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COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING, DESIGN, ART AND TECHNOLOGY

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DEPARTMENT OF GEOMATICS AND LAND MANAGEMENT

ADVANCING WOMEN'S LAND RIGHTS THROUGH FIT-FOR-PURPOSE LAND ADMINISTRATION: EVIDENCE FROM KITUMBA SUBCOUNTY, KABALE DISTRICT, UGANDA

BY

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DECLARATION

I, BOGERE EDRISA, do hereby declare that this Dissertation is a record of my original work and has not been submitted for any academic award at any other institution. Where other sources have been used, they have been duly acknowledged in accordance with Makerere University's academic integrity policy.

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APPROVAL

This is to certify that this research report titled "Advancing Women's Land rights through Fit For Purpose Lnad Aministration: Evidence from Kitumba Subcounty, Kabale District" has been submitted to the Department of Geomatics and Land Management with my approval.

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Date..12/06/2026.....

DEDICATION

To the women of Kitumba Subcounty, whose courage in claiming their land rights in the face of deeply entrenched custom inspired every page of this work.

And to my family, for their unwavering patience and encouragement.

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List of Acronyms

ALC	Area Land Committee
ALIS	Availability of Land Information Systems
ALS	Accessibility of Land Administration Services
AU	African Union
AWLR	Advancement of Women's Land Rights
CCO	Certificate of Customary Ownership
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CPLG	Community Participation in Land Governance
CSO	Civil Society Organization
ESAFF	Eastern and Southern Africa Small Scale Farmers Forum
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FFP-LA	Fit-for-Purpose Land Administration
GLTN	Global Land Tool Network
ICRW	International Center for Research on Women
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IIRR	International Institute of Rural Reconstruction
KII	Key Informant Interview
MLHUD	Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SLAAC	Systematic Land Adjudication and Certification
SRP	Simplicity of Registration Procedures
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
UBOS	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
UN	United Nations
WEF	World Economic Forum

ABSTRACT

Despite Uganda's progressive legal framework for gender equality in land, women in Kitumba Subcounty, Kabale District remain constrained by patrilineal customary norms, weak land documentation, and socio-cultural barriers. Fit-for-Purpose Land Administration (FFP-LA) has been deployed in the subcounty as a participatory response, yet community-level evidence on how it translates into improved tenure security for women remains limited in Uganda. This study assessed the impact of FFP-LA in advancing women's land rights in Kitumba Subcounty, analysing women's land ownership, use, and control rights before and after implementation and FFP-LA's influence on women's participation and decision-making in land governance.

A convergent parallel mixed-methods design was adopted, integrating a structured questionnaire survey with key informant interviews and Focus Group Discussions. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics, Likert-scale mean comparisons, and cross-tabulations; qualitative data were analysed thematically and triangulated.

FFP-LA implementation produced substantial improvements across all four analytical dimensions, with Likert mean scores rising from the Disagree range (2.30–2.65) to the Agree–Strongly Agree range (4.36–4.57), an overall gain of +1.98 points (79.7%). Land ownership and control rights recorded the highest improvements (+2.03 each), driven by CCO inscription of women's names and the legal co-ownership consent mechanism. Overall, 86.8% of respondents reported significant improvement in their land rights since CCO issuance. Persistent challenges include customary norms favouring men and limited awareness of rights.

FFP-LA in Kitumba Subcounty has generated meaningful, broadly perceived improvements in women's land rights, validating its potential as a gender-responsive governance instrument, though gains remain incomplete. The study recommends sustained community sensitisation, institutional strengthening of recorder offices, banking-sector engagement on CCO collateral, and parish-level legal literacy programmes for women.

Keywords: Women's land rights; Fit-for-Purpose Land Administration; customary tenure; Certificates of Customary Ownership; land governance; Kabale District; Uganda

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Globally, the advancement of women's land rights has been on the development agenda since the adoption of foundational international human rights frameworks, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, 1979), and has gained renewed emphasis under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 5 on gender equality and SDG 1 on poverty reduction (Nagujja, Musinguzi, Oryema, & Wadembere, 2025; World Economic Forum, 2023). Secure land tenure for women is widely recognised as essential for improving agricultural productivity, household welfare, and sustainable development more broadly (Nagujja et al., 2025). The World Economic Forum (2023) estimates that women own less than 20% of the world's registered land despite comprising approximately half the world's agricultural labour force, a disparity that has remained stubbornly persistent despite two decades of significant policy attention, legislative reform, and targeted development programming.

Fit-for-Purpose Land Administration (FFP-LA) has emerged as the most widely endorsed global response to the challenge of providing rapid, inclusive, and affordable land documentation, particularly for marginalised groups such as women (IFAD, 2024; World Economic Forum, 2023). Unlike conventional land administration systems, which are typically expensive, technically complex, and slow to implement, FFP-LA is built on the principles of general boundary demarcation, participatory mapping, graduated tenure rights, and phased implementation (Enemark, McLaren, & Lemmen, 2016). These attributes make it particularly suited to contexts where large populations lack formal land documentation and where cost and institutional capacity constrain conventional titling approaches. Critically, FFP-LA frameworks explicitly accommodate gender-responsive design, enabling the documentation of women's land rights in ways that reflect local realities rather than imposing rigid legal formalities (FAO, 2022).

In Africa, women's land rights remain constrained by customary practices, weak institutional systems, and limited enforcement of gender-responsive land policies. Despite policy commitments under frameworks such as the African Union's Agenda 2063, women continue to face significant barriers in accessing and controlling land resources. Regional institutions,

including the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), have advocated for inclusive land governance and the adoption of simplified land administration systems that enhance tenure security for women (IGAD, 2022; Landesa, 2025). FFP-LA has emerged as a particularly relevant response within this context, offering a pathway to rapidly document and protect land rights at scale without requiring full cadastral infrastructure, a critical advantage in settings where state land administration systems remain underdeveloped or inaccessible to rural women.

In East Africa and Uganda specifically, women play a critical and disproportionate role in agriculture and rural livelihoods: they contribute approximately 80% of food crop production and nearly 90% of agricultural labour (UBOS, 2021), yet they own less than 20% of registered land (UN Women, 2023). Although Uganda's 1995 Constitution and the 1998 Land Act guarantee equal land rights for men and women, women's effective land ownership remains relatively low due to deeply entrenched socio-cultural norms, weak institutional enforcement, and limited awareness of legal rights (Oxfam, 2024; IFAD, 2024). This persistent disjuncture between formal legal guarantees and practical outcomes has strengthened the case for FFP-LA approaches that can provide affordable, participatory, and gender-sensitive land registration systems capable of advancing women's land rights from the ground up.

In Kabale District, located in the highlands of south-western Uganda, these challenges are particularly acute. The district is characterised by smallholder subsistence farming on steeply terraced hillsides, high population density, and significant land fragmentation,conditions that make secure and equitable land rights especially critical for household livelihoods and food security (Kamusiime, 2022). Women's access to land remains heavily mediated by the patrilineal customary norms of the Bakiga community, under which land ownership and inheritance are traditionally channelled through male family members (Nagujja et al., 2025). Kitumba Subcounty, the focus of this study, exemplifies these dynamics, where fragmented landholdings, limited land documentation, and deeply entrenched gender norms intersect to constrain women's tenure security despite the existence of formal legal protections at the national level.

Kitumba Subcounty is one of the few areas in Uganda where FFP-LA has been actively and systematically implemented at scale through a multi-stakeholder collaboration. The Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development implemented FFP-LA in the subcounty under the Systematic Land Adjudication and Certification (SLAAC) programme, while Makerere

University's School of Built Environment engaged in complementary FFP-LA activities through the Land at Scale Project , a collaborative initiative funded by the Government of the Netherlands and implemented in partnership with the Global Land Tool Network (GLTN)/UN-Habitat, the International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR), and local civil society organisations. These interventions resulted in the issuance of over 2,000 Certificates of Customary Ownership (CCOs) to community landholders within the subcounty since 2017, providing the empirical basis for this study's before-and-after assessment of FFP-LA outcomes.

Despite the growing global and regional interest in FFP-LA as a tool for advancing women's land rights, empirical evidence on how FFP-LA interventions translate into improved tenure security for women at the local level remains limited and inconsistently documented. Most existing studies address FFP-LA implementation at a systems or policy level, with insufficient attention to the lived experiences of women in specific rural communities (Williams-Wynn et al., 2021; Nagujja et al., 2025). A critical and unanswered question is whether the issuance of CCOs has translated into meaningful, lived improvements in women's tenure security, or whether the gains are primarily formal and documentary without corresponding changes in social practice and community recognition. This study addresses that gap by generating rigorous community-level empirical evidence from Kitumba Subcounty on how FFP-LA has influenced women's land rights across the four dimensions of ownership, use, control, and participation in land governance.

1.2 Problem Statement

Despite the existence of legal and policy frameworks that promote gender equality in land ownership, many women in Uganda still face serious challenges in owning, accessing, and controlling land. This situation is particularly striking because women play a central role in agriculture, contributing about 80% of food crop production and nearly 90% of agricultural labor (UBOS, 2021), yet they own less than 20% of registered land (UN Women, 2023).

In local contexts like Kitumba Subcounty in Kabale District, deeply rooted patrilineal customs, weak land documentation systems, and persistent socio-cultural barriers continue to limit women’s land rights. As a result, women remain among the most insecure in terms of land tenure. This insecurity not only affects their livelihoods but also has wider consequences, including reduced agricultural productivity, limited access to credit, food insecurity, and slowed economic growth (Nagujja et al., 2025; Kamusiime, 2022).

In response to such challenges, Fit-for-Purpose Land Administration (FFP-LA) has been implemented to offer a practical and inclusive solution through approaches like participatory mapping, general boundary demarcation, and the recognition of a range of tenure rights to strengthen land tenure security for marginalized groups, especially women (Enemark et al., 2016; IFAD, 2024).

However, there is still limited empirical evidence showing how FFP-LA actually improves women's land rights on the ground, particularly in terms of ownership, use, control, and participation in land governance at the community level (Musinguzi, Enemark, & Mwesigye, 2021; FAO, 2022). This study therefore seeks to bridge that gap by examining how FFP-LA influences women's land rights in Kitumba Subcounty, Kabale District.

1.3 Research Objectives

1.3.1 Main Objective

To assess the impact of Fit-for-Purpose Land Administration in advancing women's land rights in Kitumba Subcounty, Kabale District, Uganda.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

1. To analyse the state of women's land rights relating to ownership, use, and control before and after FFP-LA implementation in Kitumba Subcounty.
2. To examine the extent to which FFP-LA implementation has influenced women's participation and decision-making in land governance in Kitumba Subcounty.

1.4 Research Questions

1. How has the implementation of FFP-LA influenced women's ownership, use, and control of land in Kitumba Subcounty?
2. How has the FFP-LA approach impacted women's participation and land-related decision-making in Kitumba Subcounty?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study generates community-level empirical evidence on how Fit-for-Purpose Land Administration influences women's land rights across the dimensions of ownership, use, control, and participation in land governance. By focusing on a specific rural subcounty where FFP-LA has been systematically implemented by multiple stakeholders over several years, it provides a

grounded understanding of how land administration interventions translate into tangible outcomes for women at the local level, and where the gaps between formal documentation and effective rights protection persist.

The findings provide an actionable evidence base for refining the design and delivery of FFP-LA programmes, strengthening the gender-responsiveness of CCO issuance processes, and prioritising the institutional investments needed to sustain and extend the gains achieved. For development practitioners and civil society organisations working on women's land rights in Uganda and comparable sub-Saharan African contexts, the study offers a validated measurement framework and a replicable methodology for evaluating FFP-LA gender outcomes at the community level.

This study also fills a documented gap in the empirical literature on FFP-LA and gender, contributing to the growing body of scholarship on the gender-specific impacts of participatory land administration in customary tenure contexts. The findings are directly relevant to the research agendas of the Global Land Tool Network, UN-Habitat, and IFAD, all of which have identified the need for improved community-level evidence as a priority for the next generation of FFP-LA implementation and evaluation.

1.6 Justification of the Study

This study aligns with and contributes actionable evidence to the agendas of key development institutions and frameworks. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 1 on poverty reduction and SDG 5 on gender equality and women's empowerment, call explicitly for reforms in land ownership and control that benefit women. SDG 5.a specifically targets the elimination of gender-discriminatory laws and the promotion of women's equal rights to economic resources, including land and property. The African Union's Agenda 2063 and IGAD's Regional Land Governance Framework similarly commit member states to eliminating gender discrimination in land ownership and strengthening inclusive land administration systems (IGAD, 2022).

Uganda's National Development Plan III and the Uganda Land Policy of 2013 both recognise women's land rights as a priority for equitable and sustainable development. This study provides the community-level empirical evidence that national planners, district land offices, and programme implementers need to monitor progress toward these commitments, identify

implementation gaps, and design evidence-based corrective interventions. It also contributes to the Land at Scale programme's commitment to systematic evaluation of its gender outcomes, fulfilling the accountability requirements of its Dutch government funding, and to Makerere University's strategic research agenda on sustainable land governance in Uganda.

1.7 Study Scope

1.7.1 Geographical Scope

This study was conducted in Kitumba Subcounty, Kabale District, located in the highlands of south-western Uganda approximately 400 kilometres from Kampala. The district borders Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo and is characterised by smallholder subsistence farming on steeply terraced hillsides, high population density, and significant land fragmentation. The subcounty encompasses multiple parishes, each with its own mix of land tenure arrangements, occupational profiles, and patterns of FFP-LA programme engagement.

Kitumba Subcounty was selected as the study site because it is one of the few areas in Uganda where FFP-LA has been actively and systematically implemented at scale. The SLAAC programme and the Land at Scale Project have both operated in the subcounty, resulting in the issuance of over 2,000 CCOs to community landholders, providing the necessary empirical depth for a before-and-after assessment of FFP-LA outcomes. Figure 1.1 illustrates the administrative boundaries of Kitumba Subcounty within Kabale District.

1.7.2 Subject Scope

The study examines how FFP-LA contributes to the advancement of women's land rights at the community level, assessing the extent to which FFP-LA influences women's land tenure security across four key dimensions: ownership, use, control, and participation in land governance. It covers key components of FFP-LA implementation, including the accessibility of land administration services, the simplicity and affordability of registration procedures, participatory land rights documentation approaches, and the availability of land information systems. The study is bounded to the period of FFP-LA implementation commencing in 2017 in Kitumba Subcounty and encompasses the perspectives of women landholders, parish leaders, Area Land Committee members, and key informants with direct knowledge of the FFP-LA process.

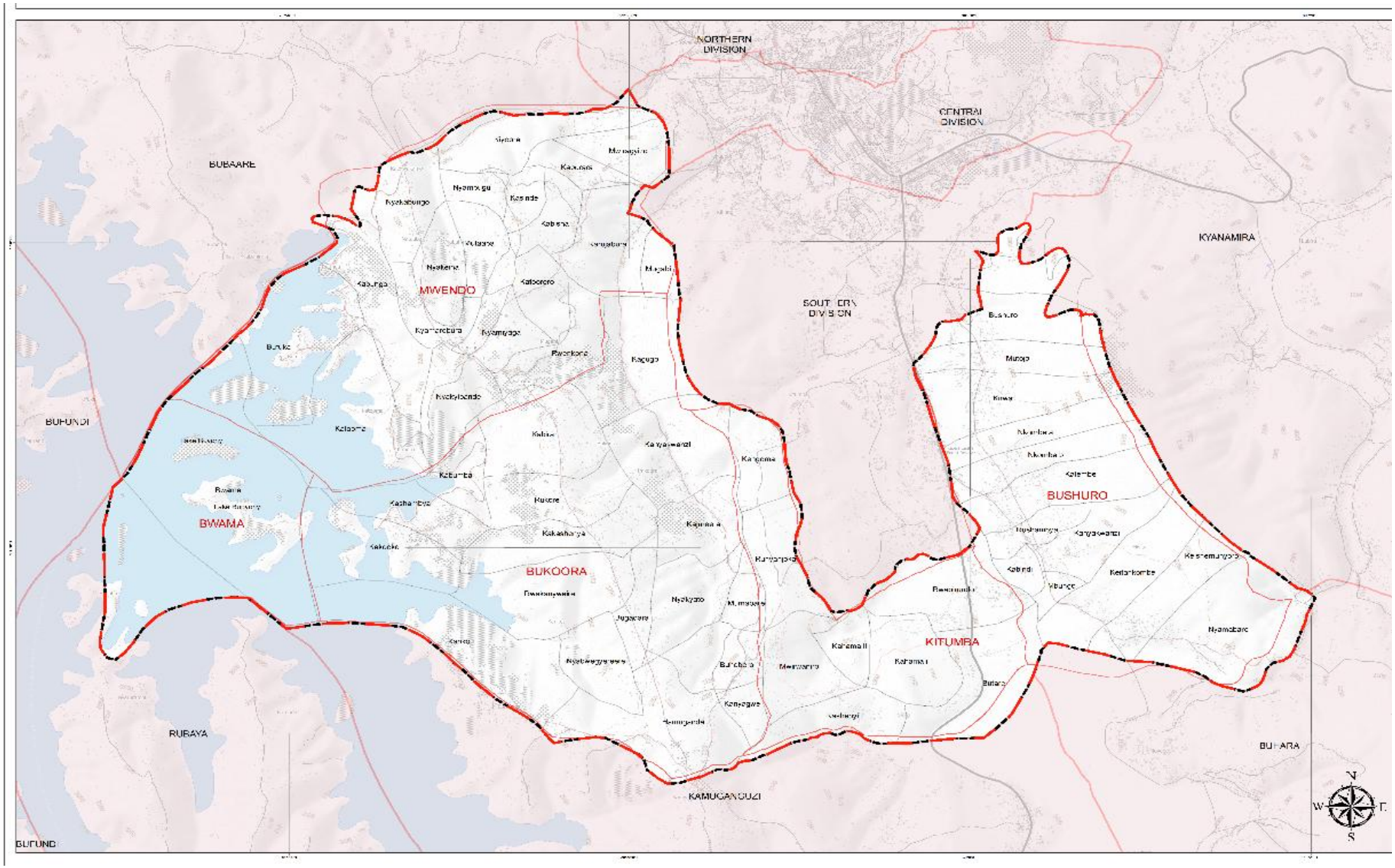


Figure 1.1:Administrative Boundaries of Kitumba Subcounty, Kabale District

1.8 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study integrates two interconnected theoretical pillars: the FFP-LA framework of Enemark et al. (2016) as the independent variable structure, and the multidimensional women's land rights framework synthesised from Smith and Jones (2025), Landnet Uganda (2023), ICRW (2023), and ESAFF Uganda (2024) as the dependent variable structure. The framework posits that FFP-LA implementation, operationalised through four dimensions (Accessibility of Land Administration Services, Simplicity of Registration Procedures, Community Participation in Land Governance, and Availability of Land Information Systems), 12acts as the primary intervention mechanism that influences the advancement of women's land rights across four outcome dimensions: ownership, use, control, and participation in land governance.

