

Strengthening land rights for women

Inspiring examples of interventions
supported by the Netherlands



LAND GOVERNANCE
MULTI STAKEHOLDER DIALOGUE

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LAND GOVERNANCE

MULTI STAKEHOLDER DIALOGUE

A BETTER WORLD

STRENGTHENING WOMEN'S LAND RIGHTS



PROSPEROUS

Women with strong property and inheritance rights earn up to **3.8 times more income**



NOURISHED

Children whose mothers own land are up to **33% less likely to be severely underweight**



EDUCATED

Families where women own more land devote **more of their budget to education**



SAFER

Women who own land are up to **8 times less likely to experience domestic violence**



RESILIENT

Where women's property and inheritance rights are stronger, women's **individual savings are up to 35 percent greater**



HEALTHY

Children in households where women own land are up to **10% less likely to be sick**



PROSPEROUS and RESILIENT data point: Peterman, A. (2013). Women's Property Rights and Gendered Policies: Implications for Women's Long-term Welfare in Rural Tanzania. *The Journal of Development Studies*, 47(1), 130.

EDUCATED data point: Doss, C. (2006). The effects of intrahousehold property ownership on expenditure patterns in Ghana. *Journal of African Economies*, 15(1), 149-160.

NOURISHED data point: Aliendort, K. (2007). Do Women's Land Rights Promote Empowerment and Child Health in Nepal?. *World Development*, 35(10), 1975-1988. Chicago

SAFER data point: Agarwal, B., & Panda, P. (2007). India. Toward freedom from domestic violence: the neglected obvious. *Journal of Human Development*, 8(3), 359-388.

HEALTHY data point: Meson, N., van der Meulen Rodgers, Y., & Nguyen, H. (2014). Women's Land Rights and Children's Human Capital in Vietnam. *World Development*, 54, 18-31.

Introduction

In preparation for the celebration of International Women's Day, at the end of January 2016, the Organizing Committee of the Land Governance Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue (LG MSD) sent out a call for inspiring practical examples of Netherlands supported interventions that show how important and catalytic strengthening of land rights for women can be.

This booklet is a collection of 14 stories that demonstrate why investing in secure land rights for women is important. Securing access to and control over land by women has multiple benefits and clearly requires involvement and commitment of many actors, including men. The booklet comprises examples of various ways in which organizations can assist in strengthening capacity development, documentation and joint catalytic action of women in their rightful claim to improved land governance.

At the launch of this booklet, it was announced that the stories that staff of Kadaster, Oxfam Novib and Wageningen UR/ Centre for Development Innovation contributed to the topic were considered outstanding by both the secretariat of the LG MSD Organizing Committee and the Taskforce Women's Rights and Gender Equality of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. These three organisations have therefore been invited to coorganize an impactful event later this year that will be geared towards accelerating joint action in strengthening women's land rights.

The last section of this booklet has photographs that were made in Mozambique by photojournalist Kadir van Lohuizen, upon request of ActionAid. These photographs were shown at the launch of the booklet by Minister Lilianne Ploumen.





Inspiring stories stressing the need for **Capacity Development** when strengthening land rights for women

Woman from the Tillabéri region, Niger:

"After the death of my parents, our brothers did not allow my sister and myself to inherit land (...) Now I know that this is not just and I decided to claim my legal share. I told my brothers that (...) if they would not grant me my part I would go to court."

Imams for Female Farmers in Niger

REFEPA and KARKARA in collaboration with Oxfam Novib

Due to climate change and desertification—one third of the arable land in Niger has been lost to desertification—food insecurity is an increasing problem for the Nigerien population. Climate change has resulted in periods of floods and severe droughts, leading in part to crop failures and famine.

The dry season is usually when men look for work outside of the agricultural sector. Today, irrigation techniques make it possible to farm even in the off-season. As a result, men claim land at the expense of women who would traditionally work the land in the off-season. In addition to this, it has become embedded in common belief that Nigerien law—be it customary, religious, or formal law—does not allow women to own land. Combined with the increased competition for agricultural land, this (mis)understanding has reduced women's access to land, not to mention land ownership. Consequently, food production has reduced and families are no longer able to feed themselves.

Towards a Solution: Bring In the Imams

Common belief regarding the role and rights of women prevents the active participation of women in food production. As became evident in a pilot project (2011-2015), with help from enlightened imams, men and women in the community can come to realise that increased participation by women in agriculture is not only possible but also beneficial to the community. Imams play a key role in convincing men and (in) formal community leaders that women's access to land (ownership) and to modern agricultural techniques is neither contrary to religious norms nor to customary or formal law, and will in fact benefit the whole community. The use of religion and local traditions such as storytelling is part of the innovation present in this project.

Results demonstrate that with the changed role of women in agriculture their status within the community will change accordingly. More equal gender relations and the participation of all members of the community will, in turn, lead to more social cohesion and cooperation, resulting in more resilience to food shortages. Secure land and water rights allow women to invest in agriculture and to fully participate in food production. As a consequence, the ability of their family to cope with food shortages will increase as will the family income.



The Project

With the help of local partners, REFEPA and KARKARA, Oxfam Novib is training community members and authorities on women's land rights. To complement this, women are encouraged to participate in decision making. Women are supported in their endeavours to acquire formal land titles and access to land in general. Economic capacities are strengthened through providing support when it comes to income generating activities and saving credit schemes. Small-scale irrigation and the rehabilitation of degraded or fallow land are ways the project enhances agricultural production. The pilot on which this project was based was well documented, being featured on local radio and TV, and a comprehensive communication strategy has been developed to expand the project to other communities. The involvement of national media and influencing local and national authorities to embrace the methodology is included in the project. Oxfam Novib and its Nigerien partners are confident that the positive results and the leading role of imams, together with the communication strategy will allow them to scale this project up, aiming to reach more than 21,000 people.

