



Eastern and Southern Africa
Small Scale Farmers' Forum
ESAFF - UGANDA



*Amplifying Small-scale
Farmers' Voices*

SMALL-SCALE FARMERS' PERSPECTIVES ON WOMEN LAND RIGHTS

LAND RIGHTS OPINION POLL STUDY

SEPTEMBER 2024



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The Opinion Polls were conducted by small-scale farmers in different districts in Uganda with support from Timothy Nkooyooyo.

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01 ABOUT ESAFF UGANDA

Eastern and Southern Africa Small-scale Farmers' Forum (ESAFF) was formed during the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) held in 2002 in South Africa. This was to create a Forum to bring together small-scale farmers into a social movement to influence favourable agriculture policies and practices at global, continental, regional, national and local levels.

ESAFF Uganda became operational in 2008 and has since become the largest small-scale farmer-led advocacy movement in Uganda. ESAFF Uganda works to enhance the SSFs ability to make informed decisions and participate meaningfully in development processes. ESAFF Uganda currently has a membership of a membership of 12588 small-scale farmer community organisations in 54 districts representing over 765,560 individual small-scale farmers of which 67 percent are women.

ESAFF Uganda is also part of a bigger network of small-scale farmers in 15 other countries in Eastern and Southern Africa including South Sudan, Rwanda, Burundi, Kenya, Tanzania, Swaziland, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Malawi, South Africa, Lesotho, DR Congo, Madagascar, Seychelles and Mozambique. ESAFF Uganda is also part of La Via Campesina (LVC) which is the largest peasant organisation in the world.



Vision

A just and resilient food system influenced by small-scale farmers.



Strategic Objectives



Mission

Influencing for a just and resilient food system through positioning small-scale farmers to protect rights to productive resources, promote sustainable agricultural practices, educate and protect consumers, ensure fair economic opportunities, participate in public social accountability of public resources, and foster collaboration and empowerment at different levels.



Strategic Goal

Increased political rights, social and economic stability and sustainability of small-scale farmers hence ensuring that small-scale farmers especially women and youths can thrive and contribute significantly to a just and resilient food system at all levels.

1. Ensure Equitable Access and Control of Productive Resources by small-scale farmers especially women and youth.
2. Campaign for Climate Justice and enhance small-scale farmers' Climate Resilience through promoting agroecological practices.
3. Protect Consumers' Rights including small-scale farmers to ensure transparency and safety in the food supply chain.
4. Ensure Fair Economic Opportunities for small-scale farmers and other marginalized groups
5. Influence increased and favorable Public Agriculture Financing target small-scale farmers and Accountability in the agriculture sector.
6. Foster Small-scale farmers' Collaboration and Empowerment from grassroot to international level.

02 ABOUT THE LAND RIGHTS SUPPORT CENTRE

Background

The Land Rights Support Centre (LRSC) was established in 2022 by ESAFF Uganda to address the critical challenges faced by small-scale farmers and vulnerable communities in accessing land rights information and legal aid. In a country where over 80% of the population cannot afford private legal services, the LRSC serves as a vital resource, particularly for women and small-scale farmers who are most at risk of land-related injustices. By providing accessible and timely support through platforms like SMS and WhatsApp, the Centre empowers individuals to protect their land rights and seek justice in an environment where legal assistance is often out of reach.

The creation of the LRSC was driven by the urgent need to address widespread land disputes, boundary conflicts, and land grabbing in Uganda. These issues, exacerbated by high poverty levels and limited legal awareness, have left many vulnerable to exploitation. The Centre plays a crucial role in bridging this gap by offering essential legal aid and information in local languages, fostering a more informed and resilient population. Through its efforts, the LRSC not only promotes justice and equity in land governance but also supports sustainable development by ensuring that land resources are managed responsibly and fairly.

Goals of the LRSC

The LRSC focuses on several key objectives:

1. Providing communities with easy access to legal aid services and justice.
2. Empowering human and environmental rights defenders to safely report injustices using the Timby platform.
3. Supporting access to critical land rights information.
4. Promoting responsible investments in agriculture, extractives, and forestry for equitable economic development and environmental protection.

Operations of the LRSC

The LRSC operates through five key platforms;

Information Platform

ESAFF Uganda recognizes that access to information is crucial for empowering citizens, particularly in understanding their land and resource rights. The organization has established an information platform where citizens engage by sending SMS, WhatsApp messages, and voice notes. This telecommunication line serves as a vital tool for people to seek information about their rights, land issues, or any related queries at their convenience.

Alternative Dispute Resolution Platform

Recognizing the need for accessible and effective dispute resolution mechanisms, ESAFF Uganda has established community-led mediation structures in collaboration with local governments, specifically facilitated by sub-county LC3 (Local Council 3) leaders. This approach empowers residents to resolve conflicts through trusted local figures, reducing the intimidation often associated with formal legal systems. By offering these services free of charge, ESAFF ensures that even the most marginalized individuals can pursue justice without the financial burden of legal fees, promoting a more equitable process for conflict resolution.

Legal Aid Services

ESAFF Uganda has mobilized a dedicated legal aid team to assist individuals facing land rights challenges across the country. Community members can easily reach the legal aid team through a dedicated telecommunication line, receiving tailored guidance and support for their specific situations. This service is particularly beneficial for those in remote areas where traditional legal assistance may be scarce or inaccessible, ensuring that even the most marginalized individuals can seek the legal help they need to protect their rights.

Safe Reporting on Human and Environmental Rights Abuses

ESAFF Uganda has established a robust grassroots structure for human and environmental defenders, including journalists and communicators, to safeguard community rights. Utilizing the Timby platform, individuals can securely and anonymously report human rights abuses.

This initiative serves several purposes;

- 1. Safe Reporting:** Timby allows individuals to document and report abuses without fear of retaliation, encouraging more victims and witnesses to come forward.
- 2. Capacity Building:** ESAFF trains reporters and journalists on how to effectively utilize the Timby platform, ensuring that communities can identify and report violations, thereby increasing transparency and accountability.
- 3. Documentation and Action:** Reports submitted through Timby can trigger local and national actions by relevant authorities to address the issues raised, creating a feedback loop that supports human rights advocacy.

Investment Compliance:

ESAFF Uganda is proactive in ensuring that investments in land and resources comply with national and international land rights frameworks.

- 1. Investment Compliance Monitoring Tool:** This tool is designed for government agencies to track whether investments meet required legal standards, preventing land grabs and abuses that could harm vulnerable communities.
- 2. Community Engagement Tool:** ESAFF builds the capacity of farming communities to engage meaningfully in investment processes, ensuring they have a voice in decisions that impact their land and livelihoods. Through training sessions, community members learn to advocate for their rights and influence outcomes effectively.
- 3. Fostering Accountability:** By holding investors accountable to established compliance standards, ESAFF helps protect community interests and promotes sustainable practices that align with social and environmental justice.

Achievements as per July 2024

1. The LRSC has established and empowered 13 Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) structures across Uganda, mediating 178 land and investment-related grievances with a 69% success rate.
2. 1,103 small-scale farmers (68% men, 23% women, and 9% youth) have accessed critical land rights information, awareness, and learning across the country.
3. Ten women-led households are being supported to acquire Certificates of Customary Ownership to secure their land rights.
4. Three local government land structures were trained on responsible land governance and service delivery. They now support grassroots land registration, awareness, and mediation.
5. Through the Timby platform, 26 grassroots human and environmental rights defenders were trained on effective reporting. Thirty cases of human rights violations and environmental abuses have been reported and verified for further referral.

03 ABOUT THE PUBLICATION

The **"Land Rights Opinion Poll Study"** is a comprehensive report developed by ESAFF Uganda with the support of Oxfam. This publication serves as the inaugural edition of the Opinion Poll Series, focusing on the critical issue of land rights in Uganda, particularly the challenges faced by small-scale farmers, with an emphasis on women. The study explores the level of understanding and awareness of land governance frameworks among small-scale farmers across various regions of Uganda.

This report is grounded in empirical data collected from 17 districts across the country, using a structured questionnaire as the primary data collection tool. The findings are rigorously analyzed to offer actionable insights that can inform and influence legal and policy frameworks aimed at strengthening women's land rights in Uganda. By promoting equitable access and control of productive resources, this publication seeks to contribute to the broader goals of gender justice and socio-economic development in Uganda's agricultural sector.

The **"Land Rights Opinion Poll Study"** not only highlights the disparities in land rights but also underscores the need for targeted interventions to address the unique challenges faced by women in different regions. As a key resource for policymakers, advocates, and stakeholders, this publication aims to drive meaningful change in Uganda's land governance systems, ensuring that the voices of small-scale farmers are heard and their rights protected.

04 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Land Rights Opinion Poll Study, conducted by ESAFF Uganda, provides critical insights into the land rights situation in Uganda, with a particular focus on the challenges faced by small-scale farmers, especially women. The study, as part of the inaugural edition of the Opinion Poll Series, aims to assess the understanding and awareness of land governance frameworks among small-scale farmers across various regions in Uganda. The study's findings are intended to inform policy development and interventions that protect and enhance women's land rights, contributing to gender equity in agriculture.

Background and Context

Uganda is experiencing significant challenges related to land rights, exacerbated by high population density and inadequate land registration systems. Less than a quarter of Uganda's land is formally registered, leaving a significant portion of the population, particularly in rural areas, without secure land tenure. Vulnerable groups such as women, youth, and marginalized communities are disproportionately affected due to a lack of awareness of their rights and limited resources to defend them. The prevalence of land conflicts, driven by unclear land ownership and illegal acquisitions, further complicates the situation.

Despite Uganda's progressive legal frameworks, including the 1995 Constitution and the 2013 National Land Policy, enforcement remains weak, especially in regions governed by customary land practices. These issues are compounded by traditional norms that often disadvantage women, leaving them with limited control over land, which is crucial for their livelihoods and economic security.

The primary objective of this opinion poll was to evaluate the awareness and knowledge levels of small-scale farmers, particularly women, regarding Uganda's legal frameworks governing land rights.

Methodology

The study employed a quantitative research approach using a structured questionnaire to collect primary data on key themes, including land tenure security, access to land by marginalized groups, and access to justice. Data collectors, trained and supervised by ESAFF Uganda's Policy and Research Officer, gathered data from 17 districts across Uganda over four days. The data underwent rigorous editing, cleaning, and analysis using quantitative methods to ensure accuracy and reliability.