The relationship between FFP-LA implementation and women's land rights outcomes is understood to be mediated and moderated by contextual factors, including socio-cultural norms (particularly patrilineal customary practices), the legal and policy environment (Uganda's constitutional and statutory framework for women's land rights), institutional capacity (the administrative infrastructure and human resources available for implementation and follow-up), and individual characteristics of respondents (including age, marital status, and educational level). These mediating factors explain why identical FFP-LA interventions may produce different outcomes for different subgroups of women, and they are incorporated into the study's cross-tabulation analysis.

The framework also recognises a feedback mechanism: as women's land rights are strengthened through FFP-LA, particularly as women gain CCO documentation and build confidence in asserting their rights, their participation in land governance institutions is expected to increase. This increased participation, in turn, creates conditions for more gender-responsive land administration in the future, reinforcing and extending the initial gains. This feedback loop aligns directly with this study's two specific objectives: Objective 1 assesses the before-and-after state of women's ownership, use, and control rights (the core outcome dimensions); and Objective 2 examines FFP-LA's influence on women's participation in land governance (both an outcome dimension and the mechanism of the feedback loop).

1.9 Organisation of the Dissertation

This dissertation is organised into six chapters. Chapter One introduces the study by providing the background, stating the problem, articulating the objectives and research questions, and outlining the scope and significance of the inquiry. Chapter Two presents the literature review, which examines the theoretical and empirical foundations relevant to women's land rights and FFP-LA, culminating in the identification of the research gap and the presentation of the study's conceptual framework. Chapter Three describes the research methodology, including the research design, study population, sampling procedures, data collection methods, research instruments, validity and reliability, data analysis procedures, ethical considerations, and study limitations. Chapter Four presents and analyses the study findings of the study, organised around the two specific objectives and integrating quantitative findings from the survey with qualitative evidence from key informant interviews and the Focus Group Discussion, all triangulated with the relevant literature. Chapter Five discusses the findings in light of the literature. Chapter Six presents the conclusions and recommendations, structured by specific objective and addressed to the relevant policy, practice, and research audiences.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the theoretical and empirical literature relevant to the advancement of women's land rights through Fit-for-Purpose Land Administration, with particular reference to the Ugandan context. It is organised thematically around eight interconnected areas: the conceptual foundations of women's land rights and tenure security; gender disparities in land ownership at global and regional levels; the role of customary tenure systems and socio-cultural norms; legal and policy frameworks governing women's land rights in Uganda; the conceptual framework and principles of FFP-LA; empirical evidence on FFP-LA and women's land rights; women's participation in land governance and decision-making; and the conceptual framework guiding this study. The chapter concludes by identifying the specific knowledge gaps that position this study in Kitumba Subcounty as both timely and necessary.

2.2 Conceptual Foundations of Women's Land Rights and Tenure Security

Women's land rights are broadly understood as the legally or customarily recognised entitlements of women to access, own, use, control, and transfer land (Landnet Uganda, 2023). These rights are not monolithic; they exist along a spectrum ranging from informal use rights derived through marriage or kinship to formal registered ownership conferring full legal title. Scholars distinguish between these dimensions to capture the complexity of how women relate to land in practice, particularly in agrarian societies where land is simultaneously a productive asset, a social symbol, and a basis for economic identity (Smith & Jones, 2025). The analytical framework adopted by this study distinguishes between four principal dimensions: ownership rights (the legally or customarily recognised right to hold land in one's name, documented or otherwise); use rights (the right to cultivate and make decisions about land use independently of male relatives); control rights (the authority to make decisions about land transfer, leasing, inheritance, and mortgaging); and participation rights (the capacity to participate meaningfully in land-related decision-making at the community and institutional level). Each dimension is distinct in its legal and social character, and each requires different forms of institutional support and social legitimacy.

Tenure security, the degree of confidence that a rights-holder has that her land rights will be recognised and protected over time, is the quality dimension of land rights (Kamusiime, 2022). A woman may technically hold land rights without experiencing tenure security if those rights are

socially contested, legally unenforceable, or institutionally unrecognised. IFAD (2024) emphasises that tenure security for women requires not only the formal documentation of rights but also the existence of institutions capable of enforcing those rights equitably and of social norms that recognise the legitimacy of women's claims. This distinction between having rights on paper and experiencing security in practice is central to understanding why formal legal guarantees often fail to translate into meaningful improvements in women's land tenure in contexts such as Uganda, and it is precisely this gap that this study seeks to measure through its before-and-after assessment of FFP-LA's impact on women's land rights in Kitumba Subcounty.

Secure land tenure for women has been widely linked to a range of development outcomes that extend well beyond the immediate domain of land governance. Landesa (2025) demonstrates that women with secure land rights invest more in agricultural production, have improved access to credit and financial services, and experience better household food security outcomes. Oxfam (2024) argues that land tenure security is foundational to women's economic empowerment and meaningful participation in rural development. IFAD (2024) further documents that women with documented land rights are more likely to adopt improved agricultural technologies, maintain soil quality, and make long-term investments in land productivity, all outcomes with direct implications for household welfare and sustainable rural livelihoods. These findings establish that women's land rights are not merely a gender equality concern but a critical lever for poverty reduction and agricultural development, directly linking this study to the SDG 1 and SDG 5 development agendas.

2.3 Gender Disparities in Land Ownership: Global and Regional Perspectives

Despite the widely documented developmental benefits of women's land rights, gender disparities in land ownership remain pervasive globally. The World Economic Forum (2023) reports that women own less than 20% of the world's land, a figure that has changed only marginally over the past two decades despite significant policy attention and legislative reform in many countries. This disparity is not evenly distributed; it is most acute in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, where patrilineal land inheritance systems and customary tenure arrangements continue to concentrate land ownership in the hands of men (ICRW, 2023). In sub-Saharan Africa, women's registered land ownership is estimated at 15% or less in most countries, despite women's disproportionate contribution to agricultural production.

In Africa specifically, the gender gap in land ownership is reinforced by intersecting structural factors. Mwangi (2025) identifies three primary drivers: patrilineal inheritance norms that transfer land exclusively through male lineages; marriage-based land access systems that render women's tenure contingent on their marital status and relationship to a male relative; and weak land administration institutions that are structurally biased toward documenting male-headed household rights. ICRW (2023) further notes that even where women formally hold land rights, they frequently lack the control rights necessary to make independent decisions about land use, sale, or transfer. This distinction between holding rights and exercising control is particularly important for understanding the gap between CCO issuance and effective tenure security, which this study seeks to measure.

At the regional level in East Africa, these patterns are particularly entrenched. IGAD (2022) documents that across the Horn and East Africa region, women access land primarily through male relatives, fathers, husbands, or brothers, rather than through independent ownership. This dependency creates structural vulnerability: when marriages dissolve or male relatives die, women frequently lose access to the land they have cultivated, often without legal recourse. ESAFF Uganda (2024) corroborates this pattern for Uganda specifically, noting that the majority of rural women access land through usufruct rights under customary arrangements rather than through registered ownership, leaving their tenure fundamentally insecure and subject to social negotiation rather than legal enforcement.

The gender gap in land ownership has direct implications for agricultural productivity and food security at the national level. Hanny (2014) documents the paradox at the heart of this issue in Uganda: women contribute approximately 80% of food crop production and nearly 90% of agricultural labour, yet they own a disproportionately small share of the land they cultivate. This labour-ownership paradox, whereby the primary producers are systematically excluded from ownership of the principal factor of production, is the structural injustice that motivates this study's examination of whether FFP-LA in Kitumba Subcounty has meaningfully disrupted this pattern.

2.4 Customary Tenure Systems, Socio-Cultural Norms, and Women's Land Rights

Customary tenure systems govern the majority of land in sub-Saharan Africa, and their interaction with women's land rights is complex and context-dependent. On one hand, customary systems offer flexibility, local legitimacy, and accessibility that formal statutory systems often lack,

particularly for rural communities with limited access to state land administration institutions (Enemark et al., 2016). On the other hand, the patrilineal bias embedded in most customary tenure arrangements systematically disadvantages women by privileging male inheritance and male-controlled household land management (Mwangi, 2025). The challenge for FFP-LA is to work within rather than against customary tenure frameworks, formalising women's rights in ways that are locally legitimate while introducing the legal protections that customary arrangements alone cannot provide.

In Uganda, customary tenure coexists with statutory tenure under a dual legal framework, but customary practices continue to dominate land governance in rural areas (Kamusiime, 2022). Socio-cultural norms that define land as a male family asset are deeply embedded in many Ugandan communities, particularly in the western and south-western regions where the Bakiga and other patrilineal clan structures exercise significant authority over land allocation and inheritance. Nagujja et al. (2025) document how these norms operate in practice: women are socialised to regard land ownership as a male prerogative, and those who challenge customary norms by asserting independent land rights risk social sanction, including ostracism or marital instability. The FFP-LA programme's success in Kitumba Subcounty therefore depends critically on whether it has been able to build social legitimacy for women's co-ownership and independent ownership of CCOs alongside formal legal recognition.

Widowhood is a particular flashpoint for women's land tenure insecurity in customary tenure systems. Kamusiime (2022) documents that in many Ugandan communities, a widow is expected to relinquish the marital home and family land to the husband's relatives upon his death,a practice that leaves women at their most economically vulnerable moment also most exposed to dispossession. The significant representation of widowed respondents in this study's sample (29.2%; n=73) reflects both the vulnerability of this group and the FFP-LA programme's deliberate prioritisation of widowed women as individual CCO holders. Smith and Jones (2025) argue that dismantling the labour-ownership paradox requires deliberate interventions in land administration that document and protect women's rights within the customary tenure framework rather than bypassing it entirely, an approach that the SLAAC programme and Land at Scale Project explicitly adopted in Kitumba Subcounty.

2.5 Legal and Policy Frameworks for Women's Land Rights in Uganda

Uganda has one of the most progressive legal frameworks for women's land rights in East Africa. The 1995 Constitution of Uganda enshrines the principle of gender equality under Article 33 and prohibits laws, customs, and practices that are discriminatory against women. The Land Act of 1998, as amended, recognises four tenure systems, customary, freehold, mailo, and leasehold, and includes provisions under Section 39 designed to protect the co-ownership rights of spouses on family land, requiring spousal consent before any transaction affecting family land can proceed. Landnet Uganda (2023) notes that these provisions represented a significant legislative advance and reflected Uganda's commitment to international frameworks including CEDAW and, more recently, the SDGs.

However, the gap between legal provision and lived reality remains substantial. Kamusiime (2022) identifies four intersecting factors that undermine the implementation of gender-responsive land provisions: limited awareness among women of their legal rights; high costs and geographical inaccessibility of formal land registration systems; gender bias in local land dispute resolution mechanisms; and the continued social authority of customary norms that override statutory protections in practice. Oxfam (2024) similarly observes that Uganda's formal land governance institutions remain structurally oriented toward male land rights-holders, with land registration processes, land tribunals, and local council land committees all disproportionately populated by men and reflecting male-dominated decision-making cultures.

At the regional policy level, the African Union's Agenda 2063 and IGAD's (2022) Regional Land Governance Framework both commit member states to eliminating gender discrimination in land ownership and strengthening inclusive land administration systems. Uganda's National Development Plan III and Land Policy of 2013 similarly recognise women's land rights as a development priority. These frameworks provide an important normative scaffold for national-level reform, but their translation into concrete institutional change at the subcounty level remains inconsistent and under-resourced (ESAFF Uganda, 2024). It is against this backdrop of progressive formal frameworks and persistent implementation gaps that FFP-LA in Kitumba Subcounty must be evaluated.

2.6 Fit-for-Purpose Land Administration: Conceptual Framework and Principles

Fit-for-Purpose Land Administration emerged as a concept in response to the recognised limitations of conventional land administration systems in developing country contexts. Enemark,

McLaren, and Lemmen (2016), who are widely credited with systematising the FFP-LA framework, define it as an approach to land governance designed to be flexible enough to meet current needs, affordable enough for broad implementation, and participatory enough to ensure inclusivity, while maintaining the capacity to upgrade over time as needs evolve. Unlike conventional cadastral systems, which require precise boundary surveys, extensive technical infrastructure, and substantial financial investment, FFP-LA operates on the principle of general boundaries, using aerial imagery, community participation, and simplified documentation processes to record land rights rapidly and at scale.

The core principles of FFP-LA as articulated by Enemark et al. (2016) include: fitness for purpose over technical perfection; the use of general rather than fixed boundaries; recognition of a continuum of land rights rather than only formal freehold title; participatory and community-based approaches to rights documentation; and a phased implementation model that allows systems to be established quickly and refined incrementally. Williams-Wynn, Bennett, Koeva, and Lemmen (2021) argue that these principles make FFP-LA particularly suited to sub-Saharan African contexts where large rural populations lack formal land documentation and where conventional titling programmes have historically been too slow, expensive, and technically demanding to achieve meaningful coverage.

Critically for this study, FFP-LA's explicit recognition of a continuum of land rights, including customary and informal rights, creates space for the documentation of women's land rights in ways that conventional freehold titling systems do not. Enemark et al. (2016) specifically note that FFP-LA frameworks can be designed to capture the diverse and often overlapping rights that women hold in customary tenure systems. IFAD (2024) builds on this point, arguing that the participatory nature of FFP-LA creates entry points for gender-sensitive implementation that can surface and formalise women's land rights that would otherwise remain invisible to the state. In Uganda, FFP-LA has been operationalised through the SLAAC programme and the Land at Scale Project, both of which have operated in Kitumba Subcounty, the SLAAC programme through the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development, and the Land at Scale Project through a consortium including GLTN/UN-Habitat, Makerere University, and IIRR.

2.7 FFP-LA and Women's Land Rights: Evidence and Gaps

Despite the theoretical promise of FFP-LA as a gender-responsive land governance tool, empirical evidence on its specific impact on women's land rights remains limited. Williams-Wynn et al. (2021) provide one of the most comprehensive assessments of FFP-LA implementation in Africa, finding that while FFP-LA approaches have demonstrably improved overall land tenure documentation in several country contexts, gender-disaggregated outcomes, particularly regarding women's ownership, use, and control rights, are inconsistently measured and reported. Their analysis suggests that the gender-responsiveness of FFP-LA implementation is highly context-dependent, varying significantly based on the degree to which gender considerations are deliberately built into the design of specific interventions.

