



Land Governance in an Interconnected World

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On Common Ground – Addressing Land Rights in the African Great Lakes Region

David Betge, Sector Specialist Land Rights, ZOA International

Introduction

This paper addresses the multi-dimensional causalities of land rights challenges and their interconnections with violent conflict in three countries of the African great Lakes region: Uganda, Burundi and the DR Congo. While each of these countries has its own very specific context and challenges, I argue that there are central commonalities that allow for the drawing of broader lessons for practically working on land rights issues in the great lakes region, based on the experiences of locally-based projects in these three countries as well as the results of academic analysis. The paper uses data from three land rights related projects, one in each of the countries, expert consultations, existing literature and participatory observation in the internal strategy building process of one organization working in all three countries.

The paper concentrates specifically on empirical cases from the Eastern DRC, Northern Uganda and Southern Burundi. In these three contexts, different phases and stages of violent conflict have led to displacement and mass migration, the destruction of communal structures and the weakening of customary governance systems over the past decades. One of the symptoms of these violent conflicts and resulting dynamics has been an increase in the number of conflicts around land (see e.g. Hopwood 2017, Vlassenroot 2013, Van Leeuwen 2010). Furthermore, there is evidence that conflicts around land, in particular in the context of weakened governance structures, can in turn be a driver of violent conflict (e.g. USAID 2004).

Land rights are entangled with peace and development in numerous ways. The indicators for measuring the progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) include three indicators specifically measuring land rights aspects (1.4.2, 5.a.1 (a) and 5.a.2)¹. The discussion around the land indicators highlights that land rights issues relate to sustainable development on various levels, from conflict resolution to gender equality and environmental protection (see e.g. ILC 2017). Addressing land rights as a topic of humanitarian interventions or development cooperation is therefore not just a context-dependent activity but can be seen as a strategic objective that is an integral element of working towards sustainable development. Moreover, addressing land rights often is a central element that links relief, recovery and development (LRRD).

In central-eastern Africa, a number of actors, ranging from international NGOs to local community based organizations has tried to address land related conflicts and insecure land rights in the past (e.g. UN Habitat, Université Chrétienne Bilingue du Congo, the Global Land

¹ All three indicators are now recognized Tier II indicators. They are: 1.4.2 *Proportion of total adult population with secure tenure rights to land, with legally recognized documentation and who perceive their rights to land as secure, by sex and by type of tenure.* 5.a.1 (a) *Proportion of total agricultural population with ownership or secure rights over agricultural land, by sex; and (b) share of women among owners or rights-bearers of agricultural land, by type of tenure.* 5.a.2 *Proportion of countries where the legal framework (including customary law) guarantees women's equal rights to land ownership and/or control.* See: ILC 2017.

Tool Network, Lemu, ZOA) and these efforts are still ongoing. The tools and strategies chosen by these actors differ, as does the nature of the specific issues they are addressing or the particular context within which they act. Nevertheless, the different actors working on land rights issues in the Great Lakes region have learnt important lessons. Technical developments and concerted international efforts for developing context-adequate tools for land administration have supported significant progress in some cases. Certain approaches have worked in various contexts, others have failed or show urgent need for improvement.

Drawing on the efforts related to land rights of one international non-governmental organization in Burundi, Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo, I demonstrate that there are common aspects of work aiming to improve land security and reduce conflicts in conflict-affected settings that can serve as the basis for the development of a broader land rights strategy. These common aspects and the conclusions drawn for a common land rights strategy are detailed in this paper. Next to lessons from practical experience, the project related data is triangulated with data from recent research on land rights issues in the region and other contexts as well as through expert consultations.