Key Findings

The study reveals significant regional and gender disparities in perceptions and experiences related to land rights. Notably:

Gender Disparities: Women face substantial barriers in accessing and controlling land, with traditional norms frequently undermining their rights despite constitutional provisions for gender equality. The Northern and Central regions are particularly challenging for women, where traditional norms are perceived as more powerful than national laws.

Support Structures: A majority of respondents believe that women lack sufficient support in resolving land-related problems. The effectiveness of land governing bodies, such as Area Land Committees and District Land Boards, is inconsistent, with significant dissatisfaction

noted in several regions.

Legal Awareness and Education: Limited access to education and information is a major barrier to women understanding and demanding their land rights. This issue is most pronounced in the Northern and Western regions, where there is a near-universal recognition of the need for better information dissemination.

Cultural Norms vs. Legal Frameworks: Traditional land systems continue to dominate, often to the detriment of women's land rights. In some regions, there is a strong perception that these traditional norms are more powerful than national laws, further entrenching gender disparities.

Conclusion

The Land Rights Opinion Poll Study underscores the urgent need for comprehensive and targeted interventions to address the challenges faced by women in securing and exercising their land rights in Uganda. While the legal frameworks exist to protect these rights, their enforcement is weak, and traditional norms continue to hinder progress. Strengthening legal support, enhancing education and awareness, and reforming traditional land systems are critical to achieving gender equity in land ownership and control.

Recommendations

The study recommends the following actions to improve women's land rights in Uganda:

- 1. Legal Education:** Develop and implement comprehensive legal education programs targeting both women and men, particularly in regions where traditional norms dominate.
- 2. Community-Based Legal Aid:** Establish more community-based legal aid clinics focused on land rights issues, particularly for women.
- 3. Empowerment Programs:** Encourage women's involvement in decision-making processes regarding land through policies, gender-sensitization workshops, and nationwide campaigns.
- 4. Inheritance Law Enforcement:** Revise and strictly enforce inheritance laws to ensure women have equal rights to inherit land.
- 5. Customary Law Reform:** Engage with traditional leaders to harmonize customary laws with national laws, ensuring that women's land rights are not undermined.
- 6. Land Rights Education in Schools:** Integrate land rights education into the school curriculum to foster a generation that supports gender equity in land ownership.
- 7. Accessible Information Centers:** Establish community land information centers where women can access resources and information on land rights.
- 8. Women's Groups Formation:** Support the formation of women's groups or cooperatives to provide mutual support and advocacy in land rights issues.
- 9. Region-Specific Interventions:** Tailor interventions to address the unique challenges in different regions, focusing on cultural change and legal support.
- 10. Strengthen Land Governance Bodies:** Ensure that land governance bodies are adequately trained and sensitized on gender equity, and held accountable for protecting women's land rights.
- 11. Continuous Monitoring and Feedback:** Establish feedback mechanisms to monitor progress and adjust strategies to better support women's land rights.

05 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

This report marks the inaugural edition of the Opinion Poll Series, with a specific focus on the land rights of small-scale farmers. Land ownership and control are critical determinants of socio-economic power, security, and identity, particularly in agrarian societies such as Uganda. Land not only serves as a primary source of livelihood but also as a key asset for wealth creation, food security, and social status. However, the distribution of land rights in Uganda is highly gendered, with women—who constitute the majority of the agricultural workforce—often facing significant barriers in accessing, controlling, and owning land.

Land Rights Situation in Uganda

The historical and cultural context of land rights in Uganda plays a significant role in shaping current gender disparities. Traditional land tenure systems in Uganda, such as customary land tenure, are deeply rooted in patriarchal norms that prioritize male ownership and inheritance of land. According to Obaikol (2014), these norms are sustained through customary laws that often marginalize women, relegating them to secondary roles in land access and control. Women typically access land through male relatives—fathers, husbands, or brothers—and rarely have independent land rights. This dependency leaves women vulnerable to displacement and disinheritance, particularly in cases of widowhood, divorce, or land conflicts (Asiimwe, 2014).

Uganda's legal framework includes several provisions aimed at promoting gender equality in land ownership. The 1995 Constitution guarantees equal rights for men and women and prohibits discrimination based on gender. The Land Act of 1998 further reinforces this by recognizing women's rights to own and inherit land. However, the implementation of these legal provisions has been inconsistent, largely due to the persistent influence of customary practices and the lack of enforcement mechanisms (Tripp, 2004; Rugadya, 2010). While these laws are progressive on paper, the gap between legislation and practice remains wide, leaving many women without the legal support necessary to claim their land rights.

Uganda faces increasing challenges related to land rights due to its high population density, with 174 inhabitants per square kilometer, making it one of Africa's most densely populated countries. This growing population puts immense pressure on the country's limited land resources, especially in rural areas where land is essential for livelihood, nutrition, and wealth. Despite the vital importance of land, less than a quarter of Uganda's land is formally registered. This lack of formal land documentation leaves a significant portion of the population without secure land tenure, particularly in areas governed by customary land practices. The absence of clear ownership records and historically weak enforcement of land rights have exacerbated land insecurity, especially for vulnerable groups such as women, youth, and marginalized communities, who often lack awareness of their rights and the resources to defend them.

Land conflicts are prevalent, frequently arising within communities or families due to unclear land use or ownership. The situation is further complicated by the involvement of investors, who sometimes engage in illegal land acquisitions, intensifying tensions, particularly in areas where land is already scarce. In regions hosting refugees, conflicts over land often emerge due to the fragile relationship between refugees and host communities. Although Uganda has established a progressive legal framework with the 1995 Constitution, the 1998 Land Act, and the 2013 National Land Policy, implementing these laws and policies remains challenging. The gap between legal provisions and practical enforcement leaves many Ugandans vulnerable to land-related disputes and

insecurity, underscoring the urgent need for stronger land governance and the protection of land rights, particularly for those most at risk.

Uganda operates under multiple land tenure systems, including customary, freehold, leasehold, and mailo land tenure systems. The customary system, which covers the majority of rural land, often disadvantages women due to its reliance on traditional practices that exclude women from land ownership (Lastarria-Cornhiel, 1997). The mailo system, prevalent in central Uganda, also tends to reinforce gender inequalities, as land is often registered in the names of male heads of households, leaving women with limited or no control over the land they work on (Rugadya, Nsamba-Gayiiya, & Kamusiime, 2004).

Women's Land Rights

Uganda is currently grappling with a significant crisis marked by rising food insecurity and widespread land evictions. In 2019, the country scored 30.6 on the Global Hunger Index, indicating a serious hunger situation, and ranked 104th out of 117 countries. The percentage of the population experiencing severe food insecurity rose from 17.5% during 2014–2016 to 21.7% in 2018–2020. The COVID-19 pandemic has further worsened food security in several districts across Uganda, revealing the urgent need for effective interventions. Uganda is also the 15th most vulnerable country to climate change and the 38th least-prepared. Studies consistently show that vulnerability to food insecurity is higher when households lack secure land tenure. Insecure land tenure adversely affects both agricultural production and productivity, implying that securing land tenure and property rights can improve productivity and reduce food insecurity and poverty. Therefore, the evictions that have left many poor Ugandans landless, particularly women, are exacerbating food insecurity and poverty.

In Uganda, where a large portion of the population relies on agriculture, land ownership is crucial. Fertile land, which supports food production for an estimated 200 million people, is essential for both sustenance and economic development. The 1995 Constitution and the 1998 Land Act ensure land ownership for citizens and prohibit gender discrimination in land rights. However, despite Uganda's progressive legal frameworks and international commitments to gender equality, enforcement remains weak. Cultural practices continue to favor male land inheritance, leaving women, who make up 50.47% of the population, owning less than 20% of the land.

Inheritance practices in Uganda are a major barrier to women's land rights. Although the Succession Act of 1906 provides for equal inheritance rights, in practice, customary laws often override statutory law, particularly in rural areas. According to Khadiagala (2001), women, especially widows and daughters, are often excluded from inheriting land, which is traditionally passed down to male heirs. This exclusion not only perpetuates gender inequality but also exacerbates women's vulnerability to poverty and food insecurity.

Women's access to justice in land-related disputes is another significant challenge. The legal system in Uganda, although theoretically accessible to all, is often prohibitively expensive, complex, and biased against women (Bikaako & Ssenkumba, 2003). Many women lack the financial resources and legal knowledge to pursue land claims, and the legal institutions themselves are often dominated by men who may hold patriarchal views. Furthermore, the formal legal system is often distant and inaccessible, leading

many women to rely on informal, community-based dispute resolution mechanisms, which may not always protect their rights adequately (Adoko & Levine, 2008).

Land grabbing, driven by both local elites and foreign investors, has emerged as a critical issue in Uganda, exacerbating the challenges women face in securing land rights. Women are particularly vulnerable to land grabbing because they often lack formal land titles and are less likely to be included in decision-making processes related to land transactions (Deininger & Castagnini, 2006). This has led to widespread displacement and loss of livelihoods, particularly in rural areas where land is a critical resource for survival.

This disparity limits women's ability to invest in agriculture, impacting food security and exacerbating poverty. Women, who are primarily responsible for growing food crops, face greater land tenure insecurity as agricultural systems shift toward market-oriented practices, often marginalizing them in decision-making. Despite legal provisions for spousal co-ownership of land, discriminatory inheritance systems persist, further complicating property ownership for women. Recognizing the critical role of secure land rights for women in improving household food security, ESAFF Uganda and Oxfam conducted an opinion poll to gather insights from small-scale farmers and advocate for gender equality in agriculture.

06 RATIONALE AND OBJECTIVES

Ugandan women possess a nuanced understanding of land tenure security, which is crucial for improving their economic security, social status, and well-being. This, in turn, enhances the resilience and productivity of the agriculture sector, where women play a dominant role as small-scale farmers. However, despite the legal frameworks in place to protect women's land rights, numerous studies have highlighted persistent challenges that hinder women's ability to own, access, and control land. These challenges are particularly severe in rural areas of developing countries like Uganda, where cultural and social norms often undermine women's land rights. According to data from the Ministry of Lands, Housing, and Urban Development (MLHUD, 2016), women own only 5-26% of the registered land in Uganda, despite comprising 52% of the population.