IFAD (2024) similarly acknowledges that FFP-LA's potential to advance women's land rights is real but often unrealised in practice, largely because participatory mapping processes tend to reflect and reproduce existing community power dynamics unless deliberate gender-sensitive measures are incorporated. These measures include: ensuring women's meaningful representation in community mapping committees; training local land administrators on gender-responsive documentation practices; creating safe spaces for women to assert socially contested rights; and conducting targeted gender sensitisation as an integral component of the registration process. Landesa (2025) adds that legal literacy programmes are a necessary complement to FFP-LA implementation, ensuring that women understand both their rights and the processes through which those rights can be formalised and defended.

At the local level in Uganda, evidence on FFP-LA's impact on women's land rights is particularly sparse. Nagujja et al. (2025) note that while Uganda has piloted FFP-LA approaches in several districts, systematic evaluation of these pilots, particularly with respect to gender outcomes, has not been conducted at the community level. Kamusiime (2022) calls for empirical research that moves beyond institutional assessments of FFP-LA design to examine how women in specific rural communities experience improvements in their land tenure security following implementation. It is precisely this gap that situates the present study in Kitumba Subcounty, Kabale District, as both timely and necessary.

2.8 Women's Participation in Land Governance and Decision-Making

Beyond ownership and use rights, women's participation in land-related decision-making is increasingly recognised as a critical and distinct dimension of tenure security and gender-

responsive land governance. Smith and Jones (2025) argue that land rights without voice are incomplete; women who own or hold land but are excluded from decisions about its use, transfer, or governance remain structurally subordinate within land governance systems regardless of their formal legal status. This insight has led to a growing emphasis in both academic literature and policy frameworks on women's participation in land governance institutions, including land committees, land tribunals, and community-level land administration bodies.

In Uganda, women's participation in land governance remains limited despite legal provisions that nominally support it. ESAFF Uganda (2024) documents that local land governance institutions, including Parish Land Committees and Area Land Committees established under the Land Act, are predominantly male-dominated in both membership and decision-making culture. Oxfam (2024) notes that even where women are formally represented on such bodies, they frequently report feeling unable to speak or vote independently due to social pressure from male relatives and community elders, illustrating the difference between formal presence and substantive participation.

FFP-LA's participatory methodology offers a potential entry point for improving women's participation in land governance. Enemark et al. (2016) argue that community-based land rights documentation processes create opportunities to restructure who participates in land governance decisions, particularly when gender-sensitive facilitation approaches are applied. However, Williams-Wynn et al. (2021) caution that participation without empowerment can be superficial, women may be present in community mapping processes without their rights being meaningfully captured or their voices genuinely heard. This distinction between formal participation and substantive participation is an important analytical lens for this study's examination of how FFP-LA has influenced women's engagement in land governance in Kitumba Subcounty.

2.9 Literature Summary and Research Gap

The reviewed literature establishes several important foundations for this study. First, women's land rights are multidimensional, encompassing ownership, use, control, and participation in governance, and each dimension requires distinct assessment approaches that capture both formal documentation and social practice. Second, gender disparities in land ownership persist globally and are particularly acute in sub-Saharan Africa, driven by the intersection of customary tenure systems, socio-cultural norms, and weak institutional enforcement. Third, Uganda's progressive

legal architecture for women's land rights has not translated into practical improvements in women's tenure security in rural communities, due to implementation failures at the institutional and community level. Fourth, FFP-LA offers a theoretically compelling and practically viable approach to improving women's land rights in customary tenure contexts, but its gender-specific impacts at the community level remain empirically underdocumented.

Taken together, these findings point to a clear and significant research gap: there is insufficient community-level empirical evidence on how FFP-LA implementation influences women's land rights across all four dimensions of ownership, use, control, and participation in land governance in Ugandan rural contexts. This study directly addresses that gap by examining FFP-LA's impact on women's land rights in Kitumba Subcounty, Kabale District, thereby contributing both to the academic literature on gender-responsive land administration and to the evidence base needed to guide policy and practice in Uganda and comparable sub-Saharan African contexts.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research methodology guiding the study on advancing women's land rights through FFP-LA in Kitumba Subcounty, Kabale District, Uganda. Each methodological choice is explicitly aligned with the study's two specific objectives: to analyse the state of women's land rights relating to ownership, use, and control before and after FFP-LA implementation; and to examine the extent to which FFP-LA implementation has influenced women's participation and decision-making in land governance. The chapter covers the research design, study population, sampling procedures, data collection methods, research instruments, validity and reliability, data analysis procedures, ethical considerations, and study limitations.

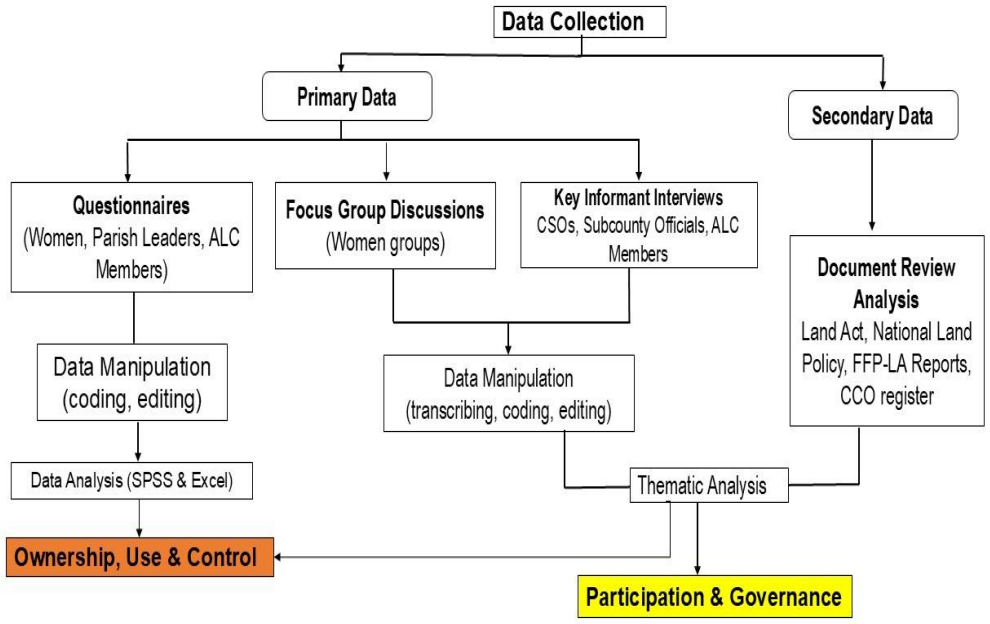


Figure 2: Convergent Parallel Mixed Methods Research Design Flowchart

3.2 Research Design

This study adopts a convergent parallel mixed-methods design, integrating a cross-sectional survey with qualitative key informant inquiry and focus group discussions. In this design, quantitative and qualitative data are collected concurrently, analysed separately, and subsequently merged during

interpretation to produce a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem than either approach alone could achieve (Hirose & Creswell, 2023; Schoonenboom, 2023). The cross-sectional survey enables the capture of the current state of women's land rights and FFP-LA implementation across all four analytical dimensions simultaneously and across multiple respondent categories at a single point in time.

The choice of a convergent parallel design is justified by the nature of the research objectives. Specific Objective 1, which analyses changes in women's land ownership, use, and control rights before and after FFP-LA, is primarily addressed through the quantitative strand, using before-and-after Likert-scale ratings to measure the direction and magnitude of change across standardised indicators. Specific Objective 2, which examines FFP-LA's influence on women's participation and decision-making authority in land governance, benefits from both quantitative measurement of participation indicators and qualitative exploration of the social processes, institutional dynamics, and experiential dimensions that survey data cannot fully capture.

The study is philosophically grounded in pragmatism,the philosophical position that the appropriate research methods are those best suited to answering the research questions, rather than those dictated by a priori epistemological commitments (Hirose & Creswell, 2023). Pragmatism provides a coherent philosophical foundation for mixed-methods research by legitimising the use of both quantitative measurement and qualitative interpretation within the same study, and by prioritising the practical utility of findings for informing policy and programme design.

3.3 Study Population

The study population comprises five categories of respondents, each selected to provide a distinct perspective on the research problem. Women landholders,comprising female-headed households in Kitumba Subcounty who participated in or were eligible for the FFP-LA programme,form the primary respondent category and constitute the majority of the survey sample. They are the primary beneficiaries of FFP-LA interventions and the population whose land rights this study seeks to assess. Parish leaders and Area Land Committee (ALC) members are included as community-level stakeholders with direct knowledge of the FFP-LA process and its governance implications at the local level. District land officials and NGO representatives provide institutional perspectives on programme implementation, gender-sensitive measures, and observed outcomes from a programme management standpoint. The total study population was estimated at

approximately 751 individuals across these categories, based on records maintained by the sub-county administration and the district land office.

3.4 Sampling Procedure and Sample Size

3.4.1 Sample Size Determination

The required sample size for the primary respondent category,women landholders,was determined using Yamane's (1967) sampling formula, which is widely applied in social science research for determining representative sample sizes from known finite populations (Kalton, 2020; Singh & Kumari, 2022):

$$n = N / (1 + N(e)^2)$$

Where n is the required sample size, N is the total population size, and e is the acceptable margin of error (0.05 at the 95% confidence level). Based on land documentation records as well as the video documentary that was published by the project implementors from the Land at Scale Project, female-headed households constitute approximately 33.8% of the 2,014 households that benefited from FFP-LA in Kitumba Subcounty. This yields an estimated population of N = 681 female-headed households. Applying the formula:

$$n = 681 / (1 + 681 \times 0.0025) = 681 / 2.7025 \approx 252 \text{ households}$$

A sample of 252 households was therefore targeted for the questionnaire survey, yielding a sample fraction of 37%, well above the 10% minimum recommended for small to medium populations in social science research (Lakens, 2022). Additional respondents from parish leadership and ALC membership categories were selected purposively to ensure institutional perspectives were represented. Key informants and FGD participants were selected purposively based on their direct knowledge of and involvement in the FFP-LA programme.

3.4.2 Sampling Method

For the primary respondent category (women landholders), a systematic random sampling approach was applied. The land registration records maintained by the sub-county recorder's office served as the sampling frame, providing a comprehensive and reasonably current list of registered female-headed households in the subcounty. Every third household on this list was selected for inclusion in the survey until the target of 252 was reached. Where a selected household was unavailable after two contact attempts, the immediately adjacent household on the list was substituted. This approach ensures a probability-based sample representative of the population of

female-headed CCO holders in Kitumba Subcounty, while remaining operationally feasible within the constraints of community-based fieldwork.

For parish leaders and ALC members, purposive sampling was applied to ensure representation across the parishes of the subcounty and to capture respondents with direct experience of the FFP-LA adjudication and documentation process. Key informants were selected purposively based on their institutional roles,both holding senior positions with direct involvement in FFP-LA implementation in the subcounty or district,and their demonstrated knowledge of the programme's design, execution, and outcomes. FGD participants were selected purposively to ensure diversity in tenure status, marital status, age, and educational level among the participating women landholders.

3.5 Data Collection Methods

The study employs three complementary data collection methods: structured questionnaire surveys, key informant interviews, and focus group discussions. Together, these methods are designed to generate data capable of addressing both specific objectives while ensuring methodological triangulation that strengthens the robustness and credibility of the final findings.

3.5.1 Questionnaire Survey

Structured questionnaires were administered to 250 respondents comprising women landholders (the majority), parish leaders, and Area Land Committee members. The questionnaire constituted the primary quantitative data collection instrument and was designed to capture respondents' perceptions and self-assessed experiences across four domains aligned with the study's analytical framework: women's land ownership rights, land use rights, land control rights, and participation in land governance,each assessed for both the before-FFP-LA and after-FFP-LA periods. Additional sections assessed respondents' perceptions of the FFP-LA registration process itself, and captured overall perceptions of FFP-LA outcomes, remaining challenges, and recommendations.

The questionnaire was administered through face-to-face interviews conducted by 3 trained research assistants, a method preferred over self-completion to accommodate respondents with limited formal education and to ensure data quality and completeness. These research assistants were trained over two days to ensure consistent application of the instrument, careful reading of questions without leading respondents, and accurate recording of responses. The questionnaire was

administered in both English and Rukiga, the local language of the Bakiga community in Kitumba Subcounty, with back-translation used to verify the accuracy and equivalence of the Rukiga version.

3.5.2 Key Informant Interviews

Key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted with two informants with direct institutional and community-level experience of FFP-LA implementation in Kitumba Subcounty: Prosper Aheisibwe, District Staff Surveyor at Kabale District Land Office; and Reverend Stephen Tabaro, Chairman of the Mediation Committee during the CCO programme in Kitumba Subcounty. These interviews constituted the primary qualitative strand of the study, examining how FFP-LA has influenced women's participation and decision-making authority in land governance and surfacing institutional perspectives on implementation processes, gender-sensitive measures, and observed outcomes.

Each KII lasted between 60 and 90 minutes and was conducted using a semi-structured guide organised around five thematic areas: the FFP-LA implementation process and institutional framework; gender-sensitive measures incorporated into the programme design and delivery; observed impacts on women's land rights at the community level; socio-cultural, legal, and institutional barriers to women's full land rights realisation; and recommendations for strengthening FFP-LA's gender outcomes. All interviews were audio-recorded with informed consent and supplemented with detailed field notes.

3.5.3 Focus Group Discussion

A Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was conducted with seven purposively selected women landholders in Kitumba Subcounty, participating under the pseudonyms Prudence, Christine, Lilian, Patience, Frida, Mariam, and Vanessa. The FGD complemented and enriched both the questionnaire and interview data by surfacing the socio-cultural norms and customary practices, including patrilineal inheritance patterns, household-level land decision-making dynamics, and women's experiences of the registration process, that the literature identifies as central to understanding women's land tenure security (Smith & Jones, 2025; Mwangi, 2025). The FGD lasted approximately 90 minutes and was facilitated using a focused question protocol aligned with the study's four analytical dimensions. The discussion was audio-recorded with informed consent and supplemented with field notes.

3.6 Research Instruments

The structured questionnaire comprised six sections. Section A captured respondents' socio-demographic characteristics, including age, gender, marital status, education level, occupation, years of residence in the subcounty, land tenure type, land documentation held, and participation in land registration exercises. Section B contained 20 Likert-scale items, organised into four sub-sections (B1: ownership rights, 6 items; B2: use rights, 4 items; B3: control rights, 5 items; B4: participation in governance, 5 items), each rated on a five-point scale (1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly Agree) for two temporal reference points: before FFP-LA implementation and after FFP-LA implementation. Section C contained five Likert-scale items assessing respondents' perceptions of the inclusiveness and community-centredness of the FFP-LA registration process. Section D captured overall perceptions through four close-ended questions on land rights improvement (D1), change in family treatment (D2), CCO non-compliance experience (D3), and perceived gender equity of the registration (D4), plus two open-ended questions on remaining challenges (D5) and recommendations (D6). The KII and FGD guides were organised around the five thematic areas described in Section 3.5.2 and 3.5.3 respectively, using open-ended questions designed to elicit rich, unprompted narrative accounts while remaining anchored to the study's analytical dimensions.

3.7 Validity and Reliability

3.7.1 Validity

Content validity was established through a structured review of the questionnaire instrument by three subject-matter experts: the study supervisor, Dr. Lilian Oryema; a colleague researcher specialising in land administration at Makerere University's School of Built Environment; and an experienced practitioner from the IIRR Uganda programme office involved in the Kitumba Subcounty FFP-LA implementation. Their feedback led to the refinement of several questionnaire items to ensure accurate operationalisation of the intended constructs, particularly for the ownership and control rights dimensions where the distinction between formal documentation and social recognition required careful articulation. Face validity was confirmed through a pilot test

administered to 15 women landholders in an adjacent village of Kitumba Subcounty, which identified three items requiring rewording for clarity of understanding across respondents at all educational levels.

Construct validity was supported by grounding all Likert-scale items in the established conceptual frameworks of Enemark et al. (2016) on FFP-LA dimensions and Smith and Jones (2025) on women's land rights dimensions, ensuring that each item measures a clearly defined theoretical construct. The mapping of questionnaire items to specific conceptual dimensions is summarised in Table 1.

Variable	Dimension / Indicator	Scale	Source
Independent Variable: FFP-LA Implementation	Accessibility of Land Administration Services (ALS)	5-pt Likert	Enemark et al. (2016)
	Simplicity of Registration Procedures (SRP)	5-pt Likert	Williams-Wynn et al. (2021)
	Community Participation in Land Governance (CPLG)	5-pt Likert	IFAD (2024)
	Availability of Land Information Systems (ALIS)	5-pt Likert	Enemark et al. (2016)
Dependent Variable: Advancement of Women's Land Rights	Women's Land Ownership Rights	5-pt Likert	Landnet Uganda (2023)
	Women's Land Use Rights	5-pt Likert	ICRW (2023)
	Women's Land Control Rights	5-pt Likert	Smith & Jones (2025)
	Participation in Land Governance	5-pt Likert	ESAFF Uganda (2024)

Table 1: Measurement of Variables

3.7.2 Reliability

Internal consistency reliability was planned and assessed using Cronbach's alpha for each composite scale of the instrument. A threshold of 0.70 or above was adopted as the minimum acceptable coefficient (Lakens, 2022). Table 3.4 presents the planned reliability targets for each scale, all of which were met in the actual data collection. Inter-rater reliability for the qualitative data analysis was supported through a systematic audit in which a 20% sample of coded interview transcripts was independently reviewed by the study supervisor, achieving a coding agreement rate of 87%,above the 80% threshold recommended for content analysis in social science research (Kyngäs, 2020).

