



NELGA GOOD PRACTICES: Gender & Land Governance

The Network of Excellence on Land Governance in Africa (NELGA) is a partnership of leading African universities and research institutions with proven leadership in education, training and research on land governance. Currently NELGA has more than **70 partner institutions** in over 40 countries and is organized in 6 regional and 1 technical nodes supported by a Secretariat.

Land matters in Africa are heavily linked to cultural, social, economic and political aspects. Women play a key role in agriculture and natural resource management. Yet, women's access to and control over land are oftentimes affected by structural inequalities including harmful cultural norms and practices, institutional arrangements as well as outdated or inconsistent legal frameworks. The following realities characterize the conditions of many women in Africa regarding their relationship with land:

- ✓ Limited access to land and low land security
- ✓ Limited and discriminatory legal framework
- ✓ Limited control and leadership on agriculture activities

- ✓ Limited participation in the process of decision making
- ✓ Limited access to information and empowerment tools

NELGA, along with its major partners, has developed several activities in the framework of the continent-wide program "Strengthening Advisory Capacities for Land Policy in Africa" (SLGA), funded by GIZ. The implemented activities aimed to improve land rights and access to land for women in Africa by tackling the major challenges listed above. This Good Practice highlights some of the NELGA activities on gender and land governance.

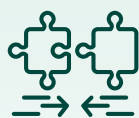
Training program at Ardhi University of Tanzania



Background

In the domain of land governance, gender equality and securing women's land rights offer considerable contributions to sustainable development and

social justice. Efforts to achieve a sustainable future should therefore ensure that the rights of all groups in the society including women are considered. Hence, mainstreaming gender in land governance is crucial for sustainable development. Despite the importance of gender mainstreaming in all aspects of land governance, we often encounter challenges in integrating gender perspectives and addressing women's land rights effectively. Solving these challenges necessitates a comprehensive understanding and integrating gender equality perspectives in all processes of concerted efforts through education, training, advocacy, raising gender awareness, and policy reform.



Implementation

NELGA and its Eastern African Node have organized one regional and three local training sessions aiming to equip NELGA experts,

land practitioners, local leaders, village executive officers, ward councilors and executive officers with

the understanding of the importance of gender mainstreaming in land governance to promote equality, gender and advance women's land rights. The regional training enabled the capacity-building of participants from the East Africa NELGA institutions based in Rwanda, Burundi, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Uganda, South Sudan, and Ethiopia. Additionally, the three trainings provided for key stakeholders in three districts in the Tanzania **capacitated 207 participants (33% women) on women's land rights and empowerment in decision-making.**

With these trainings participants were enabled to

1. improve their understanding of the intersection between gender, land governance and women's land rights,
2. examine challenges and explore opportunities and spaces for incorporating gender perspectives into land governance policies, policies, and programs,
3. exchange successful case studies, creative strategies and best practices advancing women's land rights and gender equality in the field of land governance in the East African Region,
4. increase NELGA experts' ability to mainstream gender considerations and implement gender responsive approaches in their work and to encourage networking and cooperation between professionals and various groups working in the field of land governance and gender equality.

Creation of African Women Land Professional Association

The International Federation of Surveyors Africa Regional Network (FIG-ARN), NELGA, and Ardhi University serving as the Regional Node for NELGA Eastern Africa, jointly hosted the inaugural African Women Land Professional Associations Conference (FAWLPAAC) from 24 to 28 November 2024 in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. The conference aimed to raise awareness about gender disparities in land-related professions and to highlight the vital role of women in advancing inclusive and sustainable land governance across Africa. The event gathered a diverse group of stakeholders, including representatives from various levels of government, traditional leaders, NGOs, and both individual and corporate actors working to strengthen women's land rights and promote effective land governance on the continent.

The conference showcased key achievements, challenges, and opportunities, assessed women's involvement in land governance, and outlined strategies to strengthen their role and visibility in promoting gender-responsive land governance.

Conference outputs:

1. Creation of the first Women's Land Association
2. Empowerment of participants on women issues related to land
3. Knowledge sharing and development of best practices
4. Emergence of new partnership and collaboration, for example with UN Women, Landesa, Stand for Her Land Campaign and the International Land Coalition.
5. Learning from each other: a special session was organized by GIZ-SLGA on facilitating graduates' integration in the labour market with focus on youth and women and with a non-African perspective from the Women Federation of China.
6. Networking opportunities: the conference offered ample opportunities for networking for actors working in land surveying, estate surveying, quantity surveying, building, town planning, architecture, civil engineering, land economy, GIS & ICT experts, lawyers, academics and Women's Land Rights (WLRs) actors.
7. 14 resolutions passed to enhance African women land professional association, such as the development of a Strategic Capacity Development Framework (SCDF), advocacy and implementation of frameworks, and gender quota for addressing disparities in land allocation in African communities.



