



A social digital tool empowering women to protect their land rights

Land rights key to achieving a gender-just transition

TMG Research, Rainforest Foundation UK and Kenya Land Alliance recognize that land rights are the gateway to women's economic and social empowerment, as well as global progress on achieving sustainable development goals.

But weak implementation of existing legal mechanisms that protect women's land rights impacts their ability to exercise control and decision-making power over the land they depend on for agriculture, food security and land-based livelihoods. This renders women increasingly vulnerable to poverty, exploitation and displacement.

These challenges are compounded by a cascade of other factors. This includes the impacts of climate change on land availability and fertility, patriarchal norms (such as inheritance rights solely transferred to men) and an institutional gap in raising awareness of women's legitimate tenure rights. Moreover, violations of women's tenure rights are frequently perpetrated by family members and entail gender-based violence (GBV) during forcible evictions. This perfect storm of obstacles jeopardizes women's economic and social security, as well as their mental and physical health.

TMG Research, Rainforest Foundation UK and Kenya Land Alliance developed and piloted Haki Ardhi – a powerful new tool that fosters a bottom-up monitoring and reporting of women's land rights violations. Our findings on land rights violations are translated into local legal redress mechanisms and global agenda priorities to strengthen accountability and protect women's rights.



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@Kenya Land Alliance

Harnessing land rights through inclusive digital tools

According to UN reports (2018), there is a severe data gap across the local, national and global levels on the full scope of women's land rights or access to land that would enable them to monitor and enforce their rights.

To bridge this critical gap, TMG Research, Rainforest Foundation UK and Kenya Land Alliance developed and piloted Haki Ardhi – a decentralized rights reporting tool that provides women a safe avenue to report on land conflicts and related GBV. The Haki Ardhi tool takes a multipronged, bottom-up approach to systematically documenting evidence of rights infringements.

It utilizes a toll-free, automated SMS hotline to unite women with paralegals and community workers from well-established and trusted community-based organisations in order to prompt action to resolve tenure

violations. Women are also able to report violations through in-person office consultations. With its diverse reporting options, the tool is accessible for everyone, facilitating broad reach and engagement. And by offering the SMS feature, it likewise reduces women's transportation costs and conflict risks associated with reporting rights violations.

The pilot is conducted in Kakamega and Taita Taveta County in Kenya. Through concerted outreach campaigns and radio broadcasts, the tool has successfully reached and engaged with more than 1,000 women, enhancing their awareness on women's land rights and strengthening support to claim their rights. Importantly, Haki Ardhi also enabled women to speak up louder and exercise more power over their right to land and economic stability.

“The conflict started when my husband got a second wife. He evicted me from our land. When I went to the local authorities, they ignored my case. When I sent an SMS to Haki Ardhi, Shibuye Community Health Workers responded straight away. They got me a lawyer to defend my case – this was a strong sign for my husband. He knew that the law would acknowledge my right to land, so he then let me stay.”

Jemimah Oronga



@ Elijah Mwangi, Anchor Bay Productions

Alarming trends call for action

The tool's impact report highlights alarming trends and emphasises the urgent need for comprehensive action to protect women's land rights.

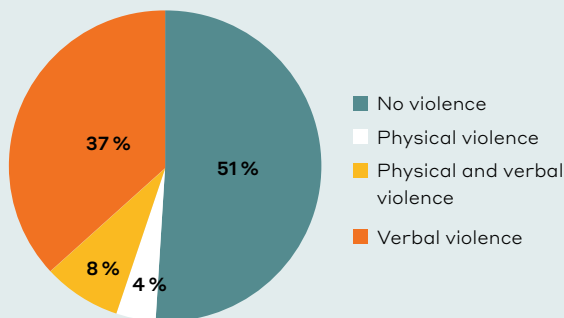
From June 2023 to February 2024, 126 cases were reported. Of this total, 73 women (58%) experienced forced eviction. Around 96% of all reported cases of forced eviction were on family/private land. Almost half of all women (49%) that faced forced eviction reported to have experienced some form of violence.

Moreover, more than half of all women reporting forced eviction are widows. The husband's family is most often mentioned as the one who is forcing the women off their land.