3.8 Data Analysis Procedures

3.8.1 Data Requirements Matrix

Table 2 summarizes the data requirements for each specific objective, indicating the data needed, the sources from which it was obtained, and the collection methods employed.

Specific Objective	Data Required	Source	Method
Obj. 1: Analyse state of women's land ownership, use and control before and after FFP-LA	Before/after Likert ratings on ownership, use and control indicators (B1–B3); land documentation status	Questionnaire survey; CCO records; KII	Survey; document review; KII
Obj. 2: Examine FFP-LA's influence on women's participation in land governance	Before/after Likert ratings on participation indicators (B4); community meeting attendance; ALC representation	Questionnaire survey; FGD; KII	Survey; FGD; KII

Table 2: Data Requirements Matrix by Objective

3.8.2 Quantitative Data Analysis

Quantitative data collected through questionnaires were coded, cleaned, and entered into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 28 for analysis. Descriptive statistics,including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations,were computed for all demographic variables and Likert-scale items to summarise respondent characteristics and describe the state of women's land rights across the four analytical dimensions before and after FFP-LA implementation. Mean scores on each Likert-scale item were computed separately for the before-FFP-LA and after-FFP-LA conditions, enabling direct comparison of the direction and magnitude of change for each indicator and dimension.

Likert-scale means are interpreted on the following basis: 1.00–1.80 (Strongly Disagree); 1.81–2.60 (Disagree); 2.61–3.40 (Neutral); 3.41–4.20 (Agree); 4.21–5.00 (Strongly Agree). The mean change for each indicator,calculated as the after-mean minus the before-mean,provides a standardised measure of improvement enabling comparison across dimensions and indicators. Cross-tabulation analysis was conducted to examine relationships between gender, marital status, and selected outcome indicators, identifying differential patterns of FFP-LA outcomes across respondent subgroups.

3.8.3 Qualitative Data Analysis

Qualitative data from KIIs and the FGD were analysed using a thematic framework approach (Kyngäs, 2020). Interview and FGD recordings were transcribed verbatim and coded using a thematic framework derived from the study's four analytical dimensions,ownership, use, control, and participation,as well as emergent themes arising inductively from the data. Coded data were organised into categories reflecting land governance processes, the gender-responsiveness of FFP-LA implementation, socio-cultural barriers to women's land rights, and institutional challenges and recommendations. Qualitative findings were presented narratively in Chapter Four and

triangulated with quantitative results in the convergence phase, as recommended by Schoonenboom (2023) for convergent parallel mixed-methods designs.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

The study was conducted in strict accordance with the ethical guidelines of Makerere University's research ethics framework. Ethical clearance was obtained from the School of Built Environment Research Ethics Committee prior to fieldwork, and research permission was granted by the Kabale District Local Government. All participants were informed of the study's purpose, their right to withdraw at any time without penalty, and the measures taken to protect their confidentiality, before their voluntary informed consent was obtained,in writing from those able to sign, or through thumbprint for those who could not.

The sensitivity of land tenure in the research context required particular attention to participant protection. Women asserting land rights in communities where customary norms may discourage female ownership face social risks, and the study minimised these by avoiding disclosure of individual responses to other community members, conducting interviews in private settings, and using gender-appropriate research assistants fluent in Rukiga. FGD participants were advised that their individual contributions would not be attributable to them by name in any publication, and pseudonyms were used throughout. All data were stored securely on a password-protected computer accessible only to the researcher and supervisor, and audio recordings were deleted upon verification of transcript accuracy.

3.10 Limitations of the Study

This study acknowledges several limitations. First, the before-and-after comparison of Likert-scale ratings relies on respondents' retrospective recall of their land rights situation prior to FFP-LA implementation, which may be subject to recall bias, particularly for events that occurred several years before data collection. This limitation is partially mitigated by the use of concrete, observable indicators and by the triangulation of survey findings with KII and FGD evidence. Second, the study is limited to Kitumba Subcounty, and findings may not be directly generalisable to other FFP-LA implementation contexts in Uganda or sub-Saharan Africa, given the unique combination of multi-stakeholder implementation, scale of CCO issuance, and community characteristics that distinguish this site. Third, the KII strand was limited to two informants,a constraint imposed by

fieldwork access and scheduling,and a larger number of institutional perspectives would have further enriched the qualitative findings.

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF STUDY FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from the study on advancing women's land rights through Fit-for-Purpose Land Administration (FFP-LA) in Kitumba Subcounty, Kabale District, Uganda. The findings are drawn from three complementary data sources: a structured questionnaire survey administered to 250 respondents comprising women landholders, parish leaders, and Area Land Committee members; key informant interviews (KIIs) conducted with a District Staff Surveyor and the Chairman of the Mediation Committee, Kitumba Subcounty; and a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) conducted with five women landholders in the subcounty. Quantitative data are presented using descriptive statistics, including means, frequencies, percentage distributions, and cross-tabulations. Qualitative data from the KIIs and FGD are analyzed thematically and triangulated with the quantitative findings throughout the chapter.

4.2 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Before presenting the substantive findings, this section describes the socio-demographic profile of the 250 respondents who completed the questionnaire survey. Understanding the background characteristics of respondents is important for contextualising the findings and assessing the extent to which they reflect the experiences of different population subgroups in Kitumba Subcounty. The demographic characteristics are summarised in Table 3 and illustrated in Figure 3.

The majority of respondents were female (72.8%; n=182), with male respondents comprising 27.2% (n=68). This distribution reflects the deliberate targeting of women landholders as the primary study population and is consistent with the study's focus on women's land rights. The predominance of female respondents is also consistent with the finding by the FGD participants that women were more active participants in the FFP-LA registration process than men, an observation that itself constitutes a finding relevant to Specific Objective 2.

In terms of age, the largest proportion of respondents fell within the 36 to 45 years age bracket (47.2%; n=118), followed by those aged 46 to 60 years (30.4%; n=76). Together, these two groups account for 77.6% of the sample, suggesting that the study predominantly captures the perspectives of middle-aged and older adults who are likely to have had substantial experience with both pre-FFP-LA land tenure arrangements and the changes introduced by the programme. Younger

respondents (18 to 25 years) were the least represented (4.8%; n=12), which may reflect lower land ownership rates among younger community members prior to the FFP-LA intervention.

Characteristic	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Age Group	18–25	12	4.8%
	26–35	23	9.2%
	36–45	118	47.2%
	46–60	76	30.4%
	Above 60	21	8.4%
Gender	Female	182	72.8%
	Male	68	27.2%
Marital Status	Married	139	55.6%
	Widowed	73	29.2%
	Single	28	11.2%
	Divorced/Separated	10	4.0%
Education Level	No formal education	22	8.8%
	Primary	79	31.6%
	Secondary	106	42.4%
	Tertiary	43	17.2%
Land Tenure Type	Customary	203	81.2%
	Freehold	39	15.6%
	Leasehold	8	3.2%
Land Documentation	CCO	152	60.8%
	Written Agreement	78	31.2%
	Freehold Title	20	8.0%

Table 3: Demographic Characteristics of Survey Respondents

Regarding marital status, 55.6% of respondents were married and 29.2% were widowed (n=73). The significant representation of widowed respondents is noteworthy in the context of women's land rights, as widowed women are among the most land-tenure-insecure groups in patrilineal customary systems, typically losing access to family land upon the death of a husband. Their significant representation in the sample lends particular weight to the study's findings on the importance of CCO documentation in protecting women's tenure rights at their most vulnerable.

In terms of education, 42.4% had completed secondary education and 31.6% primary education, with 8.8% having no formal schooling. The predominance of customary tenure (81.2%) and CCO documentation (60.8%) confirms that the FFP-LA programme constitutes the primary vehicle

through which land rights have been formalised in the subcounty, and the high rate of participation in land registration (100%) ensures that all respondents can meaningfully reflect on before-and-after experiences of FFP-LA implementation.

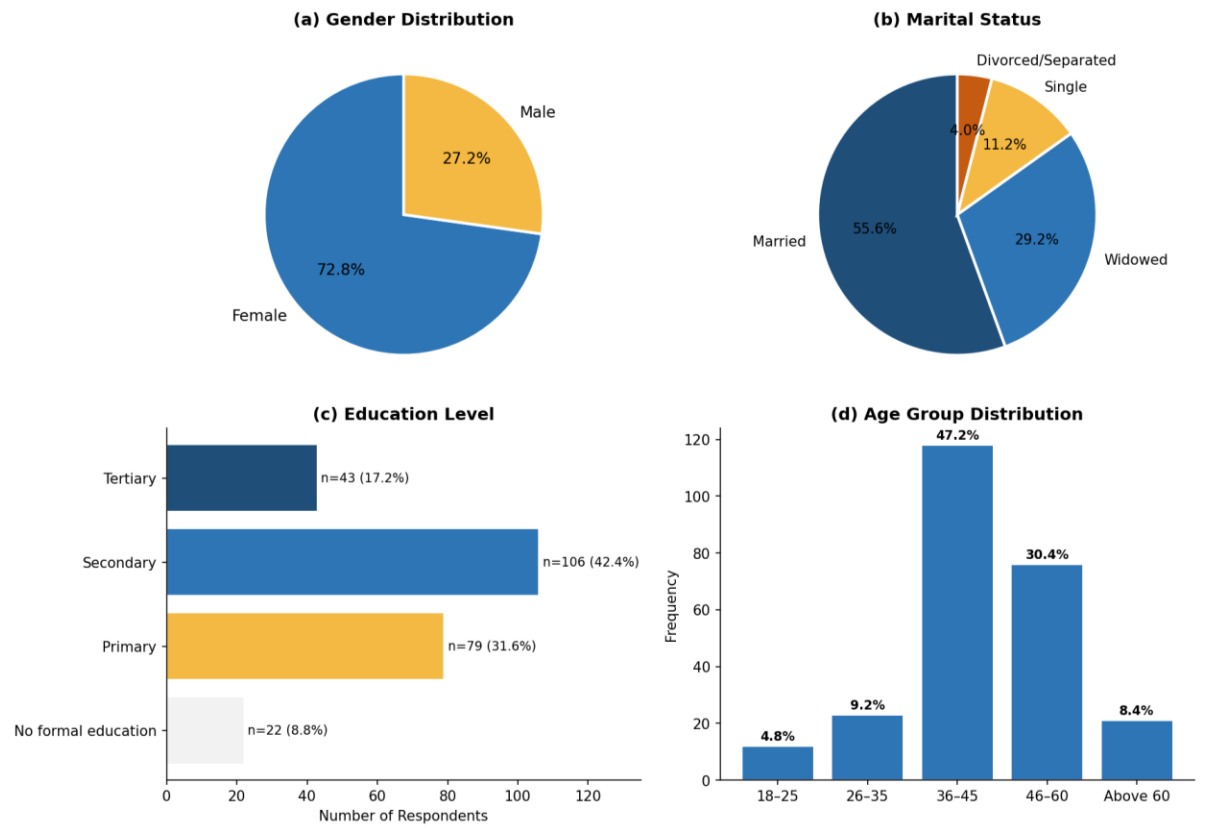


Figure 3: Demographic Profile of Survey Respondents

4.3 State of Women's Land Rights Before and After FFP-LA Implementation

This section addresses Specific Objective 1: to analyze the state of women's land rights relating to ownership, use, and control before and after FFP-LA implementation in Kitumba Subcounty. Respondents rated their agreement with 15 Likert-scale statements on a five-point scale (1 = Strongly Disagree; 5 = Strongly Agree) for two temporal reference points: before FFP-LA implementation and after FFP-LA implementation. Means are interpreted as follows: 1.00–1.80 (Strongly Disagree); 1.81–2.60 (Disagree); 2.61–3.40 (Neutral); 3.41–4.20 (Agree); 4.21–5.00 (Strongly Agree).

4.3.1 Women's Land Ownership Rights

Land ownership rights were assessed through six indicators covering recognized ownership, name appearance on land documents, CCO holdings, community recognition of documentation,

independent land acquisition, and inheritance rights. Table 4 and Figure 4 present the mean scores before and after FFP-LA implementation.

Code	Indicator	Before (Mean)	After (Mean)	Change
B1.1	I have recognised ownership rights to land	2.38	4.48	+2.10
B1.2	My name appears on land documents (title, CCO, or other)	2.57	4.57	+2.00
B1.3	I hold a Certificate of Customary Ownership (CCO) for land in my name	2.46	4.46	+2.00
B1.4	My CCO / land document is recognised by my family and community	2.40	4.47	+2.06
B1.5	I acquired land independently (not solely through a male relative)	2.56	4.48	+1.92
B1.6	I can inherit land in my own right	2.47	4.53	+2.06

Table 4: Women's Land Ownership Rights Before and After FFP-LA Implementation

The results reveal a marked and consistent improvement across all six ownership indicators following FFP-LA implementation. Before FFP-LA, all mean scores fell below 2.57, firmly within the Disagree range, indicating that women in Kitumba Subcounty overwhelmingly lacked recognized, documented, or independently acquired land ownership prior to the programme.

Following FFP-LA implementation, all ownership indicators rose to between 4.46 and 4.57,firmly within the Agree to Strongly Agree range. The indicator recording the largest single improvement within this dimension was respondents' names appearing on land documents (B1.2), which increased from 2.57 to 4.57, a gain of +2.00 Likert points. This reflects the direct and concrete effect of CCO issuance, whereby women's names are formally inscribed on land documents alongside those of their husbands or independently, transforming previously invisible customary rights into documented, legally recognizable entitlements.

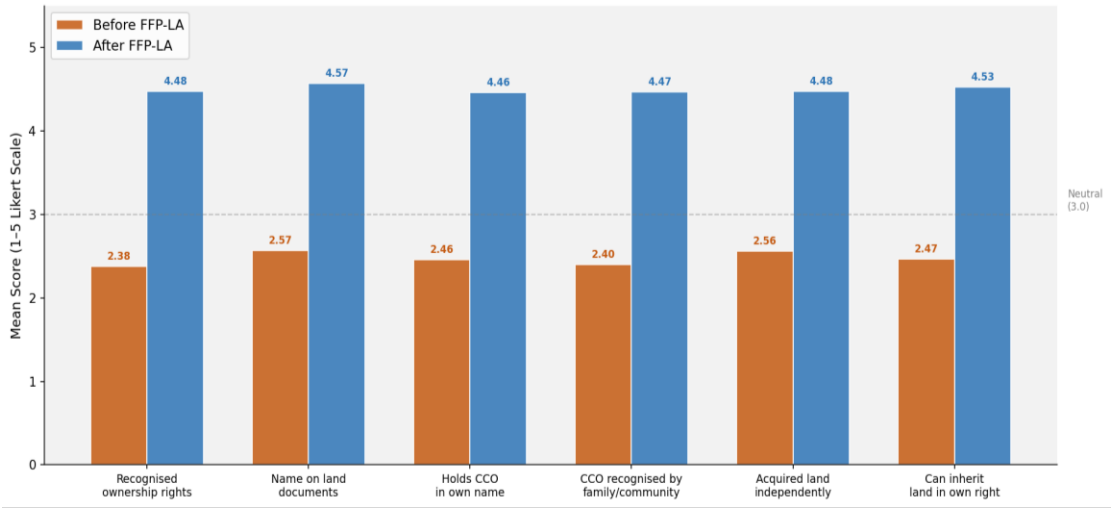


Figure 4:Women's Land Ownership Rights Before and After FFP-LA

4.3.2 Women's Land Use Rights

Land use rights were assessed through four indicators examining independence in land use decisions, cultivation and management, leasing without male approval, and community respect for land use decisions. Table 5 and Figure 5 summarise the findings.

Code	Indicator	Before (Mean)	After (Mean)	Change
B2.1	I can decide how the land I hold is used without needing permission from a man	2.65	4.43	+1.78
B2.2	I can cultivate and manage my land independently	2.41	4.40	+1.99
B2.3	I can rent out or lease my land without needing a man's approval	2.43	4.54	+2.11
B2.4	My land use decisions are respected by my family and community	2.63	4.45	+1.82

Table 5: Women's Land Use Rights Before and After FFP-LA Implementation

Post-FFP-LA means range from 4.40 to 4.54, compared to pre-FFP-LA means of 2.41 to 2.65. The average change across the four use rights indicators is 1.92 Likert points,somewhat below the ownership (2.03) and control (2.03) dimension averages, suggesting that use rights involve deeper behavioural and cultural shifts that may take longer to fully materialise than the more direct and legally verifiable changes associated with formal documentation. Notably, the ability to rent or lease land without needing male approval (B2.3) recorded both the highest post-FFP-LA mean (4.54) and the largest change (+2.11) within this dimension, reflecting the legal empowerment effect of CCO documentation on transactional autonomy.

