

Land Governance in an Interconnected World

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Understanding Gender Dynamics and Institutional Drivers of Land Access in Smallholder Maize Farms of Western Kenya

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1. Introduction

- Most if not all countries in Sub Saharan Africa (SSA) depend on agricultural land as the primary resource on which food security and poverty reduction strategies are underpinned (Toulmin, 2009).
- The manner of access, use, management, control, transfer and disposal of land is therefore a critical aspect in defining growth and prosperity in Africa.
- However, it is worth noting that smallholder farmers in SSA face a myriad of challenges in terms of access and use of land.
- Land fragmentation, diminishing soil fertility, poor governance structure, gender biased norms and population increase are some of the core challenges facing agricultural land.
- The role of gender in accessing productive resources especially land cannot be ignored. Women play a critical role in agricultural production, supplying more labour force (60%) than men in SSA.
- Further, it is important to note that ownership of land determines access and use of institutional support services in agriculture.
- This study examined how gender and other institutional dynamics drive land ownership, access and use by smallholder farm-households in Bungoma & Trans Nzoia - Western Kenya.

2. Materials and Methods

- Participatory experiential learning from farmers



- Household survey on random sample of 300 smallholder maize farmers



- Descriptive methods & linear regression analysis

3. Results and Discussion

- There was a significant difference in the average land size under maize production between Male Headed Households (MHHs) and Female Headed Households (FHHs). MHHs had 0.71 acres more under maize production compared to FHHs.

Table 1: Pooled sample determinants of land allocated to maize cropping

Variables	Coefficient	Std. Err.
Household Asset Index	0.037***	0.011
Total Maize lost to risk factor	0.041**	0.017
Duration of stay	0.143***	0.045
Dependence Ratio	0.035***	0.015
Years of formal schooling	0.006	0.011
Access to credit	0.002	0.081
Access to extension service	0.108	0.091
Membership in groups	-0.196**	0.088
Market participation	0.449***	0.082
Constant	-1.345	0.193

Notes: statistical significance levels: ***1%, **5%, respectively

- Household asset index, total amount of maize lost, duration of stay, dependence ration and market participation positively influenced land under maize cropping, while membership in development group had an inverse relationship with land under maize cropping .

Table 2: Gender disaggregated determinants of land allocated to maize cropping

Variables	MHHs		FHHs	
	Coef.	Std. Err.	Coef.	Std. Err.
Household Asset Index	0.008	0.021	0.040***	0.012
Total Maize lost to risk factor	0.012	0.032	0.044**	0.020
Duration of stay	0.267***	0.105	0.138***	0.050
Dependence Ratio	0.051	0.033	0.032**	0.016
Years of formal schooling	-0.009	0.021	0.008	0.013
Access to credit	0.070	0.156	-0.002	0.093
Access to extension service	0.265*	0.152	0.059	0.106
Membership in groups	-0.149	0.185	-0.176*	0.100
Market participation	0.539***	0.171	0.457***	0.093
Constant	-1.637	0.404	-1.332	0.220

Notes: statistical significance levels: ***1%, **5% & *10%, respectively.

- Access to markets had a positive influence on the amount of land under maize production for both MHHs and FHHs.
- However, asset index and membership in groups only affected FHHs in terms of land under maize production.

4. Conclusion and Way Forward

- Promote use of intensive land use practices to offset declining crop output on fragmented lands
- Enhance market access for instance through group bulking to improve asset base to enable acquisition of more farm land
- Re-orient priority setting in development groups that women are mainly members to focus on agricultural investments – for instance use of funds from table banking to purchase more farm land

Literature Cited

- Toulmin, C. (2009). Securing land and property rights in Sub-Saharan Africa: the role of local institutions. *Land Use Policy*, 26(1), 10-19.

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