Addressing Land Rights in the Eastern DRC

ZOA is a Dutch international non-governmental organization active in 15 countries in Africa and Asia. ZOA is primarily active in six different sectors: Livelihood and food security, WASH, Basic Education, Peacebuilding, Shelter and Urban Programming. ZOA's land rights work is a sub-sector of the Peacebuilding sector but in practice overlaps in many cases with both Peacebuilding and livelihood and food security programming.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, ZOA's work is concentrated in the north-eastern part of the country, with projects in North and South-Kivu and offices in Bukavu, Minova and Kamanyola. Two major projects in the DRC programme entail significant land rights elements. The first of these is a project implemented together with the partners War Child and VNGi in

Kalehe territory. In this context, a number of central conflict constellations around land can be identified:

1. Conflicts between large landholders (state concessionaries) and small farmers who are dependent on access to land e.g. through sharecropping. Landholders are often reluctant to lease out their land to small farmers. Such conflicts are exacerbated if the parties belong to different ethnic groups. Concessionaries are often politically well-connected and at times they mobilise armed groups to protect their (land) interests.
2. Ethnically framed conflicts around land grabbing and identity. Various ethnic groups accuse each other of land grabbing and collusion with armed groups.
3. Conflicts between agriculturalists and pastoralists on limits, cattle routes etc.
4. Inter-village tensions through expansion of agricultural areas in the context of soil erosion resulting from unsustainable agricultural techniques.
5. Intra-family disputes inter alia related to questions of inheritance. In this context, the role of women is very weak. This is due to patriarchal land management systems. Traditional chiefs largely control the access to land and leave little autonomy to women. They do not have a right to inherit land from husband or father and married women are highly dependent on their husband concerning the management of land.²

In this complex environment ZOA is following a multi-pronged strategy to enable positive coordination and cooperation around land issues and facilitate the resolution of land related conflicts. On the local level, four central pillars exist for this work:

1. Community Based Sociotherapy → Empowering individuals to engage in positive social change.
2. Cadres de Dialogue et Mediation (CDM) → Engaging in conflict mediation and in negotiation with large landholders so that farmers with no or limited access can rent land in the medium or long term and are protected through clear lease agreements.
3. Civil Society Engagement → Mobilisation and empowerment of existing civil society structures using the CIVICUS approach → allowing for concerted action on land rights.
4. Improved Governance → cooperation with and support to formal and informal authorities improves local governance by increasing transparency and service delivery.³

This approach reflects realizations that long-term solutions to (land) conflicts will require improved (land) governance, which in turn requires cooperation and coordination of a range of actors on the local, provincial and eventually national level, and from both formal and informal authorities and civil society. At the same time, after a long period of top-down intervention in the DRC, grassroots approaches and a bottom-up feeding of governance processes are an absolute necessity (see: Autesserre 2010).

Since ZOA started implementing its land rights strategy in the second half of 2017, in particular the first two components have started to show effects. The Sociotherapy approach is not specifically focused on land rights issues. It is a methodology to facilitate healing and reconciliation in conflict-affected communities that starts from very practical, day-to-day issues to establish safety and trust among participants.⁴ This means, land issues are among the topics

² Adapted from: ZOA Access to Land Strategy Document, 20-06-2017, David Betge

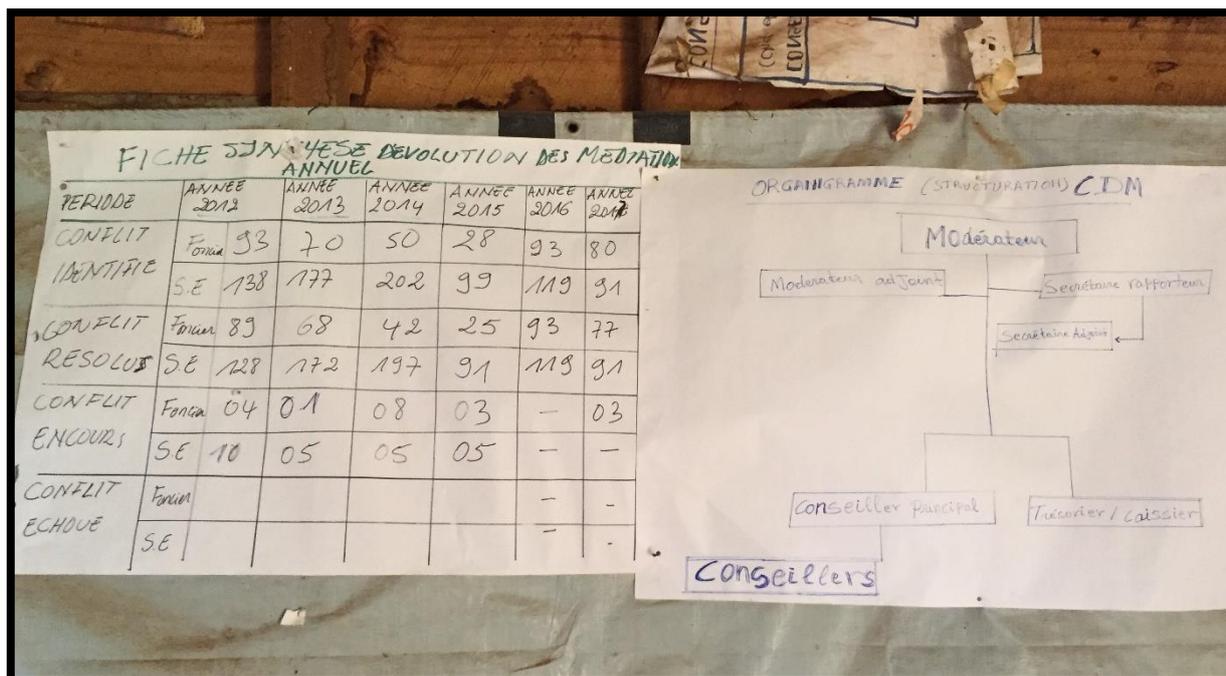
³ Ibid.