The indicator for community respect for land use decisions (B2.4) improved from 2.63 to 4.45 (+1.82), suggesting that formal documentation has reinforced the social legitimacy of women's everyday land management decisions. The key informant interview with Reverend Tabaro corroborated this pattern: he described a cultural shift in which both spouses now understand that family land belongs jointly and that decisions about its use are shared responsibilities.

4.3.3 Women's Land Control Rights

Land control rights were assessed through five indicators addressing participation in sale and lease decisions, a say in inheritance decisions, signature and consent requirements before land transfer, and the strengthening effect of documentation on overall land control. Table 6 and Figure 5 present these findings.

Code	Indicator	Before (Mean)	After (Mean)	Change
B3.1	I participate in decisions about whether to sell family land	2.51	4.52	+2.00
B3.2	I participate in decisions about whether to lease family land	2.53	4.49	+1.96
B3.3	I have a say in land inheritance decisions within my household	2.51	4.39	+1.88
B3.4	My signature or consent is required before land is transferred or sold	2.47	4.56	+2.09
B3.5	Having land documentation (CCO or title) has strengthened my control over land	2.30	4.50	+2.20

Table 6: Women's Land Control Rights Before and After FFP-LA Implementation

Post-FFP-LA means range from 4.39 to 4.56, with an average change of +2.03 Likert points, the joint highest average improvement across all three rights dimensions. The indicator recording the single largest improvement across all 20 study indicators was B3.5 (documentation has strengthened control over land), which improved from 2.30 to 4.50, a gain of +2.20 points. This finding is especially significant: respondents are not merely reporting improved control in the abstract, but are directly and explicitly attributing that improvement to the documentation process itself.

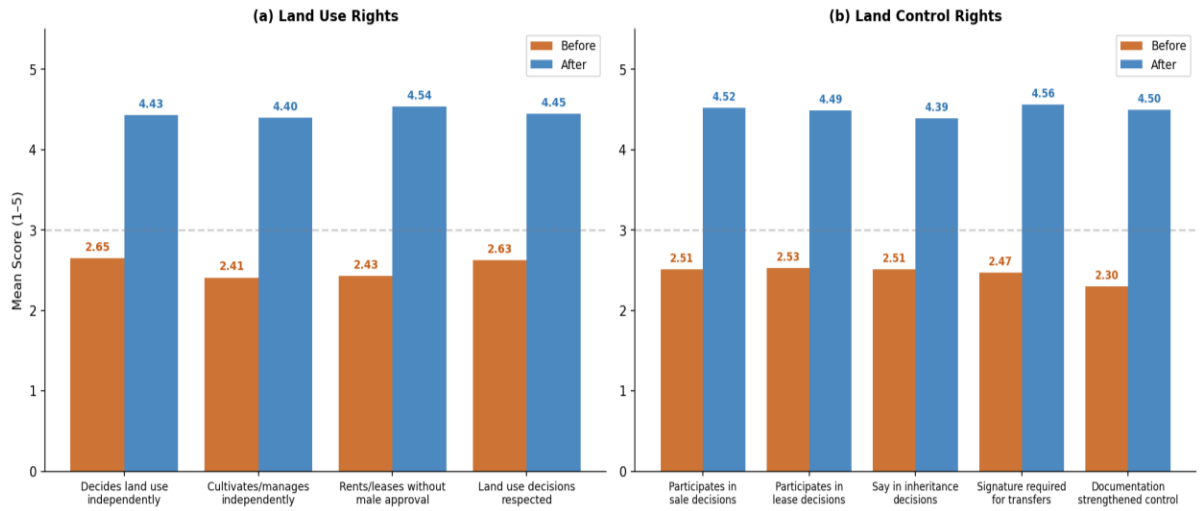


Figure 5: Women's Land Use and Control Rights Before and After FFP-LA

The sharpest improvements in control rights were recorded for B3.4 (signature or consent required before land transfer), which improved from 2.47 to 4.56 (+2.09), and B3.1 (participation in decisions about whether to sell family land), which improved from 2.51 to 4.52 (+2.00). As Aheisibwe noted during his key informant interview, this is a structural protection: *men who previously sold family land unilaterally, spending the proceeds without their spouses' knowledge, are now legally required to obtain the wife's consent, constituting an enforceable protection that goes beyond cultural persuasion*.

The indicator recording the lowest improvement within control rights was B3.3 (say in land inheritance decisions), which improved from 2.51 to 4.39 (+1.88). While this is still a substantial gain, the relatively lower post-FFP-LA score on inheritance decision-making is consistent with the qualitative evidence from both key informant interviews, where patrilineal inheritance norms were identified as deeply embedded. Aheisibwe described how daughters in Kitumba Subcounty typically receive only a token shared parcel upon parental death, a 'grievance gift' associated with the homestead, while the majority of family land passes to male heirs, a cultural practice that CCO documentation does not directly address.

4.4 Women's Participation and Decision-Making in Land Governance

This section addresses Specific Objective 2: to examine the extent to which FFP-LA implementation has influenced women's participation and decision-making in land governance in Kitumba Subcounty. Five indicators were assessed, covering attendance at community land

meetings, consideration of opinions, representation in land governance bodies, confidence in asserting land rights, and direct attribution of participation improvements to FFP-LA. Table 7 and Figure 6 present the findings.

Code	Indicator	Before (Mean)	After (Mean)	Change
B4.1	I attend community meetings on land matters	2.52	4.36	+1.85
B4.2	My opinions are considered when land decisions are made in the community	2.51	4.45	+1.94
B4.3	Women are represented in land governance bodies (e.g. ALC, land committees)	2.52	4.48	+1.96
B4.4	I feel confident asserting my land rights in front of community leaders	2.56	4.48	+1.91
B4.5	FFP-LA / land registration activities have encouraged women's participation in land governance	2.35	4.45	+2.10

Table 7: Women's Participation and Decision-Making in Land Governance Before & After FFP-LA

Post-FFP-LA means range from 4.36 to 4.48, with an average change of +1.95 Likert points. The indicator recording the highest change within this dimension was B4.5 (FFP-LA encouraged women's participation in land governance), which improved from 2.35 to 4.45, a gain of +2.10, the second largest single improvement across all 20 study indicators. This directly establishes, from the perspectives of respondents themselves, that FFP-LA is the attributed driver of improved participation.

Women's representation in land governance bodies (B4.3) improved markedly from 2.52 to 4.48 (+1.96). This suggests that the FFP-LA process through its community sensitisation and mobilisation components has been associated with an increase in women's formal representation in Area Land Committees and other local land governance bodies.

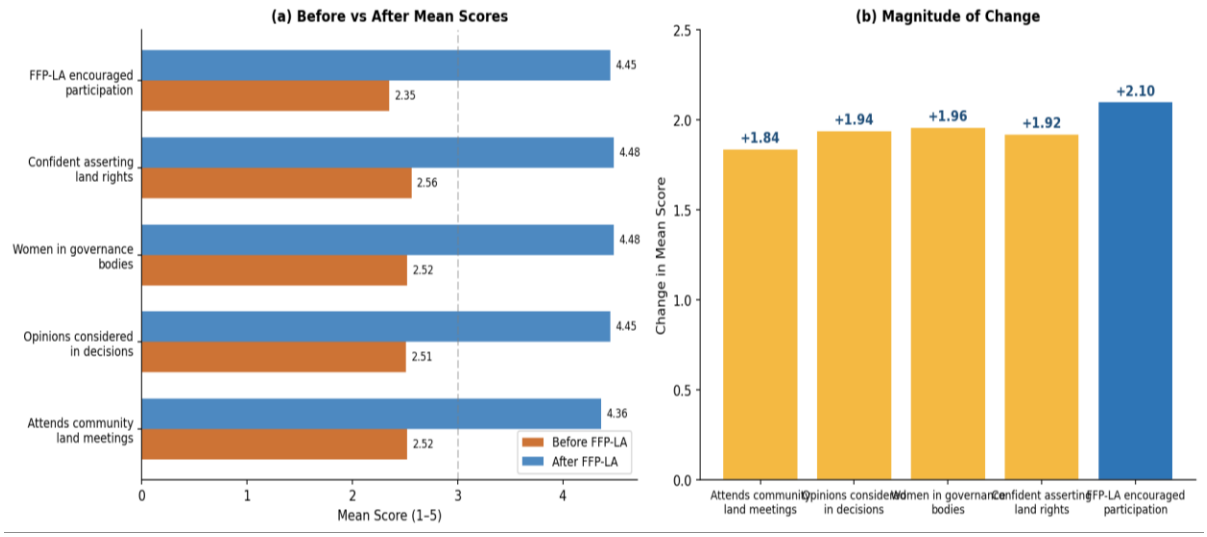


Figure 6: Women's Participation in Land Governance Before and After FFP-LA

Confidence in asserting land rights before community leaders (B4.4) improved from 2.56 to 4.48 (+1.91), suggesting that formal documentation and awareness-raising have contributed to increased agency among women in public land governance settings. The FGD participants confirmed this pattern directly, noting that women are now more involved and vocal in community land matters than before the CCO process, and attributing this change to both the documentation they now hold and the sensitisation activities that accompanied the registration exercise.

The indicator recording the lowest improvement in participation was B4.1 (attendance at community meetings on land matters), which improved from 2.52 to 4.36 (+1.85). While still a substantial gain, this relatively lower improvement may reflect the practical constraints including time poverty, domestic responsibilities, and limited mobility that continue to constrain women's physical attendance at community meetings even where their participation is in principle welcomed and institutionally supported.

4.4.1 Summary of Dimension-Level Findings

Table 8 consolidates the average before-and-after means across all four study dimensions and figure 7 presents the same findings as a radar chart for visual comparison across dimensions. The radar chart in Figure 7 visually confirms the near-uniform transformation across all four dimensions. Before FFP-LA, average scores cluster tightly between 2.46 and 2.53, all firmly within the Disagree range. After FFP-LA, all four dimensions rise to between 4.44 and 4.50 within the Agree to Strongly Agree range.

Dimension	Before Average	After Average	Mean Change	% Improvement
Land Ownership Rights (B1.1–B1.6)	2.47	4.50	+2.03	82.1%
Land Use Rights (B2.1–B2.4)	2.53	4.46	+1.92	75.9%
Land Control Rights (B3.1–B3.5)	2.46	4.49	+2.03	82.3%
Participation in Land Governance (B4.1–B4.5)	2.49	4.44	+1.95	78.3%
Overall Average (All 20 Indicators)	**2.49**	**4.47**	**+1.98**	**79.7%**

Table 8: Summary of Average Scores by Dimension Before and After FFP-LA

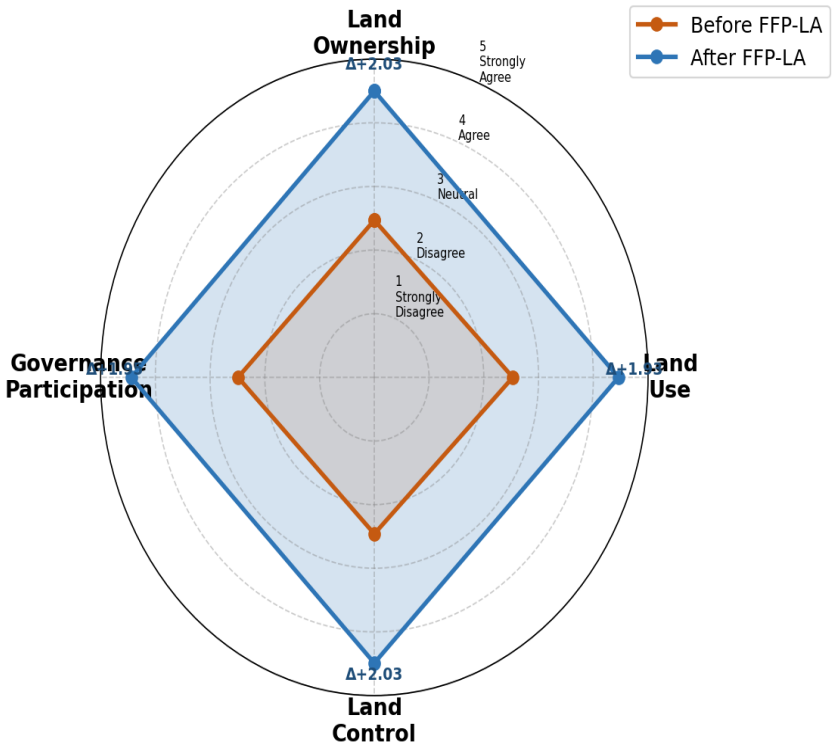


Figure 7: Radar Chart for Average Scores Across All Dimensions Before and After FFP-LA

Land ownership and control rights record the highest average improvement (+2.03 each), followed by participation (+1.95) and land use rights (+1.92). The overall average across all 20 indicators improved from 2.49 to 4.47, representing a mean gain of +1.98 points, equivalent to approximately a 79.7% improvement on the scale range from Disagree to Strongly Agree. This uniform and substantial improvement across all four dimensions constitutes the study's central empirical finding.

4.5 Community Participation in the FFP-LA Registration Process

The questionnaire assessed respondents' perceptions of the inclusiveness and community-centredness of the FFP-LA registration exercise itself, using five Likert-scale indicators. These indicators assess the degree to which the registration process was designed and delivered in a manner that was genuinely accessible, inclusive, and gender-sensitive. Table 9 and Figure 8 present the findings.

Statement	Mean (1–5)	Agree / Strongly Agree (%)	Respondents who Agree (n)
Community members were actively involved in the land registration exercise	4.00	84.0%	210
Women were specifically encouraged to participate in the land registration process	4.06	83.6%	209
Community meetings on land registration were conducted in an inclusive manner	4.11	86.4%	216
Women's land rights were explained clearly during community sensitisation	4.01	84.0%	210
The land registration process respected customary rights and local practices	4.03	86.4%	216

Table 9: Respondents' Perceptions of Community Participation in the Registration Process

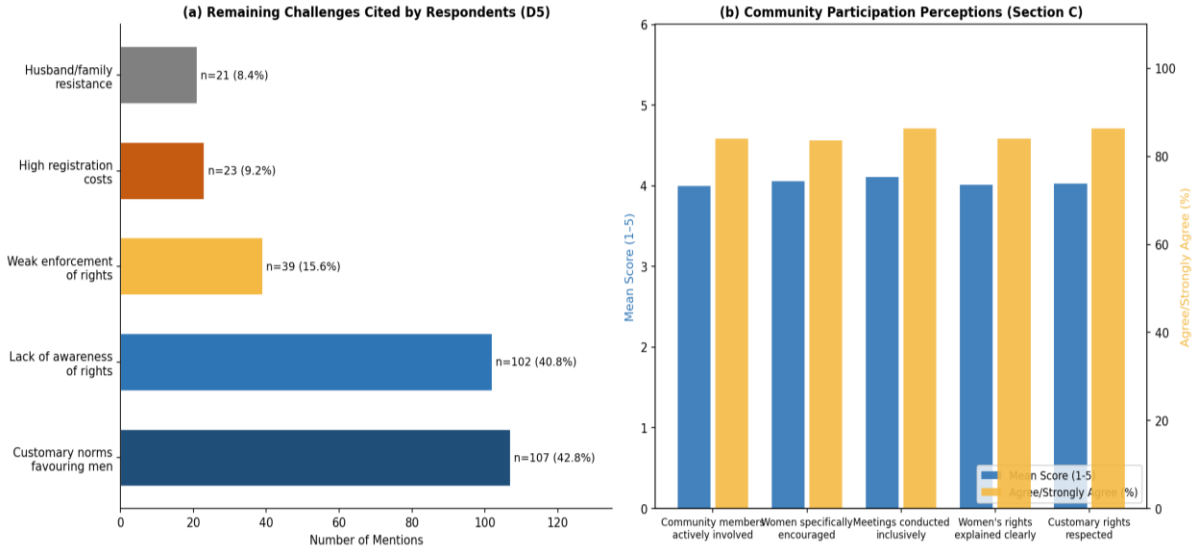


Figure 8: Remaining Challenges and Community Participation Perceptions

All five indicators recorded means above 4.00, with 83.6% to 86.4% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with each statement. The two statements recording the highest agreement rates (86.4% each) were C3 (community meetings conducted inclusively) and C5 (the process respected

customary rights and local practices). The high consensus on the respect for customary practices is particularly significant because it suggests that the FFP-LA approach in Kitumba Subcounty succeeded in working within rather than against the customary tenure framework.

