

GRASSROOTS AND LAND TOOL DEVELOPMENT

The Global Land Tool Network (GLTN) aims to establish a continuum of land rights, rather than just focus on individual land titling; improve and develop pro-poor land management, as well as land tenure tools; unblock existing initiatives; assist in strengthening existing land networks; improve global coordination on land; assist in the development of gendered tools which are affordable and useful to the grassroots; and improve the general dissemination of knowledge about how to implement security of tenure.



Introduction on the Global Land Tools Network

The Global Land Tool Network (GLTN) originates from a request made by Member States and local communities worldwide to UN Habitat and was established in 2006 as a global partnership of key international actors working together to address land tenure and land reforms issues.

The Network aims to help attain the MDGs on poverty alleviation, improved land management and security of tenure. Since its establishment, the GLTN coalition has expanded to 42 partners. These include professional groups, multilateral and bilateral organizations. The number of partners is growing continuously.

All GLTN partners share a common appreciation of the need to develop land tools at scale. They also support the core values of the Network, namely for any initiative to be pro-poor and gender-sensitive in nature. They also agree that it must be affordable, work towards equity, support subsidiarity, and consist of a systematic large-scale approach rather than the more common ad-hoc small-scale initiatives. Criteria for partnership also include operating at the regional or international level, providing financial and/or knowledge-inputs to GLTN's work, and being part of the Network for non-commercial purposes.

Grassroots participation as a cross-cutting issue

To reach the overall goal of poverty alleviation through land reform, improved land management and security of tenure, GLTN's Partners have identified 18 key implementation methods or "tools" which need to be addressed in order to deal with poverty and land issues at the country level, across all regions. These are grouped in 5 themes:

- 1) land rights, records and registration;
- 2) land use planning;
- 3) land management, administration and information;
- 4) land law and enforcement; and
- 5) land value capture.

Since these tools cannot be addressed in technical isolation eight cross-cutting issues have been identified which include grassroots participation. Consequently there is a role for grassroots participation in the design and implementation of all the GLTN tools. While some tools demand high levels of participation (e.g. co-management approaches), even other seemingly technical tools (e.g. land tax, regional land use planning) have clear roles for grassroots participation, either in implementation or design.

The "Grassroots Mechanism" as a cross-cutting strategy

The "Grassroots Mechanism" is being developed in particular by four GLTN Partners: Hakijamii Trust, Huairou Commission, International Land Coalition (ILC) and Slum/Shack Dwellers International (SDI). It is a cross-cutting strategy that responds to the need for grassroots participation in land tool design and development. The report "Not About Us Without Us: Working with grassroots organizations in the land field", which builds on inputs from partners and grassroots representatives, proposes that GLTN's strategy for working with the grassroots should comprise 4 functions:

- 1) ensuring grassroots participation in large-scale land tool development;
- 2) scaling up community-led initiatives;
- 3) strengthening the capacity of the grassroots to engage in land administration and land management; and
- 4) promoting grassroots participation approaches amongst GLTN partners.

A workshop in Nov. 2009 focused on the second function – scaling-up community-led initiatives – as a first step in implementing the Grassroots Mechanism strategy. This has led to the support of 4 projects in 2010 implemented by grassroots organisations affiliated to one of the GLTN partners.

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Answering the challenge of scaling-up

There are many laws and policies related to land and housing rights, planning and administration that are potentially pro-poor and gender-responsive. But the challenge is often implementation: turning policy concepts into realities on the ground, affordably, and at scale. Many answers to this challenge are being developed by grassroots organizations and movements. These grassroots tools tend to have one thing in common; they do not see communities as passive beneficiaries, but foresee the mobilization of communities as active partners in policy implementation. Yet grassroots organizations often face challenges in moving from pilot-level innovation to implementation at scale. These include:

1. Keeping participation meaningful when an approach is replicated at scale, in new locations, and when there is not only a bottom-up, but also a top-down demand for replication.
2. Communicating practical knowledge for successful replication, including critical understandings of opportunities and pitfalls.
3. Developing partnerships with government agencies.

The assistance GLTN and partners are giving to grassroots projects is intended to enable a process of learning and communication to take place, to allow grassroots solutions to make the leap from pilots to large scale impact. It enables experimental replication in new locations as a basis for learning, as well as critical and objective evaluation and documentation, bringing together self-reflection, with independent evaluation and technical support by GLTN and its Partners. Outputs include communication materials to facilitate replication and independent documentation to build understanding and confidence among state actors and donors.

Photos: SPARC, Mujeres Unidas, Tim Bending.

Participatory mapping for city-wide slum up-grading in India

Self-enumeration by slum-dwellers is a well-established tool in the Indian context for protecting and advancing slum-dwellers' rights. Now, the alliance made up of National Federation of Slum-Dwellers, Mahila Milan, and SPARC is seeking to use this tool more proactively to facilitate city-wide slum-upgrading in a way that maintains community ownership over data, empowering them in the planning process. GLTN's support will focus on technical aspects such as spatial data management, helping to evaluate methodologies for bridging the gap between communities and planners. A key strategic aim is to help embed the approach within the up-coming Rajeev Awas Yojana federal slum-upgrading programme.

Community-led disaster mitigation in Lima

In Lima-Callao, many informal settlements are highly vulnerable to natural hazards such as landslides. Government programmes for disaster mitigation exist, yet implementation is hindered by a top-down process, reliant on expensive technical surveys. As an alternative, Mujeres Unidas para un Pueblo Mejor and Estrategia have trained a network of community groups to carry out their own community hazard assessments and to initiate community-led planning, winning support and financing from government agencies. Now these agencies have expressed an interest in adopting and replicating this approach at a larger scale. GLTN's support could be critical in helping to cement this partnership.

Making the Village Land Act work for Maasai women

Tanzania's Village Land Act of 1999 gives people customary rights of occupancy and seeks to secure the tenure rights of women and their role in land decision-making. But it has been hard to make this law work for Maasai pastoralists with no tradition of owning land parcels. The Maasai Women's Development Organisation (MWEDO) supports communities to use the Act through training and support for women's groups, achieving more gender-responsive certification at the village level. GLTN's support for up-scaling aims to provide lessons on the implementation of the Act in relation to women and pastoralists and on enhancing the tenure security of pastoralist women and men in other African contexts.

An alternative to titling in the Philippines

In the Philippines, Indigenous Peoples' claims to ancestral territories have focused on the Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title (CADT). But processing CADT applications has been blocked by complex procedures, expensive surveying requirements and budget constraints. As an interim alternative, Task Force Mapalad is working with Indigenous community-based organisations and government agencies to secure Community-Based Forest Management Agreements that provide security of tenure for up to 50 years through a lease without prejudicing CADT claims. In 2010, GLTN will support up-scaling to 10 communities, accompanied by independent evaluation. This aims to help assess the CBFM approach, identify best practices, and to help strengthen partnerships with the relevant government agencies.