titling: Experimental Evidence from Uganda," 2018 World Bank Conference On Land And Poverty, The World Bank - Washington DC, March 19-23, 2018.
26. Deininger, K., Ali, D. A. Ali, Holden, S.T., and Zevenbergen, J. (2007). "Rural Land Certification in Ethiopia: Process, initial impact, and implications for other African countries." Washington DC: World Bank, available at <http://ideas.repec.org/a/eee/wdevel/v36y2008i10p1786-1812.html>
27. Holden, S.T, and Bezu, S. "Joint Land Certification, Gendered Preferences, and Land-related Decisions: Are Wives Getting More Involved?" Centre for Land Tenure Studies/School of Economics and Business Norwegian University of Life Sciences, AS, Norway (October, 2014); Holden, S. and Tefera, T., "From Being Property of Men to Becoming Equal Owners? Early Impacts of Land Regulation and Certification of Women in Southern Ethiopia," FINAL RESEARCH REPORT (UN-HABITAT and GLTN, January 2008).
28. Hallward-Driemeier, Mary; Hasan, Tazeen; Rusu, Anca Bogdana. 2013. Women's Legal Rights over 50 Years : Progress, Stagnation or Regression?. Policy Research Working Paper;No. 6616. World Bank, Washington, DC. © World Bank. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/21474>
29. Hallward-Driemeier, Mary; Hasan, Tazeen; Rusu, Anca Bogdana. 2013. Women's Legal Rights over 50 Years : Progress, Stagnation or Regression?. Policy Research Working Paper;No. 6616. World Bank, Washington, DC. © World Bank. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/21474>
30. Aarhus, R., & Dondeyne, S. (2015). Formalising land rights based on customary tenure: Community delimitation and women's access to land in central Mozambique. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 53(2), 193-216
31. Raghunathan, Kalyani, et al. "Can Women's Self-Help Groups Improve Access to Information, Decision-Making, and Agricultural Practices? The Indian Case." *Agricultural Economics*, vol. 50, no. 5, 2019, pp. 567-580.
32. Purabi Bose; Anne M. Larson; Susana Lastarria-Cornhiel; Claudia Radel; Marianne Schmink; Birgit Schmook; Verónica Vázquez-García (2017). Closing the gender gap in access to and control of natural resources in Latin America. *Women's Studies International Forum*, ISSN: 0277-5395, Vol: 65, Page: 53-59
33. McCarthy, N., & Kilic, T. (2015). The nexus between gender, collective action for public goods and agriculture: Evidence from Malawi. *Agricultural Economics*, 46(3), 375-402
34. Ali, D. A., Deininger, K. and Goldstein, M., 2014. Environmental and gender impacts of land tenure regularization in Africa: Pilot evidence from Rwanda, *Land and Property Rights*, Vol 110, pp. 262-275
35. Mogue, T., Mueller, V., & Kondylis, F. (2019). Cost-effectiveness of community-based gendered advisory services to farmers: Analysis in Mozambique and Tanzania. *PLoS One*, 14(3) doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0211448>
36. Bezabih, M. and Holden, S.T. (2010b). "Why is Land Productivity Lower on Land Rented Out by Female Landlords? – Theory, and Evidence from Ethiopia"
37. Lama, Ang Sanu, Kharel, Sambriddhi, and Ghale, Tracy. (2017). When the Men Are Away: Migration and Women's Participation in Nepal's Community Forestry Source: *Mountain Research and Development*, 37(3):263-270. URL: <http://www.bioone.org/doi/full/10.1659/MRD-JOURNAL-D-16-00092.1>

