



# LAND ACCESS FOR WOMEN

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While a legal framework for female land ownership in Vietnam exists, it is often thwarted by both men's and women's general lack of awareness of Vietnam's property rights laws and lack of resources to enforce women's property rights at the provincial level. As a result, women's access to land use rights is low. The Land Access for Women program combines commune-level legal rights counseling and education with advocacy efforts to empower farmers, especially women, to exercise their rights to land.

The project works in two provinces to increase awareness of existing land rights under current legislation; facilitate farmers' ability to access their land rights; generate evidence about gender-specific barriers to realizing land rights in rural areas; and increase the capacity of social and mass organizations to advocate for the gender equitable implementation of land regulations, as well as for legal revisions when necessary to achieve this. The project is implemented by the Institute for Social Development Studies, as the local partner of the International Center for Research on Women, which is sharing its tools and lessons learned from a similar, previously implemented community-based approach in Uganda.

## LEGAL RIGHTS COUNSELLING AND EDUCATION

The centerpiece of the program is the mobilization and training of 60 community volunteers for gender equality from across the two provinces. Volunteers conduct land rights awareness-raising activities as well as provide legal counseling to individuals, mitigate land disputes and offer referrals to navigate the existing legal structures. By the end of September 2015, a total of 2,438 legal counseling sessions for 1,502 people (911 women and 591 men) had been delivered by these volunteers; 688 cases had been solved with their assistance, of which, 627 cases were decided in favor of their clients.

## UNDERSTANDING BARRIERS TO WOMEN'S LAND RIGHTS

A household-level study conducted by the project is being used to determine farmers' ability to access land and solve land-related conflicts at the commune level. Outcomes show that despite the legislative measures to improve women's access to land, women continue to face multiple disadvantages compared to their male counterparts. Traditional practices, pressure from the family and lack of knowledge about system and process of claiming land rights are major barriers to closing the gap between what the law states and its implementation.

*In the photo: A woman dries incense which helps support her family. (ISDS)*