

How can women and people from vulnerable groups be encouraged to take a more active part in the SLLC process?

Encouraging all landholders to actively engage throughout the second level land certification (SLLC) process is vital if the programme is to be successful and reliable. This study assessed the extent to which women and people from vulnerable groups participate in each stage of the SLLC process with the aim of proposing a cost-effective, practical strategy to encourage them to become more involved.

Background

Women and people from vulnerable groups often miss out on development initiatives because they face physical, social, cultural, literacy and other barriers that restrict their access to public information. The Land Investment for Transformation (LIFT) programme has various strategies in place to encourage participation, in which awareness-raising activities throughout the land registration process are a priority.

LIFT works closely with relevant stakeholders and has mainstreamed women and vulnerable group issues into the second level land certification (SLLC) manual. It has also developed a public awareness and communication (PAC) strategy aiming to engage all stakeholders and landholders, particularly women and vulnerable groups (such as people with disabilities, elderly people and orphan children). However, practical challenges often compromise the quality and extent of these activities, meaning that women and vulnerable groups may be unaware of the importance of their participation, and the process involved for protecting and securing their land rights.

Methodology

The study used an inclusive, participatory approach to engage with four target groups: (i) women in male-headed households (WMMH) and their husbands; (ii) female-headed households (FHH); (iii) destitute households headed by men (DHMM), the elderly and persons with disabilities; and (iv) orphan children.

Barriers that may prevent women and people from vulnerable groups accessing information

- Gendered divisions within households:
 - Men tend to control information access and household resources.
 - Women have household duties that may stop them attending meetings.
 - Pregnancy and lactation may also restrict women's ability to attend meetings.
 - The perception that men are meant for "public" and women are meant for "domestic".
- Elderly people and people with disabilities may find it physically difficult to attend public awareness-raising events.
- Orphan children may not have a dependable guardian to help them access information.
- Unfriendly communication approach and unsuitable venues for people attending meetings.
- Low literacy levels.

Taking demographic characteristics into consideration, woredas were selected in four regions of Ethiopia – Amhara, Oromia, Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region and Tigray. Two kebeles within each woreda were chosen for the study.

Twenty-two focus group discussions were held, with each discussion group comprising between eight and 10 participants. Separate discussions were held for men and for women. In-depth interviews were conducted with 93 people. In addition, 65 key informant interviews were carried out with stakeholders that had a role in the SLLC process. Qualitative and quantitative data were gathered from the discussions and interviews.

A systematic review of the SLLC manual and the PAC strategy was also carried out.

Research findings

Religious and social gatherings are the main sources of information for many

Overall, 88% of the people who took part in focus group discussions and interviews reported that they received information about the SLLC processes. Figure 1 shows the results for the different groups.

Public awareness-raising activity was the most prominent way of encouraging women and vulnerable groups to take part in the subsequent stages of the SLLC (adjudication/demarcation, public display, and certificate distribution/collection). Religious or social gatherings and general public meetings at kebele and sub-kebele levels were the main ways of delivering information to WMHH, FHH and DHHM at each stage.

