

# **Strengthening Women's Land Rights in Northern Uganda**

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## **TWELVE-MONTH PROJECT ASSESSMENT REPORT**

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## Executive summary

Decades of conflict, community resettlements, co-existing customary and statutory systems, and high demand for land in Northern Uganda have turned access to and control over land into a very contentious issue, affecting which land rights are granted, to whom, and how secure these rights are. Women, and especially women without a male relative to support them, often find themselves in a particularly vulnerable position.

To address these problems, Landesa partnered with local organizations WORUDET and ARUL to develop and pilot an approach that relies on in-country institutional capacity to strengthen women's land rights in a customary, post-conflict setting. The pilot worked at three levels: community-based facilitators, groups of local women, and community leaders.

Twelve months after the project's launch, this mixed-methods assessment reports noticeable improvements in women's perceptions of their rights to land. More specifically, women report accessing more land; they indicate that their rights are more likely to be recognized by their families and their communities; they believe their rights are less vulnerable to changes in their families and their communities; they report being more likely to enforce their rights to land; and they perceive themselves as more likely to effectively influence their families' decisions to sell, rent, mortgage or bequeath land.

## 1. Introduction

Decades of conflict, community resettlements, co-existing customary and statutory systems, and high demand for land in Northern Uganda have turned access to and control over land into a very contentious issue, affecting which land rights are granted, to whom, and how secure these rights are. Women, and especially women without a male relative to support them, often find themselves in a particularly vulnerable position. Compared to their male relatives, women may have less access to land, may have fewer rights to the land they can access, and their land rights may be less secure. In response to this scenario, Landesa partnered with local organizations to develop and pilot a project entitled 'Strengthening Women's Land Rights in Northern Uganda'. The pilot project is located in the northern Uganda districts of Pader and Agago in Acholi sub region. These districts are located approximately 406 kilometres from Kampala and 130 kilometres north east of Gulu at coordinates: 02 50N, 33 05E.

The objective of this project was to test an approach that relies on in-country institutional capacity to strengthen women's land rights in a customary, post-conflict setting. To develop, implement and test this pilot, Landesa partnered with WORUDET, a civil society organization based in Pader but working in several other locations in Northern Uganda, and with Associates Research, a research organization based in Kampala that works on land and resource tenure issues.

The project identified all the relevant stakeholders and followed a three-pronged approach that included: (i) training and mentoring a cadre of community-based facilitators on women's rights to land, facilitation skills, and mediation and conflict mitigation; (ii) organizing groups of women who met weekly and received training on women's rights as well as skills that enabled them to gain confidence and become more assertive; and (iii) engaging, sensitizing and training relevant stakeholders as needed.

## 2. Evaluation methodology

Once participants were enrolled, we carried out a mixed-method study to create a baseline. For the qualitative component, we organized focus group discussions with each of the ten women's groups. For the quantitative component, we created a tailored questionnaire and surveyed all the project participants. The data collection instruments were in English but the interviews were conducted in Luo, the local dialect. A year later, we followed the same process and added semi-structured interviews with the relevant stakeholders.

For the 12-month assessment, we interviewed a total of 234 respondents from the two sub counties of Lira Palwo in Agago district and Puranga in Pader district. For 222 of these women we have baseline data. The results presented in this report are based on answers from these 222 women. Pader had slightly more respondents than Agago.

We organized and present our findings according to the framework we created to assess and measure the strength of women's rights to land. According to this framework, a woman's access and control over land can improve if: *a*) she gains access to more land; *b*) she gains access to land of higher quality or in a better location; *c*) she gains additional rights over a plot of land to which she already had access; or, *d*) her land rights become more secure. A woman's land rights are secure if: i) they are legitimate; ii) they are not vulnerable to changes in her social status; iii) they are enforceable; iv) they are granted for an extended period of time; and v) her ability to exercise them does not require an additional layer of approval that only applies to women. The report is organized according to the latter five dimensions and the data presented compares what women reported at the beginning of the project to what they reported a year into it. Recognizing that participants may have differed in their initial situation as well as on how they experienced the project, when appropriate we disaggregate the data by marital status.

Finally, while the figures we provide offer a helpful assessment, we encourage readers to interpret them carefully for two reasons. First, we are unable to compare project results to those of a valid control group. While our methodology included gathering data from a control group, circumstances out of our control invalidated the exercise when those women were targeted by another intervention. In light of this, we are able to report changes but must rely on our qualitative research to attribute any portion of the changes observed to the project. Second, we chose to do a perceptions-based assessment to effectively capture what matters to the participants and to what extent. However, participants' perceptions can change over the course of the project – they may assess the same situation differently – and if they do, those changes

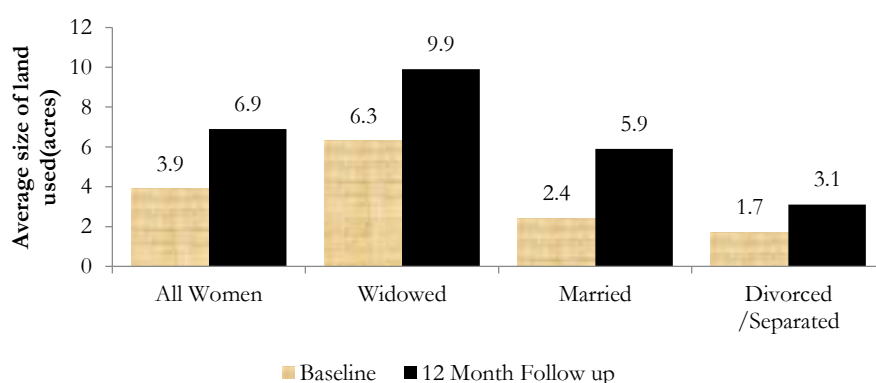
of perceptions rather than situations can affect our results.

### 3. Results

#### 3.1. Increased access to land

Twelve months into the project, almost a third of the participants (32.5%) reported accessing more land than they did when the project started. On average, they are using 3.0 more acres than at baseline. The increase was highest among widows. Table A1 in the appendix summarizes women's current use of land by marital status.

**Figure 1: Average amount of land accessed by women who reported increased access**



The two avenues used to access more land were renting and borrowing. While these options existed before the project, participants in Apur parish commended the project by saying that *“it has opened up women’s mindsets in that they can now rent out land and put in writing”*<sup>1</sup> and stressed that *“because of this training we go through and people knowing their rights, women today are engaged in signing papers in case of renting land.”*<sup>2</sup>

#### 3.2 Legitimacy of land rights

Our framework stipulates that a woman's land rights are more secure if they are legitimate. The legitimacy of her rights to land, in turn, depends on whether she knows about her rights to land and who recognizes these rights—the law, local customs, her family, her clan, or her community. The project therefore envisaged that the legitimacy of women's land rights would improve if their various land rights were increasingly recognized by any of these agents in their communities.

