Factsheet
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Securing Tenure, Forests and Livelihoods in Madagascar and Cameroon

Gender differences in local tenure systems in Madagascar

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Key messages

- For both men and women in Ambatoben'Anjavy and Sadjoavato Communes, most parcels are in household or individual ownership.
- Both men and women most commonly acquire land through inheritance.
- Women in both communes are more likely than men to own parcels jointly and are more likely than men to be sharecroppers, both potential indicators of weaker tenure security.
- Nonetheless, most men and women in both communes perceive their access to land to be secure.

Background

Securing Tenure, Forests and Livelihoods in Madagascar and Cameroon is a participatory action research project designed to develop tools to enable forest landscape restoration (FLR) programme managers, practitioners and policymakers to have a better understanding of how community tenure systems operate, as well as when, how and for whom they deliver tenure security. Funded by Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the project compares community tenure systems in Madagascar and Cameroon, two African countries investing in tenure reform and FLR. Data for the study were collected through a household survey, focus group discussions, and key informant interviews.

In Madagascar, very little has been documented about women's legal land ownership or access – and even less about women's land access and ownership within local or customary tenure systems. Yet access to land is vital for both women's and men's livelihoods, so the topic of how women access land or gain ownership to land deserves more attention. This factsheet summarizes gender differences in key tenure patterns in Ambatoben'Anjavy and Sadjoavato Communes, the two study sites in northern Madagascar (Figure 1).

Study context

Sadjoavato Commune is located about 50 kilometres south of the port city of Antsiranana, along a relatively well-maintained portion of National Road 6, which links northern Madagascar to Antananarivo. Ambatoben'Anjavy Commune is also located along National Road 6 but is nearly three times further away from Antsiranana. The Mahavavy River, which flows the length of the commune along its eastern edge, frequently floods during the cyclone season (December through March). Consequently, much of the commune is inaccessible by motor vehicle for several months each year. As in most parts of rural Madagascar, agriculture is the predominant source of livelihood in both communes. The local farming system consists of permanent rice fields in the bottomlands, with the uplands used for dryland or rainfed crops. The *fondra*, or areas between the bottomlands and uplands, are used for agroforestry, where annual and perennial subsistence crops are grown in combination with commodity crops, such as cacao beans and sugar cane, as well as fruit trees.

Key gender differences and similarities in tenure patterns

1. Women and men had land that fell into one or more of the three local ownership categories (Table 1). However, the frequency of each ownership category differed for men and women (Table 2).

Key patterns common to both sites:

- A higher percentage of parcels owned by men fell into the individual/household category than those owned by women.
- Within the individual/household category, women were more likely to own the land jointly, typically with their spouse.
- Parcels held by women were more likely to be in the "other land" category than those held by men.[1]

2. Women and men acquired access to land in the same ways in Ambatoben'Anjavy and Sadjoavato, but in very different proportions (Table 3).

- Men are more likely than women to inherit land from their family and are less likely to have access through marriage.
- Men are more likely than women to have purchased land.
- Women are more likely than men to access land as sharecroppers.
- A chi-squared analysis for mode of access by gender found statistically significant differences for both communes.

3. Both men and women perceived that most of their parcels were secure (Table 4), but differences existed across the two communes.

- In Sadjoavato, more than two-thirds of women's (72.42%) and men's (70.15%) parcels were perceived as secure.[2]
- In Ambatoben'Anjavy, the percentage of men's parcels considered secure was similar to Sadjoavato (73.99%). However, only 61.4% of women's parcels were considered secure, a difference that was statistically significant (*X-squared = 29.708, df = 5, p-value = 1.683e-05*).

Key informant interviews suggest that the differences between the two sites might be attributable to the still very strong traditional (*Zafinifotsy*) authority structure in Ambatoben'Anjavy, in which men have a higher social status than women. In Sadjoavato, the population is more ethnically diverse and includes groups who have a less strong social hierarchy than the aristocratic Zafinifotsy lineage. Moreover, it is not uncommon for women in Sadjoavato to occupy important social positions. Indeed, the current mayor of Sadjoavato is a woman.

Forest landscape restoration implications

- Overall, most of the parcels held by women in the two communes are perceived as secure. This has potentially favourable implications for engaging women in forest landscape restoration, as they are likely to anticipate benefits from any trees they plant on land that they can access.
- However, women's parcels are much more likely than men's parcels to be held jointly, whether with a spouse or the extended family. Consequently, women are less likely to have sole decision-making authority over their parcels than men. Forest landscape restoration practitioners will need to ensure that women – as well as men – are engaged in decisions on where to plant trees, and which species to plant.
- Women's parcels are much more likely than men's parcels to be accessed under sharecropping agreements. This is problematic for forest landscape restoration because in both communes, landowners generally allow sharecroppers to cultivate only annual or short-cycle crops (e.g., rice, market garden crops, rainfed crops), since the agreement could be terminated after one season.[3] Landowners typically do not allow sharecroppers to plant trees because, according to local custom, tree planting can be used to support a land ownership claim. If a goal is to encourage tree planting on sharecropped land, one possible solution would be to facilitate agreements between landowners and sharecroppers,

1 Other land includes land perceived as belonging to another private person or individual not related to the person in the household; an employer; a company; a cooperative; the village; the commune; or the national government.

2 We defined a "secure parcel" as one that the respondents felt they would "unlikely" or "very unlikely" lose access to within five years.

3 Our team found some instances where sharecroppers were allowed to plant trees, but in these cases, the sharecroppers were sons of the landowners and were future heirs to the parcel being sharecropped.

clearly stating the rights of each party and specifying, for example, that the sharecropper may harvest the fruits or own the tree, but may not lay claim to the land.

