

Efficacy of Grassroot Women's Groups in the Advancement of Women's Land Rights in Uganda



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Abstract

Activism for equal human rights continues to grow as a means to address human rights challenges in different thematic areas. Civil Society Organisations in close collaboration with governments, the international community and development agencies have offered complimentary support in crafting practical solutions for responding to global development problems. Land is one of the major issues that have given impetus for the formation of activist groups calling for equal land rights between men and women. Land is important in people's lives because it is a key productive resource. Therefore, equal land rights for everyone means equal opportunities in all development dimensions where land utilisation is key. However, Women's Land Rights are still under recognised which intensifies risks of women's economic disempowerment.

While the contribution of women to economic development through land utilisation including their labour force in agriculture and farm entrepreneurship cannot be contested, they do not in practice have equal enjoyment of land and property rights because of injustices and their marginalisation associated with unfair cultural practices and gender-blind laws and policies. To address barriers related to women's land rights and other capital assets, legislation on equitable rights to property, and laws on customary norms around land have been adopted. Despite these efforts, however, recent research on equal land rights continues to indicate that these legal frameworks have only yielded modest results. Women's rights to equal property ownership continues to be violated and that even in countries which have developed gender sensitive laws and domesticated international human rights tools on the protection of women's rights, there is limited understanding of these instruments and their effectiveness and clear gaps in implementation of legal frameworks. To effect policy reforms, women in Africa and in Uganda specifically through organised campaigns have challenged several discriminatory practices and overturned gender-blind and insufficient laws to assert their land rights.

The overall objective of the study was to analyse the efficiency of grassroots women's groups in advancing to secure women's land rights. To achieve this, the following objectives were established:

- To trace the evolution of grassroots women movement in Uganda especially in matters of land
- Analyse the conceptual and normative foundation of grassroots women organising
- Highlight previous and ongoing campaigns by grassroots women for secure land rights
- Identify successes, challenges, trends, and the future of these civic groups especially in the context of WLRs
- Propose ideas for strengthening grassroots women groups advocating for WLRs.

Accordingly, this study specifically analyses the effectiveness of grassroots women's advocacy groups for equal land rights in Uganda. The study adopted a qualitative methodology involving desk review of primary and secondary sources of information and as well conducted interviews with identified resource persons from NGO representatives, Parliamentarians and with community-based participants. The analysis demonstrates that although there are remarkable strides made by women's collective power to address gender inequalities in land use, ownership, and management, their advocacy efforts are hindered by several challenges including the civic environment, limited resources, Legal and Human Rights illiteracy, negative cultural norms, and lack of a holistic coordination approach.

Keywords: Women's civic groups; Women's Land Rights; Advocacy, Discrimination.

Contents

List of abbreviations	5
Acknowledgements	6
Organisational Profile	7

SECTION ONE

1.1. Introduction	8
1.2. Significance of the study	9
1.3. Research objectives	9
1.4. Methodology	10

SECTION TWO

2.1. Evolution of women organising for equality	11
2.2. Legal and policy frameworks on WLRs	12
2.3. Analysis: Women's grassroots campaigns for equal land rights in Uganda	15

SECTION THREE

3.1. Introduction	26
3.2. Discussion of findings	26
3.3. Success stories	26
3.4. Challenges	30

SECTION FOUR

4.1. Recommendations	36
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List of Abbreviations

ACHPR	African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, 1981
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, 1979.
FAWODE	Ugandan Forum for Women in Democracy
FIDA	Uganda Association of Women Lawyers
FY	Financial Year
GBV	Gender Based Violence
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
WLRs	Women Land Rights
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
ED	Executive Director
LCs	Local councils
MFPED	Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development
MLHUD	Ministry of Lands Housing and Urban Development
NAWAD	National Association for Women's Action in Development
NGOs	Non-Government Organisations
POWER	Participation and Opportunities for Women's Economic Rights
S4HL	Stand for Her Land Campaign
UBOS	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
UCOBAC	Uganda Community Based Association for Women and Children's Welfare
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948
UWONET	Uganda Women's Network
UWOPA	Uganda Women Parliamentarians Association
WB	World Bank
WEF	World Economic Forum
WHRDs	Women Human Rights Defenders
WLR	Women's Land Rights
GTA	Gender Transformative Approaches
WLRM	Women's Land Rights Movement

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About LANDnet

LANDnet Uganda engages in research, capacity development and policy advocacy on land, gender, and natural resources management. It envisages a Uganda where its land and natural resources are used productively, efficiently, and sustainably for present and future generations. LANDnet aspires to create an enabling environment for effective participation of all stakeholders in the efficient use and management of Uganda's land resources for sustainable development. LANDnet's work is buttressed by four core strategic goals, namely, Enhance Capacity Development for Land Sector Actors; Influence policy and practise through Research; Influence Policy and Practice through Advocacy; and lastly, enhance Democratic Governance and Accountability. LANDnet offers capacity development, research and organisational management and development support to the public, private sector and to Civil Society Organizations and further seeks to build capacity of young professionals in land governance. Our interventions fuse the emerging body of knowledge on land and natural resources management practices building with the fundamentals of gender equality and other social and cultural rights.

LANDnet has established solid work in the advancement of women's land rights and as such it has been hosting the WLRM from the time of its revamping in 2016 to date coordinating the different aspects and activities of the platform to ensure that it stays on course and visible.

Since 2016, LANDnet has implemented tens of projects in seventeen districts reaching over ten million Ugandans through community outreaches, radio talk shows, legal aid clinics, research, and capacity building on women economic empowerment. LANDnet has built the capacity of various CSOs and government agencies on different facets of land and has steered the review of tens of land-related laws and policies in Uganda and continues to pioneer cutting-edge interventions in the land sector.

About the WLRM

The WLRM was birthed in 2010 as a multi-stakeholder advocacy platform that works to collectively influence the legal and policy processes with a specific focus to women's land rights. It's mandate is to spearhead collective action towards law reform and setting the women's agenda on land.

It currently has a total of 27 members composed of CSOs, CBOs, Government Ministries and departments, Academia, INGOs and individual members working towards the fulfilment of the 10 minimum demands.

MDAs (line ministries and departments): Ministry of Lands Housing and Urban Development, Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs Specifically JLOs.

NGOs/CBOs: Women's Parliamentary Association (UWOPA), Uganda Women's Network (UWONET), Uganda Community Based Association for women and children (UCOBAC), LANDnet Uganda, Food Rights Alliance (FRA), , Allied Workers Association(AWA), FIDA- Uganda, Land Justice Network(IJN), Women and Girl Child Development Association (WEGCDA), Coalition On Girls Empowerment (COGE), Center for Economic Social Cultural Rights in Africa (CESCRA), Ateker Cultural Center (ACC), Tieng Adhola Cultural Institution(TACI), Women Human Rights Defenders(WHRD), Participatory Ecological Land Use Management in Uganda (PELUM), Hamiza Women and Girls Initiative (HAWOGI), SHED Uganda, Rostrum for Social Development(ROSD), Uganda Land Alliance (ULA), National Land Coalition (NLC), Touch the Heart, Women of Uganda's Network (WOUGNET) and Parliamentary Land Management Forum(UPLMF).

INGOs: Oxfam in Uganda and Action Aid Uganda



SECTION ONE

1.1 Introduction

The role of civil society in human rights activism has been recognized globally and their inclusion in global human rights discourses through consultations, human rights reporting, and research is a clear indication of their critical contribution to the subject. In general, civil society is characterised by their purpose and motivation to contribute to social, economic, and political advocacy for reasons of promoting behavioural change other than making a financial profit. Civil society is a branch of the wider society which interrelates with the state and/or non-state actors to guide the state but is independent of government. Civil society refers to “forms of social association intermediate between the family and the states”. While civil society and NGOs are considered to be the same, there are distinctions. Within the mainstream civil society are classifications of organisations, associations, e.g., national and non-national organisations, community-based organisations, charity groups, academia, religious organisations, workers union etc. Civil society groups vary in several ways depending on size, mandate, and issues they work on. For example, some are focused on specific issues related to environmental and land rights, human rights violations, media freedom, refugee rights, minority rights, health, religious and cultural associations – and the list could continue. By way

of establishment and registration, every country may have different legal structures upon which civil society organisations are formed and regulated. For example, in Uganda CSOs are registered and incorporated as companies limited by guarantee and are incorporated under the Companies Act, 2012. Further all CSO are expected to register with the NGO Bureau for a permit to operate as organisations in Uganda. All the work of CSOs including NGOs is guided by Non-Governmental Organisations Act, 2016 (NGO Act, 2016)

Civil Society has increasingly grown within the context of development providing a people centred approach which state infrastructure and other international development agencies have relied on for alternative development ideas and solutions. As a framework of organising joint actions, Civil Society demonstrates a defined purpose through which development issues including human rights have gained increased awareness. Gender equality lies at the heart of human rights and very much fundamental for inclusive sustainable development. This has given impetus for the formation of Civil Society groups made up of women, men, girls, and people of all genders advancing for women’s human rights across various thematic areas also known as Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs).

The work of Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs) in the field of human rights is relevant in addressing inequalities engrained within economic, social, political, and cultural realms and outlawing discriminatory tendencies to achieve equal peace and sustainable development outcomes. WHRDs are at the frontlines of social justice campaigns and movements at different levels globally, nationally and in grassroot communities. For instance, in collaboration with international human rights mechanisms grassroot women offer tremendous support for human rights monitoring, reporting and documentation and hence bringing a nuanced approach to human rights advocacy.

Scope of the study

The study was conducted in the months of August in 2022. It also explored the efficiency of grassroot women's groups in advancing for secure women's land rights in Uganda since 2010, drawing examples and reference from the women land and property rights movements at global level. Geographically the study explored various cases of grassroot movements scattered in Uganda's Acholi, West Nile, Teso, Karamoja and Bunyoro Regions as will be seen in the section describing the cases.

1.2 Significance of the Study

A transverse consideration of gender and women's access to natural resources and productive assets such as land is a necessary condition for overcoming poverty and the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 which is a significant contributor to economic development. Moreover, elevating women especially through guaranteed land rights is key for combating gender gaps in agriculture, mitigating climate change crises, strengthening food security and to improving their accessibility to financial resources and equitable resource governance.

In Uganda, land drives the economy through the agriculture sector which alone contributed 3.8% to Uganda's economic growth in Financial Year (FY)

2018/2019 and up to 4.2 % in the FY 2019/2020. In FY 2019/2020, it contributed 45% of all national exports, employed approximately 64 % of all the local population, 72% of workers in the agriculture sector being youth (MFPED, 2020). As such, land is important for sustaining housing and settlements, livelihoods and food security, mineral production, transport infrastructural development, and a major factor in financial accessibility and borrowing. Additionally, land is a source of identity.