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Photo: REFEP/ Women's Network for Peace (published in Piece Direct)



‘Fanning the Spark’

Burundi; Wageningen UR/Alterra through FDOV

Food security is a major challenge in Burundi. Farmers do not produce enough food for the growing population and fertile soils are degrading due to more intensive land use and climate change. Researchers from Wageningen University and Research Centre (WUR) work closely together with these farmers. Women play a key role in an approach that leads to more sustainable land management and higher yields.

‘Fanning the Spark’ is an FDOV financed project that aims to increase food security in Burundi. Central to the approach of the project is the Integrated Farm Plan, or PIP (Plan Intégré du Paysan in French). In a PIP the family depicts its future vision of the farm in a drawing, and makes an action plan to carry out this vision. During the creation of a PIP all family members—men and women alike—discuss their goals and aspirations, and decide together what to include. They are the main driving force of improvements on the farm, and in the action plan express their roles and responsibilities.

Results show that the creation of a PIP contributes to gender equality in the family and to enhanced mutual understanding between husband and wife. They now have a common vision and goal to



achieve, leading to fewer conflicts, clearer roles, improved distribution of tasks, and a stronger position of the wife in the family. In the PIP approach we call this conscientisation: a family becomes aware of its ability to transform reality by working closely together. For instance, having established a PIP, men spend less money on alcohol, because they see it as a necessary investment to improve the farm.

How did we achieve this change? The first step in 'Fanning the Spark' was the training of 'innovative farmers' (more women than men) in each village in integrated farm planning, better agricultural production techniques, and knowledge transfer skills. Subsequently, by means of farmer-to-farmer training, these first PIP farmers transferred their newly acquired vision, knowledge, and skills to other farmers in their community. This was done in competitions between organized farmer groups resulting in 80 percent of all families in a village having a PIP within a year. In this way the families started to collaborate and are now prepared to create cooperatives aiming to produce more for the market. The required inputs (chemical fertilizer, manure, seeds, etc.) can be purchased through micro-credits.

Women are taking the lead in this bottom-up agricultural development approach. A special case is an old woman who took the place of her deceased husband as farmer-to-farmer trainer. During the competitions she inspired and trained young farmers in creating their PIP in such a way that her groups belonged to the best of that generation. Another example is a woman who, after creating and implementing her PIP, bought extra land from the increased sales of her produce together with some of her savings. There are more stories like this: women are changing the way they live and work, because once they have a PIP, the roles and division of tasks within a household are much clearer, and women feel empowered to take the lead in sustainable farming and food security.

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Women Claim Back the Tana Delta

Kenya; Nature Kenya in collaboration with Both ENDS

Using Female Expertise in Land Use Planning

In many parts of rural Kenya women form the backbone of household food security. Women deal with land tenure and activities such as the provision of water, growing vegetables and herbs, and farming activities, on a daily basis. At the same time, women are most vulnerable to the impacts of environmental degradation and land grabbing. Their limited access to information about their land user rights and impacts of land use changes, as well as their limited participation in governance procedures, affect their contribution at the decision-making table. When women are given the possibility to participate in decision making regarding land use planning, their expertise strengthens the local management of natural resources.

The Tana Delta is characterised by a unique biodiversity where about 100,000 farmers, fishers, and nomads live and work. The natural resources such as land and water are crucial for their sustainable livelihoods. Since 2007, the Kenyan government has been issuing permits to local and foreign investors to use the Tana River Delta land for growing commercial biofuel crops such as sugar cane and *Jatropha curcas*. Both ENDS supported its partner Nature Kenya in mounting an advocacy campaign to promote conservation and traditional livelihoods in the Delta. Nature Kenya visited individual households in the area to inform them about the impacts of the proposed large scale commercial developments on their current land use.



Members of the Moa Bidii Women Group, Tana River County, sorting out their tomato harvest at their kitchen garden. Photo: G. Odera

Engaging Women in the Delta

Working with local government actors, Nature Kenya collected community views on the land use plan. The Tana Planning Advisory Committee (TPAC) was formed to provide an avenue for bottom-up participation and input into the land use plan. During these visits they noticed that women had almost no access to any of the decision-making procedures. In order to include women's voices in the land use planning process Nature Kenya focussed on women in community meetings, requiring local leaders to include at least 30 percent women in all meetings. The progress made here ensured that women's needs were at the center of the land use plan. In addition, women groups were targeted in the implementation of pilot livelihood activities such as beekeeping, kitchen gardening, and poultry farming to increase their confidence and their income.

In 2011, Nature Kenya successfully lobbied to coordinate the government in the preparation of the Tana Delta Land Use Plan (2015) to structurally address these issues. The land use plan is a negotiated document that is endorsed by national and county governments, and by local communities. It sets uses for various parts of the Delta including areas for private investors. Nature Kenya aims to form a grassroots network of women which focuses on the exchange of information and putting women at the forefront of decision-making fora across the country. The provision of information and capacity building towards women was in this way combined with the creation of political space for women to articulate and materialize their claims to land and user rights of resources in the relevant decision-making processes.

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Stories of Life and Overcoming from Mozambique

Republic of Mozambique, ITC, and CTV, in collaboration with the Netherlands Embassy in Maputo

Rebeca's Journey

Rebeca is one of the most active and vocal rural women's voices against land grabbing. Her strength and inspiration stems from a personal drama: after the death of her husband in 1992, Rebecca was subject to severe acts of violence perpetrated by her in-laws who accused her of killing her husband. They took everything from her, including the plots of land that she had cultivated with her husband. In 1995, she returned to her birthplace in Manhiça where her family took her in and where she lives to this day, managing plots of land inherited from her grandmother.