Land ownership is not just an economic asset but also a social, cultural, and political determinant of status, prestige, and power. Unfortunately, most women small-scale farmers in Uganda do not enjoy the privileges associated with land ownership. Addressing women's land rights is therefore essential to achieving gender equality in agriculture and improving the livelihoods of women farmers. However, there remains a significant gap in understanding the laws and policies governing land in Uganda, particularly regarding women's rights. This lack of knowledge is a key barrier to the effective implementation of these legal frameworks.

In response to these challenges, ESAFF Uganda conducted an opinion poll to assess small-scale farmers' understanding of existing land governance frameworks and their impact on women's land rights. By gathering comprehensive insights and perspectives from small-scale farmers across Uganda, the poll aimed to ensure that future strategies are relevant and tailored to the actual challenges and opportunities these farmers face. The information collected will be used by ESAFF Uganda and other land actors to inform the development of policies, programs, and interventions aimed at protecting and enhancing women's land rights.

Objectives

The primary objective of the opinion poll was to assess the understanding and awareness of small-scale farmers in Uganda, particularly women, regarding land governance frameworks.

Specific Objectives:

1. Evaluate the awareness and knowledge levels of small-scale farmers in at least 10 districts across Uganda concerning the legal frameworks that govern women's land rights.
2. Identify the key barriers and misconceptions held by small-scale farmers in 10 selected districts regarding women's land ownership and control.
3. Assess the current status of access to justice for small-scale farmers especially women.

07 METHODOLOGY

The methodology employed in conducting the opinion poll on women's land rights was designed to ensure the collection of reliable and comprehensive data. A quantitative research approach was adopted, centering on the use of a structured questionnaire to gather primary data on the key themes identified in the survey, such as land tenure security, access to land by marginalized groups, and access to justice.

Questionnaire Design and Training

The first step involved the design of a detailed questionnaire that encompassed questions aligned with the survey's guiding themes. This questionnaire served as the primary data collection tool, structured to capture the perceptions, knowledge, and experiences of respondents concerning women's land rights in Uganda. The questionnaire was developed with careful consideration of the local context, ensuring that the questions were clear, relevant, and accessible to the target respondents.

To ensure the effectiveness of data collection, ESAFF Uganda conducted a one-day training session for the data collectors. This training was crucial in familiarizing the data collectors with the questionnaire, teaching them the correct procedures for administering the survey, and emphasizing the importance of ethical considerations such as informed consent and confidentiality. The training also included a field test of the questionnaire, which allowed the data collectors to practice and refine their techniques in a real-world setting, leading to adjustments in the questionnaire based on field test results.

Data Collection Process

The approved data collectors were then deployed to various districts across Uganda, including Mukono, Mityana, Mayuge, Masaka, Soroti, Mbale, Mbarara, Kasese, Lira, Apac, Gulu, Adjumani, Amuru, Amuria, Nebbi, Zombo, and Arua. The data collection process spanned four days, during which the data collectors administered the questionnaires to selected respondents in each district.

To ensure consistency and quality during data collection, the process was closely supervised by ESAFF Uganda's Policy and Research Officer. This supervision involved monitoring the adherence of data collectors to the established protocols, providing on-the-ground support, and ensuring that any issues encountered during data collection were promptly addressed. The presence of a supervisor also reinforced the credibility of the data collection process, ensuring that data was collected systematically and accurately.

Data Management and Analysis

After the data collection phase, the collected information was electronically captured for further processing. The electronic data underwent rigorous editing and cleaning procedures to identify and rectify any inconsistencies or errors, ensuring the data's accuracy and integrity.

Given the quantitative nature of the survey, the cleaned data was then analyzed using quantitative methods. Statistical techniques were employed to interpret the data, allowing for the identification of patterns, trends, and correlations relevant to the key themes of the opinion poll. The systematic approach to data management and analysis ensured that the findings were not only accurate but also meaningful, providing a solid foundation for the conclusions drawn from the opinion poll.

This comprehensive and methodologically sound approach to data collection,

management, and analysis underpins the reliability of the findings, which will inform ESAFF Uganda's ongoing efforts to advocate for and protect women's land rights in Uganda.

08 FINDINGS

This section presents the findings from the land rights polls reveal significant insights into the current state of land ownership, gender disparities, and the influence of traditional norms across various regions in Uganda. The data highlights the challenges faced by women in securing and exercising their land rights, the impact of traditional land systems, and the effectiveness of legal and support structures. These findings provide a comprehensive overview of the perceptions and realities surrounding land rights, which are critical for informing policies and interventions aimed at achieving gender equity in land ownership.

Demographic characteristics of respondents of the land rights opinion polls

During the land rights opinion poll, respondents were asked about their sex, age, region of residence and knowledge about the type of land tenure. Below is the analysis of the results.

A table showing the demographic characteristics of respondents

Respondents' demographic characteristics	Opinion Poll Series	
	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sex		
Female	663	66
Male	343	34
Age Group		
15 - 35	341	34
36 - 55	423	42
55+	242	24
Region		
Central	143	14
Eastern	288	29
Northern	351	35
Western	224	22
Type of land tenure		
Customary Land	617	61
Freehold land	219	22
Private Mailo	122	12
Lease hold land	15	1
Mailo land	17	2
I don't know	16	2

Table 1: The demographic characteristics of respondents from the land rights opinion polls

This Land Rights Opinion Polls attracted 1006 respondents. The table presents the demographic characteristics of respondents from the land rights opinion polls. The majority of the respondents are female, comprising 66% of the total sample. This indicates that women's perspectives are strongly represented in the poll. Males make up 34% of the respondents, indicating a smaller representation in the survey compared to females. Respondents aged 15 to 35 years represent 34% of the total. This suggests that a significant portion of the sample is relatively young. The largest age group is 36 to 55 years, making up 42% of the respondents. Older respondents, aged 55 and above, account for 24% of the sample, indicating a moderate representation of older individuals. Respondents from the Central region make up 14% of the total, the smallest regional group. The Eastern region is represented by 29% of the respondents, showing strong participation from this area. The

Northern region has the highest representation, with 35% of the respondents. This suggests significant engagement from this region. Respondents from the Western region make up 22% of the total sample, providing a substantial regional perspective.

On the land tenure system, the majority of respondents (61%) are associated with customary land tenure. This reflects the prevalence of customary land practices in the surveyed areas. A significant portion (22%) of respondents are associated with freehold land tenure, indicating formalized land ownership in some areas. A smaller group (12%) of respondents are linked to private Mailo land, a tenure system prevalent in some regions of Uganda. Leasehold land is the least represented, with only 1% of respondents associated with this tenure type, indicating it is less common among the surveyed population. A small percentage (2%) of respondents are linked to Mailo land, which is a unique land tenure system in Uganda. Another 2% of respondents are unsure about the type of land tenure they are associated with, which could indicate a lack of awareness or knowledge about land tenure systems.

The data shows a predominantly female and middle-aged respondent group, with the Northern and Eastern regions having higher representation. Customary land tenure is the most common among respondents, reflecting its significance in the surveyed areas. The diversity in land tenure types suggests that the poll included a wide range of landholding practices, though the dominance of customary and freehold tenure systems is clear. This demographic breakdown provides insight into the sample characteristics, helping to understand the context of the land rights opinions gathered. The strong representation of women and the prevalence of customary land tenure are particularly notable and may influence the outcomes of the opinion polls.

The land type in my area ensures that women have all the rights (access, control and ownership) to land.

Many studies have shown that women often have limited decision-making power and control over how to use the land. During the land rights opinion polls, respondents were asked different questions related to their understanding of how their land tenure system treat women in respect to rights. On each of the questions, they were given different options like right to access land, right to own land, right to control land and none of them. Respondents could present more than one response to these questions. The results presented below are gender specific.

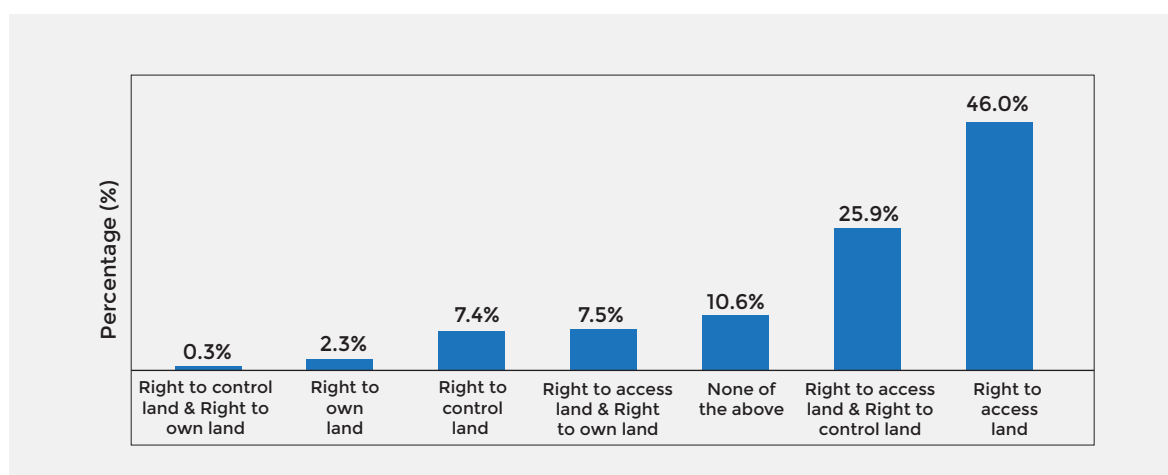


Figure 1: Female responses on whether they think their current land tenure system ensures that women have all the rights (access, control and ownership) to land.

Female in the study were asked on whether they think their current land tenure system ensures that women have all the rights (access, control and ownership) to land. The highest percentage of female respondents (46.0%) believe that women in their area primarily have the right to access land. This suggests that while women can use the land, this may not necessarily mean they have control or ownership of it. A significant proportion (25.9%) of respondents indicate that women have both the right to access and control land. This indicates that a quarter of women feel they have some degree of authority or decision-making power over the land they use.