38. Hallward-Driemeier, Mary; Hasan, Tazeen; Rusu, Anca Bogdana. 2013. Women's Legal Rights over 50 Years : Progress, Stagnation or Regression?. Policy Research Working Paper;No. 6616. World Bank, Washington, DC. © World Bank. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/21474> License: CC BY 3.0 IGO.
39. Bayisenge, J. (2018). "From male to joint land ownership: Women's experiences of the land tenure reform programme in Rwanda." *Journal of Agrarian Change*, 18(3), 588-605. DOI: 10.1111/joac.12257; Kumar, N. and Quisumbing, A. (2015). "Policy Reform toward Gender Equality in Ethiopia: Little by Little the Egg Begins to Walk." *World Development* 67, 406-23. DOI: 10.2139/ssrn.2184985
40. Newman, C., Tarp, F., and Broek, K. (2015). "Property Rights and Productivity: The Case of Joint Land Titling in Vietnam." *Land Economics*, Vol.91(1), pp. 91-105. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/279335476\\_Property\\_Rights\\_and\\_Productivity\\_The\\_Case\\_of\\_Joint\\_Land\\_Titling\\_in\\_Vietnam](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/279335476_Property_Rights_and_Productivity_The_Case_of_Joint_Land_Titling_in_Vietnam); Mequanint B. Melesse, Adane Dabissa & Erwin Bulte (2018) Joint Land Certification Programmes and Women's Empowerment: Evidence from Ethiopia, *The Journal of Development Studies*, 54:10, 1756-1774, DOI: 10.1080/00220388.2017.1327662 ; Wiig, H. (2013). Joint Titling in Rural Peru: Impact on Women's Participation in Household Decision Making. *World Development*, 52, 104-119. DOI: 10.1016/j.worlddev.2013.06.005
41. Quisumbing, Agnes R. & Pandolfelli, Lauren, 2010. "Promising Approaches to Address the Needs of Poor Female Farmers: Resources, Constraints, and Interventions," *World Development*, Elsevier, vol. 38(4), pages 581-592, April.
42. Anne M. Larson, Iliana Monterroso and Pamela Cantuarias, Gender and the formalization of native communities in the Peruvian Amazon, CIFOR, 2019;Kaarhus, R., & Dondeyne, S. (2015). Formalising land rights based on customary tenure: Community delimitation and women's access to land in central Mozambique. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 53(2), 193-216.
43. Behrman, J., Billings, L., and Peterman, A. (2013). "Evaluation of grassroots community-based legal aid activities in Uganda and Tanzania: Strengthening women's legal knowledge and land rights." CAPRI Working Paper No. 108, CGIAR Systemwide Program on Collective Action and Property Rights.
44. Food, Agriculture and Rural Development, Current and Emerging Issues for Economic Analysis and Policy Research (CUREMIS II); Volume I: Latin America and the Caribbean; Edited by Benjamin Davis, Rome, 2003.
45. Goldstein, M.; Hounbedji, K.; Kondylis, F.; O'Sullivan, M.; Selod, H. 2016. Securing Property Rights for Women and Men in Rural Benin. Gender Innovation Lab Policy Brief; No. 14. World Bank, Washington, DC. <http://hdl.handle.net/10986/25453> Ali, D.A., Deininger, K., and Goldstein, M. (2014). "Environmental and gender impacts of land tenure regularization in Africa: pilot evidence from Rwanda." *Journal of Development Economics*, vol. 110, 2014, 262-275. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdeveco.2013.12.009>
46. Raghunathan, Kalyani, et al. "Can Women's Self-Help Groups Improve Access to Information, Decision-Making, and Agricultural Practices? The Indian Case." *Agricultural Economics*, vol. 50, no. 5, 2019, pp. 567-580.
47. Quisumbing, Agnes R. & Pandolfelli, Lauren, 2010. "Promising Approaches to Address the Needs of Poor Female Farmers: Resources, Constraints, and Interventions," *World Development*, Elsevier, vol. 38(4), pages 581-592, April.
48. Mwangi, E., Meinzen-Dick, R. and Sun, Y. (2011). "Gender and sustainable forest management in East Africa and Latin America." *Ecology and Society* 16(1): 17.
49. Billings, L., Meinzen-Dick, R.S., and Mueller, V. (2014). "Implications of community-based legal aid regulation on women's land rights." IFPRI Research Brief 20, International Food Policy Research Institute.