However, the complexities of access to, use and control of property including land in Uganda are a major barrier towards full economic and social rights of women and girls. To overcome impediments pertaining to equal rights to land and property, women in Uganda started organising themselves in civic groups to advocate for equal land rights. Therefore, the overarching aim of this study is to analyse the effectiveness of grassroots campaigns led by grassroots and indigenous women to secure land rights. This is not an academic piece of work. The study is rather aimed at shading a light on the situation of women advocating for Women's Land Rights (WLRs)

1.3 Research Objectives

The overall objective is to analyse the efficiency of grassroot women's groups in advancing for secure women's land rights. To achieve this, the following objectives were established:

- To trace the evolution of grassroots women movement in Uganda especially in matters of land
- Analyse the conceptual and normative foundation of grassroot women organising
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- Identify successes, challenges, trends, and the future of these civic groups especially in the context of WLRs
- Propose ideas for strengthening grassroots women groups advocating for WLRs

1.4 Methodology

The study adopted a case study approach that was supplemented by a qualitative methodology involving desk review of primary and secondary sources of information. Interviews were conducted with identified resource persons from NGO representatives and with community-based participants that partly represented the cases. The case study approach provided indepth appreciation and investigation of the women land rights movement in a real life context which contributed to enhanced knowledge of the movements. Cases were purposively selected based on available information from various consultations. The consultant relied on government and Non-Governmental Organisations' (NGOs) reports, frameworks including from international development organisations to draw key information for the study. Academic literature produced from similar studies was relevant for providing a variety of evidence-based perspectives from recent scholarships to identify current trends and the future of these civic groups. Online platforms such as NGO and government websites, university digital libraries, and digital reports were utilised to obtain the relevant information which complimented the literature.

As previously highlighted, the consultant conducted virtual qualitative interviews with key stakeholders from selected women's movements' cases to understand their experiences, challenges, and insights for amplifying women's voices through advocacy. Purposive sampling method was used to identify key informants from women civil society organisations. A fixed purposive sampling method was chosen because of its suitability for strategic purposes since it enabled the researcher to select specific participants who could provide particular information for the study. In this study, LANDnet worked with diverse representatives from women's civil society groups at a national level and those from grassroot communities to ensure diversity of ideas and generate experiences from different regions, and cultures. Primary data obtained from

participants through interviews was analysed using thematic analysis to identify recurring key issues, challenges, and existing gaps.

Limitations

This study was impacted greatly by time constraints which reduced the number of possible participants. It is possible that a similar analysis with a wider reach would yield different results. Additionally, the paucity of literature on women's civic groups made it challenging to do a detailed analysis. Likewise, there is hardly any literature on women's previous campaigns on land rights and justice in Uganda. Future studies on the current topic are hence recommended to build a body of literature which can be used for academic, policy advice and evidence-based advocacy. Notwithstanding these limitations particularly the relatively limited literature, this work offers key insights into the value women's groups have added to the subject of equal land rights.

Outline of the report

This report is structured as follows. Section one offers a review of the evolution of women organising for their rights and the legal framework on property rights in Uganda. Building on this background, the section goes ahead to provide an analysis of land advocacy campaigns by indigenous women in Uganda. Specifically, the Co-ownership campaign was identified to support this analysis because of its importance to the land rights subject in Uganda. Section two presents a discussion on the study findings. The information obtained from interviews with respondents and the challenges surrounding civic advocacy are discussed. The report concludes by making recommendations for strengthening grassroots women's campaigns on equal land rights in section three.



SECTION TWO

2.1 Evolution of women organising for equality

Voluntary movements of women organising for equality bring new perspectives in advocacy for equal treatment of men and women and these mobilizations have and continue to find parallel efforts for challenging inequalities affecting women as a social group.

Women civic groups can be traced as early as 1495 through the work of Italian writer Christine de Pizan. In her writings, Christine questioned the role of women in society which is said to have contributed to the early days of women's struggle for equality¹. Subsequently, women were an active group during the French revolution demanding for social and political change. Although their efforts during this revolution did not yield significant recognition of their rights, a Declaration of the Rights of Woman and of the Female Citizen by Olympe de Gouges was published on 15 September in 1791 calling to action for the recognition of women's rights and fairness. Women continued mobilising movements in different corners of the world in North America fighting injustices and oppressions. The First Women's Rights Convention' was organised in 1848 and such campaigns continued to grow to extend in Europe and other parts of the world.

In Uganda specifically, the Women's Land Rights Movement was birthed in 2010 as an advocacy platform to ensure that during the legal and policy reviews, women's land rights issues stand out and are given the due attention. Substantial research has suggested over time the inequalities in land ownership and control as recipes for poverty, legal reforms aiming to secure land rights for women has been instituted yet implementation on ground is negligible. This can be traced back in time to the patriarchal nature of the different societies, women's issues and voices are unheard, unattended to during the legal and policy processes, in the decision making spaces but additionally, because there were several platforms on other issues but there was none specifically fronting women land rights agenda. It then became increasingly important to formulate the Women's Land Rights Movement to bring together different actors (Line Ministries and departments, INGOs, NGOs, CBOs, Academia and individuals) on board to rethink and do an assessment of the factors determining the power imbalance that have produced inequality in asset ownership and ultimately hinder women's economic empowerment in Uganda.

1 Woman's Art Journal (Vol. 1, No. 1 - Vol. 39, No. 2) <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/i258878>> accessed 26 August 2022

Women Civic Organising through a Normative Lens

The exponential growth of women's civic advocacy locally and globally in recent years is backed by a human rights imperative especially rights related to freedom of association, assembly, and expression; participation and non-discrimination where people join groups to take joint action to advance or pursue their interests. This freedom is guaranteed by contemporary democratic systems and is also provided for by international law tools and has been facilitated by globalisation and liberalisation policies. These have created a new world order and an environment in which human rights are progressively recognized and promoted.²

The right to organise and associate with others is provided for in the global, regional, and national laws. Article 20 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), 1948 guarantees the right for freedom of peaceful assembly which enables people to form groups to voice their issues in a collective manner.

Without necessary limitations, these groups also include those related to human rights. Likewise, in 1998 under resolution 53/144, the UN General Assembly adopted a "Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms."³ This Declaration recognises the work of Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) including Women Human Rights Defenders and beseeches States to do the same at a national level. Freedom of association and the right to form or join groups, and unions is also enshrined in Article 22 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).⁴ In the context of Africa, Article 10 and 11 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR), 1981 assert that everyone has a right to freely associate with others⁵. These instruments have been domesticated by different countries to inform their local legal systems. For example, Under Article 29 of the Constitution of Uganda, the fundamental rights to assembly and association are clearly stipulated in sub articles (d) and (e).

2.2 Legal and policy frameworks on equal Property ownership

Equal rights to ownership of property including land are recognized nationally and globally by various policy and legal frameworks which Uganda observes and has ratified at a national level. At a global and regional level, Uganda observes international human rights instruments including the UDHR, 1948 and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and International Covenant on Civil and Political

Rights (ICCPR), 1966. These collectively guarantee equal human rights for men and women including ownership of property either individually or in association with others and emphatically provide for protection of these rights. Article 2 of the UDHR, 1948 states the right to equality and Article 17 emphasises the rights to equal ownership of property such as land. Similarly, Articles 3 of both the ICESCR and ICCPR, 1966 provide for equal

2 Rosenau, J.N. *Distant proximities: Dynamics beyond globalisation* (Princeton University Press, (2003)

3 Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, *'Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms'* < <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/declaration-right-and-responsibility-individuals-groups-and> > accessed 9 September 2022

4 <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/ccpr.aspx#:~:text=Article%2022-1,the%20protection%20of%20his%20interests.> > accessed 10 September 2022

5 https://www.achpr.org/public/Document/file/English/banjul_charter.pdf > accessed 9 September 2022

enjoyment of civil, social, economic, and political rights. Accordingly, the international Bill of Rights⁶ provides for equal ownership of economic assets and property by men and women. Furthermore, Uganda is also a signatory to the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), 1979.⁷ The ratification of CEDAW in 1985 demonstrated Uganda's commitments to women's human rights and non-discrimination.⁸ In Part Five Particularly Article 16 (h) the CEDAW asserts the right to equal property "ownership, acquisition, management, administration, enjoyment and disposition of property, whether free of charge or for a valuable consideration".

At the African Continent, the right to property for all individuals is enshrined in Article 14 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR), 1981 and the Protocol (Maputo) to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa. Uganda has signed and ratified these tools and therefore calls for their domestication and implementation. The Maputo protocol in particular provides critical protection for women's rights to property ranging from acquisition, administration and management of matrimonial property and estates, equal division of property during divorce or legal separation from a marriage and the protection of widows' interests and their legal position to inherit property in case of death of a husband.

At the national level, the Constitution of Uganda (1995) is the supreme law and provides for full protection of women's rights and grants freedom from non-discrimination. The different clauses under Article 33 emphasise the respect and protection of women's rights and call on the state to provide full protection and opportunities to facilitate enjoyment of these rights in political, social, economic, and cultural dimensions. Cognizant

of the historical marginalisation of women and other vulnerable groups due to cultural norms, exclusionary policies, and traditional practices, the Constitution under Article 32 calls for affirmative actions to address injustices and imbalances suffered by women and other helpless populations and for equality and non-discrimination based on sex and other reasons in Article 21. Similarly, Article 31 (1b) provides for equal rights during marriage and at the time of separation or divorce.

In the case of property ownership, the Constitution re-echoes the UDHR under Article 26 stating equal rights to ownership of property as an individual or jointly with other people and clause 2 provides for non-deprivation of one's property unless if it is a legal requirement, if the said property is deemed necessary for reasons including communal utilisation, public safety and in this case, a fair compensation shall be made to the owner and/ or with free access to legal means for redress. The right to for women to own land is strengthened by Article 237 which vests land to Ugandan citizens (both men and women).

It is noteworthy that Land, which is the primary property of interest for this paper, is governed by a dual legal framework. The Constitution 1995 and the Land Act. The Land Act 1998 as amended in 2004 and 2010, guarantees women rights to customary land under section 27. Section 57 (3) of the 1998 Act also calls for representation of women on district land boards whereby at least 1/3 of district land board members should be women. However, although this legislation is progressive in favour of women, it seems to be inconsistent since the same section authorises land decisions to be made in conformity with existing traditions and practices. In practice, this may reinforce discrimination against powerless groups including women living in restrictive cultures.