Only 7.4% of respondents believe that women have the sole right to control land without necessarily owning or having guaranteed access to it. Similarly, 7.5% of respondents indicate that women have rights to access and own land, but without necessarily having control over it. A small percentage (2.3%) of respondents believe that women have both the right to own and control land, but this group does not consider access to land as guaranteed. A notable percentage (10.6%) believe that women do not have adequate rights to land (access, control, or ownership). This highlights a gap in land rights for women in certain areas. An even smaller group (0.3%) believes that women have the right to control and own land but without access.

The graph suggests that while access to land is relatively common, fewer women have control or ownership of the land, indicating a potential imbalance in land tenure rights. The data points to the need for the implementation of more equitable land policies that ensure women have full rights (access, control, and ownership) to land, which is essential for their empowerment and economic security. The significant percentage of respondents who believe that none of the rights are adequately provided underscores a critical issue in the land tenure system that needs to be addressed.

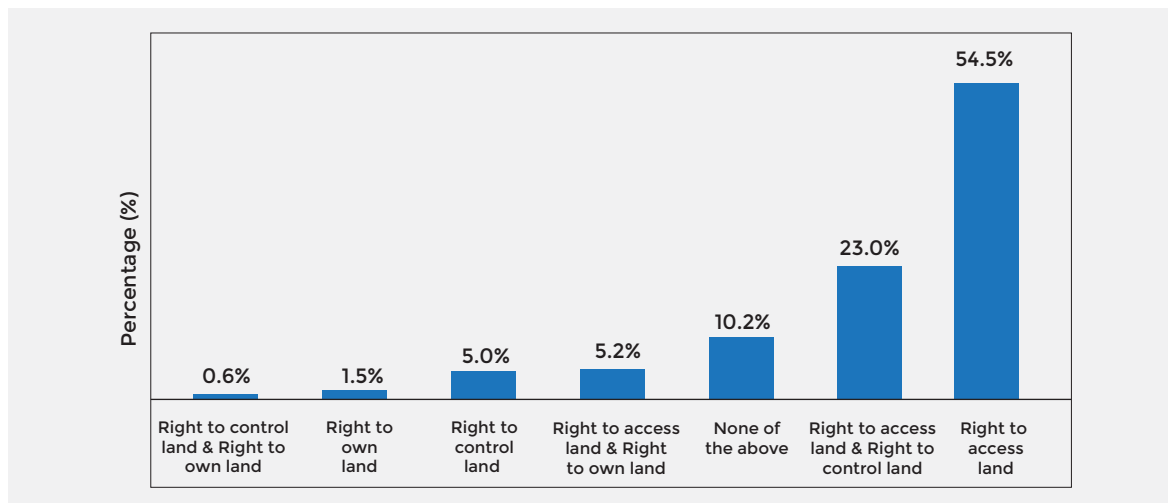


Figure 2: Male responses on whether they think their current land tenure system ensures that women have all the rights (access, control and ownership) to land.

Male respondents were asked on whether their current land tenure system allow women to have all the rights to land, including access, control, and ownership. Result show that the majority of male respondents (54.5%) believe that women have the right to access land. This suggests that, according to men, women are more likely to be able to use land than to have other types of land rights. A significant portion (23.0%) of respondents indicates that women have both the right to access and control land. This points to a relatively strong perception among men that women can not only use land but also influence decisions regarding its use.

A considerable number (10.2%) of male respondents believe that women do not have adequate rights to land (access, control, or ownership) while a smaller segment (5.2%) believes that women have control over land but without the associated rights to access or ownership. This might indicate that some men perceive women as having influence without formal ownership or access. Another small group (5.0%) believes that women have the rights to both access and own land, but not necessarily to control it while a very small percentage (1.5%) of respondents believe that women only have ownership rights without the ability to control or access the land. The smallest percentage (0.6%) of respondents believe that women have both control and ownership rights.

The graph suggests that access to land is perceived as the most common right that women have, with control and ownership being less common. This perception is stronger among men compared to women (as seen in the previous graph). A higher percentage of male respondents (54.5%) believe that women have the right to access land, compared to the 46.0% of female respondents in the previous graph. This difference might indicate a disparity between men's perceptions and women's experiences regarding land rights.

The substantial percentage (23.0%) of men who believe that women have both access and control rights reflects a more optimistic view of women's land rights among male respondents. The fact that 10.2% of male respondents believe that women lack adequate land rights is concerning and suggests that some men acknowledge the existence of significant gaps in land rights for women. The analysis of both graphs suggests a disparity in perceptions of land rights between men and women, with men generally perceiving women to have greater access and control over land than women themselves report. This highlights the need for more focused discussions on how to align perceptions with the actual experiences of women in relation to land tenure systems.

The land type in my area ensures that men have all the rights (access, use and control) to land.

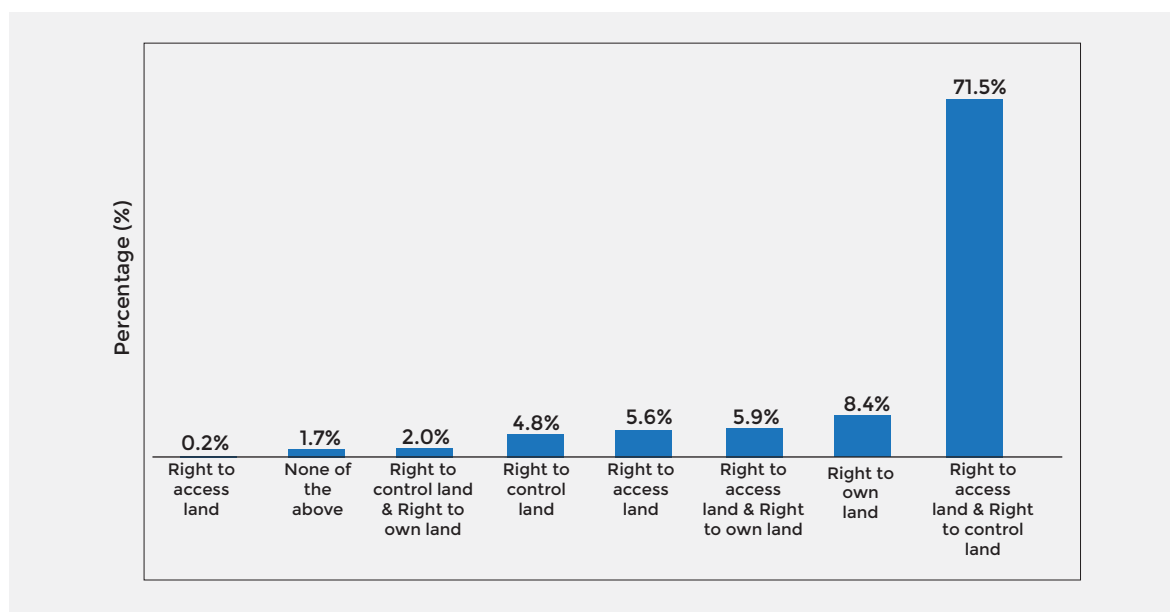


Figure 3: Female Response to the question on land type in my area ensures that men have all the rights (access, use and control) to land

Results show that a significant majority (71.5%) of female respondents believe that the land tenure system in their area ensures that men have both the right to access and control land. This suggests that the existing land tenure systems heavily favour men, granting them the

dominant role in both utilizing and making decisions about the land. A smaller percentage (8.4%) of respondents feel that men have the right to own land under the current tenure system. While ownership is recognized, it seems less emphasized compared to access and control rights. Some respondents (5.9%) believe that the tenure system grants men both access and ownership rights. This suggests that in certain areas, the emphasis might be on men's ability to both use and legally hold land, even if control is not explicitly mentioned. A similar percentage (5.6%) of respondents feel that men primarily have control over land, even if they may not necessarily have ownership or access rights under the current tenure system. A small portion (4.8%) of respondents believe that men have both control and ownership rights under the land tenure system, which implies decision-making power along with legal ownership. A very small group (1.7%) of respondents do not believe that any of the listed rights are adequately provided to men by the current land tenure system. An extremely small percentage (0.2%) of respondents think that men have only access rights, which is the least mentioned category. This implies that access alone is not considered a predominant right in the current tenure system for men.

The dominant view among female respondents is that the current land tenure system overwhelmingly favours men in terms of both accessing and controlling land (71.5%). This indicates that in many areas, men are perceived to have substantial authority and decision-making power over land, reflecting potential gender imbalances within these systems. While some respondents highlight ownership rights for men (8.4%), this is far less emphasized than access and control. This could imply that ownership is either assumed as a part of access and control or that formal ownership is less recognized or necessary in certain areas under the current tenure systems. The small percentages in other categories (e.g., control only, ownership only) suggest that there are nuanced views on how the land tenure system operates concerning men's rights. However, these views are significantly overshadowed by the predominant belief in men's access and control rights.

The graph strongly indicates that the prevailing land tenure systems are perceived to grant men extensive rights, particularly in accessing and controlling land. This highlights a significant gender imbalance in land rights, with men seen as the primary beneficiaries of these systems.

