



Ghana

MCC Learning from

“MCC – Ghana 1 Land Tenure Facilitation (LTF) Activity”

World Bank Gender Innovation Lab

MCC has identified the following programmatic and evaluation lessons based on the MCC – Ghana 1 Land Tenure Facilitation Activity (part of the Agriculture Project)

PROGRAMMATIC LESSONS

- *MCC’s rural development projects are often built around interdependent multisector investments; however, in practice, separate implementation of these projects often occurs as they move at different speeds with distinct stakeholders. MCC should remove dependencies except when absolutely needed or consider how to structure these investments to ensure alignment.* In Ghana, the Agriculture Project expected that complementary investments in farmer training, land access, access to credit, and rural roads would support agricultural productivity and farmer access to markets. However, in practice, the implementation of roads, agriculture and land programs were distinct and occurred in different locations. The agriculture and LTF efforts were not advancing at the same rate, and the LTF selected a district in a peri-urban rather than a rural agricultural area. This led LTF to spin off from the Agriculture Project and act as a standalone project. In the end LTF did not lead to the project goal of improving agricultural productivity though it had standalone benefits of increasing off-farm incomes.

Similar occurrences have happened in other land interventions. In MCC’s Participatory Land Use Planning under the Green Prosperity (GP) Project in Indonesia, the land activities moved forward at a quicker pace than the rest of GP and areas selected were distinct from those of GP investments. At other times, the interventions have occurred in tandem. In Senegal, the land and irrigated infrastructure activities implemented in tandem in the same irrigated perimeter.

The key is understanding the critical issues, including whether an interdependency in fact exists or whether there are really separate but related interventions that should stand on their own. The best strategy may be to reduce interdependencies where possible and structure these as standalone projects with their own evaluation assessment and economic rate of return. In cases where interventions are dependent on one another and key to obtaining results, MCC should consider how to best structure these multisector investment to maintain alignment of all project activities.

- *Land registration does not always translate into increases in agricultural investments or credit taking. When dealing with peri-urban areas, land values often increase and can lead to off-farm labor, land sales and land consolidation.* In Ghana, the Agriculture Project expected to increase

access to commercial agricultural land and improved tenure while increasing agricultural productivity. Instead, households increased off farm labor while decreasing agricultural labor. This was accompanied by only a small reduction in agricultural production and no changes to agricultural productivity. This result may partially be due to the program area's location in a peri-urban area on the outskirts of Accra rather than a remote rural farm area. In addition to the compact's road construction, there were additional existing roads. With urbanization and better transportation links, land values rose in peri-urban areas. Households consolidated land into larger owned parcels (away from sharecropping) and moved from farm to off farm labor. Anecdotal evidence pointed to people establishing commercial businesses and small shops instead of continuing small gardens/farms. MCC should consider land tenure effects on labor, as well as the potential for households consolidating land.

- *Dependency on demand for titles/registration of land use rights is risky, especially when there is a high cost to obtain a title or unknown demand. More attention should be paid to public awareness raising and stimulating demand for land services, especially amid first-time land registration for a country.* When outcomes depend on receipt of a land title/land use right, yet the program is structured around landholders demanding a title from new or improved land governance system, or paying a fee to obtain the land title/certificate, the program risks failure amid low demand. High cost is a potential driver of low demand. LTF planned to issue 2,500 land certificates out of the approximately 3,800 existing property rights in the program district; however, by the compact end, around 1,500 titles were issued out of 5,700 land parcels inventoried. During the compact, MCC paid for the certificates but afterwards, residents were responsible for the \$165 to obtain the land certificate. In addition, there was relatively weak awareness of land rights (57%) at the end of the compact. In Benin, land certificates, were similarly not widely issued in the program area, as households had to demand and pay for them. However, in Benin's case, there were also village land use plans, which provided feelings of security and related expected outcomes even without the land certificates. Alternatively, in Mozambique and Lesotho, DUATs, and leases, respectively, were issued by compact activities at no cost and as such easier to measure returns once the government approved and processed the certificate.