6 Global Citizenship Commission, *'the Declaration of Human Rights in the 21st Century: A living Document in A Changing World'* (Gordon Brown, Open Book Publishers, 2016)

7 Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, *'Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women New York, 18 December 1979'* < <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-elimination-all-forms-discrimination-against-women> > accessed 8 September 2022

8 Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, *'CEDAW Ratification status by country or by treaty'* < https://tbineternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?CountryID=182&Lang=EN > accessed 8 September 2022

Indeed, the Uganda National Land Policy which was adopted by parliament in 2013 in Chapter 4 section 4.10 reconfirms the discrimination surrounding land inheritance by women in Uganda and goes ahead to make policy suggestions which the government can take to protect women's land rights at implementation stages of this policy. The right for women to inherit property including land from their family members is again provided for in the Constitution. The Constitution says that equal treatment is for both men and women and everyone be treated with dignity and all non-discriminatory practices are banned. But what is practiced? Traditionally, property is passed onto people through wills made by the deceased. Wills provide clear instructions for property inheritance explicitly naming who takes what. In this case, women can be given powers to inherit or take care of the deceased estate be it from their fathers, mothers, husbands, or any other relative. However, since the majority of land in Uganda is owned by men, it is obvious that decisions of inheritance of land are largely made by men. There is also a possibility for wills to be contested by family members and in this case legal or cultural means will be utilised to resolve the conflict and to administer the inheritance process.

The above are just a few legal tools which are meant to promote and protect equal human rights including property and resource ownership such as land. Although these instruments are fully recognised in Uganda and sometimes practiced, inequalities are very much prevalent and are mainly caused by the existing lacunas within policies and national laws. Women's access to capital and economic assets such as land remains a challenge in Uganda because of cultural and marital relations attributed to land/property inheritance. Consequently, women's limited access to productive land re-enforces economic dependence on husbands and men especially those who rely on

agriculture for a living in addition to a multitude of other intra-household inequalities.

Since land ownership is also linked to financial autonomy and inclusion, unequal land rights remain a major barrier to Women's Economic Empowerment in Uganda. Gender based inequalities in land ownership are manifested through land grabbing from women, violation of their rights to land inheritance, control of agricultural products and exclusions from land governance and management. Local studies have suggested that although the level of agricultural land ownership by men in Uganda is slightly decreasing in favour of women, Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) reports that the majority of productive land is still owned by men⁹. Because of unequal power relations between men and women, this is an issue: women, girls and children are more likely to become victims of various forms of exploitation, violence, child labour and/or discrimination due to the vulnerabilities especially in the context where land ownership can be used to perpetuate GBV.

Accordingly, advocacy through multiple forms of campaigns is one of the approaches that women have utilised to engage with different stakeholders in their communities and at a national level to amplify their voices and influence policy reforms. However, the effectiveness and success of their activism through advocacy depends on a range of factors and the extent in which barriers hindering their efforts are eliminated. In this perspective, in the subsequent subsection, this report examines the efficiency of women's grassroot campaigns for secure land rights. The analysis will answer important questions related to the effectiveness of women's activist groups for equal land rights in Uganda, reveal challenges and propose recommendations for strengthening Women's land Rights (WLRs).

⁹ Uganda Bureau of statistics 'Gender Issues in Uganda: An analysis of Gender Based Violence, Asset ownership and Employment' (2019)< https://www.ubos.org/wp-content/uploads/publications/03_2019UBOS_Gender_Issues_Report_2019.pdf> accessed 27 August 2022

2.3 Women's grassroots campaigns for equal land rights in Uganda: Analysis

Regarding land, one may ask, what is it that we want equal land rights for? Before delving into this analysis, it is important to highlight why equal land rights are of concern to women. Why do equal land rights matter to women and economies? Equal land rights matter to everyone but particularly women because of their contribution to their families, society, environment, and the economy through agriculture. The World Economic Forum (WEF) reports that almost half of the world's population in agriculture and food production are women. Surprisingly, land is predominantly owned by men. The percentage of land owned by women is overwhelmingly low- under 20% globally. In Africa, women produced 70%¹⁰ of all food on the continent in 2018 and in Uganda, UBOS through the 2019/2020 National Survey¹¹ reported that 73% of agriculture labour for that particular reporting period was contributed by women.

To achieve socio-economic justice and financial independence for all groups requires equitable access to economic resources and factors of production. While insecure land rights affect everyone, the economic risks associated with gendered land injustices are not felt equally. These are more pronounced for women including widows, single mothers, and women and girls with disabilities and those living with HIV/AIDS. The imbalances in land acquisition, accessibility, usage, and ownership exacerbate economic vulnerabilities, reinforce feminization of poverty and heighten risks of care and unpaid work done by women and girls. Secure land rights mean a step forward towards improved livelihoods and inclusive labour force participation in agriculture to sustain women and families who very much earn their living through land utilisation.

For example, the number of female-headed households continues to rise globally and in Uganda. Statistics by World Bank indicate that a quarter of Ugandan households were headed by women in 2016¹² and this number has grown to reach 28.3% in 2019.¹³ In summary, equal land rights are linked to strengthening food security, combating climate crises, addressing economic violence against women and girls, bolstering inclusive market and investment, financial autonomy, equal labour force participation and social justice.

The History of grassroots women's advocacy in Uganda: Why should women organise to gain what is already granted to them by law?

Advocacy through campaigning has been critical for promoting and protecting fundamental human rights and the free and fair participation of all people in civic issues affecting them at a community and national level. Advocacy in simple terms means amplifying voices of the voiceless. It refers to a carefully planned activity that is aimed at influencing, or effecting change in policies, national legislation, and practices or to take action to address a particular issue. Advocacy included like minded individuals or a group of marginalised populations organising to build collective actions for change. Although advocacy and campaigning are used interchangeably, campaigns are processes used to deliver advocacy activities to achieve a predetermined goal or objectives. Campaigns are progressively being used to represent and communicate needs of marginalised populations to governments, decision makers and those with power to improve their situations.

10 World Economic Forum 'Gender Equality Updates' (2018) <<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2018/03/women-farmers-food-production-land-rights/>> accessed 27 August 2022

11 Uganda Bureau of statistics 'Uganda National Survey Report (2019)' <https://www.ubos.org/wp-content/uploads/publications/09_2021Uganda-National-Survey-Report-2019-2020.pdf> accessed 9 September 2022

12 World Bank 'The Uganda Poverty Assessment Report 2016' <<https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/890971474327477241-0010022016/original/UgandaPovertyAssessmentReport2016Overview.pdf>>

13 World Bank Statistics 'Female Headed Households (percentage of households with a female head)-Uganda (2019)' <<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.HOU.FEMA.ZS?locations=UG>> accessed 28 August 2022

Advocacy and campaigning by Women for land rights in Uganda are considered to have made significant strides in overturning national legislations and cultural/traditional practices which are/were considered discriminatory against women and girls. Women in Uganda started organising themselves in 1980-90s and the entire time following independence women have organised to challenge inequalities in education, political participation, health rights, rights of women and girls with disabilities, economics independence, peace, and conflict resolution. However, Land rights is one of the key thematic areas that women have and continue to add so much value and input in relation to accessibility, usage, ownership, and guidance for fair legislation. At a national level, women-led grassroots groups in Uganda are challenging gender-specific discrimination and threats which preclude their equitable enjoyment of economic rights through land and property ownership. For example, women were a fundamental group in the development of the 1995 national Constitution and the Land Act 1998 which provide a legal context for equal ownership of property including land. While literature and information concerning these campaigns seems not to be publicly accessible, initiatives such as nude demonstrations by grassroots women in Northern and Eastern Uganda, and the Co-ownership Campaign have been identified for this analysis. Also, at the time of this analysis, a **Stand for Her Land Campaign (S4HL)** had been launched in Uganda to support the closing of existing land rights gaps. The S4HL launched in Uganda to create practical ways for closing gaps related to women's land rights through the collective power of activism. This campaign comes at a critical time when Uganda, like other countries, is rebuilding its economy after the Covid-19 Pandemic. The S4HL Campaign is also present in other countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Although this is a global initiative, on ground it is coordinated by local human rights organisations. In the case of Uganda, the coordinating organisation for this campaign is Uganda Community Based

Association for Women and Children's Welfare (UCOBAC).¹⁴

The Co-ownership Campaign

Under the Uganda Women's Network (UWONET), women rights activists also worked tirelessly on a campaign to ensure that a Co-ownership clause is included in the Land Act Amendments in 2000. This clause is said to have paved the way for defying biased customary land practices including gendered land inheritance. In Uganda as everywhere else in Africa land is a major policy and development concern limiting women's economic rights including access to finance. The Uganda Association of Women Lawyers (FIDA-U), the Ugandan Forum for Women in Democracy (FOWODE), and Uganda Women Parliamentarians Association (UWOPA) are among those women groups in Uganda who worked in close collaboration with women and men from rural Ugandan districts to run the Co-ownership campaign. The Co-ownership campaign-built momentum for equal land rights and promoted collective power among women groups and collaborations with men at a community level in grassroots districts as well as male legislators in parliament. However, this did not lead to the desired outcome as the Land Act 1998 continued to be amended without the said clause. What happened? Was the campaign unsatisfactory or are women's rights not important to Uganda as society?

Nevertheless, the Co-ownership Campaign set precedent for subsequent equal land movements and activism in Uganda. This is perhaps one of the most recognisable achievements. Other noticeable achievements include education and information sharing on WLRs through media engagements, networking and international lobbying, creation of think tanks, public engagements through peaceful demonstrations. In 2003 for example, there were attempts again to amend the Land Act to include a clause of rights by all family members to family

14 Stand For Her Land Campaign < <https://stand4herland.org/about-the-campaign/> > accessed 29 August 2022

land. Although this was not possible back then, the 2010 amendment of Land Act provided for spousal consent on 'family' land.

Key human rights issues within the Co-ownership WLRs Campaign

How easy would it be to change mindsets and laws in a society that is very much preserving its own values? The response to this question is conspicuously demonstrated by the failure of the Co-ownership Campaign momentum to effect change. One would imagine that it is a downhill task to enforce women's rights in a house with full representation of women, but the reality is different because activists for WLRs are working against strong barriers including traditions and deep-rooted cultural beliefs which are difficult to challenge and these account for maintaining women's rights on paper as opposed to practice. A previous study on WLRs in Uganda "Making Women's Land Rights a Reality in Uganda: Advocacy for Co-Ownership by Spouses" by Jacqueline Asimwe¹⁵ argues that "women's autonomy and individuality" which land advocacy campaigns including the Co-ownership seek to achieve is a threat to the deeply entrenched values of communalism in several cultures of Uganda. Moreover, this collectivism puts emphasis on responsibilities and obligations to society that people including women must fulfil rather than focusing on their personal improvement. Consequently, the attainment of women's rights can be seen as a tool of promoting individualism which is problematic and very much a social cleavage.

