



Institute of Policy Analysis  
and Research - Rwanda

# Women's Economic Empowerment and Land

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# Sources of Information

- 2010/11 Integrated Household Survey
- DHS 2010
- Women's Economic Empowerment Project
- Land Reform and Women's Economic Empowerment Project
- FinScop 2008
- Kigali Safer City
- Household Enterprises Research

A Gender Lens – Looking at the world from the Perspective of women

A Commitment to Women's Human Rights

# Women's Empowerment

Progressively shifting power in three ways:

- Challenging ideologies that justify the subordination of women
- Changing prevailing patterns of access to and control over economic, natural and intellectual resources including land resources
- Transforming institutions and structures such as the family, the state, the market, education and the media all of which sustain and reinforce patriarchal power structures

# Women's Economic Empowerment

- Women's right to control their own lives in the private (home) and public spheres. This right enables women to make decisions about their own and their family's welfare and to pursue income generating activities and paid employment.
- Women's right to have control over resources including financial ones and access to opportunities. This right enables women to increase their financial and non-financial assets and resources including savings, starting and investing in enterprises, farm and non-farm, food and medical care.
- Women's right to make decisions and choices. This right enables women to make choices about the use of their own and the household's financial resources, the use of family planning and the number of children they have, and control over their own bodies (consent to sexual intercourse).
- Women's right to have a sense of self-worth, to feeling valued and respected. This right enables women to exercise agency and take control over their own lives. It enables them to develop confidence in themselves and their abilities in the wider society as well as in the home. It is especially important in enabling women to resist gender-based violence in private and public space.

# Why is Women's Economic Empowerment Important

- Human right – women are human beings just like men
- Reduces poverty
- Improves the health and wellbeing of children
- Increases economic growth

# Barriers to Women's Economic Empowerment

- Material structural disadvantage in education, the domestic division of labour, ownership of land and property, access to finance and lower bargaining power in financial decision making
- Cultural values and ideologies about appropriate behaviour of women and men which are deeply embedded in laws and policy and have become part of taken-for-granted everyday practices the outcome of which is the subordination of women
- Psycho-social factors which are the outcome of women's subordinated structural position in society and which limit their ability to act and take control over their lives.

# Conditions for Economic Empowerment

- Legal
- Education – equal opportunity
- Health
- Political
- Freedom from Sexual Violence and Harassment
- Freedom from Gender Discrimination
- Freedom from Gender Oppression
- Gender Impact Analysis

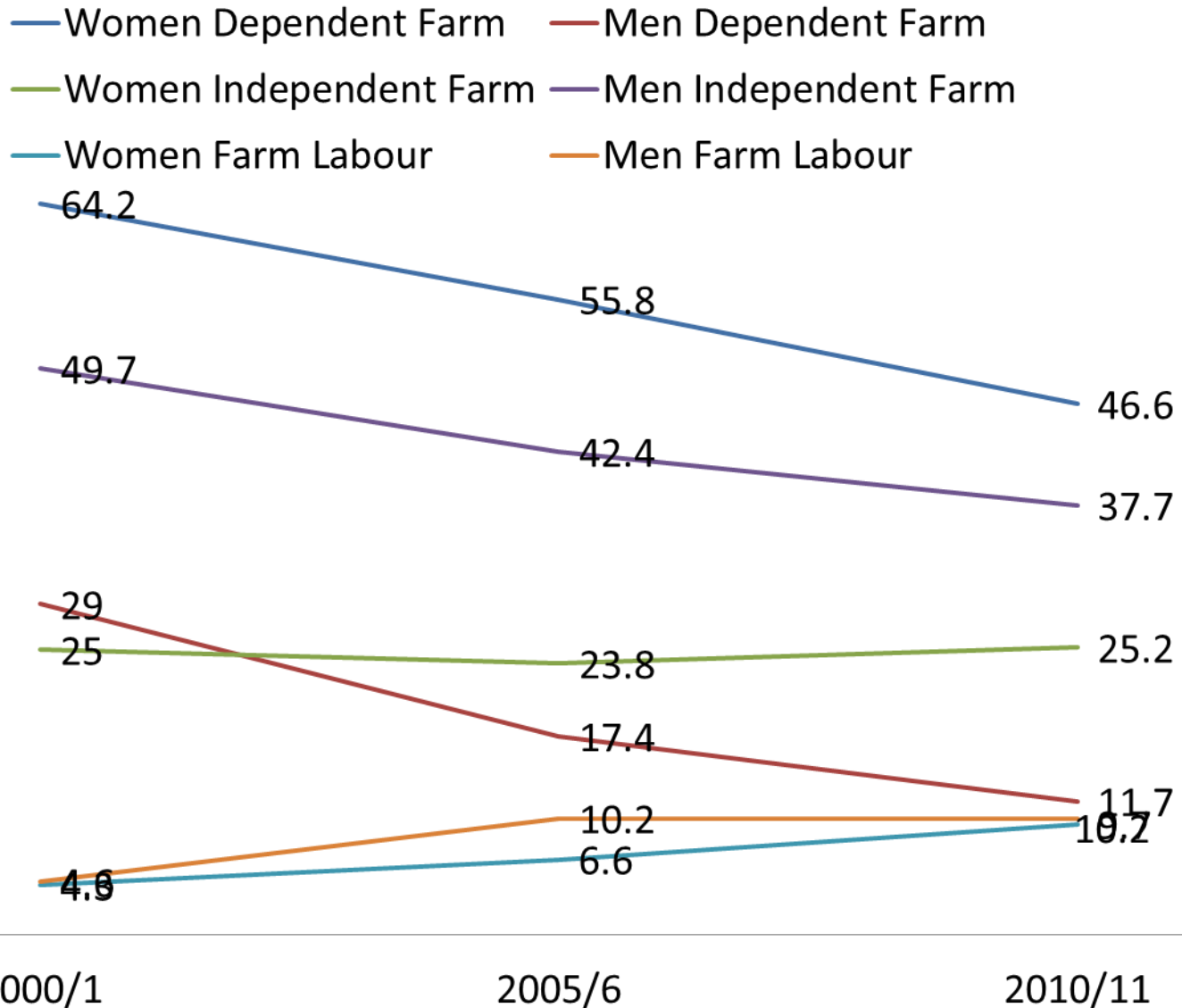
A Commitment to Gender Equality – Enabling Men and women to have Equal Opportunity to Achieve the Outcomes

