

Empowerment and Women's Rights to Land: experiences from (Southern) Africa



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Land rights understanding

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*Land is source of **power & dignity** (and **identity**) as its about Rights*

Diversity and plurality of tenure systems

'Land can offer women a platform for action, a sense of status; and opens up possibilities of participating in nation-building'

(Research Sierra Leone, India, Guatemala)





Women's rights to land – key issues

- Women rarely have **ownership and control** over land
- Women rarely sit in the **governance institutions** (traditional or formal) that make decisions on land.
- Land held in trust for rural populations or **public land, upon which women depend is most susceptible to land grabs.**
- **Patriarchal practices subjugate women** within families and communities.
- Many (agricultural) policies are **genderblind**, which risks reinforcing inequalities

Women's rights to land programme

3 year programme funded by MDG 3 fund (NL): Zimbabwe, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Zambia.

Interventions empowerment&advocacy, in particular:

- Access to knowledge: Rights awareness & exchange
- Access to justice and decision-making
- Access to land-related productive resources

→ Resulting in **higher tenure security, voice, social, political and economic empowerment, food security.**

Ex Malawi: over 2000 women successfully secured access to land, inputs and extension → Voice & economic emp.

community awareness, changing attitudes and behaviours.

advocacy for legal, institutional reforms



legal literacy and support

stronger rights to land for women

women literacy, consentization and organization

research, information dissemination

Lessons on Women's Rights, Land & Power

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Rights awareness & critical consciousness = stepping stone for women pushing for change towards equal access and control of land [power of knowledge]

Two-tiered approach: awareness raising among both women and wider community level work helps shifting structural discriminatory attitudes and practices

