



rural development institute  
securing land rights for the world's poorest

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### WOMEN'S LAND RIGHTS

When women have access and secure rights to land, they are better able to improve the lives of their families and themselves.

Unfortunately, women in many poor countries do not have access to land or lack secure property rights to the land they do possess. This dearth makes women even more vulnerable to poverty.

Land rights confer direct economic benefits as a source of income, status, nutrition, and collateral for credit. Access to agricultural land can mean higher household calories and consumption. However, women may not fully participate in these benefits as members of a household if they do not share formal rights to land.

How do women lose access and rights to land?

Women can be excluded from the benefits of land rights formalization programs, and women are particularly vulnerable when the household breaks down—for example, in the event of male migration, HIV/AIDS, abandonment, divorce, or death.

### RDI PROGRAMS TO STRENGTHEN WOMEN'S LAND RIGHTS

RDI's Women and Land Program focuses on the specific interests and needs of rural women, developing tailored solutions that address those interests and needs through secure land rights.

#### Rwanda

Women comprise more than half of Rwanda's population. Over 30 percent of households are headed by women, one of the highest rates in the world. RDI is assisting the Rwandan government with implementation of its new land law, including consideration of gender issues and coordination of a Women's Law and Policy Task Force to provide continuing input on laws from a gender perspective.

#### Burundi

In this post-conflict environment, women's rights to land are even more precarious given the repatriation of refugees and internally displaced persons placing multiple claims on the land from which they fled during the conflict. RDI is working with the government and local NGOs to promote women's land rights as the country deliberates on draft land and inheritance laws.

#### Angola

RDI is working to ensure that the land rights formalization process incorporates gender-sensitive procedures, that women participate in that process, and that their land rights are formally recognized.

#### China

In addition to strengthening women's land rights under China's new land law, RDI provides training for legal aid lawyers on the protection of rural women's land rights.

#### India

RDI is securing women's land rights through "micro-ownership" of land titled in women's names, and holds state level policy workshops on woman's land rights.

#### Indonesia

RDI is working with a local NGO to study women's roles in micro-plot production in Java.

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### MORE INFORMATION



### FACTS ABOUT WOMEN AND LAND

- Women represent over 50 percent of the world's population and provide 60-80 percent of the world's agricultural labor, yet some research indicates they own less than 5 percent of the world's land.

- Assesses and Income in the hands of women results in higher caloric intake and better nutrition for the household than when in the hands of men.

- Improving women's land rights makes a powerful contribution to household food security.

- Women's property rights increase women's status and bargaining power within the household and community.

- Secure land rights provide women with greater incentives to adopt sustainable farming practices and invest in their land. More than 80 percent of farmers in Africa are women, yet women in most African countries do not have secure rights to the land they farm.

- Providing women with secure rights to land that they can farm has the potential to mitigate the impact of HIV/AIDS on food security and reduce high-risk behaviors.

Download Fact Sheet on  
Women and Land

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Download our latest report:

**RDI Report #123 - Women's Land Rights In Rwanda:  
How Can They Be Protected and Strengthened as the Land Law  
is Implemented?**

*By Jennifer Brown and Justine Uvuza*

To see a full list of RDI reports on women's land rights, [click here](#).

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