Angered by her experience, Rebeca joined the Agricultural Cooperative of Dola, at the time composed of 48 members. Here she benefited from several development training initiatives in management and land rights. Subsequently, she held the position of President of the District Union of Peasants of Manhiça. In this capacity, she led a public demonstration in 2008 against land grabbing by large sugar producers. The demonstration had been duly communicated and authorized by the district government, but was violently repressed by riot police.



Community land delimitation certificates



Minister Ploumen discussing land empowering action in Maputo

Her voice is heard because she talks about the experiences, tragedies, and triumphs of Mozambican rural women. According to her, the National Farmers' Union (UNAC) gave her the training and information that allowed her to "open her eyes" and become aware of her rights, giving her the ability to in turn defend the rights of other rural women.

Still Leading the Fight

Rebeca Avelino Mabui is now 60 years old and has always been a farmer; agriculture has been the base of her livelihood. She grows several food crops, including maize and cassava, on 0.68 ha in the lower area of the Incomati River, and on 2 ha in the upper part.

In 2011, she was elected Vice President of the Maputo Provincial Farmers Union, a position she still holds today. She is also the Coordinator of the Provincial Rural Women as well a member of the Committee for Rural African Women. Despite the accusation of belonging to the opposition for defending women and campaigning against land grabbing and having already been publically threatened by the government, her mission in life is to fight and protect rural women, who remain vulnerable and unprotected.

Rebeca's efforts in part aim to deliver positive experiences, such as the one Otília Carlos Vitorino had, to rural women in Mozambique. Otília was previously unaware of her rights to land, but now has five land titles to her name, including one to the land where her house stands. The plots of land she inherited from her mother are now safely hers and she has moved from being a subsistence farmer to cultivating four rice fields.

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CENTRO TERRA VIVA
Estudos e Advocacia Ambiental





Educating Potential Agents of Change

East African Land Administration Network in collaboration with UTwente/ITC through NICHE

A Narrow Approach to Education

The Eastern Africa Land Administration Network (EALAN) plays an important role in development and support of land administration education in Eastern Africa. In December 2015, the Netherlands Initiative for Capacity Development in Higher Education (NICHE) funded the SEALAN project which focusses on three themes: land administration, land governance and policies, and access to land for women and vulnerable groups.

Dominance of patriarchal and discriminatory customary law restricts women's ability to own, inherit or individually use land. At the same time, formal laws in most EALAN countries do not clearly stipulate the role of women in the decision-making process since the cultural practices normally overtake the rules in the constitution. Often, land professionals do not know how to handle problems of women's rights to land. Land professionals prefer to leave it to the families to settle the problems. Due to dominant patriarchal and discriminative cultural practices, women often end up having little or no access to justice and remain marginalized.



Getting Women's Land Rights into the Curriculum

EALAN institutions find part of the problem to lie with the educational system that focuses on technical aspects of land tenure in relation to the formal land tenure and land governance systems. There is no or little attention to understanding and accommodating customary land tenure and land governance systems when administering land. At the same time, the formal land tenure systems rarely discuss the role of women in land. Women are thus bound to remain vulnerable both in the customary and the formal land administration systems.

EALAN proposes that by including elements of access to land for women and vulnerable groups in the curricula—from the perspective of customary tenure and formal land tenure—the students will be well prepared when confronted by challenges of women's access to land by the time they are professionals. It is expected that including gender elements in the education programmes the students will become agents of change and become considerate of women's position in relation to land in the future.

EALAN member institutions propose to offer short courses to administration professionals. The aim is to improve professionalism in land governance and expose current land professionals to the gender aspects of their field. EALAN members believe that sharing the problems faced by women with land professionals will bring the stories to life, and challenge the land professionals to find solutions.

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“Women Come with Nothing and So Own Nothing”

Uganda; Oxfam Novib

Although women play a major role in the production of coffee and sesame in the Kasese and Yumbe Districts, men own the land for these cash crops and everything that is harvested from them. Women typically receive only a small percentage of the profits and hardly have any decision-making power, lacking incentives to improve the quality of their agricultural produce.

Women sell small quantities of sesame, which they carry to local markets. Women also earn petty cash from weeding on other farms, though they are paid only half of what men would earn for the same work. Bulk buyers exist and would pay higher prices for women's goods. However, crops need to be delivered to them by bicycle or motorbike, and gender norms dictate that women cannot ride bicycles as they cannot wear trousers in Yumbe.

A coffee buyer in Kasese:

“Since our suppliers tell us to stop mixing different grades, we value the work of women coffee sorters much more. We now pay them a higher price per bag of sorted coffee, and provide shelter for the sun so that they can do their work even better, so that we also earn more.”



Coffee farmer Polonia explaining participatory monitoring of women's land rights in Kasese district, Uganda (Oxfam, 2012)



Joseph and Victoria explaining with their GALs diary how they achieved gender equality and a better livelihood (Oxfam in Uganda, 2014)

Stepping Stones for Change

Oxfam Novib supports the idea that a change in gender norms and relations—including those related to land use rights and land ownership—is a precondition for inclusive and sustainable economic development. Field experiences illustrate that with deliberate effort and planning it is possible to change gender behaviour in a relative short span of time. The Gender Action Learning System (GALS), a community-led methodology for empowerment, combines changes in social norms and gender relations with agro-technological interventions.

Behavioural change is further triggered by male role models from the same communities promoting collaboration between men and women as a win-win strategy. This is supported by interactive theatre, songs, and radio broadcasts. Voluntary peer learning and mentoring is an essential part of the methodology. Because of changed norms, women can now wear trousers, own and ride bicycles and motorbikes just like men, resulting in an increased access of women to markets. Women with tenure rights have a reason to invest in quality. The changes in behaviour are accompanied by technical advice to improve agricultural production as well as marketing and bargaining skills that enable male and female producers to engage in multi-stakeholder negotiations.