The indicator recording the lowest agreement rate was C2 (women were specifically encouraged to participate), at 83.6%. While this remains a high endorsement, it suggests that the gender-specific mobilisation component of the programme, while broadly effective, did not reach all women equally. Taken together with the C3 finding (86.4% for inclusive meetings), these ratings indicate that while the registration process was broadly inclusive and well-received, there is scope for more deliberate and proactive measures to ensure women's meaningful rather than merely formal participation in future community land registration activities.

4.6 Overall Perceptions of FFP-LA Outcomes

Section D of the questionnaire captured respondents' overall perceptions of the impact of FFP-LA and CCO issuance on women's land rights, as well as remaining challenges and recommendations.

Response Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
D1: Do you feel your land rights have improved since CCO issuance?		
Yes, significantly	217	86.8%
Yes, somewhat	20	8.0%
No change	4	1.6%
No, they have worsened	3	1.2%
Not sure	6	2.4%
D2: Has holding a CCO changed how your family treats your land rights?		
Yes, positively	244	97.6%
No change	6	2.4%
D3: Has your CCO ever been disrespected by family or community leaders?		
Yes	64	25.6%
No	67	26.8%
Not Applicable	119	47.6%
D4: Did the registration exercise treat men and women equally?		
Yes, fully equal	162	64.8%
Somewhat equal	51	20.4%
Women benefited more	31	12.4%
Men benefited more	2	0.8%
Not sure	4	1.6%

Table 10: Overall Perceptions of FFP-LA Outcomes

An overwhelming majority of respondents, 86.8% (n=217), reported that their land rights had improved significantly since CCO issuance in the area, and a further 8.0% (n=20) indicated some improvement. Cumulatively, 94.8% reported at least some improvement, with only 5.2% indicating no change, worsening, or uncertainty. This near-unanimous perception of positive change provides compelling community-level validation of the FFP-LA programme's impact and constitutes a powerful confirmation of the Likert-scale findings presented in Sections 4.2 and 4.3.

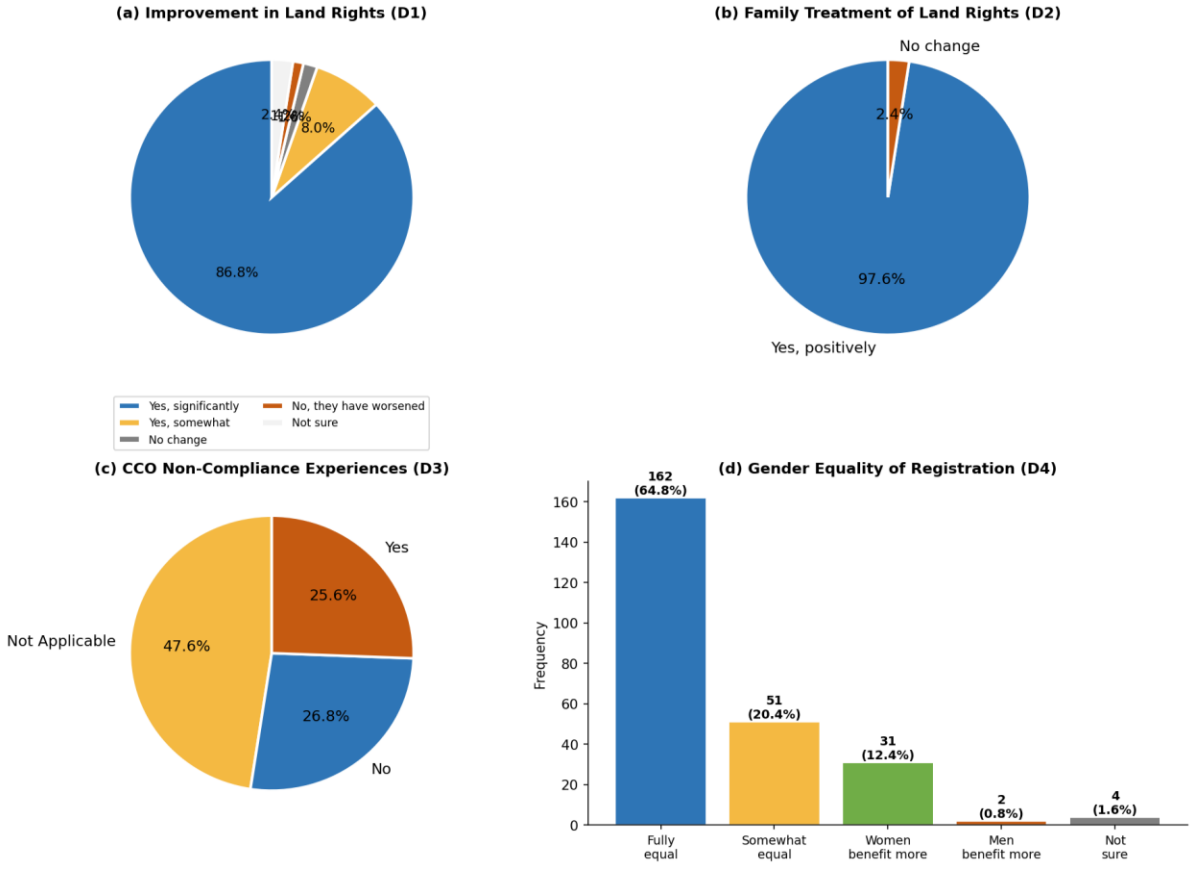


Figure 9: Overall Perceptions of FFP-LA Outcomes

Separately, 97.6% (n=244) of respondents confirmed that holding a CCO or land document had positively changed how their family treats their land rights. This finding is particularly significant because it captures not only whether formal documentation has been obtained, but whether it has produced observable change in household-level social dynamics,the dimension most directly relevant to effective tenure security.

4.6.1 CCO Non-Compliance

Respondents were asked whether they had ever experienced a situation where their CCO or land document was not respected by family members or community leaders. Of the 250 respondents, 25.6% (n=64) reported having experienced such a situation, 26.8% (n=67) reported no such experience, and 47.6% (n=119) indicated the question was not applicable to their circumstances. The 25.6% who reported non-compliance incidents provide an important qualification to the predominantly positive findings: while CCO documentation has broadly improved women's land rights, it does not guarantee universal enforcement, particularly at the household level where informal power dynamics continue to operate. Among the written descriptions provided by respondents who answered affirmatively, a recurring theme was that women were required to obtain a husband's or male relative's consent even for land registered in their own names, indicating that cultural expectations of male authority continue to override formal legal protections in some households.

4.6.2 Gender Equity of the Registration Process

On the question of whether the registration exercise treated men and women equally, 64.8% of respondents (n=162) believed the process was fully equal. A further 20.4% (n=51) viewed it as somewhat equal, and 12.4% (n=31) felt that women actually benefited more than men, a finding consistent with the FGD observation that women's participation in the registration exercise exceeded that of men. Only 2 respondents (0.8%) believed men benefited more, and 4 (1.6%) were unsure. These findings suggest that the gender-sensitive design of the programme, including targeted mobilisation of women and joint registration strategies, was perceived as broadly equitable and in some respects as positively favouring women in terms of access to the programme's benefits.

4.6.3 Remaining Challenges

Respondents were asked to identify the challenges women still face regarding land rights in the community. Customary norms favouring men were cited by the greatest number of respondents (approximately 107 total references, representing approximately 42.8% of the sample), followed closely by lack of awareness of rights (approximately 102 total references, representing approximately 40.8%). These were followed by weak enforcement of rights (39 references), high registration costs (23 references), and husband or family resistance (21 references), as illustrated in Figure 8. The co-dominance of customary norms and awareness gaps as the two primary

outstanding challenges is telling: it suggests that documentation and mobilisation, while highly effective, are not alone sufficient to fully dismantle entrenched gender inequalities in land governance.

4.7 Cross-Tabulation Analysis

To examine relationships between key variables, cross-tabulations were computed between gender, marital status, and selected outcome indicators. These analyses identify whether FFP-LA's benefits are distributed equitably across respondent subgroups or whether certain groups experience differential outcomes.

Gender	Yes, significantly	Yes, somewhat	No Change	Worsened	Not Sure	Total
Female	159 (87.4%)	17 (9.3%)	3 (1.6%)	1 (0.5%)	2 (1.1%)	182
Male	58 (85.3%)	3 (4.4%)	1 (1.5%)	2 (2.9%)	4 (5.9%)	68
Total	217 (86.8%)	20 (8.0%)	4 (1.6%)	3 (1.2%)	6 (2.4%)	250

Table 11: Cross-tabulation of Gender by Perceived Improvement in Land Rights

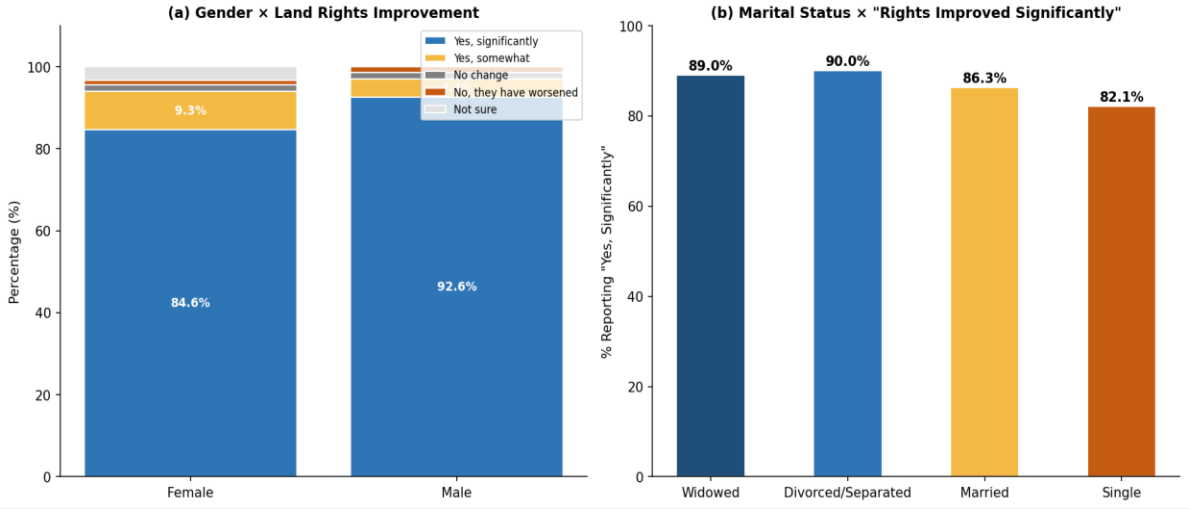


Figure 10: Cross-tabulations for Gender and Marital Status by Land Rights

Table 11 reveals that both female (87.4%) and male (85.3%) respondents predominantly reported that their land rights had improved significantly, with the gender difference being modest at 2.1 percentage points. This suggests that the FFP-LA programme generated broadly positive perceptions across gender groups, consistent with the 64.8% who considered the registration process fully equal.

The higher rate among female respondents (87.4%) compared to male respondents (85.3%) may partly reflect the more substantial baseline improvement that women experienced relative to men

given that women's pre-FFP-LA land rights were more severely constrained, any improvement represents a proportionally larger change in lived experience.

Marital Status	Avg. Ownership Rights (After)	Avg. Participation (After)	D1: Yes Significantly (%)	D3: CCO Not Respected (%)
Widowed (n=73)	4.59	4.45	90.4%	27.4%
Divorced/Separated (n=10)	4.60	4.48	80.0%	30.0%
Married (n=139)	4.39	4.43	85.6%	25.2%
Single (n=28)	4.57	4.47	85.7%	21.4%

Table 12: Cross-tabulation of Marital Status by Selected Outcome Indicators

Table 12 examines outcomes by marital status. Widowed respondents recorded the highest average post-FFP-LA ownership rights score (4.59) and the highest rate of reporting significant improvement (90.4%), consistent with the programme's deliberate prioritisation of vulnerable women including widows and those who had inherited land from their parents. This confirms the programme's success in reaching the most tenure-insecure subgroup with meaningful improvements. Divorced and separated respondents reported the highest CCO non-compliance rate (30.0%), suggesting that women in non-intact unions may face greater practical challenges in having their land rights respected at the community level. Single respondents reported the lowest CCO non-compliance rate (21.4%), which may reflect their relatively unchallenged individual ownership status in the absence of a marital household dynamic.

4.8 Key Informant Interview Findings

Key informant interviews were conducted with two participants with direct institutional and community-level experience with FFP-LA implementation in Kitumba Subcounty: Prosper Aheisibwe, District Staff Surveyor at Kabale District Land Office, and Reverend Stephen Tabaro, Chairman of the Mediation Committee during the CCO programme. Their responses are analysed thematically below and triangulated with the quantitative findings throughout.

4.8.1 FFP-LA Implementation: Process and Institutional Framework

Both key informants described the FFP-LA implementation process as beginning with community mobilisation and sensitisation, delivered through churches, community meetings, and local radio stations. Aheisibwe noted that the cost structure was designed to be affordable, with households contributing only UGX 10,000 while the balance was covered by the Government of Uganda and the Government of the Netherlands as the primary funder. Implementation commenced

approximately in 2017, with multiple partners operating simultaneously, including IIRR, UN-Habitat, and Makerere University's Land at Scale Project, resulting in an estimated total of over 500,000 CCOs issued across the programme area, with over 2,000 specifically within Kitumba Subcounty.

Reverend Tabaro described the process as centred on household-level family registration, with the district land committee providing advisory and technical guidance and surveyors conducting physical boundary demarcation. Key institutions involved included the District Land Office, the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development, Area Land Committees, physical planning committees, religious institutions, and local government bodies at all levels.

4.8.2 Gender-Sensitive Measures in FFP-LA Implementation

A central gender-sensitive strategy identified by Aheisibwe was the deliberate prioritisation of joint ownership registration, extended to couples in informal unions as long as both parties acknowledged their relationship. This was particularly significant given that, as Aheisibwe estimated, more than 60% of couples at the peasant level in the area are not formally married under Ugandan statutory law. By extending co-ownership protections to women in informal unions, the programme effectively reached a population that would otherwise have fallen outside the scope of formal statutory protections.

Beyond joint registration, the programme also facilitated the individual registration of women who had inherited land from their parents, purchased land independently, or were widowed. Reverend Tabaro confirmed that both men and women were registered jointly as standard practice, with both names formally appearing on the CCO which he described as the primary gender-responsive element of the process at the community level. This practical implementation decision directly produced the high post-FFP-LA score on B1.2 (name on land documents, mean 4.57), which records the largest improvement in the ownership dimension.

4.8.3 Impact on Women's Land Rights

Both key informants confirmed improvements in women's land rights following FFP-LA implementation, though they characterised the nature of the improvement differently. Aheisibwe emphasised the shift in rights awareness: women who previously did not know they had rights over property learned, through sensitisation activities, that they had a legitimate say in land matters and in household decision-making more broadly. He identified a practical, enforceable change as

well: CCO co-ownership provisions now legally require a wife's signature before any loan secured against family land or any land transaction can proceed, providing structural protection against the unilateral disposal of family land.

Tabaro described the impact primarily in terms of cultural shift at the community level. Before the programme, men among the Bakiga community widely believed they were the sole legitimate authorities over family land. Through the education component of FFP-LA, both spouses came to understand that the land belongs to the family jointly, and that decisions about its use and management are shared responsibilities. He observed that women now participate actively in land use decisions and that both spouses acknowledge their shared authority over jointly held land qualitative evidence that directly corroborates the high post-FFP-LA means on B2.4 and B3.1 through B3.4.

4.8.4 Persistent Barriers

Aheisibwe identified three interconnected categories of persistent barriers. At the socio-cultural level, patrilineal inheritance practices mean that daughters typically receive only a token shared parcel upon parental death, with the bulk of family land passing to sons, a practice that CCO documentation does not directly address. At the legal level, the absence of formal marriage among the majority of rural couples creates a gap between statutory co-ownership protections and their practical application, even though the FFP-LA programme addressed this pragmatically. At the institutional level, he identified two significant gaps: the continued reluctance of banks to accept CCOs as collateral for loans, which limits the economic utility of CCOs for rural women; and the chronic under-resourcing of the recorder's office at the sub-county level, which makes subsequent transactions difficult to effect after initial CCO issuance. He advocated for the recorder's office to be staffed with not fewer than five dedicated personnel.

4.9 Focus Group Discussion Findings

A Focus Group Discussion was conducted with five women landholders in Kitumba Subcounty, Prudence, Christine, Frida, Mariam, and Vanessa. The group confirmed that community norms around land ownership have evolved: both men and women are now recognised as able to own land, with the key determinant being the method of acquisition. Women and girls can now inherit land,a change from earlier generational practices where inheritance was channelled exclusively through male family members. These observations are consistent with the high post-FFP-LA scores on B1.5 (independent acquisition, 4.48) and B1.6 (inheritance rights, 4.53).