⁴ See: http://www.sociotherapy.org/about_sociotherapy/methodology_principles

that are likely to come up in the communities where ZOA is supporting the implementation of Sociotherapy through its local partner APD but this programme component is not land specific. Sociotherapy enables people to engage with each other in the long-term in a constructive way and therefore provides a basis for addressing land conflicts. So far, 18 Sociotherapy groups with 12 members each have been established and gone through the cycle of 15 sessions of trust building, problem sharing and healing. A second round of group processes is about to start. Through this, communities are gradually getting to a point where increased trust and openness allows for addressing long-standing problems, among which land access and use are central. A more direct approach to land issues is provided by the work of the Dialogue and Mediation groups (CDMs). These groups consist of 12 representatives of the communities that facilitate conflict mediation and resolution. The CDMs are set up by long-time ZOA partner APC and receive training in tools and methods for their work.



CDM Kalehe Centre with APC staff, left, and ZOA staff, second and fifth from right.



Conflicts identified by the CDM Kalehe Centre. In 2017, 80 conflicts were land related of which 77 were resolved.

The CDMs are very successful in mediating intra-community conflicts and are becoming increasingly successful in resolving conflicts between small farmers (sharecroppers) and large concessionaires. In case of successful mediations documents are signed by all parties as well as village officials that serve as proof of the achieved outcome. The CDMs have successfully leveraged the support of political actors and other third parties to get concessionaries to the negotiating table and will build on these experiences to refine their methods through peer-learning. This will be based on a clustering of the different CDMs (15 by the end of the project) who will then regularly engage in knowledge exchange and learning.

Despite these successes, central challenges remain for the CDMs such as improving their data collection and storage methods, improving their relationships with formal justice structures and local cadastres. There also seems to be a potential to increase the sustainability of the mediation outcomes by having authorities (judicial, cadastral) as witnesses. Furthermore, the experiences of the CDMs from the local level need to feed into governance structures on higher levels through strategic use by civil society organizations. It appears that making this link between local structures and higher-level governance is a central challenge. The obstacles in this regard result from resource constraints (mobility, time, knowledge) as well as lacking awareness (or recognition) of the potential for long-term policy related engagement.

In a second project in the Ruzizi plain, ZOA works with the *International Rescue Committee* (IRC) and *Search for Common Ground* (SfCG) in a consortium that strives to contribute to peacebuilding via a large-scale irrigation project called *Maji Ya Amani – Water for Peace*. In this context land rights are a particular concern because in the plain different communities have a history of conflict around land issues e.g. because of clashes between herders and farmers. Next to this, the significant increase in land value that will be achieved through the irrigation of around 500ha of land in the plain will be a potential source of conflict, particularly if political or military actors become interested in profiting from the land. In order to prevent the local population from losing their access to and ownership of land through communal or political conflicts an overview on the current land-use and –ownership patterns is needed based on which explicit agreements between the stakeholders including political guarantees

for the protection of current use- and access rights can be made. To this end ZOA facilitates a broad participatory mapping exercise supported by the Cadasta foundation and using the Cadasta platform for data storage. This demarcation, based on the principles of the Social Tenure Domain Model (STDM)⁵ provides an open platform to achieve consensus among the different stakeholders and involves actors from all levels and backgrounds including traditional authorities, civils society organizations, local and provincial authorities, the cadastre and every single affected landholder.

