



THE YOUTH AND LAND RESPONSIVENESS CRITERIA STRENGTHENS LAND GOVERNANCE IN UGANDA

ILC'S DATABASE OF GOOD PRACTICES

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Country: Uganda
Principal Organisation: GLTN, UCOBAC

ABSTRACT

The Global Land Tool Network (GLTN), in partnership with Uganda Community Based Association for Women and Children's Welfare (UCOBAC), implemented the Youth and Land Responsiveness Criteria tool (YLRC) in Northern Uganda. The tool evaluates the responsiveness of existing land programmes and policies to the needs of youth in the land sector and identifies bottlenecks they face when accessing land. Additionally, it assesses the involvement and recognition of youth in the land sector.

Further, GLTN and UCOBAC engaged youth in the Secure Access to Resources and Land programme through the Northern Uganda Pader project. The project aims to improve tenure security for smallholder farmers on customary land. Young people who participated in the SALaR programme learned about the existing land governance systems, empowering them to represent the youth in land dispute forums and land governance institutions. At the local level, the youth are more involved in land governance generally.

ILC COMMITMENTS



SECURE TENURE RIGHTS



INCLUSIVE DECISION-MAKING



COMPETENCIES

AREAS

YOUTH

SKILLS

- LAND POLICY AND MULTI-STAKEHOLDER DIALOGUE
- MAPPING AND LAND REGISTRATION
- PROJECT DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT

BACKGROUND

Uganda has one of the fastest-growing and youngest populations globally, with about 24 per cent of the population aged between 20 and 34 years (UBOS, 2020). Youth in Uganda face a significant challenge of unemployment, with the rate among youth at 40%. Although statutory law and custom govern access to land, legal statutes often fail to protect youth land rights. Instead, youth often rely on their customary rights and inheritance to access land.

Despite making up much of the population, Ugandan youth face many barriers in accessing land, especially in the aftermath of the Lord's Resistance Army insurgency in Northern Uganda. The insurgency-induced internal displacements resulted in social disruption and multi-level conflicts

over land. The lack of clarity on land boundaries further resulted in disputes among youth who grew up in internally displaced people's camps and never learned about customary boundary demarcations from their elders. Most lands are held under customary tenure in rural areas, with the 1998 Land Act providing for communal ownership and perpetual land use. However, although the Land Act and the National Land Policy (2013) have provisions for Certificates of Customary Ownership, marginalised groups, including the youth and women, do not register their customary land rights. They face challenges, including ignorance of registration procedures, limited involvement in land processes and decisions, and poverty.

THE CHALLENGE

Customary land rights generally vest in the community and clan leaders. However, the war disrupted social relations between the generations, changing young people's perceptions and approaches to traditional land management systems and prevailing methods of accessing and owning land. In the post-war society, most youths settled in growing urban areas, taking on urban economic activities and neglecting rural land

governance. As a result, the clan and community elders took the lead in land governance, excluding the youths from community land governance.

OVERCOMING THE CHALLENGE

GLTN's work on youth is consensus-driven, aiming to streamline youth land rights into all land-related platforms and processes in Uganda. The YLRC tool empowers youth to partake in land dialogue and facilitates tenure security for youths. GLTN's work in Uganda is three-pronged:

- 1 Supporting the government in implementing the National Land Policy (NLP), in cooperation with the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development and its secretariat for implementing and coordinating issues relating to land. Specifically, GLTN coordinates the implementation of the NLP and institutes strategies for legal and policy review processes relating to community land rights. Additionally, GLTN works with the government to harmonise, create consensus, and align the Land Act and the NLP.
- 2 Supporting the government to develop strategies and tools to address contemporary land issues by documenting land rights and facilitating tenure security in Uganda. These tools include the Uganda Gender Strategy for National Land Policy Implementation, pro-poor tools,
- 3 Championing multi-stakeholder platforms to promote the harmonisation, alignment and coordination of land sector activities led by various multi-stakeholder platforms such as the Northern Uganda Land Platform, the National Engagement Strategy, the women's land rights movement and the customary ownership working groups.

