

# MEASURES TOWARDS DEVELOPING APPROPRIATE CAPACITY OF THE YOUTH FOR LAND GOVERNANCE IN AFRICA

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## **1. Introduction: The Continental Land Policy Initiative**

Since commencement in 2006, the Land Policy Initiative (LPI), now the African Land Policy Center (ALPC), has made tremendous progress towards improving land governance in Africa. A key milestone in this regard was the formulation of a *Framework and Guidelines on Land Policy in Africa (F & G)*<sup>1</sup>, containing a comprehensive guide for land governance, which provides a context and framework for land policy development, implementation and tracking in Africa. Based on this framework, the African Union (AU) Heads of States and Government endorsed a *Declaration on Land Issues and Challenges in Africa*<sup>2</sup> during the 13<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session held in Sirte, Libya, in July 2009. This gave the framework political legitimacy for application by AU Member States. Through the Declaration, African Union Heads of States and Government undertook to prioritise, initiate and lead land policy development and implementation processes in their respective countries and to allocate adequate budgetary resources for the processes. The AU Declaration further urges AU Member States to build adequate human, financial, technical capacities to support land policy development and implementation. The Heads of States and Government also resolved to ensure that land laws provide for equitable access to land and related resources among all land users including the youth and other landless and vulnerable groups such as displaced persons. One therefore notes that the Framework, together with the Declaration, provide some fundamental basis for driving good land governance in Africa.

### **Land Governance capacity gap**

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<sup>1</sup> *Framework and Guidelines on Land Policy in Africa*, AUC-ECA-AfDB Consortium, 2010 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

<sup>2</sup> *Declaration on Land Issues and Challenges in Africa*, African Union, 2009 Sirte, Libya

But subsequent studies by the LPI reveal that the implementation of the AU Declaration on land in Africa will be limited without sufficient country level capacity in land governance. This capacity, primarily found in land professionals, is critical to effective implementation. The diverse skill sets of land professionals are needed for the development, implementation and even monitoring of land policies and their integral programmes. The LPI studies identify a compelling need to build the requisite land governance capacity continent-wide. To address the wider AU Agenda on regional integration and development, networking and collaboration between the African Institutions providing training on Land Governance is necessary.

While it is appreciated that some of the technical skills imparted on land professionals to drive colonial Africa may still have relevance, there is need to understand Africa's contemporary development priorities and challenges. Consequently, these conventional technical skills should be supplemented with extra skills, technical and non-technical, suited to address a wider range of challenges that is currently the concern within Africa.

To be sensitive and specifically responsive to the diverse jurisdictional requirements, it is important to establish and understand the capacity needs and priorities across the respective regions. This involves understanding how the numbers of land professionals available in each of the regions compare against national development needs. It involves understanding whether the skill sets they possess are relevant to their regional needs and the minimum necessary to manage such needs while remaining cognizant of the wider needs of Africa and the global community.

To be able to effectively do so, it is necessary to have a good understanding of what the land governance industry in Africa currently requires. An understanding of the needs of today's governments, today's private sector, today's civil society and, where applicable, today's traditional authorities, which are key actors in land governance in large parts of the African continent. It is also necessary to have an appreciation of what Universities and other tertiary training institutions require. An understanding of such needs helps to reorient the curricula of Africa's Universities and Centers of excellence responsible for training Africa's youth to be more targeted at problems currently prevalent in Africa. Such an understanding helps to determine the gap, or convergence, between the curricula that has previously driven the training of land governance in Africa, and what may be needed to respond to her current needs. This would help to ensure that the future training of Africa's youth is based on curricula whose menu is comprehensive and relevant to country and regional needs.

## **2. The study**

To be able to determine the gap and/or convergence between the existing curricula and the desirable, need-driven one, the Land Policy Initiative commissioned a study to identify the current and emerging needs of land professionals in Africa. The study helped to assess the skills needed for land professionals who are to be hired to drive land governance for governments, the private sector, civil society organizations, traditional authorities, development partners and universities. It

also helped to bring out broad views aimed at improving the general training of land professionals in Africa.

## **2.2 Objective**

The main objective of the study was to identify the current and emerging expertise needs of land professionals in order to inform training curricula in Africa. The specific objectives were to identify the main institutions employing land professionals in Africa and to assess the needs of these institutions and the type of profile and competencies they require.

## **2.3 The Methodology**

This involved basic literature and web review of available resources on the land governance industry in Africa. This was done along with a mapping exercise of industry actors around Africa. The actors, mainly cutting across governments, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), the Private Sector (PS), Development Partners (DPs) and Training Institutions were drawn from LPI databases of land experts and institutions that have informed the continental process since inception. Professional acquaintances developed through peer networking were also used to complement the LPI database. A simple data collection tool in the form of a questionnaire was then prepared and sent out, targeting the range of actors mapped out. The questionnaires sent out were mainly aimed at collecting views from actors in State Ministries of Lands and Agriculture, State Agencies such as Land Commissions, Research Institutes and Parastatals. Others were aimed at Non-State Institutions like CSOs, Professional Associations and Private Sector firms dealing in Surveying, Real Estate, Valuation, Land Management, Property development and Conveyancing. The questionnaires were also aimed at Development Partners and Training Institutions. The geographical coverage of the questionnaires was the five regions of Northern, Western, Central, Eastern and Southern Africa.