Furthermore, the seemingly unyielding environment especially at higher levels of advocacy in the Parliament can be ascribed to inadequate power by legislators to challenge the ultimate presidential powers (a parliament with tied hands). It is

reported that the president of Uganda, presently Yoweri Kaguta Museveni Tibuhabwe did not accord support for the Co-ownership Campaign and although this clause had been passed by the Parliament to be included in the Amended Land Act 1998, the president advised otherwise on grounds of anticipated future consequences this clause would cause in terms of property ownership for newly married couples. Although because of the NRM government's Affirmative Action on gender equality women have been fairly represented in the Parliament of Uganda, there are still obstacles against land and property legal reforms. Women's minimal level of decision making on issues directly affecting them could be certainly due to tokenism and/or adherence to the interests of the majority party (NRM) which in general renders their efforts towards land rights advocacy fruitless.

Promoting and protecting Women's Land rights in Northern Uganda

This campaign was organised by National Association for Women's Action in Development (NAWAD) in local areas of Nwoya, Hoima, Buliisa and Amuru under the Participation and Opportunities for Women's Economic Rights (POWER) project¹⁶. This project was targeting to protect the marginalised women who were displaced or were at risk of being displaced from their lands due to the expansion of infrastructure development in the areas.

The womankind's movement strengthening approach is based on the understanding that sustainable and transformative improvements in women's rights are achieved when there is a critical mass of actors acting collectively towards a common goal at local, regional and global levels.

This can only be achieved when there is solidarity across movements and groups which share

¹⁵ Asimwe, Jacqueline. "Making Women's Land Rights a Reality in Uganda: Advocacy for Co-Ownership by Spouses." *Yale Hum. Rts. & Dev. LJ* 4 (2001): 171 < <http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.13051/5821> > accessed 30 Aug 2022

¹⁶ National Association for Women's Action in Development 'Promoting and protecting Women's Land rights in Northern Uganda' < <https://www.nawad.co.ug/index.php/news-and-events/latest-news> > accessed 31 August 2022

common goals and can build on each other's strengths.

In a report¹⁷ some of the successes were highlighted in that they were able to support and mobilise in excess of 1,220 women across the project districts, including 110 with declared disabilities, to influence decision making in local development processes as well as to promote the adoption of Localised Alternative Livelihoods (LAL) in communities affected by land intensive industries. This has enabled often excluded women, many who provide a lion's share of the labour to sustain their families, an opportunity to understand and unleash their power within. Through that process of self-discovery they have realised the power of collective action, sisterhood and solidarity.

A women-led advocacy and bicycle caravan campaign aimed at "raising awareness on women's land rights and unlawful land evictions to improve land security and productivity in Amuru district" after continued eviction threats from West Acholi Cooperative Union, the training of community-based land advocates and paralegals otherwise known as the land queens, engagement with local leaders and police in dialogue for equal land rights and a successful public demonstration by women who delivered a petition to Amuru District headquarters.

Naked protests to protect women's land

Over the last few years there has been growing civic space exasperation at the failure of laws and policies to solve land wrangles and grabbing issues.

As a result, other forms of protests including stripping naked have been adopted by women. This approach has been seen for counter attacking powerful actors from government such as police authorities and to fight illegal land displacement and evictions. As a form of opposition, naked bodies are believed to generate power from the attention they do receive from the general public.¹⁸ A series of these protests have been recorded in Uganda in under one decade since 2012. For Example, women in Amuru District did undress to oppose a planned sale of land to an investor (Madhvani Group) in 2012.¹⁹ Similar protests were recorded in the subsequent years of 2014 and 2015 this time in Soroti district against a land encroachment by Soroti University.²⁰ While it is not possible to conclude if such advocacy approaches are efficient in reversing government decisions to transfer private developers, these initiatives demonstrate the power of civil society advocacy at a grassroot level. Furthermore, the attention received from the general public indicates that these demonstrations create issue awareness, as well are capable of spurring immediate action. In fact, this kind of grassroot level organisation to a great extent is provocative since it seems to disturb the prevailing social order in Ugandan cultures where stripping naked is anathema²¹ and hence it is a more powerful tool than fighting. It is understandable that a former Minister of Lands Ms Aidah Nantaba did advise people in Uganda to undress in contestation of land injustices including land grabbing and illegal eviction²². Besides, such rural women are powerless with no tools to fight State and private business actors who are well equipped with security, money, and a political

17 Solidarity-through-Sisterhood- Learning from the eco-feminist project, Participation and Opportunities for Women's Economic Rights (POWER) November, 2021.

18 Tamale, S., 2016. 'Nudity, protest and the law in Uganda'. School of Law, Makerere University. Inaugural Professorial Lecture, October 28, Kampala, Uganda

19 The Daily Monitor 'Tempers, uncertainty rule Amuru as Madhvani pushes land claim' Kampala, 2019 <<https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/special-reports/tempers-uncertainty-rule-amuru-as-madhvani-pushes-land-claim-1693622>> accessed 12 September 2022

20 The daily Monitor 'Soroti nude protesters charged with being a public nuisance' Kampala, 2015 <https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/news/national/soroti-nude-protesters-charged-with-being-a-public-nuisance-1617344>> accessed 12 September 2022

21 BBC News 'The Ugandan women who strip to defend their land' Uganda, 2015 <<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-32938779>> accessed 11 September 2022

22 The Daily Monitor 'Undress before land grabbers- Minister advises' Kampala, 2015 <<https://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/Undress-before-land-grabbers--Minister-advises/-/688334/2768422/-/x2uep6/-/index.html>> Accessed September 2022

backing. Unfortunately, however, these strategies are not safe for defenders since they include risks of arrests and detentions.

In reviewing the literature, very little was found on land rights movements in Uganda particularly advocacy campaigns led by grassroots women's civic groups. However, through qualitative interviews, this study received substantial data whose findings are discussed in the subsequent section.

Case studies

Cases for Grassroots Groups to defend women's land rights

The study also examined some of the grassroots women's groups who have been advancing women's land rights from all regions in Uganda including the Acholi Region, Karamoja, West Nile region, Teso Region and Bunyoro Region. They were 15 cases examined in total with 80% of them being or led by women. These were examined on their mode of advocacy, their inspiration, where, what and when they advocated for their land rights as women. Most of the respondents were aged between 30 – 65 indicating with only one of them being below the age of 30. By the time of the study; land issues that were being advocated for and cut across all the groups include: women's rights to own land, access to land justice, compensation on acquisition of land and refugees vis-à-vis host communities' land issues.

What was clear is that the most of the grassroots women's groups used a form of advocacy to address the above issues is community engagement with a focus on the community leaders as these play a key role. Despite success which is to a smaller extent still that has been registered at the grassroots level on a case-by-case basis, enormous challenges still exist and these broadly include; limited funding, poor attitude of men towards women land rights, unreliable community leaders, limited access to land

information and malfunctioning state structures. To address these, the study generated a number of recommendations including but not limited to strengthening community sensitization efforts, creating a community of practice through peer learning, capacity building for especially women leaders on land rights advocacy, translation and dissemination of information on land rights and governance as well as timely and fair compensation for communities that have lost their land.

Below are the details of the discussions that transpired among the different grass roots organizations that were involved in the study;

1 Kaiso Women's Group-Hoima

This is a community-based organization that was represented by a female aged 39. She noted that since the advent of oil in their area, some of the land issues that they face included; difficulty in achieving women land rights and access to justice, boundary conflicts effects and sale of land without the consent of women. She highlighted some of the advocacy methods they are employing in the resolution of cases like; community meetings and stakeholder dialogues between the affected people and the local councils, subcounty officials and some NGOs around.

She noted that as a group in Kaiso-Tonya an area where land is communally owned and yet prone to encroachment by the rich who have even ended up titling it, this is what we did;

- a) We petitioned the local leadership and they worked with the subcounty and district officials to ensure that the land titles are cancelled and this happened.
- b) Also, women would purchase land and are not given sales agreements but now they are able to purchase and demand for the agreements and also no longer only sign as witnesses when they are purchasing land with their spouses."

However, the Interviewee further highlighted some

of the challenges faced by the group including;

- i) threats to life from the rich who want to grab the land also men who want to sale without their spouse's consent,
- ii) patriarchy that dictates that women don't have rights to own property and they cannot inherit property puts women at a wrong side.
- iii) as well as limited access to information due to the rural set up and landing site.

She therefore gave some recommendations;

- More community awareness meetings on women land rights be conducted and
- Build capacities of women so that they are able to take part in leadership and engage in key decision making processes..

2 Mabaale Women Farmers Group

A group formed around 2010 in Hoima was represented by a married female aged 42. She noted that they have been advancing womens land rights as a group and most of the issues they interface with are; non realization of women land rights, Limited access to land information, boundary conflicts and gender-based violence. The advocacy methods being used as a group include; awareness raising and community dilaogues, negotiations, mediations and demonstration projects for financial development. She further noted that through this they have been able to register some level of success like;

- Because the women that they have closely worked with have been able to acquire more knowledge on women and land rights and
- The have been able to report some of the violations to the different stakeholders for redress because they know the referral pathways especially for GBV related cases that stem from land.

She further noted some challenges that were facing the group were;

- Limited financial capacities to be able to conduct these advocacy initiatives to reach the wider community.
- Limited information in communities on land rights especially women land rights and how they can be attained.
- Limited capacity among the leaders to also conduct mediation sessions in the community.

She recommended;

- Holding more community-based women land rights and access to justice trainings,
- Train the local councils on policy and legal frame works on land rights and also
- Do more publications and IEC materials on womens land rights, land security and property ownership rights.

3 Kigaga Women Development Association

This is a Community Based Organization founded in 2018 in Hoima district, it was represented by the chairperson of the Association aged 60-years. She noted that they mainly handle issues inline with men denying women access to compensation, men denying women to till the land as well as land grabbing. They have been able to advocate for this issues through organising for community awareness meetings, mediations and one on one engagements just to create awareness of the effects of men denying women their land rights and yet they are stipulated in the constitution. As a result of this interventions by the Association in the oil region she noted that their biggest success, *“the Association was able to build solidarity and advocate for the rights of those affected women in regards to compensation because men used to deny them participation and they would be the only beneficiaries. They have been able to engage and*

now men in their families started appreciating and opening up joint beneficiary accounts and agreeing how they will spend the money for the sustainability of the household."

