

LANDESA IN LIBERIA



Liberia's 2018 Land Rights Law is one of the most progressive land rights reforms on the African continent.

Between 1989 and 2003, discontent over land issues, exploitation of rural labor, and ethnic division in Liberia fueled a protracted civil war.

For decades, women in Liberia were commonly denied access to, control over, and ownership of land, a patriarchal practice enabled by customary land governance structures as well as traditional practices.

Now, the Land Rights Law has opened the door for the more than [2.3 million Liberians](#) living in rural areas to gain legal recognition of their customary land rights—and it safeguards women's rights within communities.



"Land is power. Land is everybody's business." — Tumu, a resident of Sanoyea Town, Bong County

Peace, stability, and sustainable development in post-conflict Liberia hinge on effective implementation of the Land Rights Law—with challenges impeding the path forward:

- Lack of awareness of the Land Rights Law in rural areas
- Inadequate infrastructure posing barriers to direct community engagement
- Discriminatory social norms limiting women's decision-making power around land

Since 2010, Landesa has supported development of gender-equitable and socially inclusive land laws—including the Land Rights Law itself—and policies, conducted integral research, built government and civil society capacity to offer solutions to land issues, and facilitated essential education and awareness in rural communities.

OUR IMPACT IN LIBERIA



2.3 million women and men can enjoy stronger land rights following the adoption of Liberia's 2018 Land Rights Act, supported by Landesa.



121 thousand women and 41 thousand men in Liberia stand to enjoy stronger land rights due to Landesa's government capacity building efforts over the last five years.



13 thousand women and 8 thousand men in Liberia received land rights training and education from Landesa over the last five years.

HIGHLIGHTS

Talking Books

Landesa raises awareness of the Land Rights Law in Liberia's low-literacy areas using Amplio Talking Books, durable handheld audio devices that offer educational messaging in 13 of Liberia's 16 local languages. Since 2020, Landesa has circulated Talking Books to more than 12,560 households across six Liberian counties, reaching 71,700 people in typically underserved and low-literacy rural communities. Each month, an identified community receives 600 Talking Books containing audio messages about the legal processes for obtaining deeds, women's land rights, land dispute resolution, climate change, and more.

Community Land Formalization

Landesa guides communities through Community Land Formalization, the multi-step process required to obtain an official deed for customary land. With legal ownership of their land, communities enjoy protection from exploitative land grabs and can better manage the resources they depend on for their livelihoods. Currently, Landesa supports five Clans—more than 41,000 people inhabiting more than 52,000 hectares of land—in this process to secure their future.

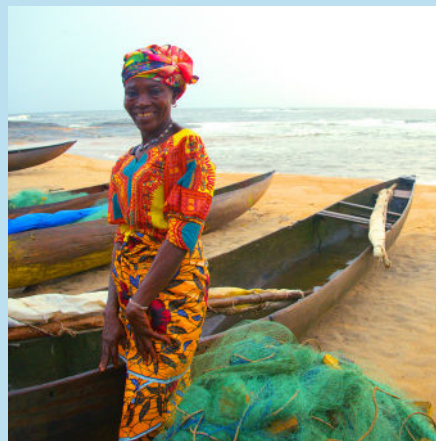
Climate Change Integration

Half the remaining Upper Guinea rainforest in West Africa lies within Liberia. To protect this valuable biodiversity in the face of climate change,

Landesa supports rural communities to integrate climate risks and adaptation capacities into land use plans. From 2023-2024, Landesa seeks to protect over 93,000 hectares of threatened biodiverse ecosystems and vulnerable human settlements.

Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

As communities formalize their customary land, members receive formal deeds to their residential plots. Despite a clear provision in the Land Rights Act stating all Liberians regardless of gender are entitled to residential land, loose interpretations hold potential to exclude women and other groups. Landesa supports the Liberian government and civil society to train local leaders on ensuring women and other marginalized groups are included in the issuance of formal land deeds.



"We want to claim land for the future of our children."

— Dekontee, Assistant Town Chief in Togba Nyakon Clan, Rivercess County



LANDESA is an international non-governmental organization that fights rural poverty and provides opportunity and security for women and men through the power of land rights.



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