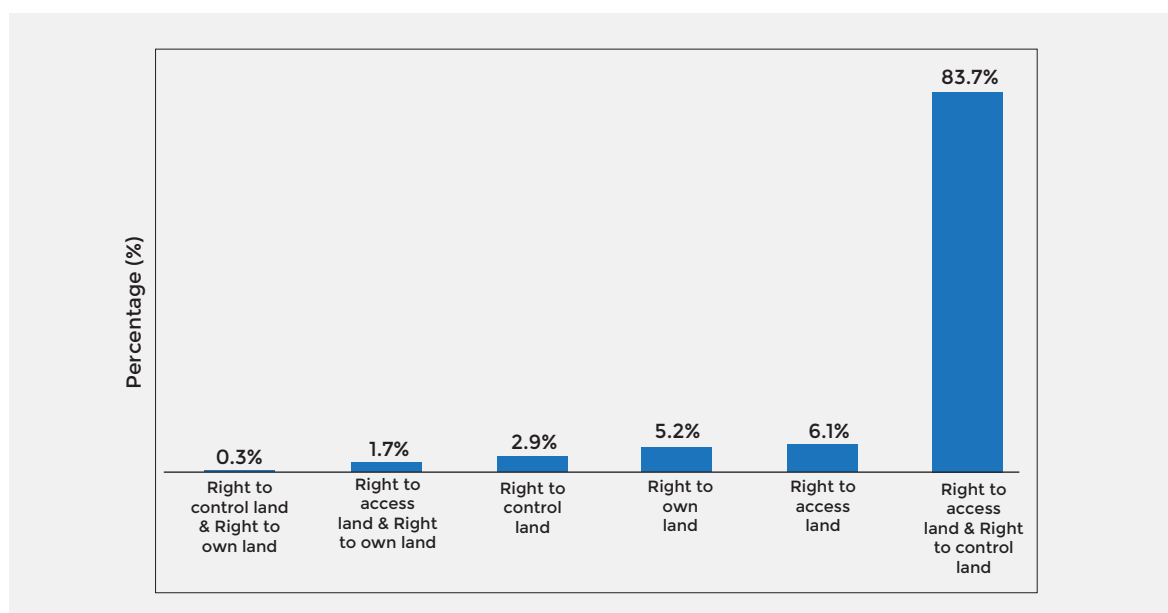


Figure 4: Male Response to the question on land type in my area ensures that men have all the rights (access, use and control) to land

The graph presents the results of a poll among male respondents regarding whether the land type (land tenure system) in their area ensures that men have all the rights (access, use, and control) to land. Results show that the vast majority of male respondents (83.7%) believe that the land tenure system in their area ensures that men have both the right to access and control land. This indicates that men perceive themselves as having dominant and comprehensive rights over land within the current tenure systems. A small percentage (6.1%) of respondents believe that men have only the right to access land. This suggests that, while access is recognized, it may not always be accompanied by control or ownership rights in the eyes of some male respondents.

Similarly, 5.2% of respondents believe that men have the right to own land. This reflects a focus on legal ownership, though it is less emphasized compared to access and control. A smaller group (2.9%) of male respondents believe that the land tenure system ensures men have control over land. This indicates that control, in isolation, is not as widely recognized as access and control together. A minimal percentage (1.7%) of respondents believe that men have both the right to access and own land, indicating that some recognize ownership as important, but not necessarily linked to control. The smallest group (0.3%) of respondents believe that men have both the right to control and own land without necessarily having access, which suggests that this combination is not common or emphasized.

Further analysis shows that a dominant response (83.7%) indicates that the vast majority of male respondents believe that men have both access and control over land, reflecting a strong sense of entitlement or actual rights within the land tenure system. This perception aligns with traditional systems where men often hold primary decision-making power regarding land use and management. The lower emphasis on ownership rights (5.2%) compared to access and control suggests that, in the context of these tenure systems, legal ownership may be considered secondary or assumed within the broader rights of access and control. The relatively low percentages for rights such as control alone, ownership alone, or access alone suggest that these are not commonly viewed in isolation but are rather seen as interlinked within the tenure system.

Compared to the female responses from the earlier graph, male respondents overwhelmingly affirm their comprehensive rights (access and control) over land. This indicates that men perceive a higher level of rights within the land tenure system than women, who recognize these rights but may also see more limitations or inequalities. These results clearly illustrate that male respondents perceive the land tenure system as overwhelmingly favoring men, particularly in terms of access and control over land. This strong perception of comprehensive rights highlights potential gender disparities in land rights, as women do not share this view to the same extent. The data suggests that men feel well-established within the current land systems, which may influence discussions on land reforms and the need for more equitable access and control across genders.

The traditional land system in the respective regions allows women to register as land owners.

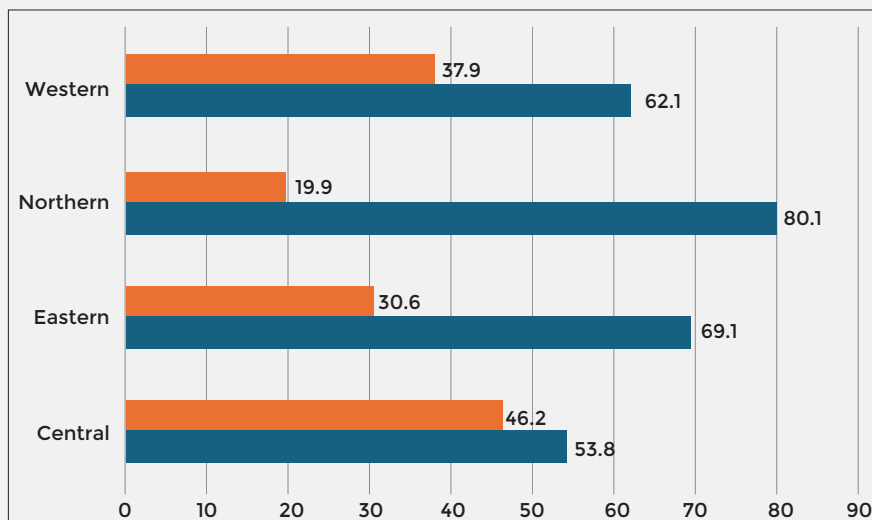


Figure 4: Male Response to the question on land type in my area ensures that men have all the rights (access, use and control) to land

Respondents were asked whether they think that the traditional land system allows women to register as landowners. A moderate proportion of respondents (37.9%) from the Western region believe that the traditional land system allows women to register as landowners while a majority (62.1%) of respondents disagree, indicating that most people in the Western region perceive that women face barriers in registering as landowners under the traditional land system. The Northern region has the lowest percentage of respondents (19.9%) who believe that women can register as landowners under the traditional land system. A significant majority (80.1%) of respondents from this region feel that the traditional land system does not allow women to register as landowners, highlighting substantial gender barriers in land ownership in the North.

About 30.6% of respondents in the Eastern region think that women are allowed to register as landowners. However, 69.4% of respondents believe that the traditional land system does not permit women to register as landowners, indicating a prevalent belief in gender inequality in land registration. The Central region has the highest percentage of respondents (46.2%) who believe that women can register as landowners under the traditional land system. Still, a slight majority (53.8%) think that the traditional system does not allow women to register as landowners, but this region is more balanced compared to the others.

Across all regions, a greater percentage of respondents believe that the traditional land system does not allow women to register as landowners, with the Northern region showing the strongest resistance to this idea (80.1% No). The Central region is the most progressive in this regard, with nearly half (46.2%) of respondents believing that women can register as landowners under the traditional land system. The Northern region stands out as the area with the most significant perceived barriers to women registering as landowners, followed by the Eastern and Western regions. The data reflects widespread perceptions of gender inequality in land registration within traditional systems across Uganda, with variations in the level of perceived accessibility for women in different regions. This analysis suggests a need for more equitable land tenure reforms especially in practice, particularly in the Northern region, to ensure that women can more easily register as landowners, and to address the widespread belief that traditional systems are not supportive of women's land ownership.

Traditional land system and treatment of women regarding land ownership

Respondents were asked about their opinion on the traditional land system as one that unfairly treats women, preventing them from owning land. The figure below presents their results.

Region	Gender	Traditional land system as one that unfairly treats women, preventing them from owning land?	Percentage (%)
Central	Female	No	2.8%
		Yes	67.1%
	Male	No	0%
		Yes	30.1%
Eastern	Female	No	12.2%
		Yes	42.0%
	Male	No	15.6%
		Yes	30.2%
Northern	Female	No	5.1%
		Yes	66.1%
	Male	No	6.8%
		Yes	21.9%
Western	Female	No	26.8%
		Yes	43.3%
	Male	No	8.5%
		Yes	21.4%

Table 2: Traditional land system as one that unfairly treats women, preventing them from owning land?

The results presented in the table above shows the respondents' opinions, segmented by gender and region, on whether the traditional land system unfairly treats women by preventing them from owning land. A small percentage of female respondents in the central region believe that the traditional land system does not unfairly treat women while a significant majority (67.1%) believe that the traditional land system does indeed unfairly treat women, preventing them from owning land. None of the male respondents in the Central region believe that the traditional land system treats women fairly in terms of land ownership while about 30.1% of them agree that the system is unfair to women. In the eastern region, a minority of female respondents (12.2%) do not see the traditional land system as unfair to women yet a larger group of female respondents (42.0%) believe that the system is indeed unfair. Some male respondents (15.6%) in the eastern region think the system does not unfairly prevent women from owning land though a larger portion of male respondents (30.2%) agree that the system is unfair to women.

In the northern region, very few female respondents (5.1%) believe that the traditional land system is fair to women while a significant majority (66.1%) of them believe that the system is unfair. A small percentage of male respondents (6.8%) also do not believe the system is unfair while a larger group of male respondents (21.9%) see the system as unfair to women. In western region, a higher percentage (26.8%) of female respondents in the western region do not see the traditional land system as unfair compared to other regions. However, 43.3% of female respondents believe that the system is unfair. A small percentage of male respondents (8.5%) in the western region think the system is fair to women while a larger

portion (21.4%) of male respondents view the system as unfair to women.

Across all regions, a majority of both female and male respondents view the traditional land system as unfair to women, though the perception is stronger among women. The Northern region has the highest percentage of female respondents (66.1%) who believe the system is unfair, which aligns with the earlier analysis showing significant barriers to women's land ownership in this region. The Central region has the highest percentage of female respondents (67.1%) who believe the system is unfair, reflecting significant concerns in this area as well. In every region, a higher percentage of women than men perceive the traditional land system as unfair. This suggests that women are more directly affected by or more aware of the gender-based inequalities in land ownership. Male respondents are less likely to view the traditional land system as unfair compared to female respondents, with the largest gender gap observed in the Central and Northern regions. The Central and Northern regions have the highest percentages of respondents (both male and female) who view the traditional land system as unfair to women. The Western region shows a slightly more balanced view, particularly among women, with 26.8% of female respondents not perceiving the system as unfair. The gender disparity in responses also highlights the need for more inclusive and equitable land policies that address the specific challenges faced by women.

Comparison between traditional land norms and customs and the national land laws and policies.

Respondents were asked about their opinion on whether the traditional land norms and customs are considered to be more powerful than the national land laws and policies. The table below presents the results.

