

LANDESA IN AFRICA

To reverse the downward spiral that has left almost half of the population in sub-Saharan Africa living on less than \$1 a day, Landesa, in partnership with governments across the continent, is leveraging the transformative power of land rights.

Landesa and its partners are designing and implementing policies and laws that provide rural communities with secure and equitable rights to land and other natural resources. Land is often the foundation for improving income, nutrition, education, health, and even school enrollment – paving the way for more prosperous and peaceful communities.

Most of sub-Saharan Africa's population is rural and depends on agriculture to survive. Landesa is working to ensure that Africa's farming families have secure land rights, which will allow them to invest in their land and build a better future for themselves and their communities.

Landesa's work in Africa targets some of the root causes of poverty and insecurity in sub-Saharan Africa: contradictions between customary and formal law, failures to recognize and protect communal land rights, women's lack of control over land assets, and weak land registration and conflict resolution institutions.

CURRENT INITIATIVES

Landesa and the World Resources Institute are creating a Web site (wri.org/property-rights-africa) that will provide development experts with a detailed, country-specific primer on property rights issues, including relevant customary laws and examples of lessons learned, for six sub-Saharan countries: Mozambique, Ghana, Mali, Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania.

Uganda

Landesa and partners aim to provide secure land rights to women and girls who were displaced by the country's 20-year civil war. The outcome from this project could be profound for future efforts to assist vulnerable girls and young women in other developing countries. (May 2010 to present)

Rwanda

Landesa is collaborating with local partners to monitor and evaluate efforts to register land rights on a national scale, specifically focusing on the impacts on women. (November 2010 to present)

Kenya

Landesa is working with the Kenyan government and USAID to protect an environmentally sensitive watershed by strengthening the land and forest rights of women and families who live in the area and rely on the watershed's resources. (April 2010 to present)

Burkina Faso

Landesa works with Catholic Relief Services to identify and monitor tenure and other factors influencing women's adoption of conservation agriculture technologies. (April 2010 - present)

Ethiopia

Landesa and the University of Washington are working with Haramaya University College of Law to launch a Land Tenure Institute to support policy research and help Ethiopia's regional governments develop and implement new land laws. (April 2010 to present)

GOALS

Strengthen women's property and inheritance rights in law and in practice

Bridge customary and statutory laws governing land and natural resources

Support community efforts to secure and defend formal collective land rights

Reduce land-related conflict

Assist displaced people to obtain secure land rights following conflict

Safeguard communities' land rights in the face of commercial pressures

Help governments design conservation strategies based on secure property rights

Liberia

Landesa is working with the government of Liberia and USAID to carry out research on customary land tenure. This will help current efforts to design a land law reform strategy that prevents land conflicts and protects customary and women's land tenure across the country. (October 2010 to present)

EARLIER PROGRAMS INCLUDE

Angola

Landesa advanced the government on legal and regulatory reforms to land and natural resource tenure. Landesa also helped create a process for dispute resolution and developed a model for formalizing community land rights. (2003 to 2008)

Rwanda

Landesa and partners worked to ensure that women understood, participated in, and benefited from post-conflict land formalization efforts; led a pilot project to strengthen the capacity of local authorities to resolve land disputes; and provided recommendations toward the development of a comprehensive policy and legal framework to govern land relations. (2003 to 2009)

Uganda

A Landesa-led team analyzed the effects of changes to Uganda's land laws on women and orphans (2001 to 2002). Landesa facilitated negotiations between industry, government, NGOs, and the community to develop a fair and sustainable plan for resource use. (2008)

LANDESA'S HISTORY

Grounded in the knowledge that having legal rights to land is the foundation for prosperity and opportunity, Landesa partners with governments and local organizations to ensure that the world's poorest families have secure rights over the land they till. Founded as the Rural Development Institute in 1967, Landesa has helped more than 100 million families gain legal control over their land, unlocking sustainable economic growth and advancing education, nutrition, and conservation efforts.

THROUGH GRANT-FUNDED AND FEE-FOR SERVICE PROGRAMS LANDESA PROVIDES THE FOLLOWING SERVICES:

- Desk and field research on factors contributing to land/resource tenure insecurity, inequitable land/resource distribution, conflict, and land and resource degradation.
- Assistance to national and local governments to reform policy and legal frameworks, and design programs to support their implementation.
- Technical advice and support in drafting of policy laws and regulations.
- Support for design and implementation of legal literacy and legal aid programs.
- Provision of technical advice to key stakeholders regarding commercial land acquisitions to ensure that land access and tenure needs of the poor are respected.
- Monitoring and assessing the impact of tenure reforms and implementation efforts.
- Mobilization of local groups and organizations for advocacy and engagement in land-based reform.
- Support to governments, civil society and communities to bridge statutory and customary law in ways that advance social justice.
- Advocacy, education, and training of donors, governments, the private sector, NGOs, and CBOs to support access to secure land/resource rights for poor women and men.