Our study results suggest that it is important for forest landscape restoration practitioners to understand how women gain access to land in the project area, as well as whether and where women have rights to plant trees on their land. It is critical to work with women's organizations active in the project area in order to include women in decisions on the focus of forest landscape restoration efforts; to identify the restoration approaches that are most appropriate for meeting women's needs; and to encourage the widespread adoption of such practices as well as the equitable distribution of benefits associated with forest landscape restoration.

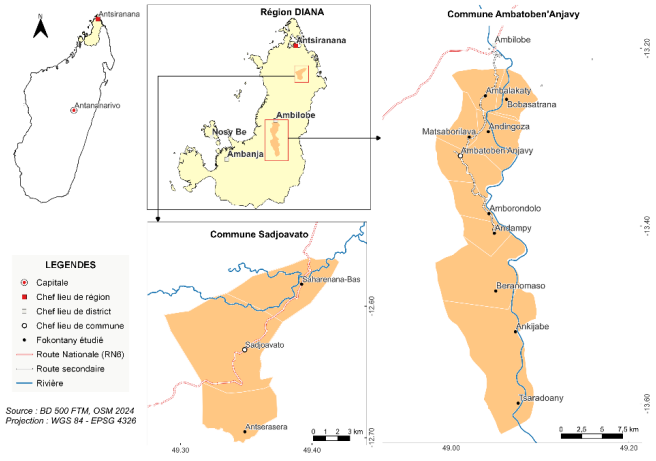

Figure 1. Location of Sadjoavato and Ambatoben'Anjavy Communes

Figure 2. Women's focus group, northern Madagascar

Table 1. Local ownership categories for men and women

Local ownership category	Who owns this parcel?	Ambatoben'Anjavy				Sadjoavato			
		Women		Men		Women		Men	
		Number of parcels (n)	Percent (%)	Number of parcels (n)	Percent (%)	Number of parcels (n)	Percent (%)	Number of parcels (n)	Percent (%)
Individual/ household land	I own it myself (alone)	62	38.51	201	58.60	85	34.27	168	64.62
	I own it jointly with my spouse	19	11.80	4	1.17	36	14.52	15	5.77
	A family member living in this household	80	49.69	138	40.23	127	51.21	77	29.62
	Total household parcels	161	100	343	100	248	100	260	100.01
Extended family land	A family member not living in this household	105	100	139	97.20	111	92.50	101	99.02
	Extended family	0	0	3	2.10	8	6.67	1	0.98
	Lineage	0	0	1	0.7	1	0.83	0	0
	Total family parcels	105	100	143	100	120	100	102	100
Other land	An unrelated individual	42	85.71	32	65.31	49	68.06	23	60.53
	Employer	1	2.04	13	26.53	15	20.83	11	28.95
	Public institution	4	8.16	0	0	7	9.72	3	7.89
	Cooperative	1	2.04	0	0	1	1.39	0	0
	Village	1	2.04	4	8.16	0	0	1	2.63
	Total other land	49	99.99	49	100	72	100	38	100

Table 2. Chi-square tests between gender and local ownership category

Tenure Category	Ambatoben'Anjavy	Sadjoavato
Household land	X-squared = 74.05, df = 1, p-value < 2.2e-16	X-squared = 51.617, df = 3, p-value = 3.614e-11
Family land	X-squared = 4.7647, df = 1, p-value = 0.02905	X-squared = 1.4595, df = 1, p-value = 0.227
Other land	X-squared = 0.0082645, df = 1, p-value = 0.9276	X-squared = 9.4696, df = 1, p-value = 0.002089

Table 3. Mode of access by gender

Mode of access	Ambatoben'Anjavy (N=876 parcels)				Sadjoavato (N=850 parcels)			
	Men		Women		Men		Women	
	Number of parcels (n)	Percent (%)	Number of parcels (n)	Percent (%)	Number of parcels (n)	Percent (%)	Number of parcels (n)	Percent (%)
Inherited from my family	305	55.76	15	46.81	238	59.06	209	46.76
Inherited through marriage	14	2.56	42	12.77	15	3.72	51	11.41
Gift	70	12.80	36	10.94	29	7.20	24	5.37
Sharecropping	48	8.78	47	14.29	52	12.90	83	18.57
Purchased	75	13.71	28	8.51	43	10.67	39	8.72
Others	35	6.40	22	6.69	26	6.45	41	9.17
Total	547	100	329	100	40	100	447	100

Chi-squared test results: Ambatoben'Anjavy: X-squared = 70.798, df = 10, p-value = 3.109e-11; Sadjoavato: X-squared = 46.91, df = 11, p-value = 2.231e-06

Table 4. Gender and tenure security perceptions

Risk of losing rights within five years	Ambatoben'Anjavy N=875				Sadjoavato N=848			
	Women		Men		Women		Men	
	Number of parcels (n)	Percent (%)	Number of parcels (n)	Percent (%)	Number of parcels (n)	Percent (%)	Number of parcels (n)	Percent (%)
Very unlikely	128	38.91	265	48.53	185	41.48	174	43.28
Unlikely	74	22.49	139	25.46	138	30.94	108	26.87
Likely	80	24.32	114	20.88	65	14.57	75	18.66
Very likely	29	8.81	15	2.75	34	7.62	27	6.72
Don't know	18	5.47	11	2.01	22	4.93	18	4.48
Did not respond	0	0	2	0.37	2	0.45	0	0
Total	329	100	546	100	446	100	402	100

Chi-squared test results: Ambatoben'Anjavy: X-squared = 29.708, df = 5, p-value = 1.683e-05, Sadjoavato: X-squared = 6.5464, df = 6, p-value = 0.3648

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