So far, key traditional leaders have agreed to support the project despite long-standing rivalries and violent encounters in the past, provincial authorities have given guarantees that current land use and access will be protected and the participatory demarcation has started with the active involvement of the communities, local cadastres and technical experts trained by the Cadasta foundation. ZOA's partners IRC and SfCG are simultaneously working on the establishment of land management councils. They actively engage the broader community in awareness raising campaigns and the drawing up of by-laws for land management and prepare the management of the re-established irrigation infrastructure.

The project is set in a highly fragile context and requires constant close coordination among all stakeholders; not least the consortium partners who need to ensure the complementarity of different activities and a high sensitivity towards potentially conflictual issues. Similar to the project in Kalehe territory, the *Maji Ya Amani* project works from the ground up but requires an integration of activities on different governance levels and active support from actors on various levels. Sustainability can only be achieved through political support and a formal recognition of the identified landholding- and use structures.

The land experiences from the DRC indicate that in such conflict prone settings with limited state authority, only multi-level approaches, involving a variety of actors and connecting different levels of governance seem to promise long-term positive outcomes. At the same time, local cooperation and locally anchored conflict resolution are the necessary conditions for success and sustainability.

Addressing Land Rights in Burundi

One of the central challenges in Burundi is the shrinking average size of landholdings while the vast majority of Burundians are dependent on agriculture for their livelihoods. Over the past decade, the return of people who fled from armed conflicts and particularly the civil war that ended in 2006, has contributed to a significant rise in conflicts over land. Land conflicts in Burundi generally range from intra-family disputes on heritage rights to disputes between repatriates and residents. Traditional and state authorities are involved in conflict resolution on the local level but in many cases, the number and the complexity of the cases overburden these actors. Particularly, because property rights are often not formally registered and tensions between formal and customary rights exist. The formalized land registration in Burundi is based on the land law (code foncier) of 2011, which, inter alia, introduced land certificates as alternatives to titles for the registration of customary land rights and decentralized the land administration (Hilhorst/Porchet 2012). The land law provided for the establishment of communal land services (*Service Foncier Communal* – SFC) in charge of delivering titles to land owners. It also mandated the establishment of communal commissions as part of the SFC in charge of measuring the plots and addressing land conflicts on the local level (*Commission de Reconnaissance Collinaire* – CRC). A third state institution, which was created for the land tenure program was the national land commission (*Commission Nationale*

⁵ See: <https://stdm.glt.n.net/>

des terres et autres biens – CNTB). This commission was specifically tasked with the resolution of conflicts related to land originating in the different wars in the past. The role of the commission has been critically discussed, with some stakeholders feeling that it has a political bias. Since around 2015, the work of the CNTB has largely been suspended.

In late 2013, the Dutch Humanitarian organization ZOA started a project financed by the Dutch Embassy in Bujumbura, designed to indicate ways of bridging the gap between various individual, decentralized land registration projects and an envisioned scaled-up land registration program initiated on the national level, which would need to be implemented in a decentralized but coherent way. ZOA targeted areas with high levels of repatriation of former refugees and displaced people and a special focus is put on safeguarding the interests of women in the process of land rights registration. Furthermore, ensuring the financial sustainability of the SFC is a central objective. While the initial project period is finished, ZOA received additional funding from the Dutch Embassy as well as USAID to expand its work.

ZOA cooperates with local partner Mi-Parec (*Ministry for Peace and Reconciliation under the Cross*) who support the project in resolving conflicts related to land. The combination of land registration and conflict resolution is central to the work. Mediation between conflict parties, particularly between returnees and residents, and a recording of the results are seen as essential for ensuring sustainable conflict resolution and tenure security of all parties. MiParec supports the CRCs with training in mediation practices and they also take over mediations in particularly complex cases.