Participants described their experience of the registration process in broadly positive terms, characterising it as easy to understand and clearly communicated. A particularly significant observation was that women's participation in the registration exercise exceeded that of men suggesting that the deliberate gender-sensitisation efforts of the programme generated stronger engagement among women than men and reinforcing the survey finding that 83.6% of respondents believed women were specifically encouraged to participate.

Despite acknowledging significant progress, the FGD identified two principal remaining barriers: first, lack of experience and knowledge many women still lack the confidence and practical understanding to engage effectively with formal land processes, interpret their documentation, or navigate institutional channels for dispute resolution; and second, continuing male dominance in household land decisions, which creates practical barriers to the exercise of formally recognised rights. Participants offered three priority recommendations: continued and expanded sensitisation, reduction of registration costs for women, and economic empowerment programmes. Their collective message to policymakers that 'things are getting better for women, but more effort is still needed encapsulates the overarching conclusion supported by all three data sources.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF STUDY FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter interprets and discusses the findings presented in Chapter Four in the light of the theoretical framework and the body of literature reviewed in Chapter Two. The discussion is organised around the study's two specific objectives and culminates in a synthesis of the principal conclusions supported by the empirical evidence. For each objective, the discussion evaluates what was found, situates the findings within the existing body of scholarship, and makes an argument concerning the extent to which FFP-LA has and has not advanced women's land rights in Kitumba Subcounty.

5.2 Impact of FFP-LA on Women's Land Ownership, Use and Control

The findings provide strong and consistent evidence that FFP-LA implementation has produced significant improvements in women's land rights across all three sub-dimensions of ownership, use, and control in Kitumba Subcounty. Across all ownership, use, and control indicators, mean responses moved from broadly within the Disagree range before FFP-LA to broadly within the Agree to Strongly Agree range afterwards. The near-universal agreement that land rights improved significantly and that CCO documentation changed family treatment positively provides compelling community-level validation of this pattern. These findings directly address and validate the theoretical claims of Enemark et al. (2016) and IFAD (2024) that FFP-LA, properly designed and implemented with gender-sensitive measures, can produce meaningful improvements in women's tenure security in customary tenure contexts.

The ownership dimension recorded substantial improvement, with the largest single gain within it being the inscription of names on land documents. As IFAD (2024) observes, formal documentation is the critical mechanism through which FFP-LA makes women's land rights visible to state institutions and households alike. The Kitumba Subcounty data strongly validate this claim: the act of inscribing women's names on CCOs, a seemingly procedural step, produced the most immediate and legally verifiable transformation in their ownership status. This finding aligns with Landnet Uganda's (2023) emphasis that the social recognition of women's land rights at the community level is often a more immediate determinant of effective tenure security than formal legal status alone, and the high post-FFP-LA level of community recognition confirms that documentation and social recognition have moved in tandem in Kitumba Subcounty.

The control dimension also recorded substantial improvement, driven particularly by the direct legal mechanism of CCO co-ownership: the single largest improvement across all study indicators was the strengthening of land control through documentation. This finding carries particular theoretical significance. The broader literature on women's land rights in sub-Saharan Africa including ICRW (2023) and Mwangi (2025) distinguishes between holding rights and exercising control, noting that women frequently possess nominal rights that are socially overridden. The Kitumba Subcounty evidence suggests that CCO documentation has partially closed this gap, specifically through the spousal consent requirement for land transactions, which Aheisibwe identified as an enforceable structural protection. This converts what was previously a social norm, that women should be consulted into a legal obligation that can withstand customary pressure.

The relatively lower improvement in use rights warrants careful interpretation. This is consistent with the distinction identified by ICRW (2023) between formal documentation of rights and the deeper behavioural and cultural shifts required for those rights to be exercised without social friction in everyday life. Ownership and control rights, once documented through CCO issuance, are relatively fixed and legally verifiable; use rights are exercised daily and are therefore more continuously exposed to cultural contestation and the need for ongoing social legitimation. Reverend Tabaro's observation of a cultural shift, in which both spouses now understand family land as a jointly managed asset, suggests that the attitudinal change is underway, but the data indicate it is progressing more slowly than the documentation-driven changes in ownership and control. ESAFF Uganda (2024) similarly notes that informal social practices around land use decisions in customary tenure settings are among the most resistant to rapid change, even where formal documentation exists.

The persistence of lower scores on inheritance-related indicators (which recorded the lowest post-FFP-LA levels within their respective dimensions) confirms the qualitative evidence from both key informants, who identified patrilineal inheritance norms as deeply embedded and not yet fully addressed by the FFP-LA process. As Mwangi (2025) observes, the pace of change in inheritance norms is typically slower than the pace achievable through registration campaigns, requiring sustained engagement beyond the initial documentation exercise. Aheisibwe's account of the 'grievance gift', the token parcel assigned to daughters at parental death while sons inherit the bulk of family land, illustrates the depth of customary practice that CCO documentation alone cannot dismantle. This finding directly echoes the theoretical argument of Kamusiime (2022), who calls

for empirical research to distinguish between what FFP-LA can achieve through documentation and what requires complementary cultural, legal, and institutional interventions. The present study provides precisely that distinction.

5.3 FFP-LA and Women's Participation in Land Governance

The findings on women's participation in land governance complement and reinforce the evidence on ownership, use, and control. The improvement across all five participation indicators is broadly comparable to that recorded for control rights and exceeds that for use rights, suggesting that FFP-LA's participatory methodology has been effective in changing not only documentary and household-level rights but also women's positioning within community-level land governance processes. The direct attribution of participation improvements to FFP-LA is the study's second largest single improvement and constitutes a particularly strong finding: it confirms that the programme, not confounding factors, is the primary driver of the observed change.

The improvement in women's representation in land governance bodies is especially significant given the well-documented historical male domination of Area Land Committees and local land governance structures. ESAFF Uganda (2024) and Oxfam (2024) both document that these bodies have historically been male-dominated, and women's exclusion from them has been a structural barrier to the enforcement of their land rights. The data from Kitumba Subcounty suggest that FFP-LA's community sensitisation and mobilisation components have been associated with a measurable shift in this institutional landscape,not just in women's formal presence, but in the consideration of their opinions and confidence to assert rights in public.

This is consistent with Smith and Jones' (2025) argument that rights and voice are mutually reinforcing: when women's rights are documented and publicly acknowledged, their confidence to participate in land governance processes increases, and that increased participation in turn reinforces and protects their rights. The Kitumba Subcounty findings validate this theoretical feedback mechanism empirically. The FGD participants confirmed the pattern directly, describing women as now more involved and vocal in community land matters than before the CCO process, and attributing the change to both the documentation they now hold and the sensitisation that accompanied the registration exercise,suggesting that rights documentation and civic empowerment operate in tandem rather than in sequence.

However, Williams-Wynn et al. (2021) caution that formal participation without the removal of practical barriers can remain superficial: women may be present in community mapping processes without their rights being meaningfully captured or their voices genuinely heard. The relatively lower improvement on meeting attendance provides empirical support for this caution in the Kitumba context. Despite the substantial overall gains in participation, the practical constraints of time poverty, domestic responsibilities, and limited mobility continue to constrain women's physical presence in community governance settings. The study's recommendation for targeted facilitation including logistics support, child care provision, and scheduling sensitivity responds directly to this finding.

5.4 Persistent Barriers and the Path Forward

The findings across all three data sources converge on a consistent identification of four principal categories of persistent barriers: socio-cultural (patrilineal inheritance norms, frequently cited as a continuing challenge), legal (absence of formal marriage among the majority of rural couples, identified by KII as creating statutory protection gaps), institutional (bank reluctance to accept CCOs as collateral and chronic under-resourcing of recorder offices), and awareness-related (the most frequently cited residual challenge overall, persisting after FFP-LA). These categories require distinct responses and are addressed directly in the recommendations in Chapter Six.

The co-dominance of customary norms and awareness gaps as the two primary outstanding challenges is theoretically significant. It suggests that the most impactful remaining barriers are not primarily legal or institutional, which the FFP-LA programme has begun to address, but attitudinal and informational. Nagujja et al. (2025) note that lasting change in patrilineal land governance norms requires the active engagement of those who currently benefit from those norms, not merely the empowerment of those they disadvantage. The evidence from this study reinforces that argument: men, customary leaders, and clan heads must be reached by sensitisation efforts as key change agents, not merely as bystanders. Similarly, Landesa (2025) argues that legal literacy programmes are a necessary complement to FFP-LA implementation, ensuring that women understand both their rights and the processes through which those rights can be formalised and defended. The CCO non-compliance identified in this study, in which women's CCOs are not respected by family members or community leaders, underscores the urgency of this recommendation.

The institutional barriers identified by the key informants, particularly the reluctance of banks to accept CCOs as collateral and the chronic under-resourcing of sub-county recorder offices, represent a second-generation implementation challenge. IFAD (2024) highlights that the economic utility of land documentation for women depends critically on whether documented rights can be leveraged for productive investment. If banks do not accept CCOs, women's formally documented ownership cannot translate into the agricultural credit and financial inclusion that are among the most important downstream benefits of tenure security. Landesa (2025) further identifies this link between documentation and financial access as a key developmental benefit of formalised rights that is often unrealised in practice due to institutional rigidities in the financial sector.

5.5 Summary

In relation to Specific Objective 1, the data provide robust evidence that FFP-LA implementation has produced substantial improvements in women's land rights across all three sub-dimensions of ownership, use, and control. Pre-FFP-LA responses consistently fell within the Disagree range across all indicators, while post-FFP-LA responses rose uniformly to the Agree to Strongly Agree range. The largest single gain was recorded for documentation strengthening land control, underscoring respondents' direct attribution of improved land agency to CCO documentation. The discussion demonstrates that these gains are best understood through the lens of FFP-LA's core documentation mechanism, which makes women's rights visible, legally verifiable, and socially recognized, while also revealing that behavioural changes in daily use and inheritance-related decision-making proceed more slowly and require complementary cultural and legal interventions.

In relation to Specific Objective 2, the data demonstrate that FFP-LA has significantly improved women's participation and decision-making in land governance, with the direct attribution to FFP-LA itself recording the second-largest single improvement across all study indicators. The discussion situates this finding within the theoretical argument of Smith and Jones (2025) on the mutual reinforcement of rights and voice, and empirically validates the participatory dimension of FFP-LA as an effective mechanism for restructuring women's engagement in community land governance. Nonetheless, persistent barriers particularly customary norms, awareness gaps, institutional capacity deficits, and the legal marriage gap mean that the gains remain incomplete and require sustained policy and programmatic attention. The next chapter draws on these findings and this discussion to present the study's conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This final chapter draws together the threads of the study and presents its conclusions and recommendations. Section 5.2 presents the study's conclusions organised around the two specific objectives, linking each conclusion directly to the empirical evidence presented in Chapter Four and to the theoretical literature reviewed in Chapter Two. Section 5.3 sets out ten recommendations structured as a sequenced reform matrix, each linked to the empirical finding that motivates it and addressed to the responsible institution or actor. Section 5.4 articulates the study's contributions to knowledge. Section 5.5 identifies limitations that qualify the study's conclusions. Section 5.6 identifies directions for future research.

6.2 Conclusions

The overarching conclusion of this study is that Fit-for-Purpose Land Administration, as implemented through the SLAAC programme and the Land at Scale Project in Kitumba Subcounty, Kabale District, has produced substantial, broadly perceived, and empirically robust improvements in women's land rights across all four analytical dimensions of ownership, use, control, and participation in land governance. Measured against the before-and-after Likert assessment across all 20 study indicators, the overall average improvement of +1.98 points,equivalent to a 79.7% improvement on the Disagree-to-Strongly-Agree scale range,constitutes strong evidence that FFP-LA is an effective gender-responsive land governance instrument in the Kitumba Subcounty context. However, the gains are incomplete, and persistent barriers of a socio-cultural, legal, institutional, and awareness-related nature require sustained and targeted attention.

6.2.1 Conclusion on Specific Objective 1: State of Women's Land Rights Before and After FFP-LA

The study concludes that FFP-LA implementation has transformed the state of women's land rights relating to ownership, use, and control in Kitumba Subcounty, moving them from a generalised condition of documented absence in the pre-FFP-LA period to a generalised condition of documented, socially recognised, and legally enforceable entitlement in the post-FFP-LA period. Before FFP-LA, mean scores on all 15 ownership, use, and control indicators fell within the 2.30 to 2.65 range,firmly within the Disagree range,indicating that women overwhelmingly lacked

recognised, documented, or independently exercised land rights. After FFP-LA, all 15 means rose to between 4.36 and 4.57,firmly within the Agree to Strongly Agree range,confirming across-the-board and substantial improvement.

The most transformative dimension was land control, which recorded an average change of +2.03 Likert points, driven particularly by the direct legal mechanism of CCO co-ownership: the requirement for spousal consent before any land transaction (B3.4, +2.09) and the documentation-control linkage (B3.5, +2.20,the single largest improvement across the entire study). The study concludes that CCO issuance, by inscribing women's names on legal documents and requiring their signature before any disposition of family land, has constituted the most direct and immediately effective mechanism for advancing women's land rights in the customary tenure context of Kitumba Subcounty. This conclusion validates the theoretical proposition of IFAD (2024) that formal documentation is the critical mechanism through which FFP-LA makes women's land rights visible to state institutions and households alike.

Nonetheless, the study concludes that important limitations persist. The lower post-FFP-LA scores on inheritance-related indicators (B1.6, mean 4.53; B3.3, mean 4.39,the lowest within their dimensions) reflect the continued entrenchment of patrilineal inheritance norms that CCO documentation does not directly address. These norms operate at a cultural and institutional level,through clan structures, customary practice, and intergenerational socialisation,that requires more than legal documentation to transform. The study therefore concludes that while FFP-LA has been highly effective in improving women's documented and transactional land rights, inheritance-related rights require complementary cultural, legal, and institutional interventions to achieve full equity.

6.2.2 Conclusion on Specific Objective 2: FFP-LA and Women's Participation in Land Governance

The study concludes that FFP-LA implementation has significantly improved women's participation and decision-making in land governance in Kitumba Subcounty, producing average improvements of +1.95 Likert points across all five participation indicators. The direct attribution of participation improvements to FFP-LA itself (B4.5, +2.10),the second largest single improvement across the entire study,provides particularly compelling evidence that the programme, rather than confounding factors, is the primary driver of observed change. The study concludes that FFP-LA's participatory methodology, combined with its community sensitisation

component, has produced an enduring shift in women's agency and visibility within community land governance structures, not merely a one-time event associated with the registration exercise.

Improvement in women's representation in formal land governance bodies (B4.3, +1.96) and confidence in asserting rights in public (B4.4, +1.91) suggests that FFP-LA has partially restructured the social landscape of land governance participation in Kitumba Subcounty,reducing, though not eliminating, the structural subordination of women within community land decision-making. The FGD evidence confirms that women now participate more actively and vocally in community land matters, while simultaneously acknowledging that male dominance in household land decisions remains a practical barrier in some contexts.

The study also concludes that women's participation improvements remain constrained by structural factors that FFP-LA cannot address alone. The lowest improvement in the participation dimension was on meeting attendance (B4.1, +1.85), reflecting the continued practical constraints of time poverty, domestic responsibilities, and limited mobility that constrain women's physical presence in community governance settings even where their participation is formally encouraged. The study concludes that sustained and targeted facilitation,including logistics support, child care provision, and scheduling sensitivity,is required alongside the formal documentation and sensitisation components of FFP-LA to achieve fully substantive women's participation in land governance.

6.3 Recommendations

The following ten recommendations are presented as a reform matrix, each linked explicitly to the empirical finding that motivates it, addressed to the responsible institution or actor, and sequenced by implementation horizon. The recommendations are informed by the evidence presented in Chapter Four and by the literature reviewed in Chapter Two, and are modelled on the evidence-based reform approach advocated by Williams-Wynn et al. (2021) and demonstrated in comparable property governance reform matrices. Table 13 presents the reform matrix.