Region	Gender	Traditional land norms and customs considered to be more powerful than the national land laws and policies.	Percentage (%)
Central	Female	No	24.5%
		Yes	45.5%
	Male	No	12.6%
		Yes	17.5%
Eastern	Female	No	21.2%
		Yes	33.0%
	Male	No	14.9%
		Yes	30.9%
Northern	Female	No	24.5%
		Yes	46.7%
	Male	No	9.4%
		Yes	19.4%
Western	Female	No	65.2%
		Yes	4.9%
	Male	No	26.8%
		Yes	3.1%

Table 3. Opinions on the traditional land norms and customs being considered to be more powerful than the national land laws and policies

The table above provides insights into respondents' opinions on whether traditional land norms and customs are considered more powerful than national land laws and policies. Results from the central region show that about a quarter of female respondents believe that traditional land norms and customs are not more powerful than national laws while a significant proportion (45.5%) of female respondents feel that traditional norms and customs do hold more power than national laws and policies. A smaller percentage of male respondents in the central region believe that national laws are more powerful than traditional norms while slightly more male respondents (17.5%) believe that traditional norms and customs are more powerful than national laws, although this is still a minority compared to the female respondents. In the eastern region, a minority of female respondents (21.2%) do not see traditional norms as more powerful while one-third of them believe that traditional norms and customs are more powerful than national laws and policies. On the other hand, 14.9% of male respondents think that national laws are more influential than traditional norms while a almost similar percentage of male respondents (30.9%) as female respondents (33.0%) in the eastern region believe traditional norms hold more power.

For the northern regions, results show that about a quarter of female respondents do not believe that traditional norms are more powerful while nearly half of the female respondents think that traditional norms and customs have more power than national laws, the highest percentage among.

A small percentage (9.4%) of male respondents disagree with the notion that traditional norms are more powerful. A larger group of male respondents (19.4%) in the northern region believes that traditional norms hold more power, though this is still lower than the female respondents' view. It is rather unique in the western region where a majority of female respondents believe that national laws are more powerful than traditional norms with very few female respondents (4.9%) in this region consider traditional norms and customs to be more powerful. Additionally, a quarter of male respondents in the western region believe national laws are more powerful while only small percentage of male respondents share the view that traditional norms are more powerful than national laws.

The northern and central regions have the highest percentages of female respondents who believe that traditional norms and customs are more powerful than national laws, with 46.7% and 45.5% respectively. In contrast, the western region shows the strongest belief that national land laws and policies are more powerful, with 65.2% of female respondents and 26.8% of male respondents holding this view. Male respondents across all regions are generally less likely than female respondents to view traditional norms as more powerful than national laws. Female respondents are generally more likely than male respondents to perceive traditional norms and customs as more powerful than national laws, particularly in the northern and central regions. The western region shows a significant gender disparity, with a much higher percentage of women believing that national laws hold more power compared to men.

These results highlight regional and gender differences in perceptions of the power of traditional land norms versus national laws. These insights could inform policy discussions and interventions aimed at harmonizing traditional practices with national land laws, ensuring equitable land rights for women across different regions.

Women and land purchase and registration.

The table presents the responses of male and female participants regarding whether women can purchase and register land without seeking permission from their husbands or parents under different land tenure systems. The table shows the percentage of respondents who answered "Yes" or "No" to this question across various tenure systems.

Land Tenure system	Sex	Response	Percentage
Customary	Female	No	36.4%
		Yes	63.6%
	Male	No	36.5%
		Yes	63.5%
Freehold	Female	No	39.1%
		Yes	60.9%
	Male	No	46.0%
		Yes	54.0%
Lease hold	Female	No	50.0%
		Yes	50.0%
	Male	No	40.0%
		Yes	60.0%
Mailo land	Female	No	25.0%
		Yes	75.0%
	Male	No	60.0%
		Yes	40.0%
Private mailo land	Female	No	29.4%
		Yes	70.6%
	Male	No	16.2%
		Yes	83.8%

Table 4: Opinions on whether women can purchase and register land without seeking for permission from their husbands or parents.

Results show that under customary land tenure system, a notable minority of female respondents (36.4%) believe that women cannot purchase and register land without seeking permission while a majority of female respondents (63.6%) believe that women can purchase and register land without permission, indicating a level of autonomy within the customary system. Similarly, 36.5% of male respondents believe that women cannot do so under the customary system while a majority of male respondents (63.5%) agree that women can purchase and register land without needing permission, showing consistency with the female perspective. Under the freehold land tenure, some female respondents (39.1%) believe that women still face restrictions while the majority (60.9%) believe that women have the freedom to purchase and register land without needing permission in the freehold system. Nearly half of the male respondents (46.0%) believe that women cannot purchase and register land without seeking permission. A slight majority of male respondents believe that women can independently purchase and register land in the freehold system.

For female respondents who reported under the leasehold land tenure system, results show that the respondents are evenly split, with half believing that women cannot purchase and register land without permission under leasehold. The other half believe that women can act independently in the leasehold system. Some male respondents under leasehold (40.0%) think that women need permission to purchase and register land while a majority of male respondents (60.0%) believe that women can purchase and register land

without needing permission.

A quarter of female respondents (25.0%) believe that women cannot purchase and register land without permission under the mailo land tenure system while a significant majority (75.0%) believe that women have the autonomy to do so. For the male respondents under the mailo land tenure system, a majority (60%) believe that women cannot purchase and register land without permission under the Mailo system while a minority of male respondents believe that women can purchase and register land independently. For female respondents under the private mailo land tenure system, results show that a minority of female respondents (29.4%) believe that women cannot act independently in purchasing and registering land while a majority of female respondents (70.6%) believe that women can purchase and register land without seeking permission. Further, a very small percentage of male respondents (16.2%) believe that women need permission under private Mailo tenure while the vast majority (83.8%) of male respondents believe that women can purchase and register land independently.

With critical analysis results show that for customary land, both male and female respondents generally believe that women can purchase and register land without permission, though a substantial minority disagrees. This suggests that customary systems may offer some autonomy to women, but there are still significant cultural or social barriers. The perception of autonomy is relatively strong among women in the freehold system, with more than 60% of both genders believing that women can purchase and register land without permission. However, the higher percentage of male respondents who believe that women need permission indicates that there may be more perceived or actual restrictions in place than among female respondents. The leasehold system shows more division in opinions, particularly among female respondents who are split evenly. This may indicate variability in the application or perception of leasehold rights for women. There is a stark gender difference in perceptions within the mailo land tenure system. While most women believe they have the autonomy to purchase and register land without permission, the majority of men believe otherwise. This discrepancy could reflect differing experiences or expectations based on gender roles within this system. The private mailo system is perceived as the most favorable to women's autonomy, with the highest percentage of male respondents (83.8%) and a strong majority of female respondents (70.6%) agreeing that women can purchase and register land without needing permission. This suggests that private ownership within the mailo system may be more progressive in terms of gender equality.

Perception on land access, use, inheritance, decision-making, and recognition of land rights during marriage.

During the land rights opinion polls, various questions regarding women's rights and access to land. The questions focused on different aspects of land access, use, inheritance, decision-making, and recognition of land rights during marriage.

Question	Response	Frequency (%)
Do you think women should have access to use land belonging to their parents?	No	11.1%
	Yes	88.9%
Do you think women should have access to the use marital land given to their husbands?	No	2.3%
	Yes	97.7%
Do you think women should be able to inherit land from their father's place?	No	16.5%
	Yes	83.5%
Do you think women should be among key decision makers over land acquired during their marriage?	No	9.9%
	Yes	90.1%
Do you think women should have their names included on land registration documents and land agreements on land acquired during their marriage to make sure their land rights are officially recognized?	No	4.9%
	Yes	95.1%

Table 5: Perception on land access, use, inheritance, decision-making, and recognition of land rights during marriage.

Results show that a strong majority of respondents (88.9%) believe that women should have access to use land belonging to their parents. A minority disagree (11.1%), suggesting that some people still hold traditional views where women may not have rights to their parents' land. An overwhelming majority (97.7%) believe that women should have access to marital land given to their husbands. This reflects a strong consensus on the importance of women having rights to land within marriage. Only 2.3% of the respondents believe that women should not have access to marital land, indicating that this view is largely unsupported.

On inheritance rights, results show a large majority (83.5%) believe that women should be able to inherit land from their father's place while a significant minority (16.5%) disagree, suggesting that traditional norms around inheritance are still influential for some respondents. 90.1% of respondents agree that women should be among the key decision-makers over land acquired during marriage. This reflects strong support for women's involvement in important decisions about land. A small percentage disagree, indicating that some people still believe decision-making should be male-dominated. The vast majority (95.1%) believe that women should have their names included on land registration documents and land agreements for land acquired during marriage to ensure their rights are officially recognized. A very small percentage do not support this, which might indicate adherence to traditional or patriarchal views where men typically hold land titles.

The results across all questions show overwhelming support for women’s rights to access, use, inherit, and make decisions about land. This reflects a positive shift towards gender equality in land rights, with most respondents recognizing the importance of formalizing and protecting these rights. While the majority support women's rights to inherit land from their father’s place and access their parents' land, the slightly higher percentage of "No" responses in these areas suggests that traditional norms still have some influence, particularly concerning inheritance. The near-universal agreement on women's access to marital land and their inclusion in decision-making and registration processes indicates strong recognition of women's rights within marriage, which is crucial for ensuring long-term security and equity. The high percentage of respondents who support including women’s names on land registration documents underscores the importance of legal recognition of women’s land rights. This step is critical for preventing disputes and ensuring that women have secure tenure.

Solving land-related problems, the role of land governing bodies

During the land rights opinion polls, different questions related solving land-related problems, the role of land governing bodies in simplifying land registration, and the impact of limited access to education and land rights information on women's understanding and demand for their rights were presented to respondents, this table presents insights in regional perceptions.