People at the Heart of the Value Chain

Visions on how to improve their livelihoods include women and men sharing productive, domestic, and care work so they can produce enough; joint decision making about expenditures so women see a return from their work; and women having secure access to land. These visions are represented in drawings and form the basis for change. Parting from these visions, gender inequalities and opportunities are analysed and discussed.

The project saw an increase in the number of men and women working together on their land and sharing household and unpaid care work. There was more shared decision making at household and community level. A significant win was the acceptance that women in extended families can own land and the increased number of women whose names were added to land agreements formerly registered under their husband's name. The programme also contributed to higher production and quality of coffee and sesame seeds, resulting in a higher income, more trust, and efficient transactions with buyers.

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Inspiring stories stressing **the need for** **Documentation** when strengthening land rights for women

Mamalefane, Lesotho:

*"Getting this lease fills me with joy. I no longer fear the future,
now that I have my lease. The future holds no fear for me any longer.
I now have a future with this lease and so do my children."*



Char: Where Women Come First

Bangladesh; Char Development and Settlement Project – IV,
in collaboration with the Netherlands Embassy in Dhaka

Land Governance in Promoting Gender Equality

One of the prime issues of better land governance is to undertake reforms to give women equal rights and access to ownership and control over land and other property. Women often have fewer rights to land for a variety of reasons, including biases in formal law, in customs, in inheritance, and in the division of power and labour in the family and in society.

If better land governance and land tenure initiatives can be promoted, gender equity and better women's rights will likewise be promoted, which directly serve to increase women's access to economic resources as well as financial services, and will help secure their inheritance rights.

The proper maintenance of land records and the implementation of inheritance law, which are the key issues for better land governance, can ensure women equal rights to land, water, pasture, and forest.



A 50/50 Deal on Land for Households

The Char Development and Settlement Project (CDSP) in Bangladesh introduced an innovative measure when it comes to landless families' settlement, which has improved the position of women regarding land rights. The wife's name is now written first in the legal land title document. As a result, she is legally entitled to 50 percent of the land. This strengthens her position in the family, provides her access to the land, and gives her a voice in decision-making processes. Women feel empowered and respected.

Further improvements include the mutual consent needed to sell land, for example, when a household wants to use land as collateral for credit; both husband and wife have an equal share in the land. Monitoring activities indicate that the improvements in land titling have already contributed to improving the livelihoods of the participants: the assets of the households are increased and the legal security that the documents give to the settlers is stimulating them to invest in their newly acquired land. Women are now eligible to apply for loans from banks, with land titles as mortgage.

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“Give Her a Room”

Albania; Urban Research Institute in collaboration with the Netherlands Embassy in Tirana

Albania’s Perpetuating Inequality

The more empowered the individual is over his own livelihood, the more equipped a society becomes to bring about collective progress. Ensuring equitable property rights to women and men puts them in a better, more secure position financially speaking, gives them access to financial services, and helps them to think beyond daily sustenance. Property exclusion perpetuates inequality: a woman needs the opportunity to prove herself in order to break the cycle of discrimination in Albania today.

Whereas land and property represent 75 percent of the global wealth, women are entitled to only 2 percent, caught in a vicious cycle of discriminating customs and ineffective laws. Fuelled by gaps in the legal framework and customary laws, which identify the man as the sole representative in household legal matters, women in Albania do not exercise equal property rights. Deprived of her most basic needs, the woman is typically considered as a child and a household caretaker with no say in decision making, reinforcing customary belief and leaving no room for emancipation.

Aside from the tradition of excluding women from property rights, the official property data and documentation on property ownership is quite incomplete. Only 12 percent of private properties in Albania have been tagged by gender in the National Registry. The number of women applying for property registration is three times less the number of men and in 2014 only 14 percent of all applications of land legalisation were filed by women. These statistics reinforced the idea that, beyond the structural limitation, civil apathy and lack of awareness was feeding into the problem especially in rural areas and smaller cities.

Tackling a Backward Rule of Law

The Urban Research Institute (URI), in partnership with the Embassy of the Netherlands, developed a programme to strengthen the rule of law, awareness, and legal advice for registering property in the Pogradec District of Albania. Building off the premise that implementing equitable property rights requires joint efforts from all stakeholders, a bottom-up approach was developed to ensure that property rights were more than a concept that exists on paper. URI acted as a catalyst for the system by providing capacity building trainings while also acting as an intermediary between the citizens and government institutions to ensure a flow of information and due diligence. Within two years, the registration of property for all households and businesses in the district was facilitated, 40 percent of which were owned by women.

URI is looking to scale up to other regions. With regard to the Progradec District, URI is interested in measuring the impact of the project on sustainable economic growth and women empowerment in the district.

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Women and Property Rights in Post-Conflict Burundi