Moving forward, MCC might want to consider either systematic registration of land rights or ensuring there is known demand for land titles and related awareness of their rights and willingness to pay. Complimentary investments, particularly in public awareness raising around the importance of titles, might be needed to drive demand for these rights. Although District Land Commission Offices were established and some titles issued, Ghana would have benefitted from more public outreach and education to garner interest by land holders for formal land certificates. Ghana carried out community sensitization exercises but no public awareness campaigns. Per the global land logic model, addressing all significant constraints is needed to allow outcomes to fully realize. In this case, the institutions were strengthened, and land recognition interventions conducted but public awareness and training was not established when this was a new process—first time registration. Alternatively, Mongolia conducted national public awareness campaigns along with legal and policy reforms that catalyzed demand for registered title, including mortgage subsidy. Compact design should include public awareness raising when there are new legal and procedural reforms or new institutions and systems, especially when trying to catalyze demand for first time statutory recognition of land rights.

- *It is key to carefully identify the constraints to growth and ensure project design is sufficiently detailed and scoped accordingly to addresses those specific constraints. If not, the program may focus on other sector aspects not originally envisioned.* Access to land was identified as a key constraint to investment. Although LTF did open and strengthen a couple land offices, its focus turned to mapping and issuance of land leases for the pilot district. This was supposed to improve tenure and related willingness to invest on farmland with the expectation of higher agricultural production. The mapping and leasing process did formalize existing informal land arrangements and allow for future business transactions to occur legally. However, LTF did not address the more complex land administration issues around land management and accessibility which would improve the ability for investors to access and develop agriculture land. Part of the issue stems from an incomplete understanding of the rural institutions and their management of land prior to compact implementation. This weakened MCC's ability to design a project that fully addressed the constraints around land access.
- *When it is the first-time formalizing land rights in the country, there is a steep learning curve as related institutions and procedures are established or strengthened. This leads to both longer implementation timelines, as well as higher sustainability risks. Projects should be scoped accordingly.* LTF originally was designed to work in 27 districts, but the scope was decreased to 9 districts by compact signing due to concerns around the five-year timeline constraints. During implementation, the LTF scope was decreased to two and then one district. One main issue was this was the first time that land was registered. As such, it took significant time to get the procedures developed, adopted, and implemented. Alternatively, in cases like Mozambique, Lesotho, and Cabo Verde, which had existing procedures in place for provision of DUATs, land leases, and titles, were able to complete large-scale formalization efforts during the compact period. These cases also were bolstered by having a contractor conduct the mapping and formalization process.

Future compacts when scoping first time land formalization efforts should consider the level of support and time necessary to establish these institutions and procedures, as well as to carry out related training and resolve issues that undoubtedly arise during first time rights registration. Pilot activities might be helpful prior to full rollout. For example, in Togo Threshold, MCC will pilot the land formalization effort before pursuing any largescale rollout. Similarly, in Indonesia there was a pilot period prior to rolling out village mapping at a larger scale, and in Burkina Faso, there was a pilot initiative setting up land administration offices prior to rolling out these procedures and institutions at a broad scale. However, this leads to timeline constraints on the second phase areas, especially as it relates to sustainability and fully training officials and building demand for formal land rights.

- *When land offices are established at the end of a compact, it is hard to ensure sustainability and effective operations. Land offices would benefit from operationalization earlier in the compact to allow a period of learning or MCC or clear agreements in place with other donors to support these institutions once the compact ends.* For LTF, the District Land Commission was established towards the end of the compact. Although the evaluation did not focus on sustainability of the land office, the understanding was the World Bank would continue strengthening and using the offices as part of its Land Administration Project (LAP). Similarly, in Mozambique, the Dutch took over the land information system and related capacity building of the provincial and national land offices. The dependence on donors is riskier but allows more time for these

offices to improve their operations with support. Alternatively, MCC can establish offices early in the compact and work together through any potential operational issues prior to compact end.