50. Dillon, B., & Voena, A. (2017) Inheritance Customs and Agricultural Investment (January 18, 2017)
51. Cherchi, Ludovica; Goldstein, Markus; Habyarimana, James; Montalvo, Joao; O'Sullivan, Michael; and Udry, Chris, "Incentives for Joint Land Titling: Experimental Evidence from Uganda," 2018 World Bank Conference On Land And Poverty, The World Bank - Washington DC, March 19-23, 2018. <https://landwise.resourceequity.org/records/3015>
52. McCarthy, N., & Kilic, T. (2015). The nexus between gender, collective action for public goods and agriculture: Evidence from Malawi. *Agricultural Economics*, 46(3), 375-402.
53. Cogolati, S. & Wisniak, M. (2018). Working Paper No. 198 – March 2018 TAKING WOMEN'S RIGHTS SERIOUSLY: THE CASE OF COMMONS. Retrieved from [https://ghum.kuleuven.be/ggs/publications/working\\_papers/2018/198cogolati](https://ghum.kuleuven.be/ggs/publications/working_papers/2018/198cogolati)
54. Raghunathan, K., Samyuktha K., and Quisumbing, A., (2019). Can Women's Self Help Groups improve Access to Information, decision-making and agricultural practices? The Indian case. *Agricultural Economics*. 2019; 50:567-580.
55. Mogue, T., Mueller, V., & Kondylis, F. (2019). Cost-effectiveness of community-based gendered advisory services to farmers: Analysis in Mozambique and Tanzania. *PLoS One*, 14(3) doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0211448>
56. Leisher, C., Temsah, G., Booker, F., Day, M., Samberg, L., Prosnitz, D., Agarwal, B., Matthews, E., Roe, D., Russell, D., Sundeland, T., Wilkie, D., (2016), Does the gender composition of forest and Fishery Management Groups affect Resource Governance and Conservation Outcomes? A systematic map. *Environmental Evidence* (2015) 5:6.
57. Bayisenge, J. (2018). From male to joint land ownership: Women's experiences of the land tenure reform programme in Rwanda. *Journal of Agrarian Change*, 18(3), 588-605; Kumar, N. & Quisumbing, A. (2015). Policy Reform toward Gender Equality in Ethiopia: Little by Little the Egg Begins to Walk. *World Development* 67, 406-23.
58. Cook, N. J., Grillos, T., Andersson, K. P., (2019) Gender Quotas Increase the Equality and Effectiveness of Climate Policy Interventions, *Nature Climate Change* 9, 330-334; Beaman, L., Chattopadhyay, R., Duflo, E., Pande, R., and Topalova, P. (2009). 'Powerful Women: Does Exposure Reduce Bias', *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, vol. 124, no. 4, pp. 1497-1540 <http://qje.oxfordjournals.org/content/124/4/1497>
59. Kaarhus, R., and Dondeyne, S., (2015) Formalizing Land Rights Based on Customary Tenure: Community Delimitation and Women's Access to Land in Central Mozambique, *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Volume 53: issue 2, June 2015 pp 193-216.

This paper was produced  
for the Research Consortium  
on Women's land Rights.



---

Identify solutions. Equip practitioners. Collaborate for change.

The Research Consortium aims to advance women's land and resource rights around the world.

An initiative from Resource Equity, the Consortium collects, shares, and exchanges knowledge on what works for women, and seeks to foster a thriving community of researchers and practitioners focused on evidence-based change.



---

Advancing women's land and resource rights.

Resource Equity is a nonprofit that advocates for legal, policy, and social change in order to empower rural women by securing their rights to land and resources.

#### Copyright

This document is covered by creative Commons License Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0). You are free to share and adapt provided that you give appropriate credit, link to the license, and indicate any changes made.

Suggested citation format : Scalise, E. and Giovarelli, R. (2020). *What Works for Women's Land and Property Rights? What we know and what we need to know.* Resource Equity.

January 2020