Interviews with the women in the pilot indicate that there is a general understanding and recognition of land rights by the pilot participants and among their families. In their definition of land rights, participants said: *“land rights is when you are allowed to own your late husband’s land”*<sup>3</sup> and *“land rights is the freedom to access, control and own land”*<sup>4</sup>. *“Because of my participation in the group, I have got knowledge on my land rights especially as a married woman”*<sup>5</sup>, said a female participant at Te-okutu parish. Another participant at Parwech had this to say: *“I can now define my land rights and also teach other people about them”*<sup>6</sup>. At Lutome parish, a female participant said, *“...my participation in the group meetings has made me aware of women land rights. I even participated in helping a widow in my family to secure her land rights”*<sup>7</sup>. A participant at Oret-Purber said, *“...as a woman, I have learnt that I have a right to influence any land-related decision that my husband makes”*<sup>8</sup>. Among families there is also a general recognition of land rights, one family head from Parwech said, *“I have learned a lot about women’s land rights from my wife, now my entire family recognizes and respects women’s land rights”*<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Focus Group Discussion, Agengo parish (October 2013)

<sup>2</sup> Focus Group Discussion, Apur parish,, (October 2013)

<sup>3</sup> Female participant, Focus Group Discussion, Apwor parish, Puranga sub county (June 2013)

<sup>4</sup> Male participant, Focus Group Discussion, Aringa parish, Puranga sub county (June 2013)

<sup>5</sup> Female participant, Focus Group Discussion, Te-okutu parish, Puranga sub county (June 2013)

<sup>6</sup> Female participant, Focus Group Discussion, Parwech parish, Puranga sub county (June 2013)

<sup>7</sup> Female participant, Focus Group Discussion, Lutome parish, Lira Palwo sub county (June 2013)

<sup>8</sup> Female participant, Focus Group Discussion, Oret-Purber parish, Puranga sub county (June 2013)

<sup>9</sup> Family Head, Parwech parish, Puranga sub county (July 2013)

*“Through our drama performances our neighbors and other community members have come to learn about and respect women’s land rights”<sup>10</sup>*, said a participant at Ademi parish. One clan leader also noted *“increased legitimacy of Women Land Rights since the communities through sensitization have come to recognize Women Land Rights.”<sup>11</sup>*

However, additional work appears to be needed to sensitize some of the cultural leaders. *“Clan leaders are very corrupt and sometimes do not respect women’s land rights, they need to get more training on women’s rights to land”<sup>12</sup>*, said a female respondent from Agengo parish. During a community dialogue in Puranga sub county, it was discovered that in Acholi, the concept of 'rights' is conceived as power and authority: *“...by the end of the dialogue 3 elders said they could not accept that women have rights”<sup>13</sup>*. *“Cultural leaders need to be retrained in order to reduce their rigidity”<sup>14</sup>*.

### 3.2.1 Statistical results on the legitimacy of women’s rights to land

We asked women whether their partners, their partners’ families, their partners’ clans, their children, their birth families, their communities, and the leaders of their communities recognized their rights to the land accessed by their households. For each one of these questions, the proportion of women who responded affirmatively is at least 23% higher than those who did in the baseline. The greatest increase in recognition of women’s rights to land was by their partners and their partners’ families. Figure 2 presents the increase in recognition by each group and unambiguously suggests an overall increase in legitimacy.

**Figure 2: Recognition of land rights by family and community members in the intervention group**

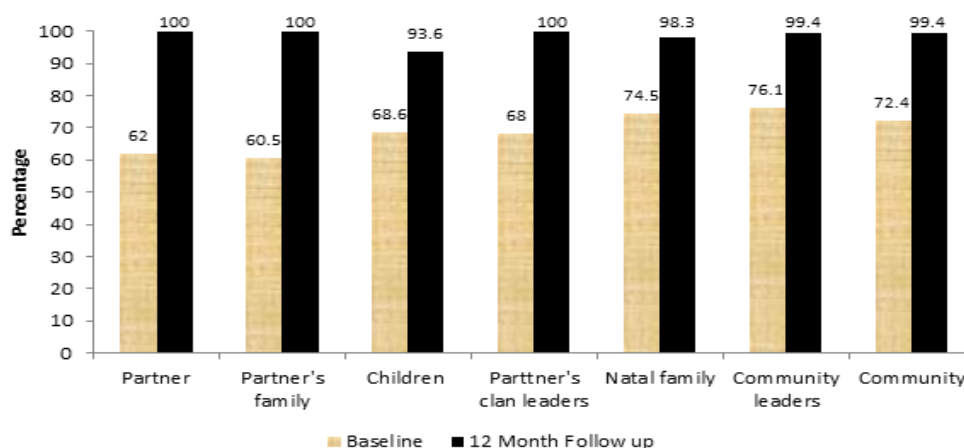


Figure 3 uses a different visual arrangement to assess these gains: green cells indicate that the 12-month data shows an improvement compared to the baseline. If the cells are painted in dark green, the improvement is substantial – figures are at least 25% higher than they were at baseline.<sup>15</sup> The first column indicates that while women’s reports indicate increased recognition of their land rights by each and every group, the improvements are more notable when it comes to their partners, their partners’ families and their partners’ clan leaders—all of whom have a strong ability to influence women’s access and control over land.

<sup>10</sup> Female participant, Focus Group Discussion, Ademi parish, Lira Palwo sub county (June 2013)

<sup>11</sup> Clan leader KII, (October 2013)

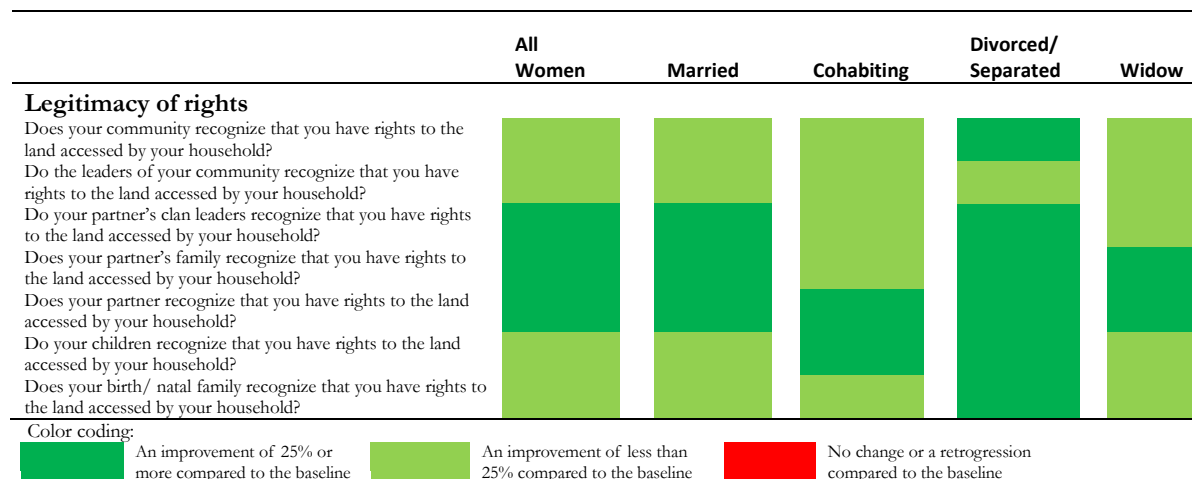
<sup>12</sup> Female participant, Focus Group Discussion, Agengo parish, Lira Palwo sub county (June 2013)

<sup>13</sup> WORUDET project activity report cited in first quarterly validation brief (April, 2013)

<sup>14</sup> CBF interview, Te-okutu parish, Puranga sub county (June 2013)

<sup>15</sup> We chose 25% as an arbitrary cut-off point to help us easily highlight areas where the improvements have been more noticeable.

**Figure 3: Improvements in the recognition of women’s rights to land, by marital status**



To explore whether the experience varied depending on the marital status of the woman, we disaggregate the analysis distinguishing women who are married from those that are cohabiting, divorced or separated, or widows. While the patterns are fairly similar, the figure suggests that women who benefitted the most in this regard were those who are divorced or separated and those who gained the least were widows and women who are cohabiting. Table A2 in the appendix, provides detailed figures describing women’s assessment of their land rights recognition 12 months into the project.

**3.2.2 Project components that contributed to improving the legitimacy of women’s land rights**

Meetings with a range of stakeholders: The project organized networking meetings and courtesy visits to a range of stakeholders identified at the beginning of the intervention (elders, local and cultural leaders, District Land Board, etc.). In these visits, staff introduced the project, asked for their input, and gathered their perceptions on issues related to women’s rights to land. Discussions included in-depth conversations on how marriage, inheritance and land disputes were handled in Acholi culture and how the customary system and statutory law affect Acholi women. These meetings have gone a long way into helping stakeholders acknowledge the overall weakness of women’s rights to land and in gaining their support for the project: ‘since the project has included us, we now recognize and work to promote land rights not only in the cultural context but also the statutory context’<sup>16</sup>said a clan leader from Parwech. ‘I also initiate individual visits to families that do not recognize women’s land rights and sensitize them’<sup>17</sup>said another clan leader.

