



**REGIONAL INSTITUTE FOR POPULATION  
STUDIES (RIPS)  
UNIVERSITY OF GHANA**



# **Empowering Women and Transforming Gender Relations in the Volta Delta, Ghana**

**Report on Baseline Survey in Sogakope and Keta Municipalities  
on Women's Land Rights**

**August 2020**

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## Executive Summary

This baseline survey is part of activities outlined within CDKN's collaboration with the University of Ghana through the Regional Institute for Population Studies (RIPS) to enhance the uptake and use of research at country and global levels, and to support gender-responsive and socially inclusive climate action. The project – "[\*Empowering women and transforming gender relations in the Volta delta, Ghana\*](#)" builds on the findings of the DELtas, vulnerability & Climate Change: Migration & Adaptation (DECCMA) research which findings indicate adverse impacts of coastal erosion and salinization on agricultural and fisheries livelihoods of coastal communities in the Volta delta. Consequently, the limited opportunities for earning a living locally has resulted in increased migration of able-bodied males, leaving behind the women, and contributing to the highest proportion of female-headed households in Ghana.

The survey which was conducted at the project initiation stage with members of the Lands/Stool Lands Secretariat, Municipal/District Assemblies, Traditional Authorities and Women groups provided an evidence-based overview and understanding of the management of land rights (access, use and ownership) and its effects on the livelihoods of the women left behind following the migration of the males from the Sogakope and Keta areas of the Volta Region. The main findings from the baseline survey include:

- In Ghana and in the Volta region specifically, land is owned by clans/families, or individuals.
- Land ownership or ownership types within the community include; (i) The Land/Property Chief (Zikpuitor) – male and female positions; (ii) Clan heads, (iii) Family heads, (iv) Individual family members (indigenes) and (v) Individual landowners (non-natives).
- Restricting land ownership to men is a way of protecting community heritage.
- Land acquisition for women in the area is mainly through inheritance from a deceased father, rental or outright purchase. However, the size of land inherited between women and men is not proportional. Lands for women's agricultural activities are usually smaller and insufficient. Lands inherited by women come with some conditions, for example, an inheriting woman continues to have access to and use of the land inherited from her father but cannot bequeath same to her children (because they are members of another family). As such, the inherited land reverts to the family upon the death of the woman.
- The women generally do not consider land rights (access, use and ownership) as a major challenge to their socioeconomic development, instead they emphasized limited capacity to effectively utilize the available land as a key concern. The limited capacity meant women are unable to build their own capital base to enable them to access extra lands through renting or outright purchase (as sizes of family lands continue to dwindle with increasing population).
- The District/Municipal Assemblies do not have control over land distribution and inheritance but provide special assistance to women in agriculture including initiatives that helps them maximise the use of lands at their disposal.

This report is a summary of the findings from the baseline survey, presented in eight (8) parts: a general introduction to the project and the baseline survey in particular. This is followed by a background to land ownership and access in Ghana and within the study areas and an overview of the study communities. These are followed by the data collection processes, the findings, conclusions and recommendations for follow up actions.



## 1. Introduction

Coastal erosion, salinization of groundwater, freshwater lagoons and soils, as well as declining soil fertility have adversely affected the environment and the livelihoods (mainly agricultural and fishing) of many populations across the globe. Agriculture and fisheries are some of the main livelihoods that are being adversely impacted by climate change in coastal communities such as those in the Volta Delta Region.

Across Ghana, large numbers of males, mostly youth and smallholder farmers, have resorted to rural-urban migration in search of jobs. Within the Volta delta for instance, findings from the [DECCMA](#) project research revealed that employment (47%) and education (49%) are the main drivers of out-migration. The study also revealed that forty-four percent (44%) of all households intend to migrate in the future for employment (84%) and educational (13%) purposes.

Rural dwellers largely regard migration (seasonal, permanent or recurrent), as a key coping strategy to environmental changes that affect their livelihoods. High male out-migration resulting from the inability to earn a living locally, has led to increased female-headed households creating additional labour burdens on women, who are left with the responsibility of taking care of their families while confronted with inequalities associated with traditional patrilineal inheritance practices related to land access and ownership.

