

Grassroots Women Innovations For Securing Land: A Tool for Sustainable Development

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Violet Shivutse, Grassroots Woman
Expert
GROOTS Kenya

Introduction

- Home-based caregivers identified large numbers of cases of disinherited widows and orphans
- Most of the women living with HIV/AIDS were day to day chased from homes and denied accessibility to land after losing their spouses.
- The problem continued to promote HIV/AIDS as the affected women were forced to engage in risky sexual practices for survival.

Grassroots Women's Approach to Securing Land Tenure

- Community Mapping and Documentation
- Community Action Plan
- Formation of Community Watchdog groups
- Sharing Approaches and Replication

Community Mapping

- Mapping helped to deepen understanding of the underlying causes of property stripping of widows and orphans.
- Understand the structures of the legal institutions and how effectively they respond to women's land rights.



How to conduct effective Community Mapping

- Focus group discussion with affected women;
- One to one interviews and gather testimonies of affected women;
- Interviews with representatives from relevant institutions;
- Documentation of the findings that are evidence-based;
- Conduct community feedback forums.

Community Mapping and Documentation



The Power of Testimonies

- Testimonies reveal the ineffectiveness in legal institutions.



Community Feedback Forums

- Bring community institutions that address issues of disinheritance including traditional, cultural, social, and religious
- Bring community members together to drive a women led action plan where each member of the community is to be involved and committed.
- Let the affected women share their experiences to highlight the evidence of gaps in existing institutions, systems in place.

Community Women Led Action Plan

- During feedback forum, community develops its response to issues raised, led by the grassroots caregivers and the affected women.

Formation of Watchdog Groups

- The Watchdog Group is a tool that was built as a systematic, community-based response to safeguard the rights of women, orphans and vulnerable children.
- Watchdog Groups have become community tools that provide institutional and participatory protection to guard against property grabbing, monitor communities for cases of women's dispossession, raise alarm in cases of disinheritance or eviction.
- The Watchdog Group comprises of all community institutions including the Provincial Administration, community opinion leaders, women caregivers and the affected women.

Effective Community Watchdog Strategy

- Should have support from male members of community, especially leaders in decision-making.
- Watchdog Group members should know all issues related to land and women, and should create room for more learning.
- Should have basic knowledge of law and administrative processes.
- Should be committed and ready to challenge the existing gaps in law and practice.

Effective Watchdog (cont'd)

- Should be able to act as a conflict resolution mechanism and support to mending social fabrics within the community
- An effective Watchdog Group should not only address issues, but enforce preventative measures, e.g. will writings, support women to write documents.
- Should create room for education of the community and awareness creation.

From legal to development...



...Effective Community Watchdog
Groups assist on various levels.



Community Paralegals

- People who can articulate issues concerning law in community are identified by the community and trained as community paralegals.
- Community Paralegals gives legal advice to the community and affected women.
- Community paralegals strengthen the legal institutions.
- They enhance the capacity of the community to understand the law and the rights of people.
- Community paralegals are human rights defenders at community level.

Effective Community Paralegals

Be able to understand and articulate basic laws and policies on land.

- Show interest in community matters that violates peoples rights
- Should be members of Watchdog Groups or constituencies – e.g. member of the affected women, an ally of the affected group.
- Should be trained to understand how to integrate development into paralegal affairs.

A Community Paralegal supporting the community members to write their wills...



Why are Grassroots Women's Innovations Important?

- The innovations are pro-poor.
- They can easily be adopted and modified to suit a given community.
- They promote participatory sustainable development.
- The solutions are developed from experiences of the community with the issues.

Thank You! Asante Sana!



Grassroots women anchoring campaign on secure land tenure in Kenya during the Hunger Free Campaign, 2007