Much as they registered that success, their Association has encountered some challenges including;

- Intimidations from perpetrators i.e., men,
- Limited Financial assistance to transport them to the areas where there are issues to be mediated
- Limited access to information generally on land rights, laws and processes that would help them to conduct their advocacy drives from an informed point of view.

She concluded by making the following recommendations;

- Translate information on compensation into the local languages and
- Capacity building of the groups on the legal frameworks on land as well as business and human rights.

4 Tii Pi Anyim Business Saving Group

This group was formed in the year 2017 in Anaka Town Council, Nwoya district, they are composed of over 200 business people. They were represented by a 38-year-old married woman who is the chairperson of the group who started that the group advocates for buying land for themselves so that they do farming and the proceeds from the farming in a long run helps to boost their savings. She added that the members did not know where to start from in case they needed help with land violations and hence their non involvement in any advocacy efforts. She then recommended that stakeholders, governments should help build the capacity of women on their land rights so that they can know their land rights in their matrimonial

homes to save them from losing their properties to relatives upon the death of a husband.

5 Opit Kic Women Group

This group is located in Patira East village, Purongo sub – county, Nwoya district was formed in 2014 and has 28 active members. They were represented by a married female aged 38. She noted that the issues being advocated for are mainly land wrangles and the approach used is mediation. When asked about the successes she said, *"one of the group members who lost the husband sometimes back and the brother to the husband had wanted to chase her out of the land but we managed to bring her back with help of local leaders."*

She highlighted that the biggest challenge they face in their group is that of mobilising members to come together for a common cause and further, the local leaders always need money to come to the field to resolve disputes.

She then called upon government and NGOs to intensify their advocacy on security of tenure for women, advocacy towards free legal aid for the vulnerable groups especially using ADR as an approach to resolving land related issues in the community, many communities need the knowledge on land rights this can be done in the different groups, churches and community meetings etc. or organize a small community dialogue as well as support to local leaders because few respond to the mediation due to money issues"

6 Apol Group Aputon Cell "A"

This was represented by a 60-year-old married woman. In this scenario, she narrated the case that the group was handling, she narrated that...*"The school (Teso College Aloet) gave the University its land but the University grabbed our land together with what the College gave them. The University has left the land the college gave them and have occupied the*

land grabbed from us. We took the University to court of Soroti but they bribed the court and court ordered us to leave the land within 7 days that land belongs to government of Uganda. After 7 days they came and destroyed our houses and threw out our property. We are just desperately renting within; we have tried all we can but we have failed to get justice. Since most of us are not educated there's nothing we are doing because even where we think could remain for us again police have given us 3 months to vacate but for, I am born here and married here, I don't have where to go we have tried even human rights commission but all in vain. All our elected leaders have abandoned us completely."

She then noted that they were having a number of challenges including;

- No alternative land to settle,
- Their children had dropped out of school,
- No agricultural land to till as well as accommodation.

She concluded by recommending that their compensation for the land they lost is paid to save them from the humiliation.

Apol Group Aputon Cell "B"

This group located in Soroti City in Arapai area formed in 2017, represented by a married female aged 58. She noted that they have had some land issues in their area with people wanting to grab their land but have never been handled to a logical conclusion. she stated that..."We did a demonstration and called upon our local leaders who also did not come to help us, we think they also connived with land grabbers. We filed a land suit in Soroti magistrates court but whenever we go to court, the case is adjourned and it has frustrated us. Therefore, we have not registered any success in as far as advancing our land rights since 2017 when the land case was filed in Soroti High Court. The matter is being heard; all witnesses have given evidence in court but our leaders are not supporting at all."

She highlighted that the biggest challenge being

faced in their advancement of their land rights is;

- Delays in the resolution of the case in court
- Renting accommodation is expensive because they were not given alternative accommodation after eviction.
- Their children have dropped out of school due to no livelihoods to support them financially since they were evicted, girls have got pregnant and adding a burden to the parents taking care of this children born out of wedlock.
- No land for agriculture hence no food to feed their families, the pressure is on the women to provide.

She then cried and recommended;

- That the court should conclude this matter immediately and grant them some sort of redress,
- The group members should be compensated and that the land be surveyed and be divided to them and some land be given to the university but not denying them all the land.
- She further recommended that the members are resettled and their children sent back to school.

7 Overcomers Women's Activists

This group is a Community Based Organization and was represented by a male aged 32. He started by noting that the land issues that were being worked on by the group included awareness on land ownership and protection of land. He noted that some of the advocacy methods that were being used included community sensitization through dialogues. The interviewee added that some success had been registered as there was increased knowledge and awareness of land rights and particularly on the uses of land and partnerships. When asked about the challenges being faced, he said that these include; social norms regarding land ownership in communities that

hold women captive regarding land ownership. He concluded by mentioning that knowledge advancement is key through continuous community sensitization and awareness creation. He also noted that stakeholders especially leaders within the communities need to be educated.

8 Adjumani Women Entrepreneurs Association Limited (AWEAL)

This is a legally incorporated organization established in Adjumani district in the year (not established) and was represented by a married female aged 49. She noted that the group mostly advocates for families to respect the right of girls to share in the ownership of land as provided for by the law. She also noted that for married women, they are supported when they are denied the right to use the family land that belongs to their husbands.

She highlighted that they majorly conduct community dialogues on land ownership as well as family meetings in those families where women are denied their right to own land and radio talk shows and through these methods they have been able to create some change in the community which is greatly ignorant of their land and property rights, but so far given the feedback from the communities, it indicates that most of their actions were due to the ignorance concerning their land rights but are now more aware and as a result, women that were once denied access to their family land are now able to access the land and cultivate on them.

She mentioned that some of the challenges being faced by the group were;

- Lack of transport to go for community dialogues,
- Inadequate funding to take up activities of community sensitization on a large scale
- The negative cultural attitudes and practices towards women land rights by some elders.

She then recommended

- There is need for more male engagement in order to have male champions for women land rights
- Intensifying radio talk shows and community sensitizations for awareness creation to reach every one in the community.
- Mind set change or Social norms transformation is urgently needed for some institution like the cultural and religious institutions to embrace change.

9 Women Councilors in Adjumani

This was represented by a female single person aged 39. She noted that the group works on family land issues for women and girls. She added that some of the advocacy methods employed include; family meetings, sensitization, involvement of cultural leaders as well as LC1s. She also noted that there was no success at the time and that some of the challenges being faced were; failure to attend meetings by most of the people, fighting among families and local leaders not being able to understand concepts around women land rights. She then recommended more sensitization on women land rights among families.

10 Tanyamwamwasi Women VSLA

This group is situated in Adjumani district, and was represented by a married female aged 65. She mentioned that the group is registered at the Subcounty and advocates for women to own land, register land in their own names, have shares on family land and be free to discuss land issues.

She further noted that their advocacy methods include sensitizations and workshops. she future noted that from the time they started this advocacy some successes were registered;

- Some women have already registered their

land and have registration certificates in their names,

- Women were being involved in discussions and research on land rights by the Community Development Officer.
- Some of the group members were on the land committee and court committees of the subcounty.

She highlighted some of the challenges being faced as men still resist and that some members do not attend meetings once called upon.

Recommendations;

- NGOs, CBOs and CSOs continue to engage women in workshops on land issues
- Some women leaders should be taken for study and learning tours on land rights in order for them to sensitize their fellow women.
- Building the capacity of the leaders

11 Moriku Women Group

This group is located in Agojo Refugee Settlement and was represented by a married male aged 41. He stated that the group is not registered but had a management system in place. He noted that the issues being advocated for in the group are; land rentals for agricultural production as well as issues of refugees and host communities. He further noted that they were using negotiations with the land owners as an advocacy method. “No success has been registered and the challenge of non-compliance, he said.” He then concluded by recommending that UNHCR allocates land to refugee women for cultivation and that land rentals for agricultural purposes should be regulated by the LC1 to avoid over pricing.

12 Women Empowerment Initiative Centre In Adjumani

This is a legal structure with a Certificate of Registration and was represented by a married female aged 40. She noted that the issue that was being addressed was grabbing of land from a woman by her brother. She noted that there was no success at the time. She went ahead to highlight some of the challenges that were being faced as; women’s ideas are still rejected by men and that they are not respected during family meetings on land issues. She then recommended that women should be respected and that their right to own land should be granted.

13 Hoima Blind Women Association Organisation Ltd

The organization situated in Hoima district noted that it focuses on women land rights, property ownership and security, land neighborhood boundary conflicts. The methods of advocacy they use included; Community sensitizations, Referrals, Drama, Radio programs, stakeholder engagements.

The Interviewee noted that women, especially the blind have been sensitized on land rights and they are able to advocate for it in addition to communities being aware of the avenues of conflict resolutions.

She further highlighted some challenges that included;

- Mindset challenge in some rural areas that do not regard the blind as humans
- Limited information on land and women’s land rights but specifically the land rights of the persons living with disabilities,
- Patriarchy that women don’t own property,
- Negative attitudes towards the disabled in terms of property ownership,

- Means of transport for those with limited abilities is a hustle i.e. it's a times hard to move in case they have challenges.

Recommendations;

- More training on mind set change need to be conducted especially in rural areas
- Support PWDS to attain security of their land i.e. support to acquire land titles.
- Provision of context friendly and specific land related information.

14 Apaa Land Issue

This commenced in 2007 when the displaced persons during the LRA war returned to their ancestral homes after the successful peace talk. The conflict has not come to an end due to different circumstances, especially the tribal conflict between the people of Acholi tribe and the Madi people.

Women from various groups who witnessed and were part of the protests within the locality were interviewed including a 32 year old resident of Acholi Ber Village and member of an unregistered group know as *Yeso Aye Yoo Kwo Farmer Group*. The Focus Group Discussion also included five other individuals; a 27, a 40, a 35, a 39 and a 40. During the discussion; she mentioned that they are facing several challenges arising for the tribal land conflict and are advocating for; land ownership by inheritance, boundary conflict between Acholi and Madi as well as the interference by the Uganda Wildlife Authority, Uganda Forest Authority and Madi tribe or encroachment on the land.

She further mentioned that some of the methods that are used in advocacy include; stakeholder engagements with local leaders through police

cells and community meetings, use of social media platforms to advance women's issues, involvement of Community Based Organizations and other Civil Society Organizations as well as the use of non-violent actions such as demonstrations.

Some challenges were also highlighted including;

- Increase in the killing and torture of people who were involved in advocacy,
- Disappearance of people,
- Attacks by the Madi using dangerous weapons like arrows and pangas,
- Poor health services,
- Limited education institutions and
- Poor state of roads leading to the areas with the problem.