The project objective is to promote gender-responsive means of adaptive livelihoods which are informed by the findings of the DECCMA research. The overall vision for the project is to “empower women and transform gender relations in the Volta delta, Ghana”, through the integration of gender-responsive actions into women’s resilience to the impacts of climate change on their efficient utilisation of accessible lands. This project seeks to undertake consultative and sensitisation meetings with appropriate stakeholders in the Keta and Sogakope districts of Ghana. Some of the stakeholders include; the land secretariats, traditional councils, District Assemblies and women’s groups in both districts. Knowledge products such as brochures and fliers on land rights issues will be disseminated during these engagements and women will be receiving training on climate adaptive livelihoods, which includes access to microfinance.

The project is gender-transformative in nature and linked to gender and social issues in climate-compatible development (CCD). It is related to the impact of climate change (coastal erosion and sea flooding) on women living in coastal communities in Ghana, and it aims to challenge existing gender norms around land rights while promoting the overall vision of men and women having equal access to land inheritance rights and opportunities for adaptive livelihoods. This project will also promote gender-responsive adaptive livelihoods informed by the findings of the [DECCMA](#) research by adopting gender-sensitive approaches such as; ensuring gender norm-appropriate and sex-disaggregated engagements, and where relevant, ensuring the equal participation of women among government structures.

The project is being implemented in two delta districts (Keta and Sogakope) by the Regional Institute for Population Studies ([RIPS](#)), and the Institute for Environment and Sanitation Studies ([IESS](#)) of the University of Ghana, in partnership with [Pro-Link](#), a non-governmental organisation (NGO), based in Ghana, that promotes equitable development of the rural and urban poor, especially women and girls. The project will also be receiving support from [Kulima Integrated Development Solutions](#), based in South Africa.

This baseline survey provides an overview of land access, acquisition and ownership within the Sogakope and Keta areas of the Volta Region.

**Box 1: Key Definitions & Key Stakeholders Explained**

**Climate compatible development:** This is about transforming development pathways to face the climate problem head-on. It moves beyond the traditional separation of adaptation, mitigation and development strategies. Climate compatible development processes adopt strategies and goals that integrate the threats and opportunities of a changing climate to lower CO2 emissions, build resilience and promote development simultaneously.

**Gender-blind:** A project description/proposal/focus does not refer to any particular gender aspects or differences between men and women. Gender-aware – Project description shows an awareness of gender issues by mentioning differences that need to be taken into consideration, but actual activities do not follow a gender approach consistently, from design to implementation to monitoring and evaluation.

**Gender-responsive:** refers to outcomes that reflect an understanding of gender roles and inequalities and which make an effort to encourage equal participation and equal and fair distribution of benefits. Gender responsiveness is accomplished through gender analysis and gender inclusiveness.

**Gender-sensitive:** Project follows a gender-sensitive methodology (gender-analysis, gender disaggregated data are collected, gender-sensitive indicators in monitoring and evaluation, etc.) and aims to promote gender equality.

**Gender-transformative:** Project follows a gender-sensitive methodology, aims to promote gender equality and also to foster change and challenge gender discriminatory norms and/or root causes of vulnerability to climate change, and of unsustainable development. In other words, the project aims to address the underlying causes of environmental or development issues.

**Land Secretariat/Stool Lands Secretariat**

Ghana practices a dual system of land governance (government lands and stool lands). Estimates indicate that about 80% of the land in Ghana is under communal tenure (stool lands). Stool lands refer to communally owned lands held in trust by chiefs for members of a local community. Noting the weakened accountability of chiefs in the administration of stool lands, the Land Administration Project (LAP) initiated in 2001 created the Customary Land Secretariat (CLS) to deepen transparency and accountability in stool land administration. The CLS oversees the utilisation of all stool lands in a more transparent manner and ensures the equitable and judicious use of the proceeds for the intended benefit of the community. The CLS system ensures that all the relevant stakeholders in the community are involved in decision-making processes regarding communal lands.

**Municipal / District Assemblies**

Districts of Ghana are second-level administrative subdivisions of Ghana responsible for local level socio-economic development activities including the regulating of land use through spatial planning and permitting (location of structures) processes. The District Assemblies oversee land use planning, permitting, and land acquisition for government use at the local level.