A study published in 2013, indicated that better capacities of national-level actors and an integration of ground level efforts with national policies and objectives are needed, while at the same time a strong focus needs to be put on the local acceptance of the measures (Hilhorst 2013). Generally, the land tenure registration projects in Burundi are seen as essential aspects of broader efforts to increase peace and stability as well as to contribute to food security for the population (Netherlands Embassy Office Bujumbura-Burundi 2011). In order to achieve these objectives several conditions have to be met. First, land conflicts need to be resolved before a piece of land is registered. It is also important to ensure the acceptance of registration procedures by the local communities and not least the local traditional authorities. The process of registration must also not contribute to the weakening of existing rights such as customary rights of women. If all these conditions are met, people receiving land certificates need to be ensured that these certificates will in fact contribute to their tenure security. Therefore, local state authorities need to have the capacities to enforce the land rights of individuals. They also need to be informed of all land transfers after the issuing of certificates, because otherwise the registry will become unreliable.

ZOA aspired to design its land tenure program in Burundi in a way that meets all of these challenges. The core of the program is the registration of the location of a plot of land and the dimensions of the parcel but only after resolving conflicts related to that specific parcel. Additionally, data on different rights concerning the land is collected. This data is put on a certificate providing the owner with evidence of his or her land rights and the cadastral data is then stored in a specific database that can eventually be integrated into a national land database or other spatial data infrastructure.

ZOA followed a cluster approach with a proactive, region-wide approach (*approche groupée*) for setting up registration services and complementary activities. This meant that in a targeted area all households are encouraged to register their land, requiring all of them to be informed of the process and its objectives and to recognize the benefits of participating. The group

approach attempts to address the social complexities of land tenure registration with a strong focus on recognizing and addressing conflicts.⁶

ZOA designed its land rights program as part of a holistic approach integrated in interventions by ZOA and other organizations that target the effects of tensions related to refugee resettlement, high population growth and declining agricultural productivity. The land registration program relates to efforts for intensifying agricultural production through distributing agricultural inputs such as seeds, fertilizer, organic manure or goats and providing trainings on agriculture in those areas targeted by land tenure registration. A basic assumption is that conflict mediation, land certification and activities aimed at increased investments in agriculture and increased agricultural productivity are mutually reinforcing.

The land tenure program is based on a large-scale assessment of land conflicts in the intervention area. This analysis is the starting point for conflict mediation. While conflict mediation institutions existed in the Burundian context on the colline level such as the elected leaders of the *colline* and traditional *bashingantahe* ('men of integrity' serving as conflict mediators and justices), the land code of 2011 required the creation of an additional institution capable of handling a relatively large number of conflicts. Therefore, the *Recognition Committees on Colline level* were created (CRCs). These committees establish whether there are land disputes regarding a plot, determine who occupies that land and who holds the *de facto* rights to that land and conduct plot surveys using handheld GPS devices and mobile phones with Kobo collect software. All of the neighbors of the particular plot participate in this exercise. The outcomes are published and if after a certain period no objection is made a certificate can be issued.

So far, more than 40.000 plots have been registered in this way and a significant number of conflicts were resolved by the CRCs. The positive results of the initial project led to follow up funding by the Dutch Embassy as well as funding to expand the project area provided by USAID. While the land registration process is proceeding well, one central issue of concern remains the situation of women's land rights in the project area. The topic is of particular sensitivity and a mixture of fears, customs and legal uncertainties results in a situation in which women's rights to land are very fragile. Engaging with the communities to create an inclusive dialogue around women's land rights is a key component of the current work. Another point of attention is the necessity to establish functioning spatial data infrastructure beyond the provincial level in order to create sustainability for the results achieved so far.

The experience in the Burundian context shows that it is possible to address land rights issues in a systematic and participatory way even in very fragile and sensitive settings. Cooperation with state and non-state actors is possible and might be crucial to ensure sustainability. Latest technological tools can be used to improve local service delivery and introduce context adequate and cost-efficient solutions into contexts where state authorities struggle with adequate and widespread service provision to the population. At the same time, a central lesson is that the technical aspects should not overshadow the fact that land rights work means social interventions that affect social structures and therefore require (conflict) sensitive approaches that allow for flexible adaptations to changes in the context.