Recommendations

- Government should deploy the security personals especially the army to protect the people.
- Alternative recovery options should be rendered to the victims.
- Mindset change and counseling and psychosocial support for those affected
- There is need to construct schools to support children that were displaced.
- Legal education is key, so that they know their rights and the laws that protect them.
- Need to provide skills training to the people of Apaa to help single mothers and young people.
- Government to open roads within the various villages to improve transportation of goods.



SECTION THREE

3.1 Introduction

This study set out with the aim of analysing the effectiveness of grassroots campaigns led by grassroots and indigenous women to secure land rights. The discussion of the findings is categorised according to the recurring themes which were identified during primary and secondary data analysis. These themes include the nature of land issues worked on by women groups and individual activists, their success stories, the challenges, and recommended approaches for ameliorating advocacy for WLRs.

3.2 Findings and Analysis

Land issues worked on

The analyses indicate that while some interventions by community activists and women civic groups work on specific land issues such as land acquisition process in urban and rural areas, food security and land compensation processes, the majority of respondents indicated that they broadly work on the creation of awareness for equal land rights. This is done through community sensitization, capacity building for lower land actors and duty bearers, Alternative Dispute Resolutions (ADR) and needs

assessments for access to land justice mechanisms. At a national level, advocacy for WLR campaigns aim to reform policies to accelerate the attainment of secure tenure rights by targeting policy makers and implementers, building partnerships for land justice and mobilising resources to support country level actions. The study included voices of women and men with legal backgrounds, local political leaders, cultural (clan) leaders, religious leaders, Grassroots women groups and other volunteers from community based organisations.

3.3 Success Stories

Policy and Legal reform

In contribution towards law reforms in favour of gender equality especially for women's property ownership, inheritance, and succession, The Succession (Amendment) Act that was passed in March 2022 for instance is an achievement that grass-root women and groups did contribute significantly. The case below demonstrates

how women have provided inputs for bolstering land rights and amendment of discriminatory laws. The Women's Land Rights Movement (WLRM) currently hosted by LANDnet Uganda started compiling inputs for the amendment process of the Succession Act just about 2017. In the initial stages the focus was on reviewing the Act to identify its applicability to the current situations given that it was believed to be outdated. The Succession Ordinance of 1906²³ 1906 also amended in 1972 by the Succession (Amendment) had raised concerns of discrimination and hence considered impotent on so many grounds. Additionally, the constitutional court ruling in favour of the suit brought by the Law & Advocacy for Women in Uganda Vs Attorney General of Uganda Constitutional petition No. 13 /05 /& 05 /06 added fresh impetus to their cause. The court ruled that certain sections in the succession Act (Section 2(n), 23, 26, 27, 29,43, 44) were discriminatory and inconsistent with the 1995 Constitution Articles 20, 21, 24,26, 31, 33 and 44). Based on these grounds, members of the WLRM took an active role in relevant consultations, the development and validation of the issue papers, justifications for amending the Act which were presented to parliament, dissemination of IEC materials and infographics to familiarise the public with the sections in question, media engagements especially via social media campaigns, radio, and television talk shows to create awareness, as well as presenting and defending their stand on the proposed amendment to the Committee of Legal and Parliamentary Affairs. WLRM members also were present in parliament when the Succession (Amendment) Bill 2018 was tabled for the first time in parliament.

Finally, they provided support for the development of a communications and advocacy strategy for the campaign engagement.

Civic education is essential for progressive human rights advocacy and interpretation of the law.

Although legal and human rights illiteracy is a barrier across all regions in Uganda, there is a fair understanding that through past advocacy activities like sensitization and translated information shared have yielded results. Currently, women with limited or no education have started to appreciate the concepts of land rights and the relevant laws. Through the collective power that individual women and groups have formed, it is undoubtable that they have indeed made substantial progress towards land justice. To demonstrate this further, lately more women in Uganda are standing up to defend their land rights either individually or in groups without consulting their male relatives first. Indeed, one interviewee also a legislator in parliament emphasised that although land registration and titling processes are still a pain in Uganda, some women have managed to secure legal custody for their land and other property and are making full utilisation of land titles to improve their livelihoods. For instance, there is evidence that women have used land titles to secure financial credit from lending institutions which they have used to invest in other economic and livelihood initiatives. The growing quest for land documentation and titles and/or legal co-ownership of land by wives and husbands confirms that "women have seen the light" as clearly put by a respondent. Talking about this issue an interviewee said:

Earlier on some women in other cultures would inherit land from their family either their fathers but give up and continue with their husband's property and forget all about their family land but now women can stand up alone and defend their rights (..) we see more women even using their land titles and agreements as collateral to borrow money from lenders.

²³ LANDnet Uganda 'The-Succession-Fact-Sheet-Serial-No-LNSF001' <<http://www.landnet.ug/landwatch/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/The-Succession-Fact-Sheet-Serial-No-LNSF001.pdf>> accessed 10 September 2022

Male Engagement;

Another common view amongst interviewees was related to the level of male engagement. A significant number of respondents said that grassroot activities have improved the level of male engagement in relation to women's land rights. Some men have gone ahead to offer themselves to be champions in their communities to provide an example to other men. The participation of men in WLRs debates, and sensitization activities, models positive behaviour which is important for shifting mindsets. Furthermore, women's grassroots groups have contributed towards research, data and information which is used to inform campaigns at a national level. Some of these campaigns include those aimed to combat GBV induced because of property ownership. The Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development (MLHUD), the Judiciary and other international development organisations including OXFAM, ActionAid, Caritas, Lutheran World Federation, and UN WOMEN were commonly identified for supporting women's land rights efforts.

Formation of community structures

Women organisations (national and grassroots) have formed community-based structures which have provided pragmatic ways in which women and girls' rights including WLRs can be bolstered in rural areas. As an approach for decentralising advisory services, community structures are also a way of nurturing sustainable actions. Grassroot structures have supported full participation of local women to take ownership of community activities on land rights. Organisations such as UCOBAC, UWONET, LANDnet Uganda and the National Land Coalition Uganda have supported these arrangements. UWONET for example runs

two advisory offices in Kamuli and Namutumba districts where land disputes related to inheritance, and succession are addressed. Likewise, LANDnet Uganda through the WLRM and with support from UN Women has established local systems in districts and sub counties for redressing land related issues.

For example, Under the UN Women project titled "INCREASING WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT THROUGH TENURE SECURITY IN UGANDA: Enhancing women's access, control, and ownership of land in Gulu, Moroto, Abim, and Kitgum districts among others (2017-2021), 60 community volunteers composed of 30 females 30 males were identified by local communities to be trained as champions of women's land rights in the districts of Gulu, Abim, Amuria, Tororo, Amudat, Kaberamaido, Kitgum, Pader, Kotido and Moroto. Local communities were tasked to identify suitable male and female champions dedicated to women's land rights who would be trained to conduct sensitization sessions, and Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) related to land in their communities.

The methodology employed by LANDnet was to ensure that women's economic empowerment should start at an individual level, household and community. The champions were also trained on how to support access to land justice through making recommendations for further legal aid services. Such transformative approaches are contributing towards empowering communities to solve land issues especially those that are basic to them without waiting for solutions from the government.

LANDnet Uganda confirms that during the project lifespan, the following success stories were registered,

A female champion called Nachap Maria (widow) from Kidepo S/C in Moroto district was able to use the knowledge gained on the rights of a widow to inherit her late husband's property, she was able to change the mindset of her late husband's brothers who had initially taken away her land. They later on agreed to give her back the land they had taken from her after the death of her husband.



Another example is for Keem Rose (youth) from Nadunget S/c Moroto district, [who] used the knowledge on rights for every one to inherit property boys and girls. She was able to sensitise and change the mindset of her father, mother, and brothers to give girls an inheritance, this enabled the father to distribute land to his children including the girls and Keem Rose was able to get her rightful portion after a long battle with the brothers who thought girls were not meant to get an inheritance of land from their father.



Lanyero Gloria from Paicho s/c, Gulu district was able to use the knowledge gained on rights of married woman and got land from her husband who had other wives and did not want to give her land as a legal wife, she now has that land registered in her name and has a title in her name. She has further constructed a permanent house on that land and is living with her children happily.



Therefore, as a sustainability approach for the project, the male and female champions were registered as CBOs in their respective districts. It should be noted that the sub counties in those respective districts have gone ahead to provide office space for the champions to operate in as they conduct their everyday activities. And as of now, these same champions have gained training in different topical issues like Conflict and gender sensitive land governance, Transformative leadership approach to Women land rights, Land registration, Human Rights Based Approaches.

Overturing of the decision to evict women;

The interviewee also noted that some successes were registered by some of the grassroots womens groups especially from Apa is that their advocacy persuaded the president to overturn the decision made by the Government of Uganda to evict the people of Apaa in May 2023. This was achieved through a peaceful demonstration during the visit by the Prime Minister that happened in February 2023. Additionally, the people of Apaa demanded

the Republic of Uganda to respond to the crisis in Apaa and indeed the president delegated a team who met the leaders of Apaa in Pabo Town Council.

In summary, respondents widely agree that women engagements through civic groups have set a foundation for provoking customs and norms, reforming laws, creating awareness, and learning about land laws and rights. Nevertheless, despite these achievements, the study re-echoes challenges which have been classified as follows.

3.4 Challenges

Deep rooted patriarchal norms, attitudes, and manipulative behaviour

The first issue that was affirmed by almost all respondents relates to the strong traditional beliefs and mindsets held by men, cultural leaders and in some cases older women who still assert that property and land rights should be solely by men. This strong standpoint which still governs cultures and societies overrides the purpose of advocacy.

While this study appreciates that a few people including leaders think differently, the patriarchal fabric is still persistent within society and these norms supersede the efforts of women. Again, these are values and attitudes that have been lived for several years and the possibility of an up-down advocacy approach to transform perspectives may only be an illusion. A few respondents are quoted sharing their experiences on the issue of patriarchal settings.

“Mostly, social norms because we really deal with local communities and these people have their beliefs really entrenched in them and they are really hard to change and with behavioural changes it takes time for you to realise tangible changes (...) in the meetings you may have 80% women [in attendance] and you know women have no control over land and if you have a meeting which has men, men have an agenda that they want to promote they feel the women are contented and their line of question gives you that background that they have a leaning which they want discussions to go. The other thing, when you have a blended meeting with men and women, women don’t talk and because of culture, they are silent and one peculiar thing I noticed is that they will sit at the back and even when they find seats they will seat down on [mats leave the chairs at the front for men but when you separate these people, they (women) will talk, and you will be surprised on what they will say. They are oppressed and they know, they will tell you that they can’t speak when their men are around.”