**Traditional Authority**

Traditional authority often refers to Chiefs and Queen Mothers. It represents the culture, heritage and traditional leadership of a people. Traditional authorities are constitutionally recognised in national Acts such as the Chieftaincy Act 759 (2008:26). Traditional authority made up of Chiefs, Queen Mothers, Clan and Family Heads (landowners) form part of the membership of the Land Secretariat. Chiefs and Queen Mothers are normally relatives but not spouses.

**The Lands Commission**

Deals with the regulation of land use at the national level (huge projects) and the provision of land titles.

**Women's Groups**

The formation of women groups aims at improving women agency to promote gender based livelihood outcomes. Research has shown that traditional patriarchal roles have favoured males and promoted structural inequalities among females in terms of decision-making, access to and control over productive resources in a way that undermines the ability of women to effectively engage in more productive livelihoods. Women self-help groups (SHGs) are an important social safety net that helps overcome many of these barriers by reducing vulnerabilities and increasing the resilience of women and their households. These groups, usually formed along livelihood types with the view of providing financial and other livelihood support to members, empower women through skills development and the promotion of diversified livelihood options at the local level.

## 2. Background

Land *ownership, access, and transfer* are characterized by legal pluralism in Ghana. Article 11 of the 1992 Constitution provides that the laws of Ghana shall comprise the Constitution, statutes, orders, rules, and regulations, and the common law, which includes customary law<sup>1</sup>. It thereby establishes a pluralist legal system without establishing a hierarchy among the various, potentially conflicting, sources of law (Higgins 2011). Usually it is expected that land is governed either by customary law or by a combination of common law and statutes (Runger, 2006). The reality is more complex, with overlapping claims, multiple systems of customary laws, boundary disputes, lack of written records, an inefficient registration system, no clear choice of law rules, and overlapping jurisdictions for dispute resolution. According to Minkah-Premo (2009), approximately 80% of the land in Ghana is held under customary land tenure systems.

In Ghana, customary law varies significantly from ethnic group to ethnic group and even from community to community within a single ethnic group. However, certain general principles emerge in the context of land and law. Firstly, the rules of customary law and land use are based on kinship and other social and political relationships, which foster a sometimes complex scheme of clearly defined rights that may be transmitted from generation to generation. Secondly, the types of rights on land that characterize customary law might not be readily translatable into the terms of civil or common law, as they are based on a combination of how that land is used and the social relationships among people using the land. The common belief among various customary law systems of land rights in Ghana is that women have had significantly less secure access to land than men.

In Ghana, rights to property under customary law do not necessarily equate with exclusive control, and thus the term ‘ownership’ has a different meaning to that used in common law. Rather, different interests in land may be vested in different persons, with the underlying title remaining with the lineage. Because of the importance of lineage to structuring relationships within the community, customary systems often provide weaker rights to those outside the lineage that holds the underlying title to the land. As a general rule, this means that access to land by outsiders to the lineage (migrants, and importantly women) will depend upon the outsider's ability to maintain a good relationship with the rights holder. For a woman, this often means her husband's family.

The patrilineal system of land inheritance is protective of each family. Land is for family inheritance and women also have their part since siblings (both males and females) have the same rights to the inheritance of a deceased father's land. Whereas a male child's land inheritance transfers automatically to his children upon his demise, the same does not apply to the children of a woman. This is because the woman's children belong to different family, clan or tribe and are expected to inherit from their father's line. However, while the woman is alive, she can utilize the inherited land together with her children. These children can also continue to use the property of their mother e.g. house, even after her demise but cannot lay claim of ownership to the piece of land on which the building stands.

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<sup>1</sup> Article 11(3) of Ghana's 1992 Constitution defines customary law as the rules of law which by custom are applicable to particular communities.

### 3. Study Communities

Ghana practices a dual system of land governance with key stakeholders including the Traditional Authority - Chiefs, Clan and Family heads (*landowners*) and Government - Lands Commission and District Assemblies (*land use regulation* – land use planning, permitting, land acquisition for government use). Thus, District Assemblies do not own land; they regulate land use through planning and permitting processes. Additionally, the Lands Commission oversees the acquisition and the management of government acquired land across the country.

This study is being carried out in Sogakope and Keta towns linked with the Volta estuary in the south eastern part of Ghana.