Building Strong Women's Collectives & Solidarity: the power of numbers

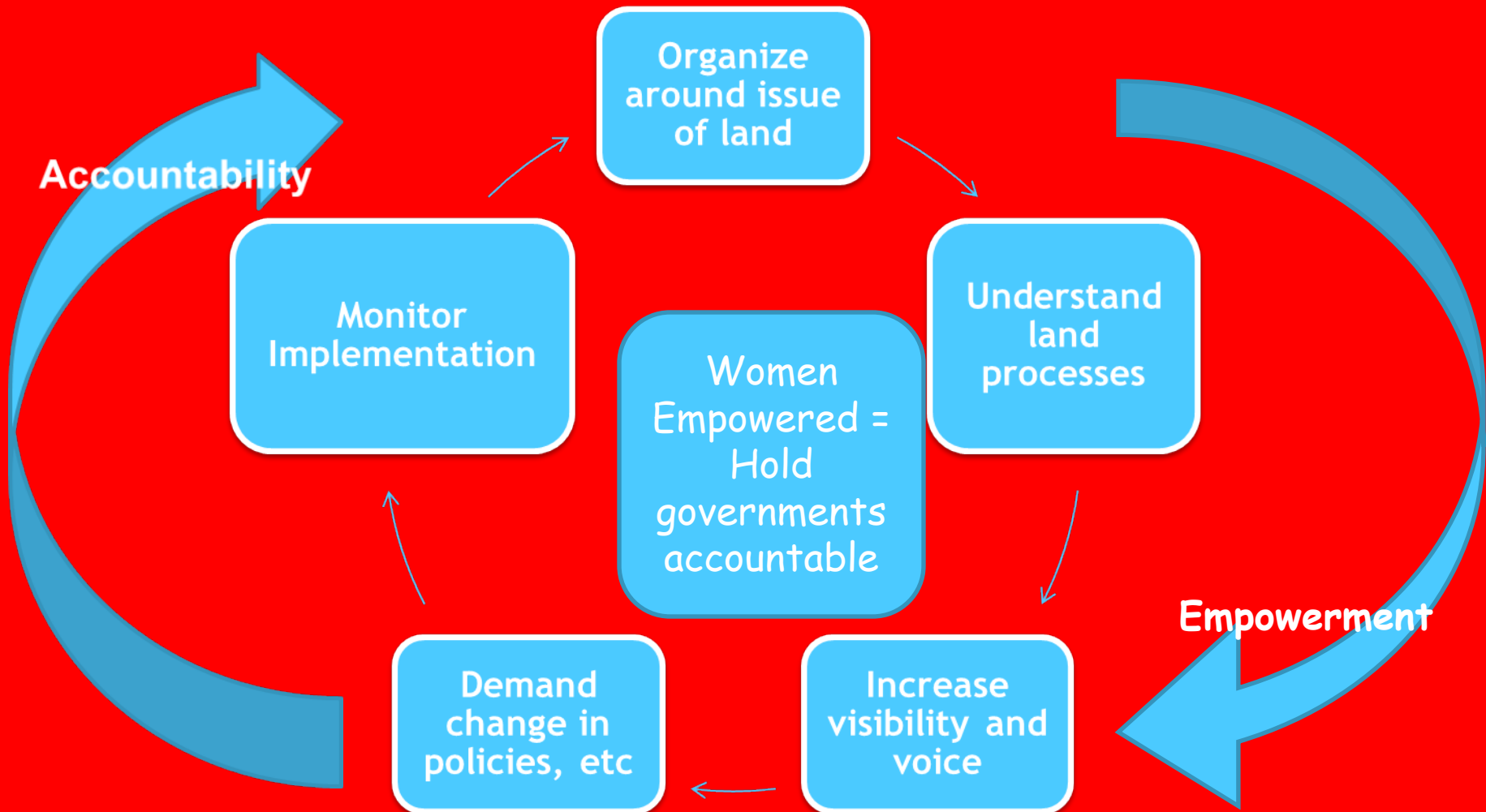
Voice & decision-making power

Economic empowerment & productive use of land

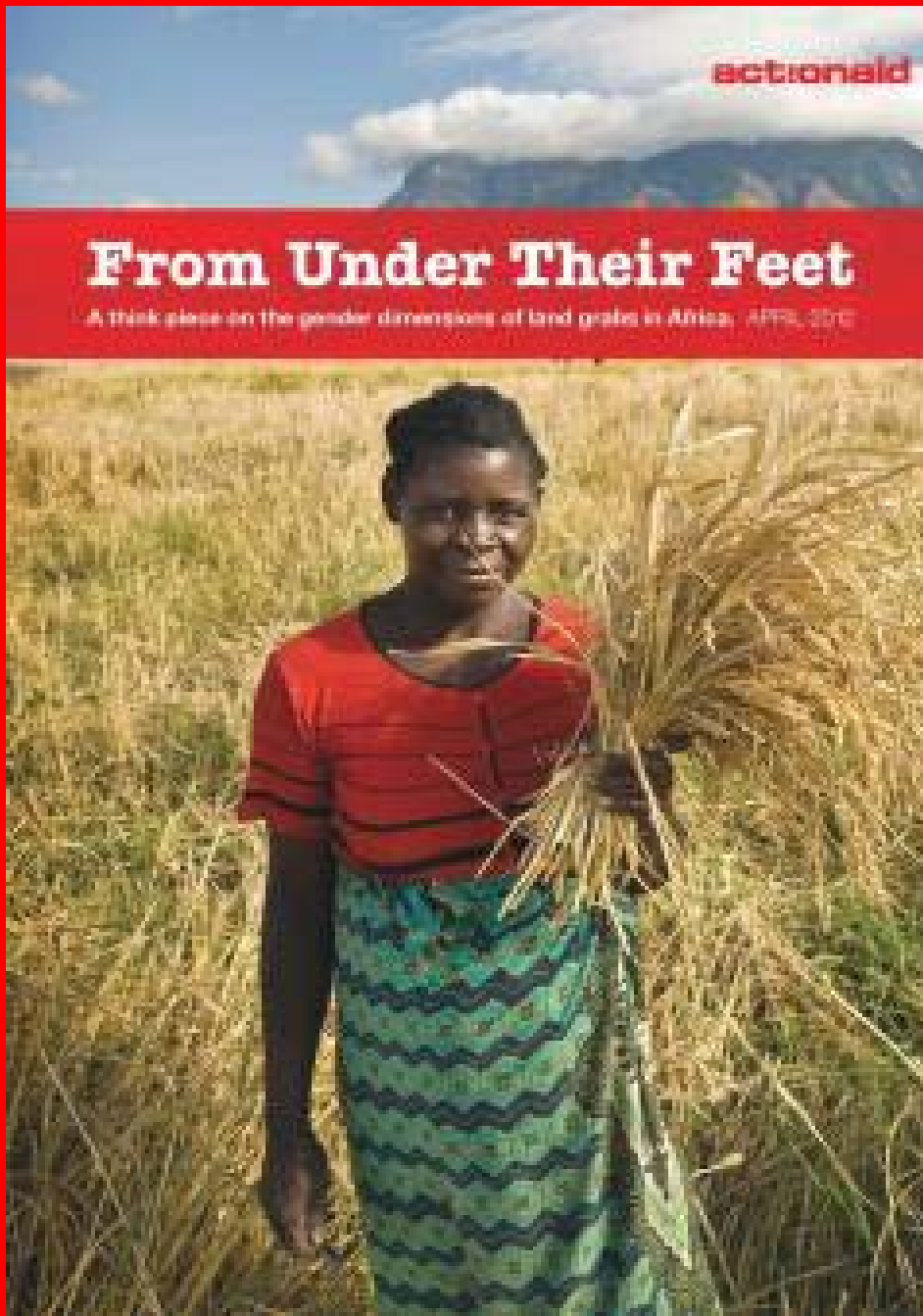
Local level capacity building for **conflict resolution**



Accountability Cycle On Land



Source: Espaco Feminista – AWID 2012



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Challenges in context of large-scale land acquisitions and increased pressure on land

– Understand gendered dimensions of land grabs & respond

– Myth of empty and marginal lands

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From marginalisation to empowerment:

The potential of land rights to contribute to gender equality – observations from Guatemala, India and Sierra Leone. ActionAid's women's rights to land project year 3.

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Research in Sierra Leone, India, Guatemala in follow-up of EC funded programme

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Clear link empowerment-land rights.



Final lessons & what else is needed...

- Accountability through empowerment: power of knowledge, numbers, voice, control and use of land. Key role civil society and strategic lessons.
- Governments: regulatory frameworks to increase level playing field: prioritize and include women.
- International: policy coherence for development and with CFS Tenure Guidelines to ensure space for smallholders and implementation.

References



WOLAR Baseline
WOLAR Evaluation

Wolar video's (youtube)

UN study

From under their feet (ActionAid 2012)
From marginalisation to empowerment (2013)

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Key shifts in (gender) power relations