The questionnaire basically sought to bring out institutional affiliation, area of specialty, qualifications and skill preferences in the respective sectoral operations. The tool also sought to find out the respondents' research preferences, based on emerging jurisdictional needs. Where applicable, experiences while supervising interns or University students while on practical attachment, was sought. The questionnaire also provided an opportunity for industry/employers to make suggestions aimed at improving the training curriculum and the process of training land professionals.

The data collection through questionnaires was complemented by direct interviews conducted with selected persons in Rwanda, Cameroon, Senegal and Kenya. The interviews in Rwanda embraced actors in government, Civil Society, Professional Associations, Private Sector and Development Partners. In Cameroon, interviews were conducted with government officials, Private Sector, Civil Society Organisations and Traditional Authority leaders. Interviews in Senegal were conducted with government officials, Land Reform Commission officials and Civil Society Organisations. Government officials, Private Sector and the Civil Society provided interviews in Kenya.



*Meeting with traditional leaders in Cameroon*

The data collected was then compiled and analysed then used to inform a report which was validated through a stakeholder forum.

### **3. The Results**

#### **3.1 General findings**

It was noted that African countries are at different levels of development and land policy development; hence the level of development of the respective consumer industry varies accordingly. The private sector is more pronounced in some countries than others. It was also found that while the influence of traditional authorities in land governance in large parts of Eastern Africa is low, these authorities play major roles in land governance in Central and Western Africa. Their needs must therefore be factored in training curricula. It was further established that overall, governments have a shortfall of land professionals and training institutions will need to undertake studies in order to establish the numbers and specialities required in their jurisdictions.

Suggestions were also made for the establishment of regional training hubs to promote the training of more land professionals and the convergence of standards and practice procedures. A strong case was made on the need for better collaboration of governments, CSOs, the Private Sector and Training Institutions particularly in identifying suitable country and region specific research

agendas and in sharing and disseminating research results. A compelling case was made on the need to place more focus and emphasis on the training and adherence to professional ethics.

It was also noted that instead of curricula focusing on the training on the narrow subject of land, it should be reoriented towards the comprehensive training on land and natural resource governance. In Central and Western Africa, a case was made on the need to professionalize training so that instead of students getting trained in land governance courses bundled up within for instance the department of law, geography and environmental studies, these could be unbundled and handled in their respective specialized fields of law, planning, surveying and land administration. It was also suggested that in order not to lose our cultural and traditional knowledge, training curricula need to consider fusing modern and traditional knowledge while designing training curricula. There was also a call for the introduction of excellence awards in the training of land governance in order to promote competition and hence excellence.

### **3.2 Call to complement traditional technical courses with soft skills courses**

The responses obtained from the industry through direct interviews and the questionnaires indicate that though it is important to maintain the basic technical content during the training of land professionals, there is need to equip them with complementary soft skills. So technical modules that equip students with planning, spatial science/surveying/geomatics, valuation, land administration and legal skills, among others, will need to be continued but kept aligned to contemporary needs and technological advancements.

But in addition to these technical skills, industry underscored the need to equip today's students with skills necessary for them to navigate situations that call for conducting public and private businesses more effectively, an appreciation of gender dimensions and social-economics, working with communities, managing projects, leadership, negotiating with investors and communities where necessary, dispute resolution, communication and conducting research. They should also be exposed to some basics in policy design and analysis, financial management and the basics in legislative, budgetary and accounting processes that drive government business.

### **3.3 Research areas**

The study noted that research in land governance needs to be shaped to be more responsive to practical challenges prevalent in the respective jurisdictions and not be left to merely meet academic expressions and fulfill career promotion needs. It was felt that a lot of research happening in training institutions hasn't met the practical needs that challenge industry. Such research should speak to generic areas like tenure, land use, policy development, women land rights, use of modern technology and emerging issues. Some of the sample areas identified for possible consideration in research include:-

- i. Land policy development
- ii. Tenure systems, land use and sustainable development

- iii. Customary land tenure models, appropriate legal frameworks, privatization and/or coexistence with modern systems
- iv. Negative impacts of colonization to land governance and options for redress
- v. Decentralization of land governance
- vi. State Vs private ownership of land
- vii. Large Scale Land Based Investments
- viii. Agrarian-pastoral conflicts
- ix. Women land rights and gender inclusion
- x. Land Information Management Systems

### **3.4 Short Courses**

It was noted that industry drivers usually tend to have little time to fit into the routine academic calendars yet need to be kept apprised with advances in modern technology, policy and legislative developments, specific thematic concerns and emerging issues. Training institutions therefore need to try and identify the needs of those working in government at the policy and operational/technical level, the CSO leadership, Private Sector practitioners, the Traditional Leaders and even University teaching and technical staff. Such courses could be ran on-site or off-site, depending on the convenience of the target constituencies. It is for instance obvious that CSOs and traditional leaders around the continent are influencing major decisions in land governance yet there aren't any structured land governance training opportunities available to them. This is a gap that needs to be addressed appropriately. Policy drivers in government will usually require to be kept apprised on national, regional and global developments that influence land policy, legislation and practice while the technical staff must be kept abreast with the latest technological trends. Practitioners and University staff will find value in courses that expose them to new policies, laws, emerging issues and new technology. Since most of these industry players will not have the convenience of long classroom training models, it is incumbent upon training institutions to reflect upon and design short courses suitable to them.