“Men pretend that a woman cannot own land. When a woman buys land, the man will say that it is his land because a woman should not own land. Not only that one, but in my sensitization, they are saying that women should talk about land whereby their contribution should remain only in clan members. Women in any land wrangles are not represented, men are the only ones to participate. Women who can speak for themselves are not informed of their land rights. (...) in my memory, there is a husband who is an accountant, and the woman (wife) is a teacher. She bought land and after the husband knew that she bought land she asked why did she buy land? She wants to leave me. They have separated.”

“The deep-rooted norms and practices within the communities and it takes time to change the attitudes for the community to embrace property rights for women. So, it is a process that really needs patience and continuous engagement. If the intervention is for once in a while it doesn’t give ample time to engage with people. In some areas in the north because of interventions people have been empowered and cultures are starting to get diluted but in areas such as Kabale the culture is still so strong, and the level of awareness is still minimal; women will say that they hardly have rights and cannot even explain what they (rights) are (...)”

These collective voices and several others that could not be added to this report emphasise that norms are not just an insurmountable resistance but are also a manipulative tool “man” and those in power have used to advantage themselves. Whenever there is oppression of one group, there is a gain for the other whilst not departing away from the truth of who owns more land vis -a-vis who uses it more. Since a large number of studies and reports have clearly pointed out that although women dominate agriculture and food production, majority of the land is owned by men, it is worth considering an important question which seeks to understand useability rights, including the nature of crops grown by women vis -a-vis those grown by men and control of agricultural outputs. Do women have full control of agricultural outputs or are they a mere group of workers? And in the case where women have attained legal ownership of land, do they have full control of that land? The point here is not to chase equality while ignoring equitable land use. Some participants that were contacted to take part in this study think otherwise. “Why is it that women are producers of food which in most cases is perishable and not longer-term high value crops such as coffee like men do? Because this is what landowners have dictated us to plant.” In fact, another respondent argued that WLRs campaigns should first seek to analyse whether legal land ownership is what women want as opposed to access and use rights.

While some women may own land on paper, they may not have full control of that land and cannot dictate how it is utilised.

Lack of information and Legal and human rights illiteracy

In recent years more girls and women in Uganda have attained education than in the past. However, women continue to face multiple barriers related to education and these are based on gender and other intersecting factors including age, poverty and ethnicity which precludes equal enjoyment of the right to quality education. Historically, education was largely a male child privilege which left out many females. It is no surprise that even in recent years these lingering impacts limit women’s ability to interact in development interventions meaningfully. Free flow of information and the understanding of this information is vital for effective advocacy. Lack of education and training especially on land rights and legal frameworks is not only an issue for women who are in most cases victims, but also a gap which must be filled among those at the forefront of land campaigns. Mediators, Local Councils (LCs), cultural leaders, and women leaders for example, all need to be adequately trained to deliver accurate and non-conflicting information.

“It’s very evident with the women councillors at village and district level, most of them do not even know the procedure for tabling motions in council especially on issues that affect women in their communities for example, human rights violations, land grabbing, GBV etc they end up being seconders of motions raised by their male counterparts, this lowers their effectiveness in decision making spaces. I witnessed this first hand when I organised for a training of women leaders on transformative leadership for women’s land rights in Amuria and Kitgum districts. The LCV of Amuria specifically requested that LANDnet organises a special training for women councillors at district level to orient them on procedures and how to conduct business in council sittings this [was] in a way to increase their voice and urgency in activism on issues that affect them [so that they are] able to table motions and defend them from an informed point of view and not just seconding motions tabled by the men.”

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“At a national level, the women MPs do not know how to articulate issues to do with land rights. There are few especially those with NGO background that can [speak] on land issues but most of them fear. Let me give an example (...) most of them are in GBV but not land rights. Women members of parliament are not quiet just because they want to be quiet. Their inability to articulate these issues is as a result of lack of knowledge, there is a need to build the capacity of the women Members of Parliament.”

“(...) Lack of knowledge in the communities that we work [in]. Many do not know their rights, especially women at the grassroots [communities]. Some of them cannot speak for themselves. First of all, they don't know that they have a right maybe to own land even when you are a girl and the marriage has failed and you have come back to your father's home, you find that because of lack of knowledge these girls are denied the right to own land and don't even know where to go for redress.”

“For me the biggest challenge is information. Women don't have information about land rights. The information that is available is scanty and is not clear for them. Different people come to tell them different things and the most times where we have CSOs engaging with them is for a short time. It is like a projectized way of looking at things and then by the time another organisation comes to create awareness on issues about land rights they cannot connect. First of all, some of them don't really understand whether they own land or not. Different types of land say customary land they know it is for the family but don't know whether they own it or not.”

“Women also need to be engaged vigorously. To know their rights but also to know how to use the rights because others might abuse those rights. When we go to communities, we don't intend to disorganise the family or bring instabilities in the family. What we need is to make life better for them. So, we need to tell them how they can make it better for themselves because for us women when we want to buy property in our own name, a man will request to be included (on the title) and women will say no and yet, we want [our name] to be included on the man's property. So, we have to let them know that it works both ways. You can buy your own and the man can buy his own, but you can also buy together. The information we pack will either do good or bring harm to the community”.

Furthermore, it was mentioned that access to information from land institutions such as the MLHUD is difficult which limits the level of engagement with target communities and support for affected groups.

“We would have the information to share with the grassroots women, but the Ministry of Lands does not provide us with information. Even if you go to the Land Information Centre searching for information on titled land, they can't give you that information even when you would want to help the grassroots women those who are being evicted you can't help because you don't have the information, they can't avail to you the information on mapped land who the owner is. Additionally, meeting the Minister of Lands and Ministry officials you have to go through bureaucratic processes (...) especially us at national level you can't get information they toss you around until when you give up. You can't help the people if you don't have the information.”

“The procedures for securing their tenure are still not clear. They may be clearly stipulated in the law but when it comes to practice, it is actually difficult. You find that somebody suffers to get a land title, even when you go to the ministry someone may not be able to tell you exactly what you need to do to get the land title. I find that as a challenge to secure women's land rights.”

Resource gaps combined with commercialisation of interventions

Advocacy and campaign activities require finances, require expertise, and require building strong collaborations with implementing institutions. The lack of resources is both a pain point at mainly three levels. For land management institutions, for women in their civic groups and individual land victims within targeted communities. Firstly, it is our understanding that the government institutions in charge of land are highly under-resourced which in so many ways breeds difficulties for efficient executive respective mandates concerning land. The inefficiencies and growing levels of corruption within the ministry of Land are understood to be as a result of limited funding.

“Poor performance of some of these land institutions. They also don't have enough funding. We know there will never be enough funding but even the basic needed funding is not available which encourages a lot of corruption and failure of them to fulfill their mandate.”

“The Land Fund is the least funded and yet they bring in a lot of money through titling and searches, but they are the least funded. Land disputes at the district and the subcounty cannot be handled because of lack of funding. The ministry of land is also constrained (...) even the district land boards, the physical planning committees some have not even conducted elections because they have no money and yet that is where most forgeries happen, so they still have old boards who are not supposed to be in office because they don't have finances and yet that is where forgeries take place-the district land boards.”

Secondly, at a national level, women groups require resources to lobby for a buy-in from male legislators to support bills and motions for legal and policy reforms. In villages, financial resources are needed to meet logistical requirements for engaging, educating, and training volunteers, duty bearers, land advocates and actors. According to the respondents, resource constraints are exacerbated by the commercialization of development interventions by some actors including organisations who believe that to effectively engage with vulnerable communities, money should be

handed out. This has rather eroded the morals of those sought to be helped and has increasingly made it difficult for other actors who may not have ready cash. Finally, the participants on the whole demonstrated that money is frustrating women's efforts to access leaders, justice, and remedy. LCs and cultural leaders in particular paramount chiefs were mentioned for asking for money before they intervene in land issues. In other cases, they are paid bribes by perpetrators to delay processes, or deny women their land rights.

“Some areas are far, and you need to have enough finances to engage with them at the same time [in] some communities financial expectations are so high every time you engage with communities, they want tangible help (money) other than the knowledge you are giving them.”

Organised and yet divided

The analysis of existing information combined with interview responses reveals that advocacy for equitable land rights in Uganda is taking place in struggling societies with divided leaders, scarce resources, conflicting agendas, and unequal power dynamics. This view was confirmed by some few key informants who stressed that women civic groups in Uganda are divided into different arms and that this limits their ability to achieve a common advocacy goal.

Sensitivities surrounding land issues

Similar to the challenges faced by activists of other thematic human rights issues, land advocates, and environmentalists, are susceptible to harassment, retaliation and intimidation from perpetrators including State, businesses, and individual actors. Across the world, Africa and in Uganda, there is evidence pointing to threats, arbitrary detention, attacks on family members, and sometimes deaths of those involved in defending land and

environmental rights. The environment of fear that Land Rights Defenders have had to work in threatens possibilities to secure Land Rights. As was pointed out in section one of this paper, some advocacy approaches are considered problematic and are risky for land rights defenders. For example, the “naked body” demonstrators in Soroti district were arrested. While engaging with interviewees, two respondents did share that land wrangles had led to deaths of victims and caused intimidation of defenders and lawyers especially in the districts of Gulu and Kitgum in Northern Uganda.

Governance of civil grassroots groups

Governance and management dynamics of civil society organisations are important in determining their contribution towards social value change. Considering that the multiplicity of organised stakeholders brings about increased awareness and necessary pressure for addressing social issues and in this situation, land rights, their internal organisation and the functionality of structures are fundamental. Governance accounts for management structures,

the composition and qualifications of management teams including board members, organisational committees, their roles and responsibilities, and how to address management challenges. While variations in mandates and size of civil society are justifiable, functional CSOs in all sizes ought to have strong governance systems. However, the interviews conducted during this study made it clear that capacity to effectively manage grassroots women organisations is very much a challenge. The governance issues within grassroots organisations range from how they are established, to meeting legal obligations and resources. Firstly, some of these organisations are formed on a voluntary basis. While free membership demonstrates commitment for members to advance social change and meet community needs, it comes with

resource (human, time, financial, and technical) implications. As a result, most of them depend on external resources which may not be readily available whenever required. Secondly, resource constraints limit their level of providing oversight for the direction of these civic groups, monitoring their progress and their compliance to legal requirements especially those specified in the NGO Act 2016 and Sections 30, 31 and 32 of the NGO Regulations, 2017 on filing returns and furnishing of information. Compilation of periodic reports, computation and filing returns for example requires qualified personnel including accountants or auditors or hiring external consultants to do so. These are not possible for every civil society group especially those operating at grassroots level with limited resources.