ZOA Burundi in collaboration with the Netherlands Embassy in Bujumbura

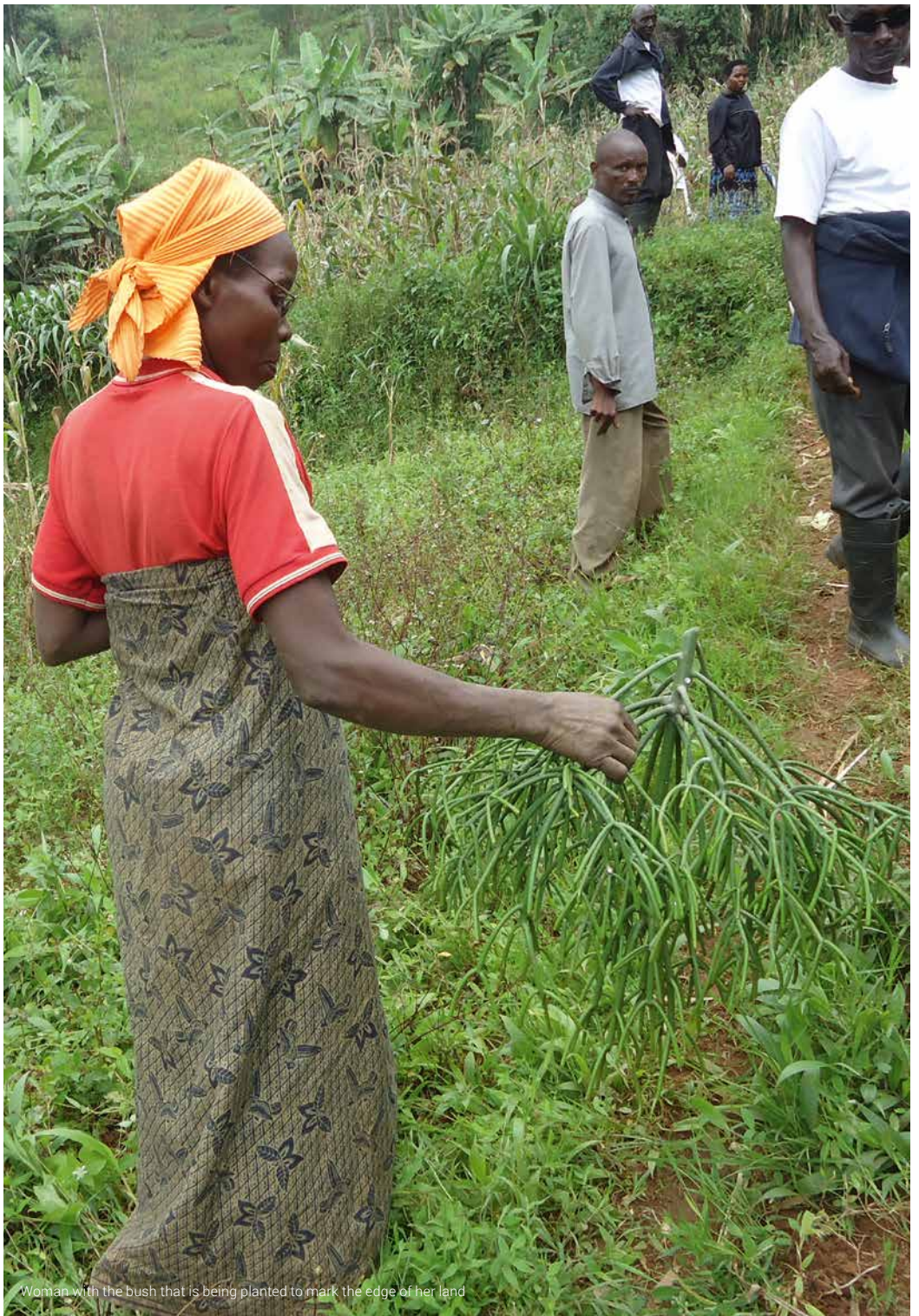
The Facts (and Fiction) of Land Rights

Although the Land Code 2011 presents no legal obstacle to ownership, the culture of Burundi does not allow women to inherit land. Most of the land tenures by women in Burundi arose from women buying land themselves. Traditional culture gives women rights to cultivate land but not own it, inherit it, or cede it to a future generation. This is referred to in Kirundi as *igiseke*. Conversely, providing a certificate to the owner of the land may put the traditional rights of women to cultivate the land at risk.

In March 2014, ZOA organised a conference in Bujumbura to discuss women's legal property rights. The conference established that there is no legal obstacle to ownership, but that the obstacle is culture and tradition, which is supported by politicians and national leaders. A study on women's traditional property rights in 2014 showed that women claimed an interest in 22,5 percent of plots of land and 14 percent had established rights of *igiseke*. However, these rights are weak and easily rejected by land owners. There is



Group of women being briefed on the land certification process



Woman with the bush that is being planted to mark the edge of her land

a national agreement to end all forms of discrimination and the marriage law gives equal rights of ownership of assets to the husband and the wife, but these laws are little known.

Working Around Land Disputes

In 2011, ZOA Burundi started an agricultural project in two districts of the province of Makamba that experienced mass displacement of the population during the civil war. To contribute to peacebuilding, ZOA chose to work exclusively with resident farmers who had settled their land disputes and agreed to share land with returning refugees. The Dutch embassy in Burundi agreed to finance ZOA to support the two districts in setting up their own land registration services.

ZOA explicitly emphasised the protection of women's property rights in the communications with the communities and throughout the process of land registration. Male land owners have been encouraged to include the names of women on the certificate, either wives or other family members, and to register the women's traditional rights on the certificates.

The Land Code 2011 establishes a local committee to determine the true ownership of a plot of land and its boundaries: all members and all the staff of the land tenure registration service have been trained in the protection of women's property rights. The project has also conducted 154 communication sessions supported by sketches with local actors to reinforce women's property rights. So far, the project has determined the GPS coordinates and established the legal ownership of 816 plots owned by women.

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Stories of Success from Mozambique and Senegal

ActionAid

Preventing Land Grabbing and Improving Food Security in Mozambique

Meet Helena and the Eduardo Mondlane Association in Manhiça, Mozambique. For years they have been fighting for their rights and against displacement by sugarcane producers. The women of the association have been educated on their rights, including land and inheritance rights, and are trained paralegals. With the support of ActionAid and its partners, female smallholders have also strengthened their organizational and agricultural skills, resulting in improved tenure security and empowerment. Instead of losing their land to inheritance conflicts or the growing number of incoming investors, they are now able to defend their land and negotiate with companies to ensure community benefits. They have also improved their food security by strengthening cooperatives, increasing productivity and diversification.