EVALUATION LESSONS

- *Women and men, even within the same household, have distinct responses to improvements in land tenure security. In order to capture these distinct effects, land evaluation data collection modules should include spousal modules and parcel manager surveys.* There are important within household differences in how women and men respond differentially. In Ghana, while there appears to be a general shift to non-farm economic activities, women's business profits, in particular, increase considerably. In Benin, following improvements in tenure security, women were more likely to leave land fallow, a key soil fertility investment. Evaluations using household surveys usually only obtain responses from household heads and fail to get the responses from women in the household. Similarly sampling often does not have sufficient women headed households to be able to look at effects on women. Many MCC land evaluations have included modules for parcel managers or spouses. It is important to try and acknowledge these beneficiary differences in the logic models which form the base for the evaluation. Having data on women and not just women headed households will not only add to the ability to detail effects on women and improve future economic modeling and logic frameworks but also provide information on which we can improve future land designs.
- *Impact evaluations dependent on household surveys benefit from triangulation with complimentary administrative data and qualitative data. This is especially true when trying to capture big picture objectives around land use administration, land transaction time, land use, land markets and land conflicts.* A key data source to understand changes in access to agricultural land is land administrative data on volume of land transaction requests and approvals around agricultural land and whether the land offices were sustained and continued functioning post compact. This data was not reviewed for the LTF evaluation beyond to verify tenure status of parcels against perceived tenure status by the households. Qualitative data would have also been able to answer the questions of why we saw some unexpected data trends. For example, focus groups or key informant interviews could have answered why women were more likely than men to go off-farm as the expectation was women would increase farm labor once land tenure more secure. MCC's impact evaluations now use multiple data sources, including not only household and parcel surveys but also administrative data, qualitative data, and geospatial data.
- *When there are key changes to implementation and related objectives, logic frameworks, and evaluation models, should be reviewed and updated in line with these changes.* There are often updates to project implementation that are not expected during project design. In this case, not only did the number of pilot areas decrease to one district but implementation changed from a rural area overlapping with the larger agricultural project to a peri-urban area without supporting agricultural activities. The evaluation objectives were never updated from attracting investors and growing high value crops to reflect outcomes more in line with formalizing tenure and setting up a land institution around a peri-urban area close to Accra near a road network. Although some farming was occurring, these parcels were more a mix of small garden and farm plots without a large potential for commercial farming.

The evaluation “surprisingly” found moves to off-farm labor rather than increased investment into farm land, but when consider the program was implemented in a peri-urban area, the improved tenure security leading to off-farm labor and profits is not surprising. In fact, the findings are in line with those in Peru around informal settlements that show improved tenure led to increased labor and income. In the future, key changes in implementation should be reviewed by MCC and the independent evaluator to see if a change in logic and evaluation design is required.

- *Evaluations should focus on the key program objectives rather than a component where it is feasible to implement an impact evaluation.* In early compacts, the evaluations focused on impact evaluations and hence formalization of land rights was measured. In Ghana’s case, a prime objective of LTF was complimenting the agriculture project by improving the ability to access land for cultivation with a secondary goal around improving tenure and related agricultural productivity of existing land users. The evaluation, however, focused on the strengthening land tenure via land formalization side and related benefit streams, like agricultural productivity, without a focus on the project’s prime objective under the Compact. Understanding existing land tenure rights is key for the land administration agency to make effective land allocation decisions, but the provision of land certificates and strengthening agriculture investments and productivity of existing households was not the project’s original objective of improving access to land.

Although the evaluation was informative on effects of LTF on labor and agricultural productivity, it did not provide an understanding of whether the program reached its original goal. The evaluation research questions, data sources and analysis did not assess changes in access to land. Part of this was due to MCC policy at the time which largely focused on where impact evaluation was possible. Now MCC reviews the entire set of programs and their results. In current cases like Indonesia’s Participatory Land Use Planning Activity under the Green Prosperity Project, MCC has restructured evaluations in coordination with the independent evaluator to not only look at village level and household effects but to also look at the big picture for changes in land use planning and administration of land use rights.

- *When establishing a comparison group in land, care should be taken to avoid splitting communities which are under the same land administration unit.* During LTF, a road was used to form program and comparison groups. The road split left the community split in half. Although the split was good from a statistical point of view as the households and land were comparable, it created problems at a practical level as these households were all under the same land administrative unit. Beyond the practical issues, when looking at effects and longer-term sustainability of land governance systems, it is helpful to have your whole administrative area mapped and registered. Two divergent systems of land rights are difficult to manage and sustain.