



IMPACT REPORT

SUMMER | 2020



So far in
2020, Landesa's
programs
strengthened
land rights for

9.8
MILLION
women & men

Dear friend,

We find ourselves in a truly unprecedented time: the world is adapting to life during a global pandemic, and, in America, a long-overdue discussion on the systems that foster racism is garnering much needed attention.

For Landesa, this period has impacted how we work, while reinforcing how critical our work is. In a recent webinar on the intersection of the coronavirus and land rights, Landesa's Chief Program Officer, Karol Boudreaux, summarized the importance of this moment, calling the virus a "widowmaker" and sharing stories of women evicted from their homes following the death of a husband. One story recounted how members of a Tanzanian community seized the land of a woman who was sheltering-in-place away from her home, unable to protect her land.

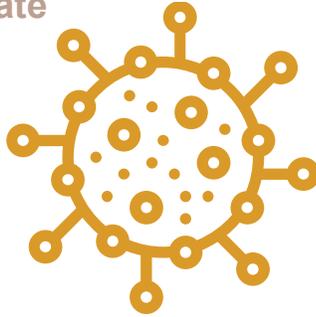
Here at home, the Black Lives Matter movement is drawing renewed attention to the devastating consequences of systemic racism that leave so many unprotected and vulnerable. We are reminded that every day our fight for land rights pits us against similarly unjust systems. Whether it is revising a law that prevents women from owning land or working with government champions to implement reforms, our work is focused on changing the systems that leave individuals, families, and communities on the margins of society, without the right to own land.

At Landesa, we know that land rights are a foundation for building sustainable, healthy, and equitable communities, and we strive to help millions of women and men worldwide unlock the benefits of strong land rights. We are successful because of you, and we thank you for joining us in this effort.

Sincerely,
Chris Jochnick, President & CEO

LAND REFORM IN A PANDEMIC

COVID-19 poses an immediate threat to rural communities, where poor sanitation, infrastructure, and health services could hasten the transmission and increase the severity of the virus.



Longer-term consequences to rural land rights could sow disorder and economic uncertainty in the months to come.

As a global leader in land rights, Landesa is positioned to assist our partners in government and civil society in responding to COVID-19. We're leveraging our networks in Asia and Africa to provide resources and expertise for local partners on the front lines of this global health crisis.

IN LIBERIA, we are using the platform of our nationally broadcast radio program to educate the public on health, hygiene, and social-distancing measures to prevent the transmission of the virus.

IN TANZANIA, we are exploring ways to adapt a mobile application, Law On Your Palm, which connects rural women with access to legal services, to be used to share information about COVID-19.

IN MYANMAR, we have assisted the Forest Department in providing protective masks and gloves for use by department staff carrying out essential fieldwork. And we've assisted our partners in government and civil society in making their own transition to video-conferencing technology as staff began to work from home.

THE LAND RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS OF COVID-19

COVID-19 will have both immediate and long-term consequences for rural communities. Secure land rights will be essential for these communities to overcome challenges posed by the pandemic. During periods of economic upheaval and recession, it is even more critical that rural people have secure access to land and productive assets that can provide a source of livelihood.

Women are isolated and vulnerable: Higher mortality rates from COVID-19 among males can endanger the land and inheritance rights of female heirs. Without legally and socially recognized rights, women are at greater risk of being dispossessed of land in the event of the death of a husband, father, or other male relative.

Internal migration stresses overburdened systems: The internal migration of laborers is a frequent pressure point on land management and administration systems in many economically developing countries. This pressure can be compounded when local land offices are at reduced capacity or closed due to the threat of COVID-19.

Interested in learning more about the intersection of the COVID-19 pandemic and land rights? Watch the three-part webinar series that Landesa helped organize in May, covering topics such as [threats to women's land and inheritance rights](#).



IN WEST BENGAL, POTATOES & PATHWAYS TO EMPOWERMENT FOR RURAL WOMEN



In the Indian state of West Bengal, Landesa is working with PepsiCo on a pilot project to help increase women’s participation in the company’s potato supply chain, an effort aimed at increasing women’s economic empowerment and improving gender equality.

The project is funded by PepsiCo and USAID, and implemented in partnership with Tetra Tech. The project explores the business case for how increasing women’s access to land and other resources can help women overcome social norms that limit their access to such resources and prevent them from being recognized as farmers. An initial project assessment revealed that women’s participation in the potato supply chain is often restricted to laboring. This is driven by limited access to land due to restrictions on joint titling and leasing, as well as social norms that prioritize men’s ownership and inheritance of land.

The assessment revealed that women face obstacles in accessing inputs and services essential to potato farming, such as seeds.