Statement	Regions	Response	Frequency (%)
Women don't have enough support when it comes to solving land related problems.	Central	No	25.9%
		Yes	74.1%
	Eastern	No	32.6%
		Yes	67.4%
	Northern	No	16.8%
		Yes	83.2%
	Western	No	42.9%
		Yes	57.1%
Land governing bodies like Area Land Committees and District Land Boards have simplified the land registration process and they are actively supporting women in my community to register their land.	Central	No	75.5%
		Yes	24.5%
	Eastern	No	64.2%
		Yes	35.8%
	Northern	No	71.2%
		Yes	28.8%
	Western	No	24.6%
		Yes	75.4%
Limited access to education and land rights information is hindering women's understanding and demand for their land rights.	Central	No	15.4%
		Yes	84.6%
	Eastern	No	20.9%
		Yes	79.1%
	Northern	No	8.0%
		Yes	92.0%
	Western	No	0.9%
		Yes	99.1%

Table 6: Solving land-related problems, the role of land governing bodies

Support for women in solving land-related problems

Results from the central region show that a substantial majority (74.1%) of respondents believe that women do not have enough support when it comes to solving land-related problems. This suggests a significant gap in the assistance or resources available to women in this region, indicating that current systems and structures might be inadequate in addressing the specific challenges women face regarding land rights and disputes. A smaller percentage (25.9%), but still notable, believe that women do receive adequate support. This could reflect either regional variability in support services or differing personal experiences with land-related issues.

The majority of respondents (67.8%) in the eastern region also feel that women lack sufficient support. This aligns with the general sentiment across most regions, suggesting systemic issues that affect women's ability to address land-related challenges. A higher percentage (32.6%) compared to the Central region feel that women do have support, which might indicate that certain areas within the eastern region have better access to support services or that some local initiatives are more effective.

The northern region has the highest percentage of respondents (83.2%) who believe that women are not adequately supported. This could reflect particularly challenging conditions in the northern region, where cultural, economic, or political factors might exacerbate the difficulties women face in securing and defending their land rights. The lowest percentage (16.8%) among the regions, indicating that very few believe that women have enough support. This reinforces the need for targeted interventions in the northern region.

Although a majority of respondents (57.1%) still believe that women lack support, this percentage is lower than in other regions, suggesting that the western region might have slightly better support structures in place for women dealing with land issues. A significant minority (42.9%) believe that women do receive adequate support, which might reflect more effective local governance or community support networks in the Western region.

Overall, the data shows that, across all regions, there is a perceived lack of support for women in solving land-related problems, with the northern region being the most affected. The western region, while still showing concerns, appears to have relatively better support systems compared to other regions. There is a clear need for enhanced support services, particularly in the northern and central regions, where the perception of insufficient support is most pronounced. This could involve increasing access to legal assistance, providing more resources for dispute resolution, and improving the overall responsiveness of local authorities to women's land-related issues.

Effectiveness of land governing bodies in simplifying land registration processes

In the central region, 75.5% of respondents feel that land governing bodies like Area Land Committees and District Land Boards have not simplified the land registration process or actively supported women. This indicates a significant disconnect between these bodies' intended roles and their perceived effectiveness, suggesting that women in this region face substantial bureaucratic or institutional barriers in registering land. A smaller percentage (24.5%) believe that these bodies are supportive, which might indicate some isolated successes or areas where land governing bodies are more effective.

Similarly, in the eastern region, most respondents (64.2%) do not feel that these bodies are simplifying the process for women. This reflects ongoing challenges in making land registration accessible and inclusive for women. A higher percentage (35.8%) compared to

the Central region believe that these bodies are supportive, suggesting that there might be specific initiatives or areas within the Eastern region where women find the process more navigable.

71.2% of respondents from northern region also feel that the land governing bodies are not effectively supporting women. This aligns with the broader challenges faced by women in this region, as noted earlier in the lack of general support. Only 28.8% believe that these bodies are supportive, which could reflect variability in the effectiveness of these institutions across different parts of the northern region.

In contrast to other regions, a majority of respondents (75.4%) in the western region believe that land governing bodies are actively supporting women and simplifying the registration process. This is a positive indication that these bodies are functioning more effectively in this region, possibly due to better implementation of policies, greater accountability, or more proactive community engagement.

The western region stands out as a positive example where land governing bodies are perceived as supportive and effective, while other regions, particularly the central and northern regions, show significant dissatisfaction with these institutions. There is a need to replicate the successes observed in the western region across other regions, particularly focusing on improving the transparency, efficiency, and inclusivity of land registration processes. Strengthening the capacity and accountability of land governing bodies in the Central and Northern regions could help bridge the gap.

Impact of limited access to education and land rights information

The majority of respondents (84.6%) believe that limited access to education and information is a significant barrier to women's understanding and demand for their land rights. This reflects the critical role that education and awareness play in empowering women to assert their rights. A small percentage do not see this as a major issue, which might suggest that some respondents feel that there are other more pressing barriers or that existing information dissemination efforts are somewhat effective.

79.1% of respondents in eastern region also recognize the importance of education and information in empowering women. This aligns with the overall trend of recognizing the need for greater awareness and education to improve women's land rights. A slightly higher percentage (20.9%) compared to the Central region do not view this as a significant issue, potentially indicating variations in how information is accessed or valued across different communities.

An overwhelming majority (92.0%) in the northern region believe that limited access to education and information is a major hindrance. This is consistent with the broader challenges women face in this region, suggesting that improving educational outreach and access to information could have a significant impact. Very few respondents (8.0%) in the northern region dismiss this issue, indicating a strong consensus on the need for better information dissemination.

Nearly unanimous agreement in the western region (99.1%) that limited access to education and information is a significant barrier. This underscores the critical importance of addressing this issue across all regions, despite the Western region's relative strengths in other areas. Almost no respondents (0.9%) believe that limited access to information is not an issue, highlighting the universal recognition of its importance.

Across all regions, there is a clear and strong consensus that limited access to education and information is a major barrier to women’s ability to understand and demand their land rights. The near-universal agreement in the Western region further emphasizes the importance of addressing this issue. Efforts to improve women’s land rights should prioritize educational initiatives and information dissemination. This could include targeted campaigns, legal literacy programs, and the development of accessible resources that empower women to understand and assert their rights. The success of such initiatives in one region could serve as a model for others.

Access to legal support and dispute resolution systems

Respondents were asked on the possibility for woman to access a lawyer for representation in court concerning land matters, Area Land Committee and lawyers when needed. Below are the results.

Statement	Response	Frequency (%)
A woman in my community can access a lawyer for representation in court concerning land matters.	No	58.8%
	Yes	42.0%
The Area Land Committee of my community is able to resolve land rights cases.	No	49.4%
	Yes	50.6%
There are cost free lawyers available to support women who are always undermined in my community	No	82.2%
	Yes	17.8%

Table 7: Access to legal support and dispute resolution systems

On access to legal representation, 58.8% of respondents believe that women in their community cannot access a lawyer for representation in court concerning land matters. This indicates significant barriers to legal representation for women, which could stem from financial constraints, lack of available legal services, or social and cultural barriers that prevent women from seeking legal help. A significant minority (42.0%) believe that women can access a lawyer. This suggests that in some areas, there are pathways for women to obtain legal representation, but these are not uniformly available across the community. The data highlights a concerning lack of access to legal representation for women, which could severely limit their ability to defend their land rights in court. Efforts to increase the availability and accessibility of legal services, particularly for women, are critical to ensuring that they can effectively navigate legal challenges related to land.

On the effectiveness of Area Land Committees, almost half of the respondents (49.4%) believe that the Area Land Committee in their community is not able to resolve land rights cases effectively. This suggests that these committees may face challenges in terms of resources, expertise, or authority, which hinders their ability to resolve disputes and protect land rights. A slight majority (50.6%) believe that these committees can resolve land rights cases. This indicates that there is some confidence in the ability of Area Land Committees to manage land disputes, but this confidence is marginal and possibly variable across different communities. The nearly even split in opinions suggests that the effectiveness of

Area Land Committees is inconsistent. There is a need to strengthen these bodies by providing them with more resources, training, and authority to ensure they can effectively handle land rights cases, especially those involving women. Ensuring that these committees are adequately equipped and operate transparently could improve trust and outcomes in land dispute resolutions.

On the aspect of availability of cost-free lawyers for women. An overwhelming majority of respondents (82.2%) believe that there are no cost-free lawyers available to support women who are undermined in their community. This indicates a significant gap in the availability of pro bono legal services for women, which could leave many women without any legal recourse in disputes or when their land rights are challenged. A small percentage of respondents (17.8%) believe that cost-free legal services are available. This suggests that while some initiatives may exist, they are not widespread or well-known, limiting their impact on the broader community. The lack of access to cost-free legal services is a major barrier for women seeking to assert or defend their land rights, particularly those who are economically disadvantaged. Expanding pro bono legal services and ensuring they are accessible to women in all communities is crucial for promoting gender equity in land rights.

The results reveal a significant challenge in accessing legal representation for women in land-related matters, with the majority of respondents indicating that such access is limited or unavailable. This is a critical issue that needs addressing, as it directly impacts women's ability to protect their land rights through legal channels. The mixed views on the effectiveness of Area Land Committees suggest that these bodies are not consistently reliable in resolving land rights cases. Strengthening these committees and ensuring they operate fairly and efficiently could help improve land governance at the community level. The overwhelming perception that cost-free legal services are not available to women highlights a significant gap in support systems. Addressing this issue could involve increasing funding for legal aid, encouraging more lawyers to offer pro bono services, and creating awareness of these services among women who need them.

Knowledge about the constitution and the National Land Policy

This level focuses respondents' views on three statements related to constitutional rights, land ownership, and the National Land Policy in Uganda.

Statement	Response	Frequency (%)
In the constitution, both women and men are regarded as equals, and there should be no form of discrimination among them.	No	15.7%
	Yes	59.2%
	Don't know	15.7%
The constitution of Uganda states that land belongs to the government.	No	57.4%
	Yes	16.1%
	Don't know	26.5%
The National Land Policy doesn't offer ways to settle land disputes.	No	43.4%
	Yes	22.3%
	Don't know	34.3%

Table 8: Knowledge about the constitution and the National Land Policy

On constitutional equality of men and women, a minority of respondents (15.7%) do not believe that the Ugandan constitution regards men and women as equals or that it prohibits discrimination. A majority (59.2%) believe that the constitution does regard men and women as equals, with a clear prohibition against discrimination. This reflects an awareness of constitutional rights and a belief in gender equality as enshrined in the law. 15.7% percentage of respondents are unsure about this constitutional provision, indicating a lack of knowledge or uncertainty about the specifics of the constitution regarding gender equality. While a majority recognize the constitutional commitment to gender equality, the presence of a significant minority who either disagree or are unsure highlights the need for more public education on constitutional rights, particularly concerning gender equality.