Women’s group meetings: The women’s group meetings have been very instrumental in teaching the pilot participants about their rights to land. As a result of their participation in the group meetings, women have gained more confidence and have started to openly discuss land rights violations and initiated consultations at family level. Participants from Agengo stated that “before I joined the project I did not know my rights about land they used to say that it was the men who had rights overland but now I know about my land rights and it was because of my involvement in the project. It improved my understanding in that in the project it says anybody who is married has the right over family land”<sup>18</sup> and that “the women under this project can now go out and teach others about land rights”<sup>19</sup>. Similarly, a participant from Apwor noted that “There is a great change in the way women land conflict cases are handled by the families and elders because of the influence of the project; the participating women have in turn spoken to their families and communities on land rights and they are more recognized now”<sup>20</sup>. One household head interviewed in Agengo parish said, ‘I have learnt so much about women land rights from my wife and now I share information about our land with her, I even let her make decisions regarding land’<sup>21</sup>. Also ‘men have now started showing their wives land demarcations and giving them more access to the land because they have learnt and now recognize women land rights’<sup>22</sup> said a Focus Group Discussion participant from Bed Kimur group in Te-okutu parish. In the

<sup>16</sup>Clan leader, Parwech parish Puranga sub county (July 2013)  
<sup>17</sup>Clan leader, Parwech parish, Puranga sub county (July 2013)  
<sup>18</sup>Female participant, Focus Group Discussion, Agengo Parish (October 2013)  
<sup>19</sup>Female participant, Focus Group Discussion, Agengo Parish (October 2013)  
<sup>20</sup>Female participant, Focus Group Discussion, Apwor parish, Puranga sub county (July 2013)  
<sup>21</sup>Family Head, Agengo parish, Lira Palwo sub county (July 2013)  
<sup>22</sup>Female participant, Focus Group Discussion, Te-okutu parish, Lira Palwo sub county (July 2013)



interview with the primary implementing officer he had this to say about the impact of the project on the male pilot participants *'there has been a positive change in terms of their perceptions and now have a clear understanding of women's rights to land. They are now keener on women's land rights and give advice on how to reduce women's vulnerability and promote legitimacy'*<sup>23</sup>. In Agengo parish, one respondent revealed that she witnessed change *'the LCs people cooperate and sometimes consult our group members in case of land problems'*<sup>24</sup> yet this was not common before. The other change noted was that *'the group members have decided to move as a group to give trainings out in the community in Acuru.'*<sup>25</sup>

Community-based facilitators: Trained community-based facilitators who teach pilot participants about their rights to land and facilitate their group meetings have played a key role in the increased knowledge and recognition of women's rights to land. The women are now aware of their land rights and seek justice whenever violations occur. In addition to that, the community-based facilitators do home visits and have been able to reach other family members to sensitize them on women land rights, especially in families where there are persistent land conflicts. In an interview with the primary implementing officer he had this to say: *"I rate the general performance of the community-based facilitators at 8 out of 10 because they are knowledgeable on women's land rights and perform their duties well"*.<sup>26</sup>

Drama performance and community-wide discussions on women's land rights: Each group is now doing a drama in their own parish to sensitize the community on land rights and, particularly, on women's rights to land. The drama is followed by a community-wide discussion of these issues. These plays and discussions have roused interest and curiosity among community members and have also served as a sensitization medium for women's land rights issues. One female participant from Te-okutu parish said, *"...through our drama performances, we have sensitized the community on women's land rights and our rights are generally more recognized by community members"*<sup>27</sup>. At Oret-Purber, the community-based facilitator said, *'the drama performances have been good in sensitizing the community because now we have more community members reaching out to us with questions on women's rights to land'*<sup>28</sup>. The community-based facilitators we interviewed said that these performances have attracted the communities to the project. More and more non-group members are now seeking the intervention of the community-based facilitators in land conflict cases. The community-based facilitators at Parwech, Te-okutu and Afwo testified to this during interviews: *'I have got many land conflict cases reported by non-group members. When they come to me, I forward them to Rwot okoro'*<sup>29</sup>.

Recognition of the Acholi clan structure and working within that system: The existence of a firm clan structure in Acholi has also been key in promoting the legitimacy of women's rights to land. Land conflicts in Acholi land are mostly mediated upon by clan leaders in line with the cultural provisions and therefore by engaging the clan leaders the project has made its agenda more acceptable to the community as a whole. Communities are more willing and eager to listen and accept women's rights to land because their cultural leaders are involved in the project. In Parwech parish, the Jaka clan leader said that because of his interaction with the project, *"I am more knowledgeable and now use every opportunity I get during clan meetings to sensitize the community on women's rights to land"*<sup>30</sup>. *"I have been very keen on sensitizing the communities about land rights especially widows' and orphans' land rights"*<sup>31</sup>, said the Lamola clan leader.

Provision of project t-shirts: Project t-shirts were printed and distributed to the community-based facilitators and to all the pilot women. They were happy to receive the t-shirts and this directly influenced their participation. The t-shirts also served as a marketing strategy for the project because they attracted the attention of community members who then asked questions and got information on women's rights to land: *"...when I wear my t-shirt in the community people respect me because it is a sign that I have been taught on women land rights. I find that many women reach out to me with questions regarding their land rights"*<sup>32</sup>, said one participant at a Focus Group Discussion in Ademi parish.

<sup>23</sup>Primary implementing officer interview (June 2013)

<sup>24</sup>Female participant, Focus Group Discussion, Agengo Parish (October 2013)

<sup>25</sup>Female participant, Focus Group Discussion, Agengo Parish (October 2013)

<sup>26</sup>Primary implementing officer interview (June 2013)

<sup>27</sup>Female participant, Focus Group Discussion, Te-okutu parish, Puranga sub county (June 2013)

<sup>28</sup>CBF interview, Oret-Purber parish, Puranga sub county (June 2013)

<sup>29</sup>CBF interview, Te-okutu parish, Puranga sub county (June 2013)

<sup>30</sup>Clan leader Jaka clan, Parwech parish, Puranga sub county (July 2013)

<sup>31</sup>Clan leader Lamola clan, Parwech parish, Puranga sub county (July 2013)

<sup>32</sup>Female participant, Focus Group Discussion, Ademi parish, Lira Palwo sub county (June 2013)