Testimonial:



Most importantly, the conference brought together diverse women land professionals tackling land issues from multiple angles. While the majority were women, men also participated, ensuring inclusivity. The emphasis on mentorship throughout was key to fostering continuity and sustainability.

– Patience Chadambuka (NELGA Scholarship Recipient, Zimbabwe)



Showcasing NELGA Women Researchers on the International Stage

International Rural Women's Day

The International Rural Women's Day (IRWD) was established by the United Nations General Assembly in its resolution 62/136 of 18 December 2007 and is celebrated on 15 October of each year. This event recognizes 'the essential role and contribution of rural women in strengthening agricultural and rural development, improving food security and eradicating hunger and eradicating rural poverty'.

The theme of the IDRW 2024 was 'Empowering rural women through education and access to technology:

Bridging the gap for inclusive and sustainable agri-food systems in Africa'. It was commemorated on 15 October at the African Union Headquarters. The event's overall objective was to showcase and celebrate best practices empowerment interventions promoting the development of inclusive and sustainable Agri-food systems in Africa.

NELGA was represented by Prof. Mediebou Chindji Epse Kenmeugne, lecturer and researcher at University of Yaoundé 1 in Cameroon and member of NELGA Central Africa.



« When rural women have access to education and technology, it is not only their lives that change, but the future of entire communities that is transformed. »

– Professor Mediebou Chindi Rose



Together Conference

NELGA was also represented at the Together Conference under the theme "Strengthening Women's Voices for Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems" which took place in Nairobi, Kenya 18 - 20 February 2025. The Together Conference is a space to amplify these voices, foster collaboration, and co-create solutions. It is also a conference that brings global

experts together to discuss strategies for creating a more inclusive and sustainable agricultural system. Over 80 participants attended from different regions of the world, including Africa, Asia and Europe. The Conference allowed NELGA participants to build alliances with other stakeholders from civil society in order to promote equal participation of women in the decision-making and implementation processes in agriculture and land policies.



Promoting Female Researchers in Land Governance

A key challenge in the land governance sector is the continuously low number of female researchers in general and specifically in senior academic positions. This is also reflected in applications for post-doctoral positions. The field of land governance, with its technical and legal aspects, has traditionally been male dominated, resulting in women being less visible and less encouraged to pursue an academic career in this area.

A good example of a successful strategy for promoting female researchers is the NELGA Post-Doc Fellowship program by DAAD. In the first selection round of the program, only one female candidate was selected

among the post-doctoral fellows due to a very low number of female applicants. This issue was actively addressed in the second selection round: through targeted outreach and encouragement of female candidates, the proportion of women significantly increased. In the second cohort, six women were selected among a total of 15 post-doctoral fellows. This demonstrates that strategic measures, such as conscious outreach and greater consideration of gender dynamics in selection processes, can achieve significant progress.

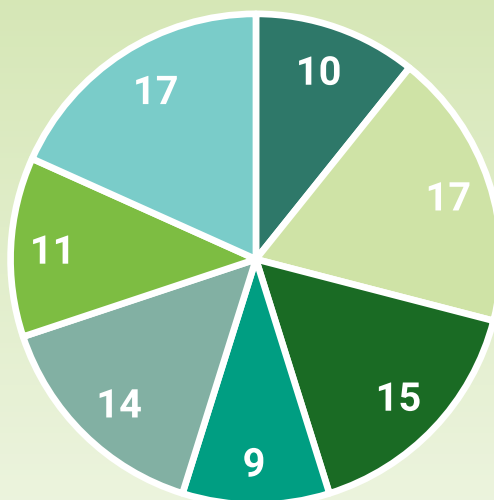
These targeted measures help to attract more female scientists to the field of land governance in the long run, thereby improving gender balance in research, land professions and policymaking. The experiences from NELGA highlight the importance of proactive support to counteract structural challenges.

Example of Student Enrollments by Gender: NELGA North Africa

The number of female graduates of the Masters programme “Geospatial Sciences and Land Governance” at IAV-Hassan II, the NELGA North Africa Node, increased from five in 2020 to 13 in 2022.

Overall the programme had 52 female graduates and 41 male graduates since its roll-out in 2018.

Overall number of graduates



2018-2020

2019-2021

2020-2022

2021-2023

2022-2024

2023-2025

2023-2025 (TA)



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