*Sogakope* is the capital of the South Tongu Municipal Assembly, one of the 25 administrative districts of the Volta Region with a population of 87,950 (GSS, 2010). Located in the southern part of the Lower Volta Basin, it is bounded by the Central and North Tongu Districts to the north, Akatsi South District to the east, Ada East District of the Greater Accra Region to the west, and Keta Municipality to the south. The South Tongu District occupies a total land area of 643.57km<sup>2</sup> representing 3.1% of the size of the Volta Region. The District is generally low lying since it is located within the Coastal Savannah Plain, but rises gradually to a height of 75m above sea level. The Volta River drains the District. About eighty-seven (87.1%) percent of the population in the South Tongu district reside in rural localities; 70.9% are economically active. Of this, 46.4% engage in skilled agriculture, forestry and fishery; 15.9% are in service and sales; 20.5% in craft and related trade; and 5.6% are in elementary occupations. The remaining 11.6% work as managers, professionals, technicians and associate professionals, clerical support workers, plant and machine operators and assemblers.

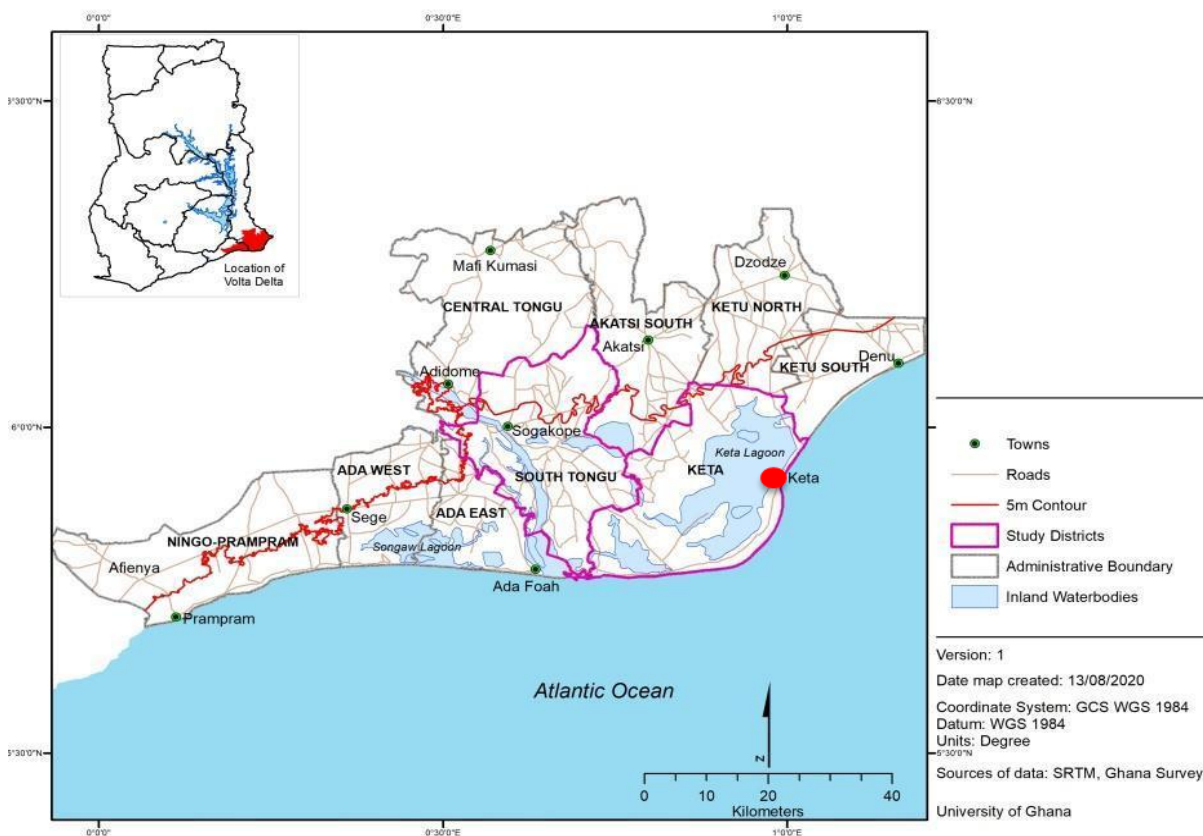


Fig. 1: A map showing the study area and the target towns



*Keta* is the capital of the Keta Municipal Assembly, and has a population of 147,861 (GSS 2010). It is located east of the Volta estuary and about 160km east of Accra and off the Accra – Aflao main road. The municipality shares common borders with Akatsi district to the north, Ketu South district to the east, South Tongu district to the west and the Gulf of Guinea to the south. Water bodies cover approximately 30% of the total surface area of 1,086km<sup>2</sup>, creating a severe constraint regarding access to land for development in the district. In addition, severe erosion has affected the social and economic life of the local populations, threatened cultural heritage and hindered coastal tourism in addition to the destruction of houses and other physical infrastructure. Approximately 64% of the population is economically active and engaged in agriculture. Of this, forestry and fishery make up (34.8%), service and sales (21.8%), craft and related trade (25.4%), and managers (2.3%). 4.6% are professionals; 1.2% are technicians and associate professionals; 1.0% are clerical support workers; 3.1% are plant and machine operators and assemblers; and 5.9% are in elementary occupations.

#### 4. Data Collection

Data collection for this project involved Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and one-on-one interviews with the following groups:

- Traditional authorities
- Land secretariat
- District Assemblies
- Women's groups

At each municipal assembly, we held one-on-one interviews with the District Coordinating Director, the Agriculture Coordinator, Gender Desk Officer, Planning Officer and the Physical Planning Coordinator and adopted the FGD approach for the officials of the Keta Municipal Assembly. These officials were selected due to their knowledge and influence in land management and women issues. They are also responsible for the development of the district regarding land use, and granting of permits for land development.

FGDs were also conducted with women groups, the traditional authority and the land secretariat in Sogakope and Keta. Separate interviews were conducted for men and women to promote their effective participation.