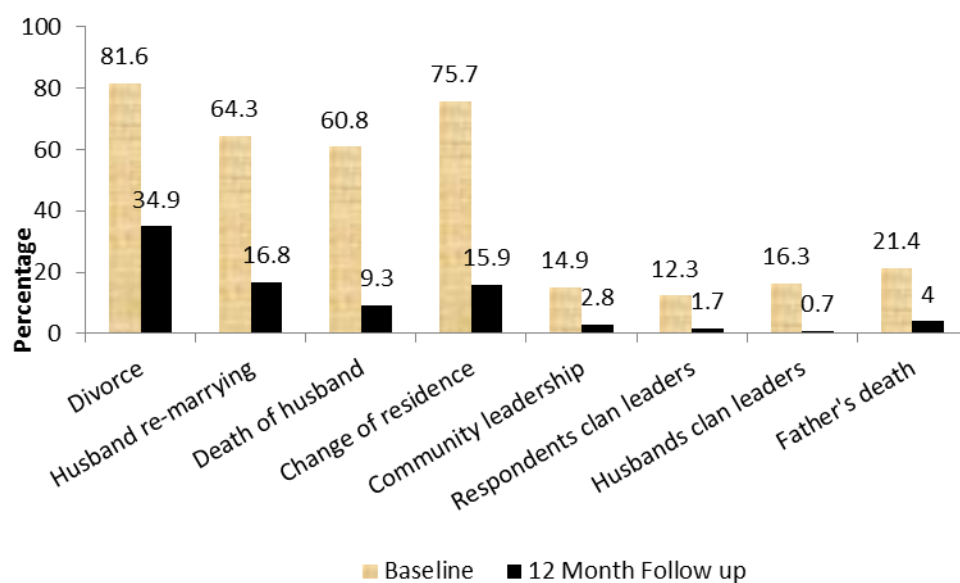
### 3.3 Vulnerability of land rights

Our framework posits that a woman's land rights are more secure if they are not vulnerable to changes in her family structure or in her community's leadership. These changes can include instances such as the death of her father, the death of her husband, getting divorced or being abandoned by her husband, and her husband taking on another wife; as well as changes in the leadership of her clan or her community that can weaken or eliminate her rights to land. To assess whether the project has strengthened women's land rights by decreasing their vulnerability, we considered women's perceptions of the likelihood that they could lose access to land if certain conditions materialized.

#### 3.3.1 Statistical results on the vulnerability of women's rights to land

Overall, 86% of the respondents said they would still have the same access and control over land in the next five years (Table A3). We asked women how likely they were to lose access to the plots they currently accessed if: (i) their fathers died; (ii) their husbands divorced or abandoned them; (iii) their husbands married another wife; (iv) their husbands died; (v) they moved to another place; (vi) the leadership in their communities changed; (vii) their clan leaders changed; or (viii) the leaders of their husbands' clans changed. We recorded their answers to each of these questions as very likely, likely, unlikely, or very unlikely. For the purposes of this report, we consider a woman's land rights to be vulnerable if she reported being likely or very likely to lose them under each of these circumstances.

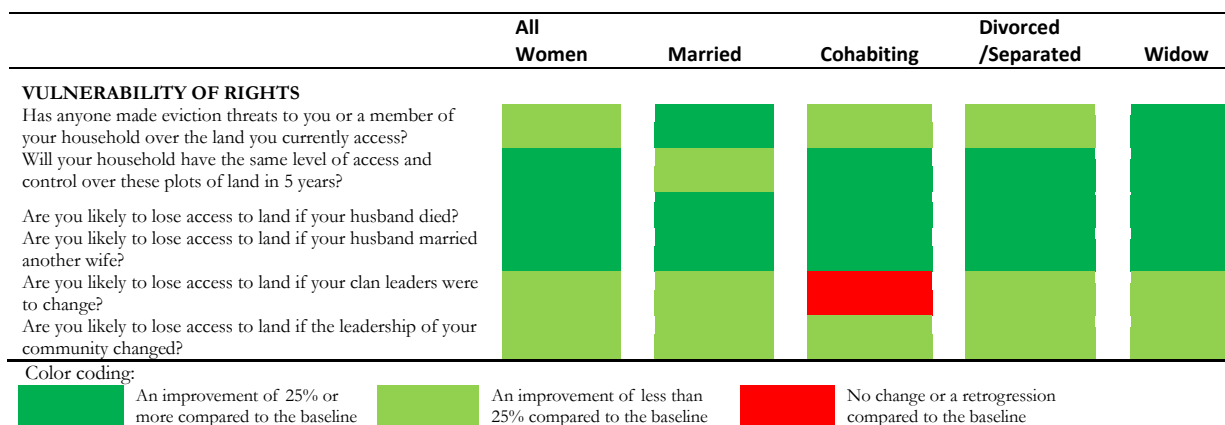
**Figure 4: Women's vulnerability to losing access to land due to changes in their families or communities**



The proportion of women who perceive their land rights as vulnerable has decreased markedly for every single one of the types of risks considered, but the improvement is most notable—over 50%—when it comes to vulnerability to their husbands' death or vulnerability were they to move to another location. Figure 4 presents the decrease in vulnerability by type of risks and unambiguously suggests an overall decrease in vulnerability.

In Figure 5, we rely on colors to indicate where results from the 12-month assessment unveiled improvements (a decrease in the vulnerability of women's rights to land) and where the improvements have been more noticeable. These results are consistent with those in the previous section: while there have been improvements in all the areas we proved, the decrease in vulnerability is considerably larger when it comes to being able to withstand changes within the family (the death of their husbands or their husbands taking other wives) than when it comes to changes in their clans or communities.

**Figure 5: Improvement in the vulnerability of women’s rights to land, by marital status**



Disaggregating these results by marital status suggests that the changes are fairly uniform for all types of women although women who are in a cohabiting relationship have not seen an improvement in their vulnerability to changes in clan leadership.

Table A3 in the appendix summarizes women’s perceptions of the vulnerability of their rights to land 12 months into the project. In general, their answers indicate that, by far, the circumstance most likely to cause them to lose access to the land is divorcing or being abandoned by their husbands. Despite the improvements associated with the project, 35% of the women interviewed said this was likely to lead to a loss in their access to the land.

### 3.3.2 Project components that contributed to reducing the vulnerability of women’s land rights

*Sensitizing and engaging cultural and local leaders:* “By engaging cultural and local leaders in discussion and involving them in the mediation process, I have built relationships with them”<sup>33</sup>, responded the community-based facilitator from Ademi parish when asked about his achievements in reducing women’s vulnerability to land conflict. Similarly, in interviews with the community-based facilitators from Te-okutu, Parwech and Agengo, they all reported that they continually initiated consultative meetings with clan and local leaders as a way to ensure the security of women land rights in the communities. A Paramount chief from Puranga sub county had this to say, “I usually sensitize clan-based land chairpersons on women’s rights to land whenever I am called upon to mediate land conflicts”<sup>34</sup>. All the clan leaders that we interviewed expressed enthusiasm about working with other stakeholders to promote women’s rights to land in the communities. “Whenever I am called upon to intervene in land conflicts, I do so promptly”<sup>35</sup>, said a clan leader from Parwech parish. Another clan leader when asked about his achievements regarding to reduce the vulnerability of women’s rights to land had this to say: “I do a lot of community sensitization on women’s land rights but especially focus on families that have persistent land conflicts for follow up”<sup>36</sup>.

However, when asked about how vulnerability can be further reduced, one participant at Aringa said, “family members not only need to be trained on women’s land rights but also need to be involved in the entire mediation process in case of land conflicts because it will make them more accountable in future”<sup>37</sup>. “I think that if my husband got training on women’s rights to land, it would help to make my rights more secure”<sup>38</sup>, said a participant at Apwor parish.

### 3.4 Enforceability of land rights

Our framework postulates that for a woman’s rights to be secure, she must be able to enforce them. A woman will be able to enforce her rights if she is aware of where to present her claims, if she can easily get to that forum, if she has the ability and the means to present her case, if her case will be heard, if the overall process will not take a very long period of time and if a decision in her favor will be implemented.

<sup>33</sup> CBF interview, Ademi parish, Lira Palwo sub county (June 2013)

<sup>34</sup> Paramount Chief, Puranga sub county (July 2013)

<sup>35</sup> Clan leader, Parwech parish, Puranga sub county (July 2013)

<sup>36</sup> Clan leader, Parwech parish, Puranga sub county (July 2013)

<sup>37</sup> Female participant, Focus Group Discussion, Aringa parish, Puranga sub county (June 2013)

<sup>38</sup> Female participant, Focus Group Discussion, Apwor parish, Puranga sub county (June 2013)

### 3.4.1 Statistical evidence on the enforceability of women’s rights to land

We asked women if they knew where to present land claims and if they thought they would have access to those agencies or individuals. The improvement observed during the life of this project has been remarkable: now all the women involved in the project said they know where to go—a 15% increase since the project’s inception—and the proportion of women who felt they could easily access those institutions has gone up by 57%.