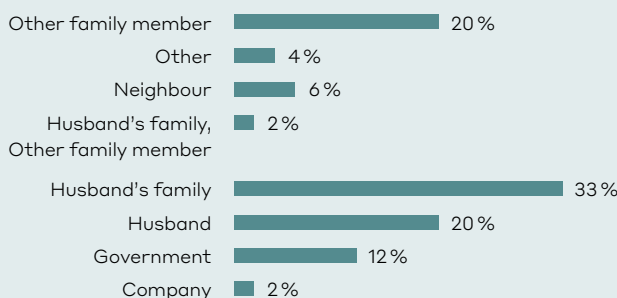
Before women turned to the Haki Ardhi tool, many cases had already been reported to government authorities. But since women did not receive support to settle the land dispute, women decided to harness the power of this reporting tool that put monitoring and reporting directly in the hands of both communities and community-based organisations.¹

¹ Figures based on the analysis of in-person alerts of forced evictions only.

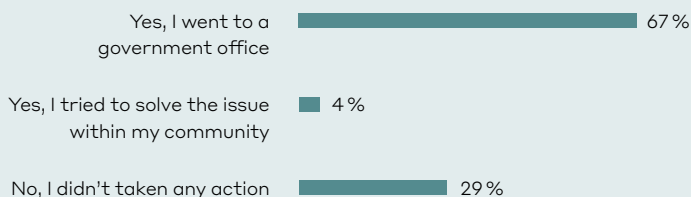
Violence experienced by women who reported forced eviction



Reported perpetrators in cases of forced eviction



Action taken to resolve cases of forced eviction



Land rights data advance accountability

Haki Ardhi has become a powerful tool to enhance visibility around women's rights violations in order to advocate for an effective response to land tenure violations and promote gender equity.

Indeed, increased reporting resulting from Haki Ardhi's adoption has enabled women-led, grassroots organisations to improve their response to rights infringements. For example, the national civil society organization, Kenya Land Alliance, and three Kenyan community-based organisations harness the tool's crowd-sourced data and analyses on rights infringements to hold traditional authorities accountable, as well as local and national governments. Moreover, the



Community event to raise awareness on Haki Ardhi in Kakamega County. @ Kenya Land Alliance

utilisation of near real-time data enables governments to make well-informed decisions and develop effective gender-responsive policies to protect women against rights infringements. This has so far expanded access to justice for women and helped bring about dispute settlements in their favour.

3 Pillars of Haki Ardhi

1. Addressing individual cases
2. Fostering a movement based on solidarity
3. Systems changed generated through informed policy recommendations.

Widespread adoption potential to achieve land justice

Haki Ardhi offers a bottom-up monitoring and reporting system that demonstrates promising potential to increase access to justice, bolster accountability in land governance, and realise just transitions. Despite Haki Ardhi's current focus on women, this tool could also be used to advance land justice for other marginalized groups. This includes Indigenous Peoples and local communities with (unrecognized) customary tenure rights that face displacement caused by the global rush for land capture. For example, in the context of green grabbing, Haki Ardhi makes the scale and nature of people's suffering visible. With this information at hand, TMG Research and its local partners can support more inclusive digital pathways to hold governments to account. In the fight to use data to counter exploitative practices, mitigate the negative impacts of climate change and improve access to justice and redress, Haki Ardhi serves as a valuable investment.

Haki Ardhi's transformational power

In Kakamega County, Shibuye Community Health Workers are using Haki Ardhi data to underpin evidence-based advocacy around protecting women's access to land. Their efforts are already bearing fruits. The local governor of Kakamega is now promoting land lease guidelines as an effective means to secure women's land access.

In Kakamega and Taita Taveta counties, women experience the constant fear of forced eviction due to tenure-insecurity. To help alleviate this, Kenya Land Alliance presented Haki Ardhi data to the Judiciary for both counties to demonstrate a backlog of unresolved tenure cases that violated women's land rights. This prompted the Judiciary to intervene by using the data to identify cases that have long overstayed in court. A week deadline to resolve those cases was then agreed upon to ensure women in both counties can access justice through court processes.



Testing the Haki Ardhi tool during a training with community-based organizations in Taita Taveta County. @ Kenya Land Alliance

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