⁶ One assumption informing the clustered/grouped approach is that it is very time-consuming for state authorities to build adequate capacities to facilitate a conflict sensitive demand driven approach. Furthermore, an isolated, demand-driven approach could leave large numbers of parcels unprotected by registration and be restricted to the registration of land acquired by large, more affluent buyers. ZOA's project design was informed by an earlier pilot project of the Swiss Development Cooperation.

Addressing Land Rights in Uganda

ZOA works on land rights issues in Nwoya district in Acholi region, in the North of Uganda. In this area, people were forced to live in camps for around a decade until 2007, because of the activities of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). When the population started to return to their homes, the number of land-related conflicts increased massively. Local courts were overburdened and traditional authorities unable to resolve the large number of conflicts.

The Government of Uganda adopted a *National Land Policy*, a *Land Sector Strategy*, and several other pieces of legislation to address the problems related to land rights. Land tenure registration and certification are central parts of this agenda. Innovative about the Ugandan approach to registration and certification is the fact that it provides for registration of customary rights. *Certificates of Customary Ownership* (CCOs) can be used as evidence of customary ownership of the rights holders. Holders of a CCO can lease, mortgage, pledge, transfer and sell the land, subject to limitations provided for by customary law. In most other countries in the region, registration and certification lead to a transformation of customary rights to rights under formal law. Since rights are differently structured under the two systems, this can lead to a series of problems, notably for women and vulnerable groups, who frequently end up dispossessed.

ZOA has set up a tenure registration program supported by the Dutch *Pharus foundation*. The program centres on setting up demarcation teams (Area Land Committees) consisting of traditional and state authorities as well as volunteers. These prepare the tenure registration by meeting with all stakeholders involved in plot registration, in particular occupants and neighbours, preparing the registration by making sure that there are no conflicts or respectively resolving them and establishing that all borders are agreed on. In a final step, the land is demarcated. To this end, tablets with a specific software are used. Google earth satellite images and GPS coordinates enable the teams to capture information on boundaries. These data are then complemented by scans of all hard copy application- and support documents, and stored on a server. The aim of this process is to generate data, which shows conclusive evidence of boundaries, and can be migrated to the National Land Information System currently under development in Uganda. The objective is that digital information about registered customary land is accessible at the national level as well as the local level as is already the case for freehold or leasehold titles. This is preventing double titling and overlapping claims. The borders of the plot can be marked on a digital map and all necessary information regarding the occupants, owners, neighbours and rights such as easements can be entered into the database. The tenure registration itself is flanked by campaigns to inform the local population and traditional authorities about the process and its objectives, facilitate conflict resolution through ZOA's local partner the *Acholi Religious Leadership Peace Initiative* (ARLPI) and inter-community communication about these various issues. Essential are the support of capacity building of local state actors and linking all of these efforts with actors and processes on higher levels of government including the national ministries.

The program has so far led to a number of successes. The provisions governing customary tenure registration within the existing legal and regulatory framework were largely unknown before the intervention. Widespread misinformation led to mistrust among political and traditional leaders in Northern Uganda in general, and the Acholi sub-region in specific, against CCOs, which were suspected to be an instrument of land grabbing or commoditization of customary land. Through exposure visits for opinion leaders from the political, religious and administrative leadership, radio talk shows, radio spot messages, drama and community dialogue meetings at the village level, information about the urgent need for land conflict resolution and opportunities for increased tenure security through registration of customary were disseminated. The District leadership took the lead in building widespread support for

land registration by conducting stakeholder workshops and outreach activities within the community. Other Districts in Northern Uganda have sent requests for support to ZOA and the Ministry of Lands has asked for rolling out customary land registration services. The project in Nwoya is providing an evidence base for the argument that technical upgrades are possible by integrating low-cost, fit for purpose solutions into the existing process for CCOs. Therefore, Uganda might be able to avoid a lengthy and costly political and administrative process of developing a completely new instrument.