"My name is Helena. I am 53 years old and a single mom with five children. I have been a member of the Eduardo Mondlane Association, which is mainly led by women, since 2009. On our joint plot we grow vegetables, but we also have our own land. Part of what we produce is for our own consumption, the rest I sell. (...) In the past the men controlled



The women of the Eduardo Mondlane farmers association working on their land. They have secured their land rights through official land use certificates. Kadir van Lohuizen / NOOR for ActionAid

everything, but now we've learned a lot and have strengthened our position. We have also secured our land rights by getting official user certificates. In the past, only men got such certificates. Thanks to our campaigns, supported by ActionAid, women now have access to land and user rights. Some investors, like sugar cane companies, think they can easily chase us off the land because we are women, but they can't because we are well organized and supported by civil society organizations."

Fatoumata Sow's Battle for Her Land Rights

The natural reserve of Ndial in Senegal is a rural community comprising of 37 villages. Being pastoralists, the Fulani depend on their land for food security and way of life. In March 2012, the government of Senegal 'liberated' 26,650 ha designated as 'protected areas', and granted a major Italian company, Senhuile SA, 20,000 of the 26,650 hectares, while the Fulani population were provided with a meager 6,650 ha.

Fatoumata Sow, one of the women farmers from the rural community, explained her grievances:

"The high agriculture irrigation project development in the Ndial area by Senhuile has limited women's access to land and the mobility of both people and animals. Senhuile has done nothing in the village since its arrival; we have nothing. Women farmers, already marginalized, are the main victims."

To address the issue of women's access to land, Fatoumata and other Fulani women were trained by ActionAid on land legislation and the Tenure Guidelines (VGGT) using so-called reflection action tools. They improved the governance structure of the Ndial community and together they came up with a proposition to get 50 percent of the arable land back. They met with the company and the government to convince them of the importance of women's secure land rights. As a result, 10,000 ha of land has been given back for the purpose of rural development, which improves livelihoods, and a programme has been set up to secure access for women to water and land (OLAC). Their propositions have also been taken into account by the National Commission for Land Reform.

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‘Land Is Home’: Land Rights for Women in Lesotho

Land Administration Authority in collaboration with Kadaster

Mamalefane’s Success Story

Mamalefane has two children and is married to a miner, who is often far from home because of his work. She has just received her lease from the Land Administration Authority of Lesotho, and says: *“Getting this lease fills me with joy. I no longer fear the future, now that I have my lease. The future holds no fear for me. I now have a future with this lease and so do my children.”*

With this lease she hopes to get a small loan from a bank. Mamalefane dreams of starting her own small shop, and of keeping pigs and egg-laying hens. Within the Land Administration Reform Project, 60,000 rural properties have been identified in a period of five years. The film ‘Land Is Home’ focuses on experiences such as Mamalefane’s. Kadaster was responsible for project management and IT embedding, in close collaboration with the FAO.

Changing the Land Law

Because of international pressure from the Millennium Challenge Cooperation and other donors, the Land Law in Lesotho has been modified. Regulations that discriminate against women and vulnerable groups have been deleted. New institutions to implement



Mamalefane



This woman presents a note with her parcel number, and thus secures her land

land reform have been established, such as the Land Administration Authority. This is a transparent and accessible new organisation, with a transparent office; it is a 'one stop shop' for clients, respecting women's rights.

Kadaster is committed to the implementation of this land administration reform. Kadaster also aims to make global standards in land administration systems 'gender ready'. For the practical implementation of women's land rights, it is important that systems are designed in such a way that their rights can be effectively registered. The design of the ISO-certified Land Administration Domain Model ensures that women can register their share of land.

In other countries informal rights exist alongside formal rights. Here Kadaster tries to introduce methods that take into account all sorts of rights when it comes to land registration. An example of such a method is the Social Tenure Domain Model of UN Habitat. An example of the rights involved is the law of land succession for women in Bangladesh: national legislation differs from the Sharia or from local rules. Making sure that registration systems can handle both formal and informal rules will not solve gender issues in land administration. But it will start debates about women's rights and possible solutions.

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Inspiring stories stressing **the need for Joint Action** when strengthening land rights for women

Woman in Kerala, India:

*"I am respected as an earning member and included in all
decision making matters in my family."*



Not Oxen, But Tractors for Female Headed Households

Ethiopia; Wageningen UR/Center for Development Innovation through FDOV

Lack of Access to the Means of Production

The vast majority of Ethiopian farmers are smallholders. In the Tigray Region of Northwest Ethiopia, Female Headed Households (FHH) represent 30 percent of the population. FHH face many problems when it comes to farming. Firstly, FHH have limited access to land for farming: FHH have an average of 0.6 ha per household, whereas MHH have an average of 0.9 ha. Furthermore, FHH have limited family labour available to engage in farming, and less purchasing power to hire labour. Finally, FHH often don't own oxen: the average FHH owns 0.5 ox, while the average MHH owns 2 oxen.

For a country as Ethiopia, oxen ownership is a crucial asset in the production of food. With Ethiopian soils, ploughing with oxen is a necessity, and doing so timely and several times is one of the key factors for increased productivity. Moreover, women are culturally not allowed to plough the land; this is done by men. Hence, FHH without oxen are left with three options: rent oxen and a labourer to plough their land; ask their neighbours to plough their land for them; or rent out their land to other farmers. Obviously, farmers



with oxen plough their own land first, and only lend their oxen to others once that is done. FHH thus always plough late, resulting in lower productivity per hectare. For this reason, many FHH—approximately half of the FHH in Tigray—decide to rent out their land to other farmers and in return ask a percentage of the harvest (usually between a third and half of the harvest). The implications are clear: the relatively lower returns for FHH that sharecrop as opposed to working the land themselves lead to less cash and/or food for their family. The same holds true for the option to plough late as this leaves less labour available for daily farm management.