Figure 6: Knowledge of where to present land rights claims

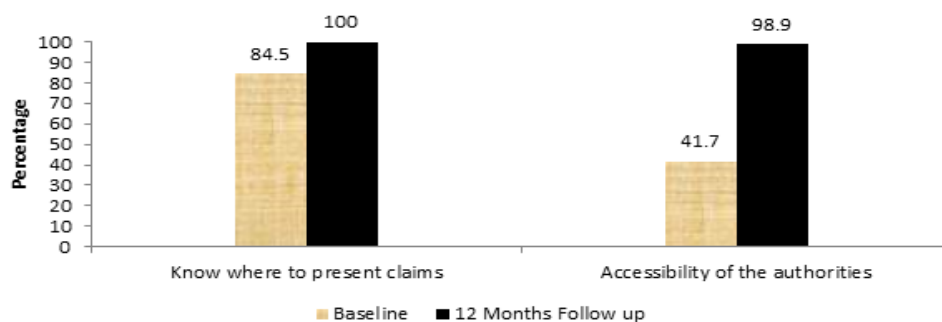
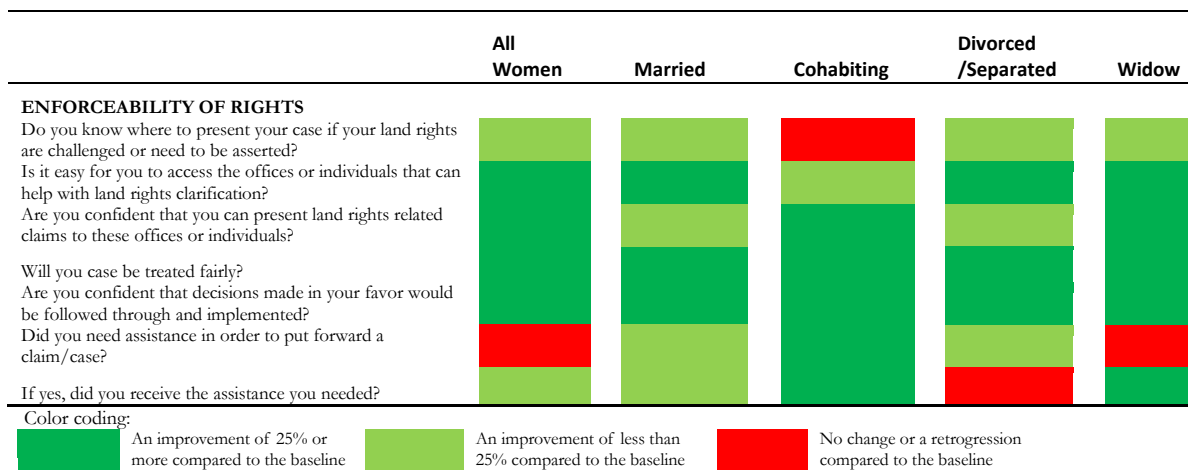


Figure 7 suggests that while women still need assistance to put forth their claims, they feel more confident in their ability to enforce their rights. The improvements are particularly strong in their perceptions about being able to access the right forum and present their case, their expectation that they will be treated fairly, and their belief that a decision in their favor would be implemented. The reported improvement did vary, however, depending on their marital status and appears to be somewhat weaker for women who are divorced or separated.

Figure 7: Enforceability of women’s rights to land, by marital status



Importantly, 12 months into the project, all the women in the pilot are confident that they can present their claims personally, 98% think their cases will be treated fairly, and 99% are confident that if the decision is in their favor it will be implemented. These results are disaggregated by marital status in Table A4 in the appendix.

### 3.4.2 Project components that contributed to improving the enforceability of women’s land rights

*Interventions to improve women’s assertiveness and confidence:* During the women’s empowerment training to promote assertiveness and confidence, it was agreed that at all subsequent meetings, each participant raising an issue would do so standing up before the entire group. The community-based facilitators also looked for ways to engage women who were particularly shy. As a result, the community-based facilitators

reported an increase in women's confidence, in their participation in meetings, and in their active brainstorming. *"Since she joined the group, my wife has become more confident when talking about her rights to land"*<sup>39</sup>, said one household head that was interviewed in Parwech parish. At Te-okutu parish one woman said, *"...as a widow, I have come to learn about my rights to land and have negotiated for another piece of land"*<sup>40</sup>. *"I have become more empowered through the training and now have the ability to resist threats over my access to land"*<sup>41</sup>, said one woman at Parwech parish. Another participant also observed that the project *"has brought confidence to me especially if anybody intends to grab my land I know where to go to report"*<sup>42</sup> so she feels more confident to advance to report any case relating to land rights infringement.

All the community-based facilitators interviewed said that the pilot women are keener on reporting land cases and demanding for their land rights at family level. *"There has been a change in pilot women in terms of confidence and assertiveness and no longer depend entirely on community-based facilitators to mediate conflicts in their families"*<sup>43</sup>, answered the community-based facilitator from Lutome parish when asked about her achievements with the group. When asked about the factors that have contributed to their increased access to land, participants attributed it to the *'empowerment training which made us more assertive in negotiation for land'*<sup>44</sup>. In Agengo parish, many female respondents reported that they had achieved *"women empowerment and confidence- they can now freely speak to others about Women Land Rights with authority."*<sup>45</sup> This was further emphasized by another respondent who noted that *"the confidence women have today to stand up and speak in public meeting ... makes them feel less vulnerable."*<sup>46</sup>

*Training Rwot okoro on mediation and conflict mitigation:* Forty Rwot okoro (women leaders) were trained. They are well positioned with the clan structure to deal with these issues. In interviews with Rwot okoros, they asserted that they were all doing well in mediation of land conflicts: *"I have been very active in mediating land cases in my community and have so far successfully resolved three (3)"*<sup>47</sup>. *"The Rwot okoro are also doing a very good job in mediation. There has been a tremendous reduction in the number of cases forwarded to court as more and more cases are getting resolved through mediation"*<sup>48</sup>, said a community-based facilitator from Ademi parish. *"I have organized many mediation meetings, even between members of different clans and resolved quite a number of land cases"*<sup>49</sup>. One respondent cited that there is *"need to involve all categories in the project e.g. cultural leaders etc. because they directly influence mediation (all the stakeholders to be involved)."*<sup>50</sup> It was also noted that it was important to *"train all clan leaders / other clan hierarchy because they are very key in reaching out to more people."*<sup>51</sup>

*Training community-based facilitators on mediation and conflict mitigation:* This training has improved community-based facilitators ability to tailor the project work and has enabled them to advise the women on the pathway they should take to resolve disputes and enforce their rights. The primary implementing officer attested to this: *"The community-based facilitators are all generally performing well because they have mastered their role of initiating mediation and following up the cases with the Rwot okoros"*<sup>52</sup>. The community-based facilitator at Lutome parish said, *"one of my duties is to follow up on cases that have been forwarded to the Rwot okoro and I think I am doing that well because of our good relationship"*<sup>53</sup>. The community-based facilitator at Parwech parish attributed his achievements to *"my good mediation skills, follow up of cases and training women on procedures and pathways to land dispute resolution which they have now mastered well"*<sup>54</sup>.

