



POLICY BRIEF No. 8/2012

A REVIEW OF THE LAND REFORM: GENDER DISAGGREGATION

Introduction

This paper focuses civil society perspectives on gender and land reform process, with a special analysis of the Fast Track Land Reform Programme. It interrogates the extent to which the government has managed to bring about equality and equity in land distribution process. Major findings and key recommendations are tabulated to inform policy makers and enrich parliamentary debates on the investigated theme.

Background

In an attempt to redress the land inequalities inherited from the colonial era, the government embarked on the land reform programme which started after independence in 1980. However, in 2000 a new form of land reform came into being through the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP), pioneered by the war veterans. According to Moyo et al,(2009:1), the Fast Track Land Reform Programme transformed the agrarian structure from a bi-modal structure in which 4, 500 farmers (approximately 5,000 farm units) held over 11 million hectares mostly on the basis of export-focused commercial agriculture, alongside one million communal area households on 16.4 million hectares mostly in drier regions of the country. The FTLRP implemented by the Government of Zimbabwe redistributed about 80% of the former large scale commercial farms (LSCF) to a broad base of beneficiaries including peasants ‘supposedly’ from across the political divide, as well as politicians and corporate (*ibid*).

Objectives of the study

- To investigate key factors that led to the land reform process in Zimbabwe
- To analyze the extent to which the land reform processes benefited both men and women in Zimbabwe.
- Analyze factors that hindered women to benefiting from the land reform program
- To proffer recommendations on how the gaps could be addressed

Study methodology

- Primary data collection methods included focus group discussions, consultative workshops and interviews in the five NANGO regions in Bulawayo, Gweru, Masvingo, Mutare and Harare.
- The secondary sources of information mainly used was reviewing of existing literature, policy documents and Acts

Findings of the study

The study revealed that the key factors that led to the land reform process in Zimbabwe are to:

- Reduce civil conflict by transferring white held land to black people;
- Provide opportunities for war veterans and landless people;
- Relieve population pressure on communal lands; and
- Maintain existing agricultural production.

The study observed a disproportionate allocation of land between men and women. Anecdotal data on figure 1 shows that more men than women benefited from the land reform program. Only 12% women benefited in the A2 distribution and 18% in the A1. Ironically, the majority of women who accessed land were politically affiliated to the ruling party.

Fig 1: Allocation patterns by gender per province

	Model A1				Model A2			
Province	No of males	%	No of females	%	No of males	%	No of females	%
Midlands	14800	82	3198	18	338	95	17	5
Masvingo	19026	84	3644	16	709	92	64	8
Mashonaland Central	12986	88	1770	12	1469	87	215	13
Mashonaland West	12782	81	5270	19	1777	89	226	11
Mashonaland East	12967	76	3992	24	*	*	*	*
Matebeleland South	7754	87	1169	13	215	79	56	21
Matebeleland North	7919	84	1490	16	574	83	121	17
Manicaland	9572	82	2190	18	961	91	97	9
Total	106986	82	22723	18	6043	88	796	12

Source: The Presidential Land Review Committee Report (TPLRCR), 2003)

The study results showed that the reasons that hindered women from benefiting from the land reform program were:

- The politicization of the land reform process ,
- Traditional leaders operate within a framework of customary law which inherently does not recognize women to access and own land ,
- The Communal Land Act and its administration within a framework of customary law continues to preclude women from having rights over land and property,
- Women in polygamous marriages are further disadvantaged since the policy stipulates that its one farm per household where it assumes a man heads one household. Other women are then disadvantaged,

- Most banks require collateral for one to access loans and credit. Hence women's failure to provide collateral becomes a huge barrier towards their chances of accessing land, loans and credit facilities,
- Lack of involvement and participation by women in the land allocating committees,
- Culture and patriarchal systems that view women as second class citizens and
- Hesitancy by some women to take up decision-making roles

Recommendations from the study

- There is need for a proper gender and land audit which would stipulate gender disaggregated data on who accessed what size of farm disaggregated by location.
- Financing mechanisms for new farmers must be improved so that both men and women farmers have equal opportunities to access loans from the banks.
- Local authorities should issue certificates of ownership and not offer letters so that the land can be transferable. The certificate of ownership should allow the occupier of the piece of land to determine the level of compensation if that piece of land is acquired by the state.
- Equitable representation and participation of all women and men in local land administration and management committees as well as in decision making structures on land
- The supreme law of the country, the new constitution should not have discriminatory clauses in the areas of adoption, marriage, divorce, burial, devolution of property and death with regards to access, ownership and control of land.
- The new constitution should ensure that the principle of gender equality is unequivocal and entrenched, and as well as all policy language should be gender sensitive
- More opportunities should be created for women to have access to credit facilities and agricultural technological know-how.
- Gender sensitization, awareness raising on rights and distribution of information need to be included among strategies supporting women's access, ownership and control to land
- There is need for the deconstruction of the mind set, especially in rural areas that sees land as a preserve of males. This paradigm shift needs to be in cooperated in the general socialization process as well as the school curriculum.
- Land reform should be matched with legal literacy training for men and women, particularly on the relationship between law and rural productivity.
- There is need for the review and harmonization of customary law and practices and the communal land act with the new constitution and other statutory instruments so that women have consistent rights relating to land access, ownership and control.

NB. This policy brief is a summary of the policy monograph on the a review of the land reform: gender disaggregation by Judith Kaulem. The policy monograph was developed by the National Association of NGOs (NANGO), the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) from the University of Zimbabwe and Progressio-Zimbabwe with the financial support from the European Union. For more detailed information on the policy monograph contact Mr. Marongwe Machinda at NANGO offices in Harare at machinda@nango.org.zw or Mr. Mweembe Christopher at Progressio Zimbabwe in Harare at chrismweembe@yahoo.com