A Sustainable Future for the Mechanisation in Tigray

This project, coordinated by the Centre for Development Innovation, is a public private partnership funded by the Dutch tractor company Rumpststad, the Ethiopian engineering company TGT Enterprise, and the FDOV Facility (RVO). TGT Enterprise and Rumpststad test viable business modalities for the introduction of two-wheel tractors in the highlands of Ethiopia which, because of their size, are mainly used on small farms of 0,5 to 2 ha. The tractors are a welcome solution to the challenges faced by FHH: the small size and low price of the tractor suit the farms of FHH, and they are more efficient than oxen ploughs. On top of this, TGT Enterprise offers special arrangements for women cooperatives and makes the two-wheel tractor available to FHH in particular. The cooperative leases the tractor from TGT Enterprise and provides (paid) service to their members.

In 2015, ten cooperatives and two NGOs (working with female farmers) tested the tractors, and fourteen on-farm trials with male and female farmers were conducted in Tigray. Lease constructions and tractor renting services are currently being piloted in Tigray. Post-sale services are provided by local outlets of TGT Enterprise that are located in small towns near the farmers' fields. The ultimate aim is to have the tractors assembled in Ethiopia where TGT Enterprise will sell and lease them to rural entrepreneurs and cooperative unions.

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Female Farmers as Saviours of the Wetlands

India; Article published in LEISA India in collaboration with ILEIA

Kerala's Transformation over the Years

Kerala's socio-economic transformation over the past three decades has resulted in large-scale conversion of rice fields to non-farming uses. Increasing labour costs, lack of effective market support, low returns, and climate vagaries have created a disinterest among land owning families to continue farming. Large patches of paddy land have been left fallow. This has resulted in a notable reduction of employment opportunities for female farm workers and their families.

Women are responsible for 70 percent of the work in Indian agriculture. Nevertheless, non-availability of land is a major obstacle, especially for women. Land owners are afraid of losing their right to land by leasing it out. In Kerala, as part of the Land Reforms Act, there is a ban on leasing of land for cultivation. But various forms of informal leasing exist in practice. Even in such informal arrangements most owners are not ready to lease the land to women for farming.

Woman in Kerala, India:

"Now we are farmers, and not workers."



Women Band Together and Thrive

In Kerala, the State Government has implemented a successful programme aiming to improve land governance with a special focus on enhancing women's access to land for farming. The collective power of women groups, integration of local self-government institutions, and proactive credit schemes have enabled landless women to emerge as confident organic farmers. In the process, they gained influence and further established their identity as farmers.

Kudumbashree, the State Poverty Eradication Mission of Kerala, has established a State-wide web of community organisations of women, working in tandem with local self-governments. The programme mobilises women to form Joint Liability Groups (JLGs). Credit support with low interest rates is made available for group farming through the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD). More than 280,000 female members from low income families were organised into 61,836 JLGs and have been able to access fallow lands. In 2015, the area under farming by women JLGs in Kerala State was 38,706 ha. Most members of the women groups use organic inputs to fertilise their soils and use botanical pesticides to treat their crops if needed. Some groups now process their rice into a variety of products and are selling these under their own group's brand names.

The women groups have emerged as the saviours of the wetlands ecosystem of Kerala by re-introducing rice cultivation in fields that were kept fallow for a long time. They have made the case that with stable access to land women can provide healthy food for their families, their communities and State/country, while earning a decent income and leading a good life.

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No Land, No Say: the Coffee Business in Uganda

Bukonzo Joint in collaboration with Hivos

Quantifying Women's Contribution

Although it is difficult to quantify, women's ownership of resources in coffee production is modest at all levels. Regarding land ownership, for example, the distinction between ownership and user-rights, and co-ownership for married couples is sometimes unclear. In general, productive resources and land, but also equipment and means of transport, are the property of men.

Ownership of land is important for successful coffee production, as ownership is often linked to a lot of other benefits, such as ownership of coffee trees, the income derived from coffee sales, and membership of producer organisations. In most cases, men are invited to and participate in trainings, even if the training relates to activities commonly carried out by their spouses.

The Bukonzo Joint Coffee Cooperative

Rural communities in the remote Rwenzori Mountains in Western Uganda were isolated from international coffee markets for many years. Although women carried out much of the work on the land,

few had joint or sole land and home ownership, leaving them financially vulnerable and dependent on their husbands or male relatives. Without land ownership, women were unable to be members of cooperatives, or to directly access savings and credit facilities. Within the household, most women had very limited control over income and expenditure.

From its beginnings in 1992, as a savings self-help group, Bukonzo Joint has been dedicated to improving this situation, starting with equal property rights. Today, women represent 85 percent of Bukonzo Joint's 5,200 farmer members and 55 percent of its board. Bukonzo Joint also makes a convincing business case for prioritising gender justice, having successfully established itself in the specialty coffee sector in recent years.

Gender Inclusion Toolkit

The Hivos promoted Gender Action Learning Systems (GALS) is the inclusive methodology used by Bukonzo Joint across all of its group activities, from farmer workshops to board meetings, to enhance the participation of women within the coffee value chain. Bukonzo Joint also uses the methodology to promote youth leadership and to assist other cooperatives in replicating the approach.

HIVOS, in close collaboration with the Sustainable Coffee Programme and Agri-Pro-Focus, has published a gender inclusion toolkit for the coffee sector, to address the inequalities that women and youth in the coffee supply chain experience in terms of access to training, land ownership, inputs, and income.

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Inspiring stories from photojournalist Kadir van Lohuizen

"I visited the area of Manhiça in Mozambique and it was quite amazing to see the power of especially the women. They fight for their land rights and push this to the highest levels until they have a signed and stamped document to prove their rights. They are very well organised in cooperatives which enables them to have a voice against the large agro-business companies."

Women in Mozambique with secure access to and control over land

Kadir van Lohuizen/NOOR in Mozambique with ActionAid

In February 2016, 25 years after his first visit to the country, Kadir van Lohuizen (NOOR) returned to Mozambique. The purpose of his trip was to portray the challenges that land grabs pose to communities, but also to capture the strength of the people standing up for their rights. During his stay, Kadir was invited by ActionAid to meet with female smallholders in Manhiça, a rural area not far from the capital Maputo. ActionAid and its partner NADEC have been working with these women for years to improve their position. Awareness raising, and organizing and advocating for their land rights proved to be crucial in securing land tenure and preventing land grabs, as well as to improve food security.