*Training women on women's land rights and conflict mitigation:* In their weekly group meetings, women have acquired knowledge and developed confidence and assertiveness. As a result, they have become ardent at reporting land conflicts and asking their families for their rights to land. *"I have noticed that my wife is more*

<sup>39</sup>Family Head, Parwech parish, Puranga sub county (July 2013)

<sup>40</sup>Female participant, Focus Group Discussion, Te-okutu parish, Puranga sub county (June 2013)

<sup>41</sup>Female participant, Focus Group Discussion, Parwech parish, Puranga sub county (June 2013)

<sup>42</sup>Female participant, Focus Group Discussion, Agengo Parish (October 2013)

<sup>43</sup>CBF interview, Lutome parish, Lira Palwo sub county (June 2013)

<sup>44</sup>Female participant, Focus Group Discussion, Aringa parish, Puranga sub county (June 2013)

<sup>45</sup>Female participant, Focus Group Discussion, Agengo Parish (October 2013)

<sup>46</sup>Female Participant, Focus Group Discussion, (October 2013)

<sup>47</sup>Rwot okoro interview, Apwor parish, Puranga sub county (July 2013)

<sup>48</sup>CBF interview, Ademi parish, Lira Palwo sub county (June 2013)

<sup>49</sup>Clan leader, Parwech parish, Puranga sub county (July 2013)

<sup>50</sup>Key Informant interview, (October 2013)

<sup>51</sup>Key Informant Interview (October 2013)

<sup>52</sup>Primary implementing officer interview (June 2013)

<sup>53</sup>CBF interview, Lutome parish, Lira Palwo sub county (June 2013)

<sup>54</sup>CBF interview, Parwech parish, Puranga sub county (June 2013)

*assertive and has participated in mediation of our family land conflicts many times, she is even called upon by the neighbors to intervene in land conflicts because of the knowledge on women's land rights she acquired from the project*<sup>55</sup>. A community-based facilitator at Agengo parish said, *"more women are now reporting land cases because they have been trained on their rights and pathways for justice"*<sup>56</sup>. *"We are now able to handle issues in court and know how to talk to lawyers and have learnt to plant trees to demarcate land"*<sup>57</sup> *"We know who to approach in case land conflicts come up, we go to the clan leaders or the Rwot okoro"*<sup>58</sup>, said a participant at Ademi parish. Another participant in Agengo parish said that *"in my community there used to be fighting especially on case of land that would lead to death or courts but now people negotiate because of the training we give."*<sup>59</sup> This shows that the trainings have yielded quite substantial in resolving land disputes. This was followed still by another Agengo parish participant who revealed that nowadays women *"...feel less vulnerable because of the training we go through which has brought a lot of confidence to us."*<sup>60</sup>

Pilot participants generally believe that their cases will be treated fairly when reported and some of the reasons they give include: *"the people who sanction cases are now aware of women's land rights"*<sup>61</sup>, *"I now have the capacity to speak without fear when I take my case to the authorities"*<sup>62</sup>, *"corrupt officials will think twice before playing around with my case because they know I have adequate knowledge on my rights to land and the law"*<sup>63</sup>.

The project has been effective in improving enforceability of land rights, *"we now know where to go to seek for justice in case a land dispute arises"*<sup>64</sup>, said a female participant in Ademi parish. Another participant at Te-okutu parish said: *"we have also learnt to get documents for the land we own as evidence"*<sup>65</sup>. *"More women have come up to report land cases and community-based facilitators have registered many resolved land cases, I am working on a template to document them"*<sup>66</sup>, said the primary implementing officer when asked about the achievements of the project in enforceability.

However, *"the project can improve on enforceability by facilitating the Rwot okoro in their work with lunch and transport allowances because they have to travel long distances to mediate land cases"*<sup>67</sup>. *"We need stationery to help us in documentation, posters to help in mediation, gumboots because we walk long distances through bushes and allowances"*<sup>68</sup>, responded a Rwot okoro in Apwor parish when asked about how the project could further promote enforceability.

### 3.5 Rights granted for an extended period of time

In order to make the best use of the land, farmers need to be able to count on having secure access to a plot for an extended period of time. Besides accessing land through their husbands or other male kin, women typically gain access to productive land by borrowing, renting or sharecropping for fixed periods of time. Because of the importance of this long time horizon, our framework posits that a woman's land rights are more secure if she can access land according to fixed terms that are guaranteed to be upheld.

#### 3.5.1 Statistical evidence on guarantee of fixed term land rights

Sixty one percent of the women interviewed for the 12-month assessment had rented land since the project started. The average lease was 15.6 months long and most of these agreements were documented – 76.4% of those who rented land had a written agreement. Borrowing land was a little more common than renting: 70.6% of the women reported that they had borrowed land since the project started, but only 29.9% of the agreements had been recorded in writing. While renting and borrowing appear to be fairly common avenues for accessing land, we cannot attribute these results to the project since women had already mentioned them as options before the project started. The graph below compares women who reported ever renting or borrowing land before the project started with those who have rented or

<sup>55</sup>Family Head, Parwech parish, Puranga sub county (July 2013)

<sup>56</sup>CBF interview, Agengo parish, Lira Palwo sub county (June 2013)

<sup>57</sup>Female participant, Focus Group Discussion, Parwech parish, Puranga sub county (June 2013)

<sup>58</sup>Female participant, Focus Group Discussion, Ademi parish, Lira Palwo sub county (June 2013)

<sup>59</sup>Female participant, Focus Group Discussion, Agengo Parish (October 2013)

<sup>60</sup>Female participant, Focus Group Discussion, Agengo Parish (October 2013)

<sup>61</sup>Female participant, Focus Group Discussion, Aringa parish, Puranga sub county (June 2013)

<sup>62</sup>Female participant, Focus Group Discussion, Ademi parish, Lira Palwo sub county (June 2013)

<sup>63</sup>Female participant, Focus Group Discussion, Aringa parish, Puranga sub county (June 2013)

<sup>64</sup>Female participant, Focus Group Discussion, Ademi parish, Lira Palwo sub county (June 2013)

<sup>65</sup>Participant at Te-okutu parish, Puranga sub county (June 2013)

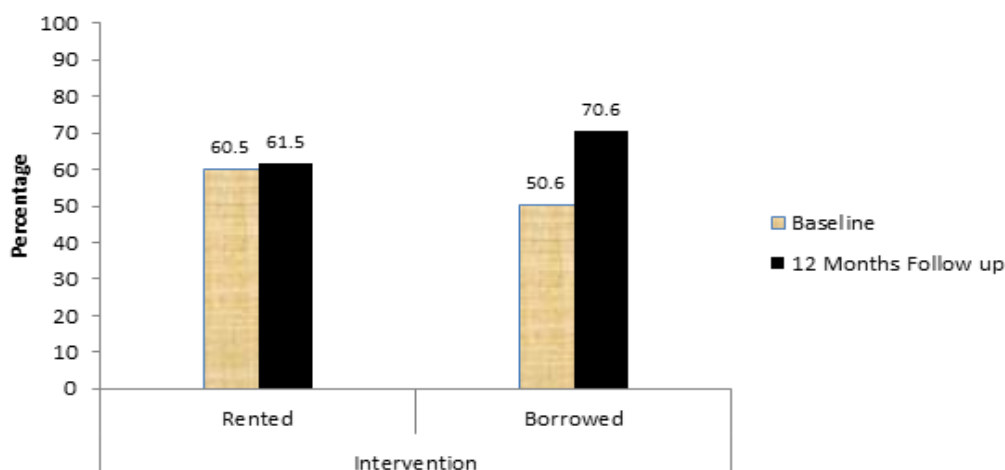
<sup>66</sup>Primary implementing officer interview (June 2013)

<sup>67</sup>CBF interview, Ademi parish, Lira Palwo sub county (June 2013)

<sup>68</sup>Rwot okoro interview, Apwor parish, Puranga sub county (July 2013)

borrowed since the project started.

**Figure 8: Respondents reporting ever renting or borrowing of land at baseline and since the project started**



An examination of these results considering women's marital status, as presented in Table A5 in the appendix, suggests that the women most likely to report renting land are those who are divorced or separated and those most likely to indicate that they have borrowed land are those in a cohabiting relationship.