### **3.5 General suggestions on improving training and practical attachment/internships in land governance**

The study also reveals useful general suggestions on how to enhance the quality of training in land governance, including the practical attachment of continuing students and/or interns as suggested by industry. On students and interns attached to industry for practical learning, it was felt that supervision by the University authorities should be more proactive, focused and accountable. Senior professionals in industry should also make an effort to give quality attention to students and interns. It would also help if the learning students were exposed to more practical assignments and made to understand how to integrate professional ethics during the course of attending to such practical tasks. The students could also be exposed to boardroom discussions in order to be able to appreciate how policy is initiated and developed. An effective feedback mechanism on the performance of the students and interns from the various institutions should also be put in place.

To be able to tap better from senior practising professionals and industry leaders with experience that may be useful to the student and teaching fraternity, it is suggested that Universities and Training Institutions establish mechanisms for inviting such professionals and leaders to some open forums in which they can share experiences and field any pertinent questions.

Measures that could be taken to improve the general training and practice in land governance include:-

- i. *Undertaking regular/periodic curricular review*: This should be driven by market/consumer surveys to help identify the routine and emerging needs within a jurisdiction of a University or Training Institution. For good results, such surveys should embrace the industry actors within a jurisdiction.
- ii. *Undertaking collaborative research*: This involves the identification of practical challenges by industry for research by Universities and Training Institutions. This calls for the formation of steering teams or committees if you wish, that bring together actors from Universities, government, Civil Society, Private Sector, and Traditional Leaders where applicable. Development Partners would also be helpful members of such teams/committees as they would be able to identify and support the identified research agenda.
- iii. *Organising Open Days*: Structured open days would help industry actors to freely interact with University students and staff. They provide good opportunity for the University to inform about and discuss new curricula, emerging issues and share research findings while industry would get opportunity to share experiences about the performance of new graduates, new practice procedures and emerging challenges.
- iv. *Expose students to multi-disciplinary working teams*: As much as possible, learning students should be exposed to situations where they interact with professionals of different competencies working on common tasks so that they appreciate the need for professional and sectoral complementarity at an early moment.
- v. *Affiliation of graduates to Professional Associations*: Professional Associations offer a good opportunity for peer sharing, professional networking and retooling through continuous professional development, usually offered by most associations. Students should be encouraged to enlist with the Professional Associations available within their jurisdictions soon after graduating. Indeed, many Professional Associations provide opportunities for student membership, making it possible for students to enlist as members while still in University. Such opportunities should be harnessed.
- vi. *Partnerships between Universities, Professional Associations and Regulatory Agencies*: Regulatory agencies, usually supported by Professional Associations, have the duty of providing statutory registration, policing and disciplining practitioners. To be able to effectively admit and manage land professionals after qualification, strong partnerships between these three institutions are encouraged. Universities should ensure that they

maintain good linkages with regulatory agencies and professional associations and engage them robustly during curricula designs, reviews and validation.

#### **4. Uptake of findings through NELGA**

The above findings were integrated into those from another LPI study on the mapping of existing land governance training centers in Africa. The combined result went on to inform the preparation of *Guidelines for Curricula Development on Land Governance in Africa*. This is work-in-progress under LPI. It is expected that once complete, the guidelines will be endorsed and adopted for use by Universities and training centers in Africa. The guidelines will help these institutions to design new curricula, or review existing ones, to incorporate the identified needs of the industry in Africa. Sensitization and uptake of the guidelines for use in designing and reviewing curricula around the continent can be scaled up through the LPI-GIZ-World Bank driven programme aimed at establishing a *Network of Excellence on Land Governance in Africa (NELGA)*. Through the NELGA programme, which aims to link up Universities and Training Institutions in land governance around the continent, training institutions can be taken through the contents of the guidelines and challenged to develop research agendas responsive to their respective regions as recommended in the findings from the above study.

#### **5. Conclusion**

The study findings help to inform University Managers and curricula developers about the changed and emerging needs of Africa's land governance industry. To remain relevant, Universities and Training Institutions must respond to these needs in their considered ways. The industry too will need to build bridges to Universities and Training Institutions within their jurisdictions in order make it easier for the building of partnerships and collaboration platforms to help improve training in Africa. The net result of these collaborative efforts will increase the quantity, quality and relevance of the training available for youth in Africa. The LPI-GIZ-World bank driven NELGA programme provides a good opportunity to mobilise the training institutions and industry towards the development of suitable curricula, including the development of country- and region-responsive research agendas. This will in return help Africa to effectively implement the AU Agenda on land.

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