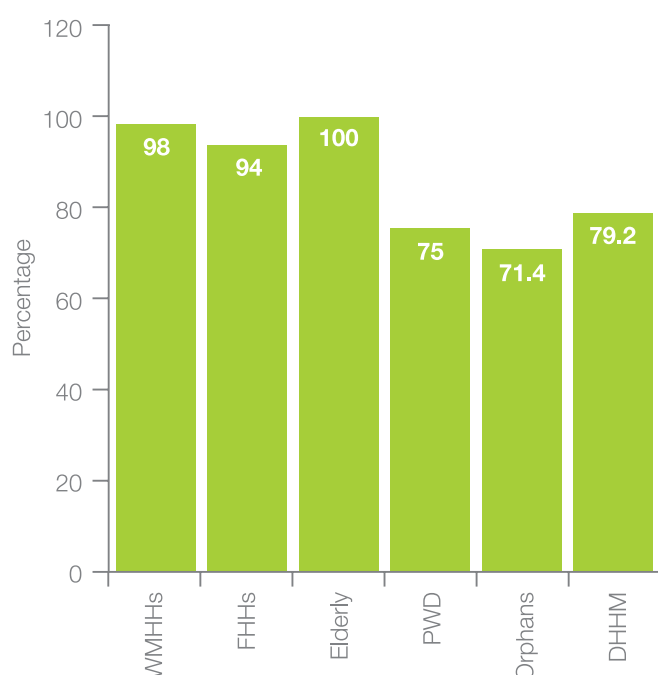


Figure 1. Proportion of women and vulnerable groups who have information on the SLLC process

For the elderly, their caregivers (usually a family member or relative) was the main source of information. Caregivers were also a key source for people with disabilities, together with '1 to 5' networks and neighbours. Guardians were the key source of information for orphan children. Posters and radio programmes were less popular methods of accessing information.

Public awareness activity is valuable

Many women said that PAC activity raised their awareness of the SLLC programme, gave them information about the various processes and helped them understand their land rights and the benefits of certification. However, although awareness-raising activity was reported at each stage of the SLLC process, the level of participation in the stages varied between women and vulnerable groups (Figure 2).

Women in male-headed households

Although 98% of WMHH said they received information about the SLLC, only 60% took part in the adjudication and demarcation (AD) stage. Participation levels fell to 45% during the public display (PD) stage and to 27% at the certificate collection (CC) stage. Of those who took part in the various stages, their key reasons for doing so included information they had received about the SLLC, encouragement from their husbands, and advice from village elders.

Reasons given by WMHH for not taking part included household responsibilities, being unaware that they should attend each stage alongside their husbands, lack of knowledge about the land in question, being refused permission to attend by their husbands, and maternity needs.

Female-headed households

In contrast to WMHH, almost 90% of FHH attended the AD stage for their land parcels, with 66% of these women saying that information about the SLLC had helped them decide to do so. Advice from women's representatives and elders in their village was also a key reason for their attendance.

Sixty-three per cent of FHH took part in the PD stage and 76% in the CC stage. Again, information received during public awareness-raising activities was a key reason for their participation. Almost one-third of FHH who attended the PD stage said they faced a land dispute with a neighbouring landholder. Fear of dispute was also a key reason why FHH attended the CC stage.

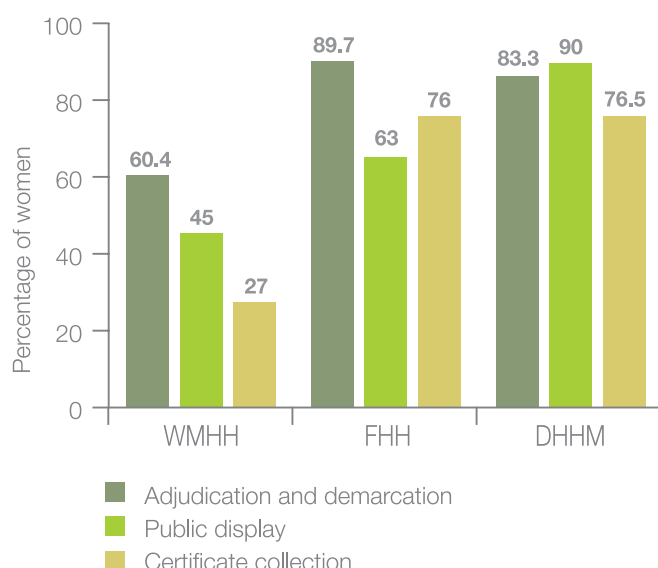


Figure 2: Percentage of women from male-headed households (WMHH), female-headed households (FHH) and destitute households headed by men (DHHM) taking part in each stage of the SLLC process

“Among the female-headed households who attended the public display, 32% faced disputes with a neighbouring landowner...this could indicate how much dispute female-headed households face with regard to land.”

The elderly and people with disabilities

During the AD stage, 72% of the elderly and 63% of people with disabilities were represented by their caregivers. Although two-thirds of the caregivers did not have legal authority to sign papers, they did so anyway.