“There is a problem with how civil society groups are governed and operated. Well, let me not generalise but it is definitely true for organisations that are constrained in so many ways. As you can imagine there are women groups that have only a handful of staff and support. They don’t have enough qualified personnel to assist these organisations to manage their work in conformity with the law, some don’t even have sound boards or strategic plans because all these require financial resources which they can’t afford. Their memberships are free of charge and rely on voluntary support mainly. How do you expect a farmers group to have boards, keep audited records, or hire consultants to streamline their work? Because of these internal weaknesses, it is very hard for civic women organisations to grow and contribute to the enormous work of fighting for their land rights.”

Overall, although there are several other issues that could not be included in this analysis, the study results indicate that land rights campaigns by local women organizations are met with social, economic, and political obstacles which all combined together impact the efficacy of civic engagements. That notwithstanding, the study in section four suggests recommendations for actions.



SECTION FOUR

4.1 Recommendations

As was mentioned earlier, the S4HL Campaign was launched to contribute to the ongoing efforts of securing land rights for women. This pertinent campaign has an opportunity to mitigate some of the challenges mentioned in this study to change the trajectory of its civic actions in time because this study has raised important questions about the nature of environment land rights and how they are understood and implemented.

Gender transformative approaches to re-think negative norms

The gendered power structures within societies can only be dismantled if their impacts on women and girls are appreciated by all social groups. Gender Transformative Approaches (GTA) are interventions designed to change norms and promote equal social hierarchies by examining existing power dynamics within populations for example, some organisations like Oxfam, PELUM Uganda have been using the GALS methodology, its a community-led empowerment methodology to promote more harmonious and violence-free relationships in families and communities. It aims to connect and build synergies between various

groups of people in a pursuit of the common vision of promoting a harmonious and life free of gender-based violence (GBV) for women and girls within their families and the wider communities, ActionAid Uganda on the other hand uses the SASA methodology to prevent violence against women and girls, its a call to action to all. First, a bottom-up approach for shifting norms through socialisation by targeting young people in learning institutions and their social groups. Studies indicate that people acquire social knowledge, beliefs, and customs through socialisation while growing up. It is possible, therefore, that if conversations of equal rights to property including land are introduced to young adults earlier enough, young men will appreciate this discourse right from childhood: as opposed to introducing these topics when boys and girls have grown into fathers, mothers and leaders who will go ahead to inherit negative attitudes from their cultures. It is likely that such approaches can cause long term impacts. Second, GPA can also be introduced to older populations after a careful analysis of the lived experiences of diverse groups. Analyses are also recommended to mitigate any potential risks and concerns including GBV that may arise for challenging customs.²⁴

²⁴ USAID 'Intimate Partner Violence and Land Toolkit' <https://www.land-links.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/USAID_Land_Tenure_IPV_Toolkit.pdf> accessed 10 September 2022

Continuous sensitization and capacity building through a holistic coordination approach

The first step of running a successful campaign is having knowledge not only on the issue in question but on the entire process itself. Process knowledge is important for addressing ambiguity since it enables to define which activities should be implemented at any particular stage of the campaign paying attention to desired impact. As has been defined in the previous section, advocacy refers to a carefully planned activity with a well-defined starting and end point. To achieve results, there must be an encompassing approach broad enough to engage with relevant stakeholders at all levels. The proposed approaches should enable continuous knowledge generation and sharing to keep targeted communities engaged. Based on the protracted issues explored by this analysis, there is a need for a more coherent voice and continuous engagement processes dedicated towards transforming norms barring the achievement of gender equality. Although some interventions are designed for community level engagement, there is a need for community land actors and duty bearers to collaborate with enforcing institutions to ensure access to land justice. This collaboration can move beyond communities to the level where the law will be upheld. In addition, women land activists have the opportunity to leverage the power of fellow women in various leadership positions at all levels. However, this can only be achieved if indigenous women groups form a unanimous voice to seek support of those near power. Civil Society may consider introducing women's land rights training and capacity building programmes for women in government to respond to the existing knowledge gap. It is possible that their appreciation of women's land rights will spur their support towards land rights advocacy and strengthening.

Multi-stakeholder partnerships

With regards to building a more coherent advocacy voice, women organisations in Uganda could make

tangible achievements if they work together in partnerships. Strong collaborations are critical for driving investments in campaign activities especially to craft solutions for the aforementioned challenges. Working in close collaboration with different stakeholders including cultural leaders and women representatives, civil society, religious leaders, and government is particularly fundamental in leveraging on existing expertise, resources, efforts, and the political will of governments to address corruption which has crippled the justice system at all levels. Similarly working together is essential for decommercialization of land advocacy to enable women attain secure tenure rights. Drawing from the information provided by respondents, international development organisations are very much inclined towards funding other gender equality thematic issues with less action towards land rights. Yet, land is a critical source of livelihoods and a basis for women's economic empowerment. In this case therefore, funding proposals for land rights activities should clearly demonstrate the threat of insecure land rights and how this can be linked to gender issues including GBV induced by land related conflicts.

Its additionally recommended that every livelihood project fronted or implemented with land based interventions, women's land rights should be mainstreamed because improvement of livelihoods cannot be achieved like Agribusiness/ value chains, or generally food systems with the women's land rights discourse being ignored or not deliberately fronted because women produce the $\frac{2}{3}$ of the agricultural labour force.

Training of community land rights advocates and male champions

Generally speaking, the role of men in attaining gender equality should not be limited to only shifting their attitudes but they should also be empowered and encouraged to be change agents. On the issue of secure and equitable land rights for both men and women, it is more meaningful to take everyone (elders, young men, and cultural leaders) along and

to include the majority decision makers (men) in all dialogues concerning women's land rights. It goes without saying that majority cultural leaders in Uganda are men and they also dominate political and religious leadership positions. Accordingly, their engagement cannot be emphasised enough. The power of male engagement is exemplified further in the context of customary land justice system/s. The preponderance of male actors in social and customary leadership implies that they are key in enforcing land related discriminatory practices using customary law. Accordingly, there

seems to be a definite need to explore more perspectives for engaging men to protect women's land rights, promote equitable land justice, and to create an enabling environment in which women can be supported using customary legal systems.

Additionally, the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development came up with the National Male Involvement Strategy for the Prevention and Response of Gender Based Violence in Uganda this is a model that can be replicated in the women's land rights work.

“Male engagement is very important because they [men] are custodians of property. I always ask Civil society Organisation members, do you realise why we are not making an impact even when interventions have been increased? How much are we engaging men in these spaces. Away from calling women in meetings we need to engage and train male champions. Maybe that will work better and engage the cultural institutions in these issues if we involve them deeply, I think that is where the change will start from. I have seen that men are the preservers of the customs because these customs work in their favour so, if you change their mind slowly by slowly you will be changing the whole community.”

Multi lens approaches to consider diverse experiences of women

While it is undoubtedly true that land rights are generally weaker for all women, another fact is that women are not a homogenous group and the different populations which exist within the big group of women are impacted differently. Limited education and knowledge of land rights and laws is for example a major obstacle that has been cited for hindering women's secure land rights in Uganda. However, within Ugandan communities not all women are uneducated and not all women are educated. Even among those with sufficient education, their level of knowledge of land rights and related laws varies. These differences affect how information is received, understood, and used. The same applies for women living with HIV, the disabled ones, and other conditions. It is important to conceptualise community interventions based

on women's experiences. As a way forward, it is more appropriate for an inclusive lens to address the intersectionality challenges faced by different women. Opinions of vulnerable/target populations should be used as the starting point for designing solutions. Through community consultations, local contexts should be analysed to understand what it is that will yield positive results. To support the participation of all women populations in land rights advocacy, the term participation should also be clearly unpacked to help potential actors understand how they can contribute in a meaningful way.

Research and Documentation of community activities and best practices

Documentation serves several purposes in advocacy for human rights and particularly land.

Sources of information capturing activities, challenges, and achievements should be available for actors and non-actors including researchers. Availability of documents and information detailing women's experiences, and testimonies on land rights including access, acquisition, ownership, and utilisation provides a basis for greater organisation, resource mobilisation and ideas for building stronger support systems. For future research, comparisons and analyses on land cases and progress, campaigns on land ought to be well documented. With the advancement in technology and enhanced sources of information generation and sharing tools, advocacy activities on tenure rights can be to a greater extent supported.

Additionally, focus should also be geared towards the documentation of best practices and learnings from the various civic groups, campaigns fronted, this will go a long way in providing good reference information to inform the upcoming or future campaigns.

Good Governance

To achieve predetermined goals, organisational leaders must exercise their power and authority in a way that directs the organisation forward. Good governance does not stop at having qualified teams and BODs, but it is also mindful of how decisions concerning resources and investments are made. Internal policies governing CSOs including roles and responsibilities of teams must all be clearly defined, understood, and implemented. Because civil society survives largely on external resources, accountability of actions and resources, and prioritisation of key issues in which those resources are invested is essential for driving impact. While national laws may not be favorable for some organizations because of the range of requirements that they must fulfill, compliance with regulations is relevant to prevent possible frustrations on CSOs work.

Transformative leadership approach to Women's Land Rights

Much as LANDnet Uganda with support from Oxfam rolled out a two day training each for the councilors in just 2 districts of Amuria and Kitgum, there have been tremendous results that came out of the training conducted. Adoption of a transformative leadership approach to women's land rights. Oxfam has adopted this as an approach to the promotion of Women's land rights as opposed to the conventional leadership. and moving forward, Oxfam has supported the different organizations like UWONET, and the Women First Coalition, (a national coalition of women's right organizations) to increase their skills and capacity, for example on strategies such as gender budgeting, so they can drive the project's activities forward. One of such projects is implemented alongside the Uganda Women's Network (UWONET) in four districts of the Northern Region. LANDnet Uganda on the other hand , This approach seeks to empower women at all levels of society to promote women's rights: at the grassroots level, supporting community activists; at the district level, training councilors and leaders in policy drafting and lobbying; and at the national level, supporting politicians to lead improvements to key pieces of legislation. As the WLRM this should be an approach adopted to ensure that the capacity of the councilors at the grassroots is built for both the old and new leaders.

Development of a repository

To cure the limitation on limited studies or researches conducted on previous campaigns and civic women's groups, its prudent that a one stop center, could be a website, a knowledge hub for women's land rights materials, studies, best practices, databases for the different kind of information on women's land rights can be stored and can be accessed easily by any one should be developed.

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