Representatives from each of the four women's groups (two groups for each area) participated in the FGDs on livelihoods. These representatives consisted of five (5) executives each of the women groups selected for the discussions. These women, aged between 40 – 60 years, were selected to participate in the FGDs because they had stayed longer in the communities and could provide more information to the team regarding the subject matter being researched.

#### **Box 2: Profile of Women's groups**

The women's groups in both Sogakope and Keta are women-only, self-help associations that have come together to promote their own economic benefits and to support group members' access to financial assistance such as loans. The groups are structured and have executives who are nominated by the group members through majority agreement. The executives comprise a President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and an Organizer. In Sogakope the two (2) groups involved in the research are Hlevi (with a total of 62 members) and Fievie (with a total of 35 members) women's groups. The general age range of the members is 30

years and above; with the highest educational levels being Junior High school leavers and O'Level certificate holders.

In Keta, Sitsofe and Lolonyo Co-operative women's groups were involved in the research. Their total memberships are 20 and 35 respectively. Similar to the groups in Sogakope, members of these women groups are aged 30 years and above. Members are generally illiterate with a few others being Middle school and Junior High school graduates.

In all, fifty-two (52) participants (31 females and 22 males) participated in both the in-depth interviews and FGDs. The interview guides are attached in Appendix B for referencing.

## 5. Findings

### 5.1 Traditional Authorities and Land Secretariat

There was a total of thirty-two (32) respondents from both Sogakope and Keta. Sixteen (16) respondents from each study area. The members of the land secretariat and part of the traditional council are regarded as custodians of the land.

The findings from the Traditional Authorities and Land Secretariat in both Keta and Sogakope revealed that Chiefs and Queen Mothers (custodians of traditional lands) view the restriction of land ownership to men as a way of protecting community heritage and preventing non-natives from becoming the controllers of their land resource.

Generally, women can only access land for farming to provide food and income for their families as well as for shelter. In addition, women can only access land through their relationship with a male relative including a husband, father or brother.

The idea that men and women could have equal access to land inheritance rights is perceived by both the Chiefs and Queen Mothers as highly improbable because the patrilineal practice is strongly embedded in the traditions of the study area and within the Volta region as a whole. However, they were optimistic that this practice could be amended in the future, if the elders in the communities would agree to amend the laid down traditions of their ancestors. Despite their strong sentiments for the practice, both groups of leaders were amenable to the proposal for women and men to have equal access to land to create equal opportunities for adaptive livelihoods. They however suggested that there was a need for women to be able to effectively manage the land that they have access to in order to gain maximum benefits from it. . Therefore actions such as building women's adaptive capacities and improving their agricultural activities would be very useful.