Since 1988, Kadir van Lohuizen has captured many countries and issues as a photo-journalist, ranging from conflict diamonds in Congo to the consequences of climate change in Kiribati. During his recent trip to Mozambique he also visited the northern provinces Tete and Nampula where industrial mining is booming and thousands of people are losing their fertile land to the biggest coal mine in the world. Van Lohuizen is co-founder of the photographers collective NOOR (noorimages.com).

ActionAid is a movement of people working together to fight poverty and injustice, with women's rights to land and food as an important focus. ActionAid also campaigns against land grabs, see www.actionaid.org/land-for. The photos in Manhiça, Mozambique, are part of a bigger photography project by ActionAid and Van Lohuizen/NOOR, highlighting the consequences of land grabs and the importance of land rights.



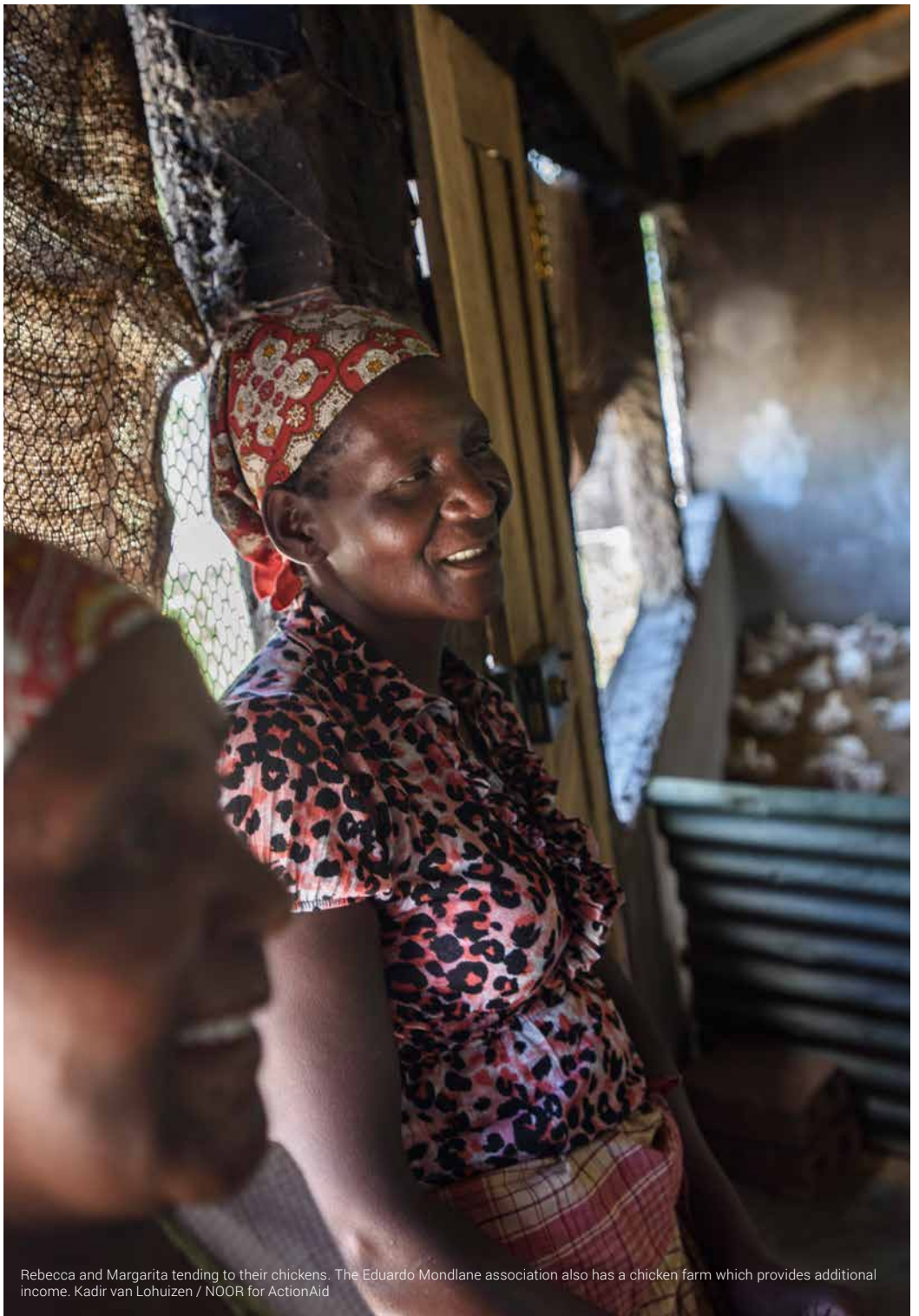
Women of the Eduardo Mondlane cooperative working in their fields to grow vegetables for their own consumption and to sell at the market. Kadir van Lohuizen / NOOR for ActionAid



A large sugarcane plantation in the Manhica district. Local women farmers have leased part of their land in exchange for additional income. Worries remain about the expansion of monoculture and aerial spraying of pesticides. Kadir van Lohuizen / NOOR for ActionAid



Eva and Helena of the Eduardo Mondlane farmers association selling their produce at the local market in Manhica.
Kadir van Lohuizen / NOOR for ActionAid



Rebecca and Margarita tending to their chickens. The Eduardo Mondlane association also has a chicken farm which provides additional income. Kadir van Lohuizen / NOOR for ActionAid



The women of the Eduardo Mondlane farmers association return from working on their land. Kadir van Lohuizen / NOOR for ActionAid

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