

ALMOST HALF OF THE POPULATION IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA LIVES ON LESS THAN \$1 A DAY



Photograph by Deborah Espinoza

LANDESA IN AFRICA

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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.

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

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 study the impacts of 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)

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)

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)

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.

EARLIER PROGRAMS INCLUDE

Angola

Landesa helped the government through the legal and regulatory drafting process as it implemented new land laws. Landesa also helped create a process for dispute resolution and developed a model for formalizing community land rights. (2003 to 2008)

Burkina Faso

Landesa examined factors diminishing women's adoption of advanced soil and water conservation techniques. (2009 and 2010)

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)

