

Women's Land Rights Visiting Professionals Program Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Landesa Center for Women's Land Rights?

The Landesa Center for Women's Land Rights ("the LCWLR") is an initiative of Landesa that champions women's secure access to land by providing resources and training that connects policymakers, researchers, and practitioners around the world. We pilot innovative solutions to secure women's land rights and educate development experts about the gap between customary and institutional law. Our goals are to strengthen women's property rights in law and in practice in countries where we work and to build women's land rights capacity globally.

Why do we focus on women's land rights?

Three quarters of the 1.2 billion people surviving on less than a dollar a day live and work in rural areas. For most of them land is a key input—their ability to lift themselves out of poverty is strongly influenced by the extent to which they have secure access to and control over a plot of land.

Women are particularly vulnerable. They may lose access or control over land when they get married, get divorced, or become widows or when their husbands take another wife. They may be prevented from inheriting land from their parents. They may not have a say about how the family land is used or how the income it generates is allocated. They may not know their rights. They may not be able to enforce the rights they do have.

Research has shown that addressing these issues can improve the lives of women, their families, and their communities. When women's land rights improve they are less likely to experience domestic violence, their families are better fed, their children perform better in school, they tend to practice better family planning, and they are more likely to be involved in family decisions.

What is the Women's Land Rights Visiting Professionals Program?

As one of the LCWLR's core efforts to build capacity, the Women's Land Rights Visiting Professionals Program seeks to cultivate a network of qualified professionals who are strongly committed to strengthening women's land rights at national, local, and international levels. Our goal is to enhance these visiting professionals' capacity to strengthen women's land rights, to foster their ability and motivation to participate in a women's land rights network, and to reinforce their commitment to strengthening women's land rights.

This is a competitive program that begins with a six-week period of intense training, mentoring, and sharing with land tenure experts at Landesa's main office in Seattle, Washington. Visiting professionals will have the opportunity to enhance their understanding of the challenges to strengthening women's land rights, expand the set of approaches they can consider to address these challenges, and improve their effectiveness by strengthening their leadership, managerial, and communication skills. In addition to enhancing visiting professionals' capacity, the six weeks in Seattle are designed to foster the ties and mutual trust that will lay the foundation for an international network of women's land rights professionals.



Who are we targeting for the Women's Land Rights Visiting Professionals Program?

The Women's Land Rights Visiting Professionals Program is designed for mid-level development professionals working in India, China, and East Africa (Kenya, Tanzania, or Uganda) who are strongly committed to strengthening women's land rights. Candidates must have a minimum of five years' experience working in development, at least two of which are focused on issues related to land tenure or women's rights. They must be able to communicate fluently in English, both verbally and in writing, and they need to be able to spend six weeks in Seattle during parts of September and October.

What do we expect from the visiting professionals?

In order to satisfy this program's requirements, visiting professionals must be able to take a six-week break from their professional obligations at home. Visiting professionals are expected to be active and engaged participants who will take full advantage of their six weeks in Seattle to hone their knowledge and skills and to share their expertise with their peers and with Landesa experts. To maximize learning and to help develop a sense of community during their time in Seattle, visiting professionals will cover a full-time curriculum that combines structured sessions, informal gatherings, speaking engagements, and mentoring. Visiting professionals will be expected to do readings, lead sessions, and make presentations about their work.

In the long term, we expect visiting professionals will continue working to strengthen women's land rights through their own work as well as through their mentoring and support of others in the same field.

What are the topics covered during the six-week period in Seattle?

The six-week curriculum is designed to:

Increase the visiting professionals' understanding of the challenges to strengthening women's land rights by identifying what the problems are and how they fit into the larger picture, both in relation to other development issues and to what is taking place in other geographic or political regions;

Expand the set of options, approaches, and potential solutions that visiting professionals can consider by learning from what has been tried in other settings, by learning from solutions to different-but-related problems, by becoming part of a network of colleagues who can act as a resource, and by being encouraged to think creatively; and

Improve their effectiveness at addressing the challenges of securing women's land rights by strengthening their leadership, managerial, and communication skills.

What costs are covered by the Visiting Professionals Program?

The program will cover the following travel expenses: cost of obtaining a US visa, roundtrip flights, and airport transfers. We will also cover lodging and public transportation during the six weeks in Seattle, and we will provide a modest stipend to cover food and other living expenses for those six weeks. Visiting professionals will have access to a computer and internet. The program will not be responsible for any additional expenses.