Orphan children

Many of the guardians of the orphan children in the study were not formally appointed. The guardians participated in the SLLC process on behalf of the orphan child, and 88% told the child about the process. Interviews with orphan children indicated that they received information about the SLLC process from more than one source. Approximately 53% of the guardians collected the land certificate on behalf of the orphan child.



Manual and PAC strategy review

The review of the SLLC manual and the PAC strategy identified a number of weaknesses, including:

- No requirement to disaggregate participants by vulnerability type.
- A lack of tailor-made communication approaches targeted to the different groups of women and vulnerable people.
- A lack of detailed and specific approaches to address different groups of stakeholders and articulate their roles and responsibilities.
- A lack of emphasis on the need for stakeholders to reflect on progress with implementing the SLLC in terms of registering land belonging to women and people from vulnerable groups.

Feedback from stakeholders

Interviews with different stakeholders revealed a lack of coordination, joint planning and working, and monitoring and evaluation at the woreda level, which negatively impacted implementation of the SLLC. This was compounded by heavy work burdens on staff and experts and poor sharing of information within offices.

Recommendations

A cost-effective and practical strategy targeting women and people from vulnerable groups will encourage and support their engagement with the SLLC process.

Revise the SLLC manual and implement accordingly

The SLLC manual contains useful information about the SLLC process and procedures for implementing it, but needs to be revised to address the weaknesses identified by this study. Also, instructions in the manual are often not followed precisely in the field. For instance, the manual says that WMHH should participate alongside their husbands at every stage of the process, yet some married women reported that they were unaware of this. Guarding against deviations from the manual is critically important in ensuring the rights of women and people from vulnerable groups are protected.

Information alone is not enough

As well as giving information, evidence-based messages targeting women and vulnerable groups should specifically encourage and empower them to take part in SLLC processes. These messages should be disseminated using the methods preferred by the different groups. Also, because husbands play an important role in encouraging their wives to participate in the SLLC, gender-based awareness-raising activities

“Vulnerable groups differ as regards to specific marginalisation factors. This demands specific communication approaches.”

aimed at both men and women would encourage mutual understanding of the process.

Enhance the capacity and engagement of stakeholders

Employing a full-time member of staff at woreda level to focus specifically on land issues facing women and vulnerable groups, increasing the technical and social skills and capacity of field teams, and engaging all key stakeholders, would help ensure that these non-mainstream landholders are not overlooked. Woreda-level stakeholders need to be encouraged to devote adequate attention to the SLLC implementation process and mobilise their communities to participate in each stage.

Monitor, report and reflect

Monitoring and evaluation systems should operate at all levels and should consider women and vulnerable groups specifically. Systems should also be used for more than just tracking the performance of different stakeholders. Critical reflection on monitoring and evaluation reports by field staff, stakeholders and even landholders themselves would help identify areas where the SLLC implementation process could be improved.

Clarify responsibilities

The informal nature of many arrangements for caregiving of elderly people and guardianship of orphan children means that responsibilities are not clearly defined. This can compromise the integrity of the land registration process as many do not have the legal authority to act on behalf of the people or children, they are responsible for. Clarifying the responsibilities of caregivers and guardians would help protect the land rights of the elderly and orphan children.



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About the Research Summary series

This series summarises key research by the UK Department for International Development (DFID)-funded Land Investment for Transformation (LIFT) programme. LIFT aims to improve the incomes of the rural poor in Ethiopia by securing the land rights of households through second level land certification (SLLC); improving rural land administration systems (RLAS); and increasing productivity by leveraging SLLC through a 'making markets work for the poor' (M4P) approach, in Oromia, Amhara, the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region (SNNPR) and Tigray regions.

This summary is based on the following report: Development Research and Training plc. 2017. *Strategy to Effectively Engage Women and Vulnerable Groups during SLLC*. Research was commissioned by LIFT but has been conducted by an independent consultancy and does not necessarily reflect the views of LIFT or DFID.