Traditional Authority/Land secretariat - Sogakope



Traditional Authority/Land secretariat - Keta

## 5.2 Municipal/District Assemblies

### 5.2.1 South Tongu Municipal Assembly (STMA) - Sogakope

The dominant type of land ownership in the district is clan / family land ownership. There is also family-owned, individual-owned, and government-owned (both proposed and acquired) land. As to whether the District Assembly considers gender in land distribution, the respondents indicated that the Assembly does not have control over land distribution and inheritance, because this is an area for Traditional Authorities and Land Secretariats. They however, explained that the inheritance system in the district is patrilineal, and therefore the issue of ownership of land favors men most. Furthermore, they pointed out that women have access to land for agricultural activities, mainly farming. The only challenge is with the ownership of the land. If women inherit at all, it is a small portion, which they may lose upon getting married (into other families, within or outside the community).

Additionally, land registration is the sole responsibility of the Government of Ghana's Land Commission and not the Municipal Assembly. The District/Municipal Assembly only deals with Land Use Regulation, for which they have by-laws and policies but not on land distribution. Due to the bureaucracy involved in land registration, the indigenes are not interested in registering their land, hence the majority (about 90%) of the land in the district is not registered. Only five of the towns within the municipality have an existing plan/layout/town sheet for their area and even those are outdated. These towns are Agokpe, Sogakope New Town, Sukpe, Agovome, and Kudzekpokpe.

The Agriculture Unit and Gender Secretariat of the Municipal Assemblies indicated that they provide special assistance to women in agriculture. This includes initiatives to encourage maximization of the usage of land to which the women may have access to. Though the Municipal Assemblies have limited resources to effectively provide this support continuously, the following are examples of the special initiatives by the Municipal Assemblies:

- **Training women on adding value to their produce:** this includes processing of cassava into gari, flour for baking, and enriching gari with Orange Flesh Sweet Potato (OFSP) or ordinary Sweet Potato;
- **Training women in business management and entrepreneurship:** This is having a positive impact on the women. They are able to save money to support their home and for other economic activities. These support systems have contributed to the emergence of the overall best farmer and overall best youth in agriculture for the year 2019 being women from the town;
- **Ensuring women's voices are heard:** this is mostly during meetings, by ensuring equal representation of women and men in training programs and other economic empowerment activities; and
- **Sensitization of men:** on the importance of sharing ownership of property with women within their extended families as well as their spouses; through annual farmers' forum and other workshops

It was indicated that the government mainly acquires land through an executive instrument. For example, if the Municipality is interested in a piece of land for a project, there will be negotiations with the owners, compensation will be made, and the land will be transferred to the government. There have been instances where the government had acquired land in the municipality, yet, the owners had not been compensated, and because of this owners are still occupying portions of the land leading to numerous legal battles between the two. It was indicated that legal tussles are ongoing in the courts involving government and the clans regarding unpaid compensations. Furthermore, it was identified that women rarely come to the Municipality to process permits for land acquisition and usage. However, a number of women apply for temporary permits through sale or lease for business purposes such as shops.



Fig. South Tongu Municipal Assembly (STMA) - Sogakope

### 5.2.2 Keta Municipal Assembly (KeMA) - Keta

The issues identified in Keta were similar to those identified in Sogakope. Here as well, land belonged to a clan/family, or individual. Government land (mainly from sea reclamation) also exists. Generally, age

The discussions further revealed that more women have been moved into agriculture as a means of benefitting from the “*Planting for Food and Jobs Project*” by government (<http://mofa.gov.gh/site/programmes/pfj>). When this government project started in 2017 there were 830 women, and this has increased to 1,858 and 6786 in 2018 and 2019, respectively, due to the equal opportunity it offers to the participation of women. The district plans to implement a programme in the coming years to train women on home gardening as an alternative source of livelihood. It was also indicated that the Assembly is collaborating with Delta Alliance, an NGO, to train women in processing ‘gari’<sup>2</sup> with smokeless stoves.



