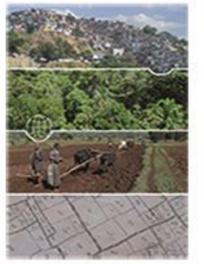


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TOWARDS A RESPONSIVE CUSTOMARY LAND RIGHTS SECURITY IN RURAL GHANA: THE RURAL PARCEL RIGHT DEMARCATION APPROACH

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INTRODUCTION

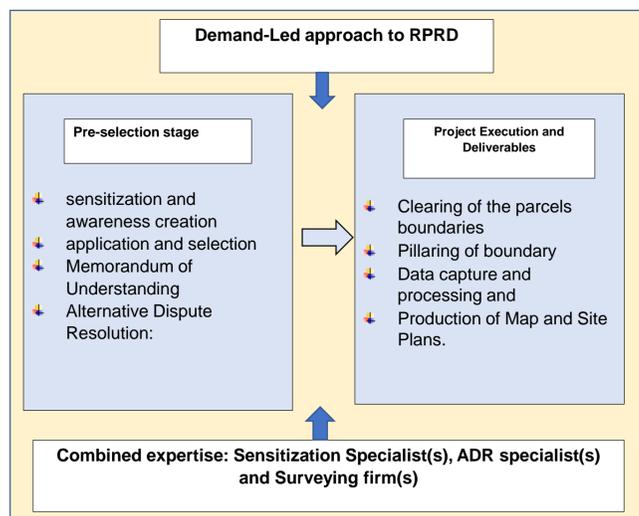
Land for diverse uses in Ghana has come under intense pressure in recent times. The situation is even more critical in rural settings where customary tenure prevails. Rapid population increase and other drivers such as urbanization, trade liberalization and large-scale land acquisitions continue to pile up pressure on these lands. These increasing land pressures have rendered land rights of the poor and marginal group volatile, heightening the need for their security. The issue is further exacerbated by the use of unreliable, old or inaccurate maps resulting in a myriad of land administration challenges. This is a disincentive to ensuring security and certainty of tenure for land users and to encourage investment in agricultural productivity.

To mitigate this challenge, the Government of Ghana through the Land Administration Project (LAP) introduced the Rural Parcel Right Demarcation (RPRD) program in 2012. The project implementation adopted the demand led and cost sharing approaches to ensure that land owners give their utmost support and commitment. The project is a major pro-poor attempt to help rural farmers particularly women to initiate steps to formalize and record oral grants and have some form of documentation of their interests in the land.

Why Rural Parcel Right Demarcation?

- ❖ Expensive cost of normal land survey and demarcation
- ❖ A more reliable way for land owners and their neighbors to know their respective boundaries.
- ❖ parcels once demarcated can be registered with the land sector agencies .
- ❖ It will enable rural land holders to be able to secure financial assistance from financial institutions.
- ❖ Opportunity to resolve existing boundary and ownership
- ❖ the RPRD provides a big opportunity for established CLS and rural land inventory activities particularly in the processes of attribute data and property enumeration as it promotes the recording of accurate data on land boundaries

MATERIALS | METHODS



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Staff of the Lands Commission, Office of the Administrator of Stool Lands, Ghana Land Administration Project

RESULTS

Dispute Resolution Mechanisms: During the process of conducting the field work, several attempts were made by the survey team comprising of the Office of the Administrator of Stool Lands and the Alternative Dispute Resolution consultant to resolve disputes.

Main challenges: Disagreements among adjoining tenants affected smooth progress and speed of the actual survey works. This also affected the project cost as the surveyors spent a much longer time waiting for disputes to be resolved. On a number of occasions, surveyors were re-called to resume work with the assurance that disputes have been resolved only to realize that disputes have not been fully resolved to allow for the progress of work.

At the end of the project period, Five Thousand, One Hundred and Eighteen parcels of land have been successfully demarcated with the regional breakdown as follows:

No.	Region	Number of parcels demarcated
1.	Western Region	3,643
2.	Ashanti Region	484
3.	Brong Ahafo Region	991
	Total	5,118

Reconnaissance and Planning: Prior to the start of the actual survey work, meetings were held with the local organizing team to agree on the best and acceptable approach to undertake the works taking due cognizance of the local public's reaction and concerns of the assignment to be carried out which was to involve clearing of vegetation affecting some farms and planting of pillars across farm lands.

Boundary identification: It was decided that, in order to save time and resources, undisputed areas would be surveyed first whilst areas in dispute were passed on to the ADR consultant and the Local Organizing Team for resolution whilst the survey work progressed.

Demarcation of Boundary Lines: This was done with the aid of GPS survey equipment as well as local laborers engaged for the assignment.

Construction of Pillars: concreted pillars were then erected in accordance with the specification set out in the contract. Two sets of pillars were built, namely Land Boundary Pillars and Natural Boundary Pillars.

The findings of the study showed that the poor and marginalized are mostly ignorant of their land rights under the customary settings. Thus, they consider the chiefs as the owners of the lands and not as custodians/trustees as the customary statutes stipulates.

Again, it was realized from the study that the rural folks are more enthusiastic to support approaches that are participatory and intended to safeguard tenure security whilst creating a learning forum in the process insofar as land and its related issues are concerned.

CONCLUSIONS

The study acknowledges the classic collaboration between Customary and Public Sector Land Sector Agencies. The contribution of the Survey and Mapping Division of the Lands Commission in providing quality control for the survey work conducted by the surveying consultant, was enormous. The Customary Land Secretariats (CLS) played a lead role in resolving disputes that came up among lessees of land. The CLS also contributed in sensitizing community people on the demarcation process and aided in the quick resolution of conflicts as and when they arise.

There is a great potential to reduce land boundary and ownership disputes through the Rural Parcel Right Demarcation exercise. Indeed the Demand Led approach to implementing the Rural Parcel Right Demarcation guarantees up to 60 percent success. There is the need to set up a participatory monitoring and evaluation mechanism within Civil Society at the community level to help sensitize the local folks, and also encourage more people to take advantage of the program.

The study found a slow but increasing number of women registering titles to land either alone or jointly with their spouses. The strong enthusiasm and support shown needs to be sustained. The study found that, the RPRD provides many useful lessons that will enable other land owning communities not only in Ghana but in Africa and beyond improve upon land management at the customary level through a participatory approach. There is the need for urgent steps to be taken to scale up the project to cover other pro poor jurisdictions in the country.

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