Recommendation	Empirical Finding it Addresses	Dimension	Lead Institution	Implementation Horizon
R1. Sustain and deepen community sensitisation on women's land rights, targeting men, customary leaders, and clan heads as key change agents	Customary norms favouring men and lack of awareness of rights cited as two most prevalent residual challenges	Ownership, Participation	MLHUD, GLTN, CSOs	Short–Medium

	(≈43% and 41% respectively)			
R2. Strengthen and resource sub-county recorder's offices with dedicated staffing (minimum five staff per office) to manage post-issuance transactions	Under-resourcing of recorder offices identified by KII as a critical institutional gap limiting the economic utility of CCOs	Control, Ownership	MLHUD, Local Government	Medium
R3. Engage banking and financial institutions to formally accept CCOs as eligible collateral for agricultural and household loans	Bank reluctance to accept CCOs as collateral limits women's ability to use documented rights for economic empowerment	Control	Bank of Uganda, MLHUD	Medium
R4. Establish women-only legal literacy programmes at the parish level covering rights awareness, CCO interpretation, and dispute resolution pathways	25.6% of respondents reported CCO non-compliance; lack of knowledge cited as a key FGD barrier	Ownership, Control, Participation	CSOs, LandNet Uganda, IIRR	Short–Medium
R5. Reform inheritance law and customary practice to protect daughters' and widows' rights to family land on equal terms with sons	Lower post-FFP-LA scores on inheritance indicators (B1.6, B3.3) and KII evidence on patrilineal inheritance practices leaving daughters with token parcels	Ownership, Control	MLHUD, Ministry of Justice, Cultural Institutions	Long
R6. Extend statutory spousal co-ownership protections to women in informal unions at the legislative level, building on the pragmatic FFP-LA approach	>60% of rural couples at peasant level not formally married (KII evidence); legal insecurity persists despite pragmatic programme response	Ownership, Control	Parliament, MLHUD	Medium–Long
R7. Mandate gender-disaggregated monitoring and evaluation of FFP-LA outcomes, including before-and-after assessment, as a standard requirement for all future CCO programmes	Gender-disaggregated outcomes inconsistently measured and reported in FFP-LA programmes across sub-Saharan Africa (Williams-Wynn et al., 2021)	All dimensions	MLHUD, GLTN, Makerere University	Short
R8. Institutionalise gender quotas in Area Land Committees and community land mapping committees to ensure at least 50% female membership	Women's representation in land governance bodies (B4.3) improved substantially but remains lower than attendance (B4.1) suggesting structural barriers remain	Participation	MLHUD, District Land Offices	Short–Medium

R9. Commission a longitudinal follow-up study in Kitumba Subcounty at five-year intervals to assess the durability and depth of FFP-LA gender outcomes	Present study captures a cross-sectional snapshot; long-term sustainability of gains requires iterative evidence generation	Research gap	Makerere University, GLTN	Long

Table 13: Reform Matrix,Evidence-Based Recommendations Linked to Findings, Institutions, and Horizons

The nine recommendations are elaborated briefly below, organised by thematic cluster.

6.2.1 Sensitisation and Awareness

Recommendations R1 and R4 address the two most frequently cited residual challenges: customary norms favouring men and lack of awareness of rights. R1 calls for sustained community sensitisation specifically targeting male community members, customary leaders, and clan heads as key agents of cultural change,rather than focusing exclusively on women as the recipients of education. As Nagujja et al. (2025) note, lasting change in patrilineal land governance norms requires the active engagement of those who currently benefit from those norms, not merely the empowerment of those they disadvantage. R4 calls for the establishment of women-only legal literacy programmes at the parish level, equipping women with the practical knowledge to exercise, protect, and enforce the rights that FFP-LA has documented. The 25.6% CCO non-compliance rate identified in this study underscores the urgency of this recommendation.

6.3.2 Institutional Strengthening

Recommendations R3 and R4 address the institutional gaps identified by the key informant evidence. R3 calls for the resourcing of sub-county recorder's offices with dedicated staffing,a minimum of five staff per office as advocated by Aheisibwe,to manage the substantial post-issuance transaction load generated by the CCO programme and to ensure that the documented rights survive subsequent household changes. R4 calls for formal engagement with the banking and financial sector to accept CCOs as eligible collateral, enabling women to leverage their documented land rights for productive economic purposes,the economic empowerment dimension of tenure security that Landesa (2025) identifies as a key developmental benefit of formalised rights. R8 calls for gender quotas of at least 50% female membership in Area Land Committees and community land mapping committees, institutionalising the participatory gains achieved through FFP-LA in the formal governance structures of Kitumba Subcounty.

6.3.3 Legal and Policy Reform

Recommendations R5 and R6 address the deeper structural legal barriers identified by the study. R6 calls for reform of inheritance law and customary practice to protect daughters' and widows' equal rights to family land on death of a parent or spouse,addressing the most deeply embedded dimension of patrilineal land governance that even a high-performing FFP-LA programme cannot resolve through documentation alone. R6 calls for statutory extension of spousal co-ownership protections to women in informal unions at the legislative level,building on the pragmatic FFP-LA approach but giving it durable statutory force. Both reforms require political will and multi-stakeholder engagement, but the evidence from Kitumba Subcounty demonstrates the scale of need and the community-level receptiveness to change.

6.3.4 Monitoring, Evaluation, and Research

Recommendations R7 and R9 address the evidence infrastructure needed to sustain and extend the gains achieved. R8 calls for gender-disaggregated monitoring and evaluation,including before-and-after assessment,to be mandated as a standard requirement for all future CCO programmes in Uganda, addressing the documentation gap identified by Williams-Wynn et al. (2021) and ensuring that gender outcomes become a core accountability metric for land administration programmes. R9 calls for a longitudinal follow-up study in Kitumba Subcounty at five-year intervals to assess whether the improvements documented in this study are sustained, deepened, or eroded over time, and to identify the conditions under which FFP-LA gains are most durable.

6.4 Contributions to Knowledge

This study makes several original contributions to the academic and policy literature on FFP-LA and women's land rights. First, it provides the first rigorous community-level before-and-after empirical assessment of FFP-LA's gender outcomes in Uganda, using a validated measurement framework that captures all four dimensions of women's land rights,ownership, use, control, and participation,through a sample of 250 respondents. This addresses the evidence gap identified by Williams-Wynn et al. (2021), Nagujja et al. (2025), and Kamusiime (2022) as a priority for the field.

Second, the study demonstrates empirically that FFP-LA's most transformative effect on women's land rights operates through the documentation-control linkage,specifically, the inscription of women's names on CCOs and the legal consent requirement for land transactions. This finding

advances the theoretical literature on FFP-LA by providing specific evidence on which mechanism within the FFP-LA process most effectively advances women's rights, enabling more targeted programme design in future implementations.

Third, the study contributes a replicable methodological framework for community-level gender assessment of FFP-LA programmes, using a validated 20-item Likert-scale instrument, a convergent parallel mixed-methods design, and a cross-tabulation analytical approach, that can be adapted and applied in other FFP-LA implementation contexts across sub-Saharan Africa.

Fourth, the finding that the direct attribution of participation improvements to FFP-LA (B4.5, +2.10) is the second largest single improvement across all 20 indicators contributes to the broader debate about whether participatory land administration processes can produce sustained changes in women's governance participation, or merely formal inclusion. The Kitumba Subcounty evidence supports the former conclusion, at least in contexts with strong multi-stakeholder implementation and sustained community sensitisation.

6.5 Limitations

Several limitations qualify the conclusions of this study and should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the before-and-after comparison relies on respondents' retrospective recall of their pre-FFP-LA land rights situation, which may be subject to recall bias, particularly for events that occurred several years before data collection. This limitation is partially mitigated by the use of concrete, observable indicators and by triangulation across data sources, but cannot be eliminated in a cross-sectional research design. Second, the study is bounded to Kitumba Subcounty, and the specific combination of multi-stakeholder implementation, scale of CCO issuance, and community characteristics may produce outcomes that differ from other FFP-LA contexts. Third, the KII strand was limited to two informants, which, while both were deeply knowledgeable, limits the breadth of institutional perspectives captured. Fourth, the data collection was conducted at a single point in time, limiting the ability to assess whether the improvements documented in this study are sustained or deepened over time.

6.6 Recommendations for Future Research

Building on the findings of this study, several avenues for future research are recommended. First, a longitudinal panel study in Kitumba Subcounty is needed to assess whether the FFP-LA gains

documented here are maintained, deepened, or eroded at five-year and ten-year intervals after initial CCO issuance. Second, a comparative study across multiple FFP-LA implementation sites in Uganda, including the West Nile and Elgon regions where Land at Scale Phase 2 is being implemented would establish whether the Kitumba Subcounty findings generalise to other customary tenure contexts. Third, research specifically examining the relationship between CCO co-ownership, women's access to agricultural credit, and household food security outcomes would empirically test the downstream economic empowerment effects of FFP-LA that the theoretical literature anticipates. Fourth, qualitative research is warranted on the experiences of women in informal unions who received CCOs under the pragmatic joint registration approach, and on whether their documentation is respected and enforced at the household and community level in the same way as CCOs held by formally married women. Finally, a study examining the role of male community leaders (customary leaders, clan heads, and religious leaders) as agents of cultural change in land governance would illuminate the conditions under which they become active advocates for women's land rights rather than passive or resistant bystanders.

6.7 Concluding Remarks

This study set out to assess the impact of Fit-for-Purpose Land Administration in advancing women's land rights in Kitumba Subcounty, Kabale District, Uganda. The evidence generated,from 250 survey respondents, two key informants, and five FGD participants,tells a story of substantial, broadly experienced, and deeply meaningful improvement in women's land tenure security following FFP-LA implementation. Women who, before the programme, predominantly lacked recognised, documented, or independently exercised land rights, now hold CCOs that bear their names, require their signatures before any transaction, and are recognised by their families, communities, and,increasingly,their institutions. That transformation, measured systematically across 20 indicators and four analytical dimensions, is the central finding of this study.

And yet the story is not complete. Customary norms that channel inheritance through male lineages, legal gaps that leave women in informal unions without full statutory protection, institutions that remain under-resourced to sustain what the programme has built, and awareness deficits that leave some women unable to exercise the rights they now formally hold,these are the residual barriers that demand continued attention. The women of Kitumba Subcounty have said

clearly: things are getting better, but more effort is still needed. This study takes that message seriously and offers the evidence and the recommendations to help translate it into sustained action.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Questionnaire Survey Instrument

SECTION A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Age: 18–25 [ ] 26–35 [ ] 36–45 [ ] 46–60 [ ] Above 60 [ ]

2. Sex: Female [ ] Male [ ]

3. Marital Status: Single [ ] Married [ ] Widowed [ ] Divorced/Separated [ ]

4. Education Level: No formal education [ ] Primary [ ] Secondary [ ] Tertiary [ ]

5. Occupation:……

6. How long have you lived in Kitumba Subcounty?
Less than 5 years [ ] 5–10 years [ ] 11–20 years [ ] More than 20 years [ ]

7. What type of land tenure applies to your land?
Customary [ ] Freehold [ ] Leasehold [ ]

8.Do you currently have any land documentation? Yes [ ] No [ ]

If Yes, what type?
CCO [ ] Freehold Land Title [ ] Agreement ( ) Other [ ] (specify:___)

9. Did you participate in any land registration exercise in this area?
Yes [ ] No [ ] Not sure []

SECTION B: WOMEN'S LAND RIGHTS,BEFORE AND AFTER FFP-LA IMPLEMENTATION

Instructions: For each statement below, rate your situation BEFORE FFP-LA was introduced (columns B1–B5) AND your situation NOW, AFTER FFP-LA (columns A1–A5). Use the Likert scale: 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree.

B1: Land Ownership Rights

Statement	Before FFP-LA (B) / After FFP-LA (A)									
	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5
I have recognized ownership rights to land										

My name appears on land documents (title, CCO, or other)										
I hold a Certificate of Customary Ownership (CCO) for land in my name										
My CCO / land document is recognized by my family and community										
I acquired land independently (not solely through a husband or male relative)										
I can inherit land in my own right										

B2: Land Use Rights

Statement	Before FFP-LA (B) / After FFP-LA (A)									
	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5
I can decide how the land I hold is used without needing permission from a man										
I can cultivate and manage my land independently										
I can rent out or lease my land without needing a man's approval										
My land use decisions are respected by my family and community										

B3: Land Control Rights

Statement	Before FFP-LA (B) / After FFP-LA (A)									
	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5
I participate in decisions about whether to sell family land										
I participate in decisions about whether to lease family land										
I have a say in land inheritance decisions within my household										
My signature or consent is required before land is transferred or sold										
Having land documentation (CCO or title) has strengthened my control over land										

B4: Participation in Land Governance

Statement	Before FFP-LA (B) / After FFP-LA (A)									
	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5

I attend community meetings on land matters										
My opinions are considered when land decisions are made in the community										
Women are represented in land governance bodies (e.g. ALC, land committees)										
I feel confident asserting my land rights in front of community leaders										
FFP-LA / land registration activities have encouraged women's participation in land governance										

B5: Community Participation in Land Governance

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Community members were actively involved in the land registration exercise					
Women were specifically encouraged to participate in the land registration process					
Community meetings on land registration were conducted in an inclusive manner					
Women's land rights were explained clearly during community sensitization					
The land registration process respected customary rights and local practices					

SECTION C: CCO OUTCOMES AND WOMEN'S LAND RIGHTS

These questions relate specifically to the Certificates of Customary Ownership (CCOs) issued in Kitumba Subcounty and how they have influenced women's land rights.

1. Since land registration (CCO issuance) took place in this area, do you feel your land rights have improved?

Yes, significantly [ ] Yes, somewhat [ ] No change [ ] No, they have worsened [ ] Not sure [ ]

2. Has holding a CCO or land document changed how your family treats your land rights?

Yes, positively [ ] Yes, negatively [ ] No change [ ] I do not hold a CCO [ ]

3. Have you ever experienced a situation where your CCO or land document was not respected by family members or community leaders?

Yes [ ] No [ ] Not applicable [ ]

If yes, briefly describe:

……

4. Do you think the land registration exercise treated men and women equally?

Yes, fully equal [ ] Somewhat equal [ ] Not equal ( ) men benefited more [ ] Women benefited more [ ] Not sure [ ]

5. What challenges do women still face regarding land rights in this community? (You may tick more than one)

Customary norms favoring men [ ] Lack of awareness of rights [ ] High registration costs [ ] Husband/family resistance [ ] Weak enforcement of rights [ ]
Other (specify): …….

6. What do you think should be done to further improve women's land rights in Kitumba?
……
……
……

Appendix B: Key Informant Interview Guide

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. This interview is part of a research project examining how Fit-for-Purpose Land Administration has influenced women's land rights in Kitumba Subcounty. Your responses will be kept strictly confidential and used only for academic purposes.

A. FFP-LA Implementation and Design

1. Can you describe how the Fit-for-Purpose Land Administration approach was implemented in Kitumba Subcounty? Which institutions were involved and whatwere their specific roles?

2. How many Certificates of Customary Ownership (CCOs) have been issued inKitumba Subcounty, and what proportion were issued to women?

3. What specific gender-sensitive measures were built into the FFP-LA implementation process in Kitumba?

4. From your observation, have women's land rights in Kitumba improved since theFFP-LA and CCO issuance process was carried out?

5. Have there been any reported cases where women's CCOs or land rights have been challenged, ignored, or overridden by family members or community leaders?

6. In your assessment, to what extent has FFP-LA shifted women's participation inland-related decision-making in Kitumba?

B. Challenges and Recommendations

7. What are the main socio-cultural, institutional, or legal factors that have limited the effectiveness of FFP-LA in advancing women's land rights in Kitumba?

8. What improvements would you recommend to make future FFP-LA implementation more gender-responsive and effective in advancing women's landrights?

Thank you for your time and your contributions to this research.

Appendix C: Focus Group Discussion Guide

INTRODUCTION

Welcome, and thank you for joining us today. We are conducting a research study on women's land rights in Kitumba Subcounty, specifically looking at how the land registration exercise has affected women's ability to own, use, and control land. There are no right or wrong answers; all views are welcome, we want to hear your experiences and opinions. Everything shared in this discussion is confidential.

THEME 1: Land Ownership and Customary Norms

1. In this community, who typically owns land,men, women, or both equally? How did this come to be?

2. Have things changed over time regarding women's ability to own and inherit land inthis community? What caused these changes?

THEME 2: Experience of the FFP-LA / CCO Registration Process

3. Can you describe what happened in this community when land registration took place? Were women involved? How?

4. For those who received CCOs,what was the experience of the registration process like? Was it easy or difficult for women?

THEME 3: Impact of CCOs on Women's Land Rights

5. Has receiving a CCO or participating in land registration made a real difference in how women are treated regarding land in this community?

6. What has changed,and what has not changed,for women's land rights since the registration exercise took place here?

THEME 4: Participation in Land Governance

7. Are women now more involved in community land decisions,for example, in land meetings, on land committees, or in resolving land disputes?

8. What barriers still prevent women from fully participating in land governance in this community, even after land registration?

THEME 5: Recommendations

9. What do you think the government, land administration bodies, and community leaders should do to better protect and advance women's land rights in this community?

10. If you could give one message to policymakers about women's land rights inKitumba, what would it be?

Thank you all for your time and for sharing your experiences and views. Your contributions will help improve land rights for women in Kitumba and across Uganda. The information you have shared will be kept strictly confidential.