Figure. Keta Municipal Assembly - Keta

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<sup>2</sup> Gari is a local food made from cassava

### 5.3 Women's Groups

Five (5) members from each of the two women's groups aged 30 years and above were interviewed. This age group was interviewed because these are elderly women who have more detailed information about how land rights issues have evolved over the years. Some of these women were in positions of authority. Specifically, one of the women was the *Zikpuitor*<sup>3</sup> (Property Chief) of the Queen Mother in one of the communities. These women were still economically active, engaging mainly in agricultural activities such as the growing of pepper, cassava, maize, etc. They operate as individual farmers but regularly undertake informal loan club popularly called *Susu*<sup>4</sup> schemes as a means of raising capital to support their individual operations.

Land ownership or ownership types within the community include; (i) The Land/Property Chief (*Zikpuitor*) – with both male and female positions; (ii) Clan heads, (iii) Family heads, (iv) Individual family members (indigenes) and (v) Individual landowners (non-natives). Thus, the major decision makers for land management at the community and family levels include the *Zikpuitor*.

In terms of management, the *Zikpuitor* is in charge of allocating land to the clans in consultation with their heads. The family heads in turn allocate these lands to the families (through the family heads) within the respective clans in the community. At the family level, the head of the family (usually a man) holds the land (registered in the family name) in a trust for the family members and sees to its allocation and or use as required. The *Zikpuitor* has no control over the allocation of clan or family lands. His/her jurisdiction extends only to unallocated (community) land. Regarding decision-making on land management, the *Zikpuitor* cannot act without the knowledge and or approval of the paramount Chief. The *Zikpuitor* reports on all community land transactions to the paramount Chief. He cannot allocate or put any community land to use without the approval of the paramount Chief. Sub-Chiefs at the clan levels and family heads administer and control their land allocations respectively. These clan and family heads need no permission from the *Zikpuitor* when they make decisions on how to use their land. If the government or other individuals wishes to acquire or use a portion of the community land (land that is unallocated to any clan or family), they need to seek the permission of the *Zikpuitor* and thus the paramount Chief to be able to do so.

At the family level, usually male children are slightly favored over female children. For example, if a father bequeaths a piece of land, which may be too small to share among the children, the male child assumes ownership and management of the land, with the female children having access to this land. Where the father bequeaths land to his children as an inheritance, the female children cannot transfer the ownership of their portion of the land to their children. The same land management practices apply to other properties such as houses or space for putting up new buildings.

Land acquisition for women in the area is mainly through inheritance from a deceased father; however, the respondents indicated that it was easy for women to have access to land, albeit with conditions including through inheritance, rental or outright purchase. For example, one of the female respondents from the Fievie community in Sogakope indicated that she inherited land from her late father and has some documentation of ownership to that effect.

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<sup>3</sup> Note that the *Zikpuitor* (property/land chief) has jurisdiction on only community lands and not the clan or family lands.

<sup>4</sup> *Susu* is an informal means of collecting and saving money through a savings club or partnership, practiced in Ghana and the Caribbean. It is usually taking turns by "throwing hand" as the partners call it. They pay a specific amount of money in one hand when it is collected to a person. Each month, every person in the group will collect a sum of money until the next time, when another *Susu* is thrown.

Other land inheritance conditions for women include:

- The children of a deceased woman who inherit land cannot claim ownership of this land as their mother's property, thus the land reverts to the family.
- An inheriting woman who marries outside her community continues to have access to and use of the inherited land from her father but she cannot bequeath this land to her children.

Apart from inheriting land from a father, a woman from within or outside of the community can buy and own land and register it in her name once she has the financial capacity. A man who is a native of the town can guarantee (not required, but makes it easier) for his wife to buy land. A woman married into a family cannot inherit the husband's family land but can have access to and use her husband's share of the family land.

Women in the area are minimally involved at all the levels of decision-making regarding the use and management of land. For example, the women noted that though there is the women equivalent of the *Zikpuitor* who works closely with the Queen Mother, the women who get to participate in these decision-making meetings are usually *informed* or *updated* on already agreed decisions regarding the use of a particular piece of land. Beyond the lack of participation in decision-making processes, a major concern of the women remains the fact that the men leave them out in the sharing of proceeds from land transactions.