The vast majority of land conflicts are resolved by members of the demarcation teams before or during the land inspection, which is part of the CCO application process. Next to the good results regarding conflict mediation there are also positive developments in relation to the registration of women's land rights. Customary land in Nwoya District is predominantly registered as family land. CCOs can include an unlimited number of names of land rights holders. In Nwoya, there are nuclear and extended families applying for CCOs and CCO applications including 40 or more names have been processed. In 2017, about a third of applicants for CCOs in Nwoya District were women. This relatively high proportion of female applicants is remarkable considering the severe challenges and restrictions to women's land rights within Acholi culture, especially regarding ownership of land. This can be seen as an achievement of large-scale communication processes on women's land rights as well as training of land administration authorities on how to identify and include vulnerable land rights holders, especially women. Women have expressed their hope that through proper documentation, their tenure security will be strengthened and discriminatory cultural practices will change.

One innovation in the CCO registration process in Nwoya is the introduction of a comprehensive list of all land rights holders, including children, as a support document in the official registers copy. There is ongoing debate about the how people hold land in Acholi and how best to secure tenure. While the overwhelming preference in Nwoya District has been for registration of family land through CCOs for nuclear or extended family, there are voices calling for registration of land at the level of clans (in Acholi, clans consist of thousands of members), or even incorporations of clans who can hold land in trust. Others are suggesting that the CCO is inadequate in its current form and land should be secured through boundary tree planting and the documentation of family land rights trees. This debate is ongoing and results partly from confusion about the definition of legal concepts and terms. Commonly confused concepts in the Acholi context include: communal land vs. customary land, clan land vs. communal land, extended family land vs. clan land, etc. with some of these concepts are used inappropriately and interchangeable.

The Ugandan program meets some challenges similar to those encountered in the Burundian context. For example, though land may have been successfully demarcated and land rights comprehensively documented, subsequent transactions, which occur frequently, are rarely recorded. This is not a mere question of limited awareness of the intended beneficiaries. Awareness plays a role, but, in areas with a history like that of Acholiland, limited confidence of the government's capacity to effectively guarantee land rights also plays a role, as does a general reluctance or inability to pay the fees. Furthermore, the work highlights once more the centrality of a conflict sensitive approach that provides room for broad discussions and is perceptive towards grievances and diverging views. The discussions around the 'actual' customary practices cannot be ignored and are found in other contexts as well such as the Burundian. While the project proves that context-adequate land tenure registration can reduce conflicts and increase people's confidence in their rights and perspectives for the future, it underlines the need for constant monitoring of results in order to be able to react flexibly to possible negative developments.

Conclusions

The land rights work in the three very diverse settings points towards some key requirements that land rights work needs to fulfil independent of the specific setting:

1. The need for a comprehensive, gender sensitive stakeholder analysis that reflects the interests of the different parties and systematically points out the political and cultural sensitivities.
2. Based on the above, an adequate risk analysis that points out the risks involved for the different stakeholders.
3. The need for an understanding of the continuum of rights related to land rights and in this context, an adequate, context-dependent vision for long-term impact with clearly defined steps and benchmarks that reflect realistic targets as well as the results of the stakeholder and risk analysis.
4. An understanding of the central challenges to sustainable rights protection related to both political (and customary) as well as administrative aspects and systematic planning on how to address these based on the understanding that rights to land in all their different forms require adequate and sustainable documentation, registration and protection → This can and should be facilitated/supported by continuous monitoring (see below).
5. The necessity to work in actor networks and to understand one's own land rights related work as a contribution to a broader set of efforts resulting in strategic and systematic coordination and cooperation.
6. Finally, the need to follow a participatory approach that enables continuous monitoring of effects and social dynamics and adaptation of the practical work based on this.

Investments in land rights work that are done in a context-adequate and conflict sensitive way, strongly contribute to peacebuilding and the resilience of local communities. In particular, if the land rights and conflict related work is combined with targeted livelihood support that provides people with economic opportunities next to the decrease in violent conflicts and the envisioned increase in tenure security. Land rights work done right contributes to better social relations and better state-society relations. These objectives can only be achieved by flexible, conflict sensitive and above all participatory approaches. Conflict resolution mechanisms need to be included in the planning of land rights interventions. Generally, land rights work needs to be focused on improving governance structures, be they formal or informal. Therefore, land rights work is always a social intervention and never just a technical process. To be sustainable in the long term land rights work requires an approach that is top-down and bottom-up at the same time. There needs to be a parallelism of efforts on different levels of policymaking and policy implementation, which requires strategic partnerships. Organization's land rights policies and guidelines need to reflect this.

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