

# A Review of Long-Term Impacts of Land Registration on Women's Land Rights

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## SUMMARY

The nexus between land registration interventions, tenure security, and the resulting impacts on gender, particularly women, has diverse contributions in literature. Although land registration is the most dominant land intervention tool, it has received criticisms in many studies as not being the golden solution to increased tenure security. In many developing countries, land rights is primarily embedded in complex social arrangements such that formalization per se may not render the universal solution to equal access and tenure security. Over the years, efforts to safeguard women's land rights in different country contexts through land registration interventions have not yielded the expected change, especially in the longer term. There is ample evidence in literature and project implementation reports worth learning from.

This scoping study reviewed existing evidence as potential indicators of long-term transformative impacts of land registration interventions on women's land rights. It was found that there are limited studies on long-term impact assessment of land registration interventions because many projects are evaluated in the short term. Focusing on Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, and Asia, the study relied on literature reviews and interviews with experts and practitioners. Among the evidence of transformative impacts in the short term, results observe that: women have increased perceived tenure security; increased investment in agriculture; improved socio-economic status and empowerments. Some identified threats to the sustainability of transformative impacts include socio-cultural norms and practices, supply-driven interventions, and costly land registration processes.

The study uncovers that generally, when it comes to inheritance, laws from many countries aim provide equal rights and protection for all. But contradictions exist between statutory laws, religious laws and customary practices in the protection of women's inheritance rights. These contradictions

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must be critically analyzed to address the gaps. Also, different categories of women have diverse land tenure needs and each land registration intervention tool used: individual, joint, or collective, has its pros and cons on women's tenure security. Thus, it is important not to follow a 'one size fits all' approach, but rather conduct efficient baseline studies to align the contextual women's land needs to the selected interventions tools or strategies, in order to realize the expected transformative impacts. It is also recommended that adequate project funding and technical assistance are provided to ensure the project's continuity even after donors have withdrawn their support.

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