On land ownership according to the constitution 57.4% of respondents do not believe that the Ugandan constitution states that land belongs to the government. This suggests that most respondents are aware that the constitution allows for various forms of land ownership, including private and customary ownership, rather than state ownership. A smaller group (16.1%) believes that the constitution states land belongs to the government, which could reflect confusion or misunderstanding about the constitutional provisions on land ownership. A significant portion of respondents (26.5%) are uncertain about this aspect of the constitution, indicating a need for clearer communication and education about land ownership rights and the legal framework governing land in Uganda. The high level of uncertainty and the presence of misconceptions about land ownership under the constitution suggest that public knowledge about land rights and constitutional provisions is limited. This could be addressed through public awareness campaigns and legal education.

On the role of the National Land Policy on dispute resolution, a substantial portion of respondents (43.4%) do not believe that the National Land Policy fails to offer ways to settle land disputes. This indicates confidence among some respondents in the policy's provisions for dispute resolution. A smaller group (22.3%) believes that the policy does not provide adequate mechanisms for settling land disputes, reflecting dissatisfaction or a lack of awareness of the dispute resolution mechanisms available. A significant percentage of respondents (34.3%) are unsure whether the National Land Policy provides ways to settle disputes, highlighting a gap in understanding or knowledge about the policy. The mixed responses and high level of uncertainty suggest that the National Land Policy's provisions for dispute resolution are not well understood by the public. This may require better dissemination of information about the policy and its practical applications in resolving land conflicts.

The majority recognition of gender equality in the constitution is a positive sign, but the presence of a significant minority who are either unaware or unsure of these rights indicates a need for continued education on constitutional provisions, particularly around gender and land rights. The responses reflect a relatively good understanding that the constitution does not declare land as government-owned, but the high percentage of respondents who are unsure or hold misconceptions points to the need for clearer communication on land ownership rights under the constitution. The varied responses about the National Land Policy's role in dispute resolution suggest that its provisions are not widely understood or effectively communicated. This gap in understanding could hinder the effective use of the policy's mechanisms for resolving land disputes.

09 CONCLUSION

The study on land rights in Uganda reveals significant regional and gender disparities in perceptions and experiences related to land ownership and rights. Traditional land systems continue to wield considerable power, often to the detriment of women's land rights. Despite constitutional provisions advocating for gender equality, the influence of traditional norms frequently undermines these rights, leaving women at a disadvantage in terms of land access, control, and ownership.

The findings indicate that women, particularly in the Northern and Central regions, face substantial barriers in asserting their land rights. These barriers include a lack of support from legal and governing bodies, limited access to education and information about land rights, and the overwhelming power of traditional norms over national laws. The perception that women do not receive adequate support in resolving land-related issues is pervasive, further exacerbating the challenges they face.

Furthermore, the study highlights the inconsistent effectiveness of land governing bodies such as Area Land Committees and District Land Boards in simplifying land registration processes and actively supporting women. While the Western region shows some positive signs of progress, other regions, particularly the Northern and Central regions, lag behind, necessitating targeted interventions.

The data also underscores the critical need for more robust legal frameworks, enhanced support systems, and comprehensive education and awareness programs to ensure that women can fully exercise their land rights across Uganda. Addressing these issues requires a multifaceted approach that includes legal reforms, cultural shifts, and the empowerment of women through education and economic support.

Overall, the study suggests that achieving gender equity in land rights in Uganda will require significant efforts to reform traditional land systems, strengthen legal support, and improve access to education and information. These efforts are essential for ensuring that all individuals, regardless of gender, can exercise their land rights effectively and equitably.

10 RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings from the land rights polls underscore the complex and multifaceted challenges that women in Uganda face in securing and exercising their land rights. The persistent influence of traditional norms, combined with inadequate legal support and limited access to education and information, has created significant barriers for women in achieving land ownership and control. To address these challenges and promote gender equity in land rights, a comprehensive and strategic approach is necessary.

The following recommendations are designed to provide practical and actionable steps that can be taken by government agencies, civil society organizations, traditional leaders, and community stakeholders. These recommendations aim to strengthen legal frameworks, enhance support systems, and promote education and awareness, thereby ensuring that women across all regions of Uganda can fully realize their land rights. By implementing these measures, it is possible to create a more equitable land tenure system that empowers women and contributes to broader social and economic development.

To effectively address the entrenched gender disparities in land rights, it is crucial to develop and implement comprehensive legal education programs targeting both women and men, particularly in regions where traditional norms dominate. The findings from the study reveal that traditional land systems often overshadow national laws, leaving women at a disadvantage. For instance, a significant majority of respondents from the Northern region (46.7% of females and 19.4% of males) believe that traditional norms and customs are more powerful than national laws and policies. This perception underscores the need for legal education programs that empower communities with knowledge about their rights under the national constitution and land laws. By educating both genders, these programs can help shift societal attitudes and foster a more equitable understanding of land rights.

The study highlights a critical gap in the availability of legal services for women, particularly those that are cost-free or subsidized. A significant majority of respondents (82.2%) believe that there are no cost-free lawyers available to support women who are undermined in their community. To address this, the government and stakeholders should establish more community-based legal aid clinics focused on land rights issues. These clinics would provide vital support to women throughout the legal process, from understanding their rights to navigating complex legal challenges. Partnerships with NGOs, government initiatives, and legal aid organizations could be instrumental in expanding these services, ensuring that even the most vulnerable women have access to the legal representation they need.

Empowering women to participate in decision-making processes regarding land is essential for achieving gender equity. The study reveals that women often lack control over land, with only 25.9% of female respondents indicating that women in their area have the right to access and control land. To combat this, policies and programs should be developed to encourage women's involvement in decision-making, both within their families and in community governance structures. Gender-sensitization workshops for community leaders and male family members can play a pivotal role in changing the cultural norms that marginalize women. Additionally, nationwide campaigns using various media platforms—such as radio, community meetings, and printed materials in local languages—should be launched to educate women about their land rights and the importance of their involvement in land-related decisions.

Inheritance laws are critical in ensuring that women can secure land rights on equal footing with men. However, the study shows that traditional norms often prevent women from

inheriting land, with a significant portion of respondents (16.5%) believing that women should not be able to inherit land from their father's place. To address this, there must be a concerted effort to revise and strictly enforce inheritance laws like the Succession Law, ensuring that women have equal rights to inherit land. Public campaigns should also be conducted to change social attitudes that oppose women's inheritance rights, fostering a societal shift towards gender equality in land ownership.

Customary land systems, which are prevalent in many parts of Uganda, often discriminate against women. The study indicates that in the Northern region, 80.1% of respondents believe that the traditional land system does not allow women to register as landowners. To reform these harmful practices, it is crucial to engage with traditional leaders and create a dialogue between traditional authorities and government officials. This dialogue should aim to harmonize traditional practices with national laws, ensuring that customary laws do not undermine women's land rights. Additionally, where possible, customary laws should be documented and codified, aligning them with national gender equity principles. This codification process should involve community participation, particularly from women, to ensure that their voices and needs are adequately represented.

To ensure a long-term shift towards gender equity in land ownership, land rights education should be integrated into the school curriculum. The study highlights the significant barriers women face due to limited access to education and information, with an overwhelming majority in the Western region (99.1%) acknowledging this as a major hindrance to women's understanding and demand for their land rights. By educating young people from an early age about the importance of gender equity in land ownership, we can foster a generation that is more aware and supportive of women's land rights.

Access to reliable information is key to empowering women to exercise their land rights. The study reveals a clear need for accessible resources, with respondents across all regions acknowledging the importance of education and information in improving women's land rights. To address this, community land information centers should be established where women can access resources and information on land rights, legal support, and dispute resolution mechanisms. These centers would serve as hubs for knowledge dissemination, helping women to better understand and navigate the complexities of land ownership.

The formation of women's groups or cooperatives can provide mutual support in navigating land rights issues and act as platforms for collective action. The study suggests that women often face challenges alone, without sufficient community support. By encouraging the formation of these groups, women can share knowledge, resources, and strategies, making it easier for them to advocate for their rights and support each other in resolving land-related disputes. These groups can also play a critical role in influencing policy and driving cultural change within their communities.

The study shows that the challenges women face regarding land rights vary significantly by region, with the Northern and Central regions facing particularly strong traditional norms that disadvantage women. Therefore, region-specific interventions are necessary to address these unique challenges. In areas where traditional norms are particularly strong, interventions could focus more on cultural change and dialogue with traditional leaders. Tailoring interventions to the specific needs and contexts of different regions will make them more effective in promoting gender equity in land rights.

To improve the effectiveness of land governance bodies, such as Area Land Committees and District Land Boards, it is crucial to ensure they are adequately trained and sensitized on gender equity. The study reveals mixed perceptions of these bodies' effectiveness, with significant dissatisfaction noted in the Northern and Central regions. These bodies should

be held accountable for ensuring that women's land rights are respected and protected. Strengthening their capacity and ensuring that they operate with a focus on gender sensitivity and equity will help create a more supportive environment for women seeking to secure their land rights.

Ongoing monitoring and assessment are essential for measuring progress in improving women's land rights. The study emphasizes the need for continuous improvement in policies and interventions. Regular surveys and assessments should be conducted to measure changes in perceptions, legal registrations, and dispute resolutions over time. This data will be critical for identifying areas where additional support or reform is needed and ensuring that interventions remain effective and responsive to the needs of women.

To ensure that policies and interventions are continuously improved, it is essential to establish feedback mechanisms that allow women to report challenges they encounter in securing their land rights. The study shows that women often face barriers in accessing legal support and resolving land disputes. By creating avenues for feedback, policymakers can gain valuable insights into the ongoing challenges and adjust strategies accordingly to better support women's land rights.

Public education campaigns are vital for increasing understanding of constitutional provisions on gender equality, land ownership, and the National Land Policy. The study indicates that there is still significant misinformation and lack of awareness regarding these issues. These campaigns should focus on providing clear, accessible information about the different forms of land ownership recognized by the constitution, reducing misconceptions, and enhancing public knowledge. Additionally, increasing awareness of the National Land Policy's provisions, particularly in dispute resolution, will ensure that the public knows how to access and utilize these mechanisms effectively.

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NOTES



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