The women in Sogakope do not consider land rights (access, use and ownership) as a challenge to their socioeconomic development but the limited capacity to utilize the available land effectively. The limited capacity meant women are unable to build their own capital base to enable them to access extra lands through renting or outright purchase (as sizes of family lands continue to dwindle with increasing population). For these women, they require support in terms of *flexible-term funds* for their farming activities (with payments made at the end of the farming season) and *training* on other livelihood activities which they can rely on during the planting season.



Women's Group - Sogakope



Women's Group - Keta

## 6. Conclusions & Recommendations

In Sogakope and Keta, land administration and governance rests within the authority of traditional leaders, who are also the custodians. Ownership is through a patrilineal inheritance system, thus women cannot become custodians or owners of family lands. However, women have the right to buy or access lands for livelihood and other economic purposes through outright purchase, rental or inheriting part of their father's land with legal rights over a period. District Assemblies have minimal roles in the administration of land in these areas, except for government-acquired lands.

The implementation of subsequent activities within this project will aim at providing assistance towards empowering the women to efficiently utilize the lands they are able to access. Additionally, other women who may not have access to land will gain some awareness through this project to enable them to access adaptive livelihoods in midst of some of them still lacking ownership of the land for farming.

Based on these findings it is possible to make the following recommendations:

- Develop a training manual and organise a training on climate adaptive livelihoods (including access to microfinance) for women in Keta and Sogakope in collaboration with the assemblies and relevant microfinance companies specifically the rural banks.
- Organise informal follow up meetings with women's groups in both Keta and Sogakope on the utilisation of skills acquired from the training.
- Develop Social and Behavioural Change Communication (SBCC) materials like brochures and/or flyers and video documentary on efficient land utilisation as well as economic empowerment options for women's groups and disseminate among women's groups and the assemblies during sensitisation programmes.

## 7. References

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## **8. Appendices**

### **Appendix A: QUESTIONNAIRES FOR BASELINE SURVEY AT KETA AND SOGAKOPE**

#### ***DISTRICT ASSEMBLY***

1. To what extent does the District Assembly law/byelaws guarantees secure tenure for land rights of the poor and marginalized, and secure access to land for women and other vulnerable groups?
2. To what extent government policies contribute to the sustainable management of common property resources, including land distribution and management?
3. What is the extent to which the law and policies guarantees secure tenure for land rights of the poor?
4. How are lands administered within your Districts and the extent to which land is titled and registered?
5. What are the controls on family owned land by the district, and do you have any policies that govern the distribution of lands by families within the District Assembly?
6. What are some challenges of land title registry and have you registered all agricultural land and its ownership especially by women?
7. Do you have any special assistant for women in Agriculture and fishing and do you have any future plans for women access to land?
8. What are the modalities for government acquiring land for developmental projects?

#### ***LAND SECRETARIAT***

1. How do you manage the indicators that assess the extent to which the institutional, legal, and market framework provide secure land tenure and equitable access to land?
2. To what extent is integrated landscape management practiced in the Districts, and are there laws to safeguard the environment (water resources, soil management, air, forest, etc.?)
3. How does land and land-use planning address land ownership, land tenure and access to land by marginalized groups, including women?
4. How is land transfers processed and land alienation administered in the District and what are the roles of the secretarial in the inheritance of deceased person's land?
5. Can you explain the functioning of land markets in the District, and do you sell lands to individuals, and what are the rates/amount involved (per acre/hector), for commercial and non-commercial purposes?

6. Do you consider the sex of an individual before you distribute land in terms of sale or inheritance?

***WOMEN'S GROUP***

1. What is the nature of land and property rights within your customary system
2. Do you personally own a land, and how did you acquire it?
3. How can you use acquired land and other properties for expanding your business, as collateral in taking new loans, or, if necessary, to sell it to another business?
4. Do you have any criteria to qualify women for land ownership and how has land ownership affected your family and household?
5. Who are the main decision makers for land management at the family and community level?
6. To what extent are women involved in land management issues at the family and community level in your Traditional Areas?
7. What are the roles of the Paramount Chiefs, Sub Chiefs and Family Heads in land management in your Traditional Area?
8. What is the normal practice in communal land management?

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