To help overcome these obstacles, Landesa’s project team identified two well-organized women’s self-help groups (SHG) – community-based savings groups that are common throughout India – who were interested in leasing land to produce PepsiCo potatoes. Using credit and savings, each SHG pooled their resources to lease approximately one acre of land to produce potatoes. Through the project, both SHGs had access to critical inputs (e.g., seed, fertilizer, crop insurance, etc.), as well as regular agronomic training on topics such as land preparation, planting, irrigation and pest management from PepsiCo agronomists and Tetra Tech experts.

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Despite unusually wet weather that delayed planting and waterlogged portions of fields, both groups successfully grew PepsiCo potatoes, producing yields that equaled or exceeded the yields of other PepsiCo farmers, and made a profit.

To help PepsiCo staff fully support women farmers, the project also conducted training that explored women's roles in agriculture. Objectives included building staff understanding of the various ways in which women are denied opportunities to fully contribute their talents, the benefits to both businesses and communities when women are no longer marginalized, and practical guidance on ways to engage and empower women farmers. PepsiCo staff will also be trained on gender-based violence (GBV) to raise awareness of related risks in relation to empowering women in the PepsiCo potato supply chain to give PepsiCo field teams the

knowledge to respond appropriately to GBV concerns in their work.

These training efforts help build a company culture of inclusion and equal treatment, essential to leveling the field for women farmers.

Following up on the success of the pilot, Landesa and its project partners will expand land leasing to more SHGs in West Bengal, carry out land literacy trainings for SHG members and PepsiCo staff, and pursue law and policy reform efforts to help strengthen women's land rights.

Lessons from the project can be further applied across PepsiCo's operations in India and globally, helping create pathways to empowerment for women around the world.

METRIC FOCUS: MYANMAR



206,000

The number of families who have been allocated land so far under policies developed in partnership with Landesa's Myanmar team.



3,749,750

Estimated number of farmers in Myanmar who have benefitted from extensive trainings under Landesa's program so far.

STAFF SPOTLIGHT



DR. OHNMAR MYO AUNG

Dr. Ohnmar leads Landesa's in-country Myanmar team, made up of dozens of staff across the country. As a local expert on land reforms, she has played a critical role in the success of Landesa's program in Myanmar since its founding in 2015. Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, Dr. Ohnmar and her team have continued their tireless work to secure the rights of millions of their compatriots by helping lawmakers utilize video conferencing tools, providing forest department employees with personal protective equipment, and developing paper copies of land reform materials to help those with limited resources access critical information.

MOBILE TECHNOLOGY HELPS MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES ACCESS LEGAL RESOURCES



Around the world, land is the foundation for life – a place of shelter and security, a source of food and income, and a guarantee of status and standing in one’s community.

But these benefits aren’t always equitably distributed to all – and women are most at risk. A new tool is helping women in rural Tanzania secure legal protection for their land rights. And it fits in the palm of their hand.

Sheria Kiganjani, which translates from Kiswahili as “Law On Your Palm,” is the first online legal digital platform in Tanzania, enabling users to access various legal services remotely from their cellphone and other mobile devices. Stand for Her Land, a women’s land rights campaign currently led by Landesa, in partnership with Sheria Kiganjani, recently developed a “women and land” module that allows users to obtain legal information and advice about land rights through the Law On Your Palm tool.

The use of mobile tech helps reduce barriers to justice in remote areas where the nearest legal aid service could be a day’s journey away, or in urban areas where women experiencing poverty struggle to get proper advice on matters that affect their daily lives, such as land rights.

Asia, a farmer from Mkuranga district, is one such beneficiary. She and her sister inherited a plot of land from their parents, but had difficulty obtaining

ownership of the parcel because a man in their village wished to claim it as his own. Though his claim was without merit, the sisters feared they would lose their family land due to discriminatory perceptions about women’s rights to own land.

Asia documented her case in the Law On Your Palm application and received legal advice from a community paralegal, who walked her through the steps necessary to defend their claim to the land. Asia and her sister then took their case to village leaders, who ruled they were the rightful owners of the land.

In addition to connecting end users with the resources to resolve land disputes, Law On Your Palm serves as a data collection tool for community paralegals to document the challenges women encounter to their land rights, which in turn allows Landesa’s campaign partners to monitor progress and direct resources more efficiently.

With Law On Your Palm, Landesa is helping bridge the gap between law and practice for women in rural Tanzania by putting legal resources into the hands of those who need it the most.



“This value of secure land rights can be taken for granted by those of us who live comfortably in cities. When you return home tonight, are you certain that your home will be there waiting for you and that you cannot be evicted unexpectedly? If so, then you have secure rights to land. This just isn’t the case for 1 billion people around the world.”

My-Lan Dodd

Attorney & Land Tenure
Specialist at Landesa



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