### 3.5.2 Project components meant to improve women's fixed-term land rights

The project did not focus specifically on this issue—no single activity was tailored to address this problem by helping respondents negotiate for longer, clearer, and more accessible rental and borrowing agreements. As a result, as exemplified by the quotes below, some women have started asking for land and are considering renting, but many face cultural constraints or appear to be ignorant on how to rent land.

According to a community-based facilitator at Lutome parish in Lira Palwo sub county, *"this empowerment has made women more aware and increased their access to land. They now consider renting-in when they have extra money unlike before"*<sup>69</sup>. Another household head that was interviewed from Lira Palwo sub county said, *"because of her participation in the project, my wife has now asked me to give her more land for cultivation and there is generally more respect between us"*<sup>70</sup>. *"The knowledge we have acquired through our weekly group meetings has empowered us to negotiate for more land"*<sup>71</sup> and *"we have been witnesses to successful mediation which has encouraged us to acquire more land through renting and borrowing"*<sup>72</sup>.

But cultural traditions appear to be an important constraint: *"it is particularly hard for widows to enter into rental agreements because the family of the deceased husband would never permit her to do so- land belongs to the man's family"*<sup>73</sup> and *"sometimes when a man has many wives and grown children, it is hard for a widow to enter into rental agreements because the children keep interfering in all family land matters"*<sup>74</sup>.

Furthermore, there appears to be general ignorance and lack of knowledge by participants on how to secure their fixed term rights to land. *"The reason we do not enter into rental agreements is because it is a new thing in our communities and we have no clue how to go about them"*<sup>75</sup>, said one participant at Aringa parish. *"We have never been trained on how to do these rental agreements, that is the reason people fear to enter into them. We are not sure what they are about and some land owners think that they could lose rights to their land should such an agreement be signed"*<sup>76</sup>, said another participant. A community-based facilitator at Agengo said, *"ignorance"*<sup>77</sup> is the reason why people don't enter into rental agreements.

<sup>69</sup>CBF interview, Lutome parish, Lira Palwo sub county (June 2013)

<sup>70</sup>Family Head interview, Agengo parish, Lira Palwo sub county (July 2013)

<sup>71</sup>Female participant, Focus Group Discussion, Aringa parish, Puranga sub county (June 2013)

<sup>72</sup>Female participant, Focus Group Discussion, Apwor parish, Puranga sub county (June 2013)

<sup>73</sup>Focus Group Discussion, Apwor parish, Puranga sub county (June 2013)

<sup>74</sup>Focus Group Discussion, Apwor parish, Puranga sub county (June 2013)

<sup>75</sup>Female participant, Focus Group Discussion, Aringa parish, Puranga sub county (June 2013)

<sup>76</sup>Female participant, Focus Group Discussion, Aringa parish, Puranga sub county (June 2013)

<sup>77</sup>CBF interview, Agengo parish, Lira Palwo sub county (June 2013)

### 3.6 Exercise of land rights without consultation or approval that only applies to women

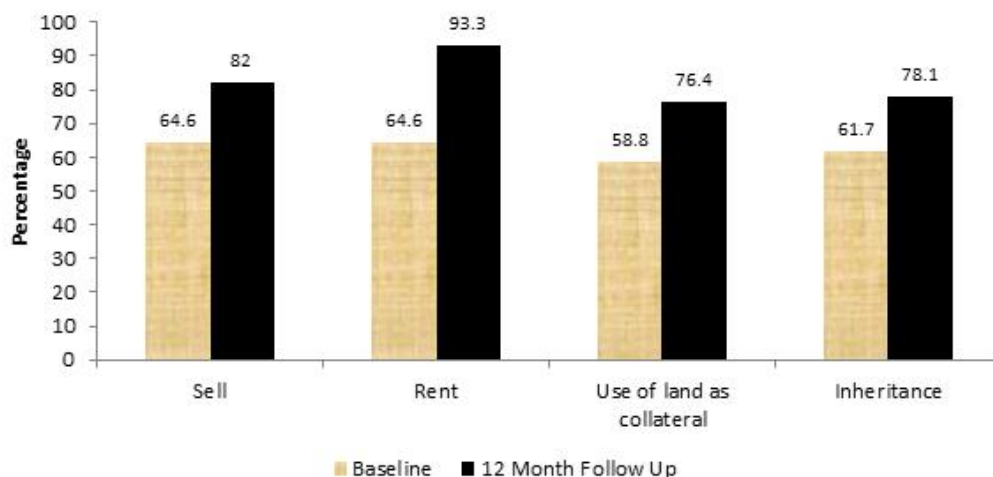
Our framework stipulates that a woman’s land rights are more secure if they can be exercised without being subject to conditions that men are not asked to fulfill such as obtaining the approval and permission of her spouse, father or other male relative. In other words, if the woman’s ability to exercise her rights does not hinge on additional layers of approval that only apply to women. While we have not explicitly asked women about additional requirements, we did ask whether they could make decisions and whether they could influence their households’ decisions.

#### 3.6.1 Statistical results on the exercise of land rights without consultation

We asked women whether they were able to make decisions on how their households used the land, on whether the land would be rented or offered as collateral, on whether the land would be sold, and on who would inherit the land. We also asked women whether they thought they could have an effective influence on what their households decide—that is, whether they had the ability to convince family members not to sell land, offer land as collateral, etc.

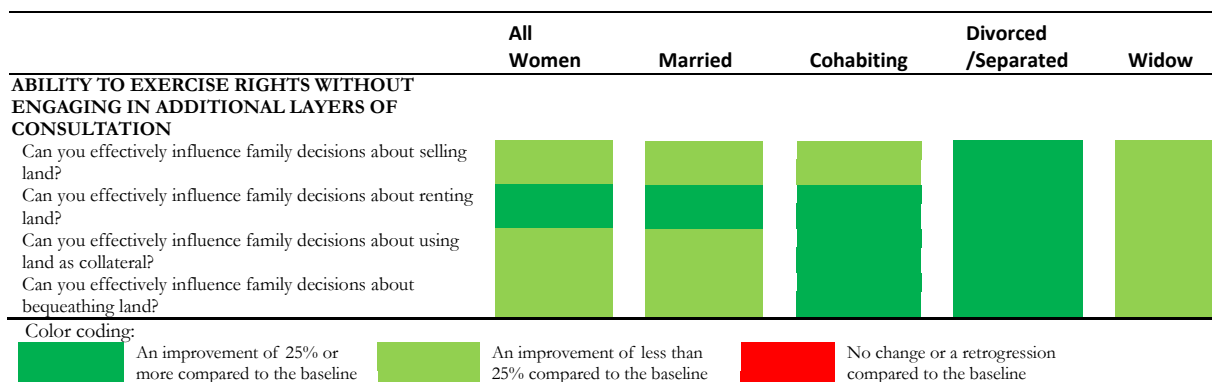
While women are still less likely than men to have influence on family decisions about land, the proportion of women who reported being able to effectively influence their households’ decisions on whether to sell or rent land, to use it as collateral, or to whom it will be bequeathed has increased since the project started. The improvements range between 16% and 29% depending on the decision and are the largest for decisions about renting land.

Figure 9: Percentage of respondents with effective influence



As Figure 10 suggests, women’s ability to influence land-related decisions has improved regardless of their marital status, but women who are cohabiting and those who are divorced appeared to have experienced the largest gains. Detailed figures from the six-month assessment are included in Table A6 in the appendix.