# Women and Land

- Women's land rights are a priority in developing countries because access to land is a basis for sustainable livelihoods and increased social inclusion
- Women's land rights and women's control over land can be tenuous even when they have de jure rights – limited control over land is often the outcome of cultural values as much as inheritance and ownership laws.



# Agricultural Employment



# Conditions for Economic Empowerment of Women in Rwanda

- 1999 Amendment to the Civil Code
- 2003 Constitution
- Gender Quotas
- Community Health Insurance
- 2005 Land Law
- Girls Education Policy
- Women's Guarantee Fund (now withdrawn)
- 2008 Domestic Violence Law
- 2009 Labour Law
- Gender Mainstreaming (Ministry, EDPRS, GMO)
- Gender Sensitive Budgeting
- Agricultural Policy
- Gender (and age) disaggregated statistical data

# Barriers to Women's Economic Empowerment

- Less educated than men
- High fertility rate and burden of reproductive work
- GBV – in private and public spheres and patriarchal values more generally
- Restrictions on woman's engagement in productive work
- Little control over own economic resources

# Women's Legal Entitlement to Land

- Legal protection for legitimate daughters – same rights to inherit land as legitimate sons
- Limited rights for legally married women – Laws protect legitimate children as heirs
- Few rights for traditionally married women /women in polygamous unions and their children

# Key Findings

- Women are increasingly able to claim their rights under the local medication service but access to the law courts remains problematic
- Women are involved in decision making but their role is limited and husbands are much more likely than wives to have money they regard as their own
- There is little evidence that women are using land titles to get credit, they remain less likely than men to have formal credit and when they do tend to borrow less
- Women are involved in agricultural reforms but are concerned that crop specialisation will have a negative impact on producing food for the table. There is a resistance to using improved seeds and fertilizer.

# Main Policy Recommendations

- There should be a systematic review and harmonisation of all the family and inheritance Laws and policies need to be considered that give married women and widows secure ownership of land lineage land so that it can be used as collateral.
- Consideration should be given to how the property rights of women in consensual unions and polygamous marriages and their children can be protected.
- The land-consolidation and crop-specialisation policies and agricultural policy more generally should be reviewed to ensure that farmers are consulted and that the policies do not endanger food security and land rights for the poorest and most vulnerable.
- Consideration should be given to how the community mediation service can be strengthened and the poorest and most vulnerable given access to legal services.
- The possibility of carrying out a socio-economic impact analysis when marsh lands and other government land is leased/sold to commercial companies, to ensure community members are not adversely affected, should be examined and, if feasible, implemented.
- A full gender impact analysis of all proposed new legislation, policies, prior to approval, should be explored and if feasible implemented.
- Consideration should be given to requiring that all strategies, programmes and implementation plans be accompanied by a gender responsive budget.
- Adult literacy programmes for women should include business skills;
- Consideration should be given to re-introducing a women's guarantee fund and linking such a fund to business development services tailored to meet the specific needs of women.



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