MOVING TOWARDS PEOPLE-CENTRED LAND GOVERNANCE

GLTN and UCOBAC work with local communities and stakeholders in multi-stakeholder platforms to protect, promote, and register youth land rights. They assess the youth responsiveness of land governance processes and platforms in Uganda using the YLRC tool. The YLRC tool ensures that the interests and challenges of the youth in accessing land are understood and integrated into land programmes and projects systematically and comprehensively to achieve secure land tenure for all. As a result of UCOBAC and GLTN implementing the YLRC in Uganda, the greater community managed to identify interventions to change perceptions about young people and include them in land-related decision-making processes.

THE GOOD PRACTICE IN FIVE SIMPLE STEPS



1

UNDERSTANDING THE YLRC TOOL

First, it is crucial to understand the YLRC tool as youth access to land is a relatively new focus. The YLRC tool is a consensus-based tool that facilitates land-related discussions between the youth and other stakeholders. The tool assesses the youth responsiveness of land programmes, policies, and other land tools to ensure youth access to land and tenure security. The indicators for youth responsiveness include understanding the definition of youth in the land sector, land rights literacy, participation in land governance, and youth access to land. It also provides opportunities for youth to identify bottlenecks and opportunities to secure land rights.

2

IMPLEMENTING THE TOOL

GLTN and UCOBAC conducted a three-day workshop at Pader town council to introduce the theme and tool to the youth. In the training workshop, the youth learned about the benefits attached to secure land tenure rights. They worked in focus groups based on their regions to identify their local challenges. At the end of the workshop, they created a database of information on youth access to land based on the participants' contributions and research. Further capacity-building training assisted the youth in gaining new skills such as the use of GPS and land mapping technologies, which are assets to the community and government institutions.

3

DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTING OUTCOMES

After interviews with the youth focus groups, research information is analysed to identify the challenges and opportunities to strengthen youth land rights. The outcomes are grouped under the following themes:

- 1 Criteria for youth recognition in land governance.
- 2 Ensuring youth access to land information and identifying potential barriers to accessing the information.
- 3 Ensuring that structures are in place for active youth participation in land governance.
- 4 Ensuring that existing land policies and mechanisms address the youths' land needs.

4

EVIDENCE-BASED ADVOCACY

Based on the collected data, GLTN and UCOBAC analysed the information to draw recommendations to increase youth participation in decision-making and ensure youth access to land. UCOBAC and GLTN designed three recommendations:

- 1 Advocacy to ensure youth representation and meaningful participation in decision-making.
- 2 Community engagement and awareness-raising on the existing land policies and laws.
- 3 Training and capacity building for youth in the following areas:
 - i Interpretation and application of land laws and policies,
 - ii Land use and livelihood options for young people,
 - iii Network-building to organise the youth to participate in land governance, and
 - iv Advocacy and lobbying for inclusive and youth-friendly land policies at the local and national levels

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AWARENESS-RAISING ACTIVITIES ABOUT YOUTH AND LAND-RELATED CHALLENGES

GLTN and UCOBAC work to raise national awareness about the challenges that the youth face at a local level. This includes working with government actors and other relevant stakeholders and television campaigns on NTV Uganda, where government lawyers and GLTN and UCOBAC staff discussed the challenges of youth access to land, emphasising gendered challenges.



KEY FACTORS OF SUCCESS FOR REPLICABILITY AND ADAPTABILITY PURPOSES

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The YLRC tool is customisable to suit the local context. Thus, GLTN used it to diagnose the challenges and opportunities in various regions with different backgrounds. Additionally, this information can be used in capacity building exercises for the benefit of the youth. Finally, the YLRC tool is a participatory tool that empowers youth to gain land governance skills that can be used in community land governance platforms and government institutions.

FIND OUT MORE

Kobusingye, D. (2020). *African youths; the forgotten category in land governance. A case study of post-conflict Acholi Region, Northern Uganda*. Geoforum, 109, 135-142. doi: 10.1016/j.geoforum.2018.06.008

Youth and Land Responsiveness Criteria Tool

<https://gltn.net/download/how-responsive-is-your-land-programme-to-the-needs-of-youth/>

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LESSONS LEARNED

Although GLTN began working in Uganda in 2012, youth access to land was not prioritised at the time. However, this changed in 2017 as the importance of youth land rights became apparent. Using the YLRC tool, GLTN and UCOBAC learned that youth are not a homogeneous group, and different youth groups face diverse challenges and thus requiring different solutions. For example, young women face an additional gender barrier in accessing land, predominantly under customary tenure systems—additionally, the tool assists in identifying the unique bottlenecks and opportunities relating to youth from different regions.



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