Figure 10: Influence on decisions concerning land, by marital status





**APPENDIX: Additional Statistical Results****Table A1: Respondents' ability to use land, by marital status**

	Married		Cohabiting		Divorced /Separated		Widowed		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Are you able to use all the land to which you currently have access?										
Yes	49	89.1	10	100	28	93.3	65	77.4	152	84.9
No	6	10.9	0	0	2	6.7	19	22.6	27	15.1
Total	<b>55</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>100</b>
Since joining the project, has the amount of land you used regularly increased?										
Decrease	5	9.6	0	0	3	10.3	7	8.9	15	8.9
No change	28	53.8	7	77.8	15	51.7	49	62	99	58.6
An increase	19	36.5	2	22.2	11	37.9	23	29.1	55	32.5
Total	<b>52</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table A2: Recognition of women's rights to land, by marital status**

	Married		Cohabiting		Divorced/ Separated		Widowed		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Partner recognizes your rights to your household's land										
Yes	70	97.2	13	100	5	100	4	100	92	97.9
No	2	2.8	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2.1
Total	72	100	13	100	5	100	4	100	94	100
Partner's family recognize your rights to your household's land										
Yes	66	91.7	13	100	4	100	4	100	87	93.5
No	6	8.3	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	6.5
Total	72	100	13	100	4	100	4	100	93	100
Partner's clan recognize your rights to your household's land										
Yes	67	93.1	13	100	4	100	4	100	88	94.6
No	5	6.9	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	5.4
Total	72	100	13	100	4	100	4	100	93	100
Your children recognize you have rights to your household's land										
Yes	74	89.2	15	93.8	32	97	84	96.6	205	93.6
No	9	10.8	1	6.3	1	3	3	3.4	14	6.4
Total	83	100	16	100	33	100	87	100	219	100
Birth/natal family recognize your right to your household's land										
Yes	76	91.6	16	100	33	97.1	85	95.5	210	94.6
No	7	8.4	0	0	1	2.9	4	4.5	12	5.4
Total	83	100	16	100	34	100	89	100	222	100
The community leaders recognize your right to your household's land										
Yes	81	97.6	16	100	34	100	87	97.8	218	98.2
No	2	2.4	0	0	0	0	2	2.2	4	1.8
Total	83	100	16	100	34	100	89	100	222	100
Community in which you currently live recognize your right to your household's land										
Yes	81	97.6	16	100	33	97.1	86	96.6	216	97.3
No	2	2.4	0	0	1	2.9	3	3.4	6	2.7
Total	83	100	16	100	34	100	89	100	222	100

**Table A3: Vulnerability of women's rights to land, by marital status**

	Married		Cohabiting		Divorced /Separated		Widowed		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Are you likely to have access and control over these plots in the next five years?										
Yes	43	78.2	9	90	28	93.3	74	88.1	154	86
No	12	21.8	1	10	2	6.7	10	11.9	25	14
Total	55	100	10	100	30	100	84	100	179	100
How likely are YOU to lose access to these plots if your father died?										
Likely	1	2.6	0	0	0	0	4	6.7	5	4
Unlikely	37	97.4	7	100	20	100	56	93.3	120	96
Total	38	100	7	100	20	100	60	100	125	100
How likely are YOU to lose access to these plots if the leaders of your husband's clan were to change?										
Likely	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1.4	1	0.7
Unlikely	46	100	9	100	25	100	70	98.6	150	99.3
Total	46	100	9	100	25	100	71	100	151	100
How likely are YOU to lose access to these plots if your clan leaders were to change?										
Likely	2	3.6	0	0	1	3.3	0	0	3	1.7
Unlikely	53	96.4	10	100	29	96.7	84	100	176	98.3
Total	55	100	10	100	30	100	84	100	179	100
How likely are YOU to lose access to these plots if the leadership of your community were to change?										
Likely	2	3.6	0	0	1	3.3	2	2.4	5	2.8
Unlikely	53	96.4	10	100	29	96.7	82	97.6	174	97.2
Total	55	100	10	100	30	100	84	100	179	100
How likely are YOU to lose access to these plots if you were to move place of residency?										
Likely	6	10.9	2	22.2	8	26.7	12	14.6	28	15.9
Unlikely	49	89.1	7	77.8	22	73.3	70	85.4	148	84.1
Total	55	100	9	100	30	100	82	100	176	100
How likely are YOU to lose access to these plots if your husband died?										
Likely	4	12.9	1	12.5	0	0	5	9.6	10	9.3
Unlikely	27	87.1	7	87.5	16	100	47	90.4	97	90.7
Total	31	100	8	100	16	100	52	100	107	100
How likely are YOU to lose access to these plots if your husband married another wife?										
Likely	3	9.4	1	12.5	5	29.4	9	18	18	16.8
Unlikely	29	90.6	7	87.5	12	70.6	41	82	89	83.2
Total	32	100	8	100	17	100	50	100	107	100
How likely are YOU to lose access to these plots if your husband divorced/abandoned you?										
Likely	11	35.5	3	42.9	5	29.4	18	35.3	37	34.9
Unlikely	20	64.5	4	57.1	12	70.6	33	64.7	69	65.1
Total	31	100	7	100	17	100	51	100	106	100

**Table A4: Enforceability of women's rights to land, by marital status**

	Married		Cohabiting		Divorced/ Separated		Widowed		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Do you know where to go if your rights to land are challenged?										
Yes	55	100	10	100	30	100	84	100	179	100
No	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	55	100	10	100	30	100	84	100	179	100
Can you now access offices, institutions or individuals in your community that can help with land rights clarification when need arises										
Yes	53	100	9	90	29	100	82	98.8	173	98.9
No	0	0	1	10	0	0	1	1.2	2	1.1
Total	53	100	10	100	29	100	83	100	175	100
How do you rate your confidence when it came to personally presenting claims?										
Strong	38	100	7	100	19	100	57	100	121	100
Weak										
Total	38	100	7	100	19	100	57	100	121	100
Do you believe that your case will be treated fairly and given equal attention?										
Yes	49	96.1	9	100	28	96.6	80	98.8	166	97.6
No	2	3.9	0	0	1	3.4	1	1.2	4	2.4
Total	51	100	9	100	29	100	81	100	170	100
Do you have confidence that decisions made in your will be followed through and implemented?										
Yes	50	100	9	100	28	96.6	79	98.8	166	98.8
No	0	0	0	0	1	3.4	1	1.3	2	1.2
Total	50	100	9	100	29	100	80	100	168	100

**Table A5: Extent to which respondents engaged in land rental, by marital status**

	Married		Cohabiting		Divorced/ Separated		Widowed		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Rented Land										
Yes	19	57.6	4	57.1	13	56.5	36	66.7	72	61.5
No	14	42.4	3	42.9	10	43.5	18	33.3	45	38.5
Total	33	100	7	100	23	100	54	100	117	100
Borrowed Land										
Yes	21	70	3	60	15	75	38	70.4	77	70.6
No	9	30	2	40	5	25	16	29.6	32	29.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table A6: Influence on decisions concerning land, by marital status**

	Married		Cohabiting		Divorced/ Separated		Widowed		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Do you have an effective influence on decisions about selling land?										
Yes	47	85.5	9	90	26	86.7	64	77.1	146	82
No	8	14.5	1	10	4	13.3	19	22.9	32	18
Total	55	100	10	100	30	100	83	100	178	100
Do you have effective influence on decisions about renting land?										
Yes	53	96.4	8	80	28	96.6	77	91.7	166	93.3
No	2	3.6	2	20	1	3.4	7	8.3	12	6.7
Total	55	100	10	100	29	100	84	100	178	100
Do you have an effective influence on decisions concerning using land as a collateral?										
Yes	40	72.7	8	80	22	75.9	66	78.6	136	76.4
No	15	27.3	2	20	7	24.1	18	21.4	42	23.6
Total	55	100	10	100	29	100	84	100	178	100
Do you have an effective influence on decisions concerning inheritance of land?										
Yes	43	78.2	9	90	27	90	60	72.3	139	78.1
No	12	21.8	1	10	3	10	23	27.7	39	21.9
Total	55	100	10	100	30	100	83	100	178	100