

Participants' evaluation of the land reform programme in Rwanda's Southern Province

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Abstract

Land reform is a state-initiated process that aims to redistribute land in such a way that the poor and vulnerable can benefit. To overcome previous socio-political and economic induced inequalities, several countries embarked on land reform to help improve the quality of life of inhabitants and redress inequality. The land reform implemented in 2006 in Rwanda was a unique programme due to the specific history of this country. This article presents participants' evaluation in 2014 on land reform. Through a survey, interviews and focus groups, role-players in land reform within the Southern Province of Rwanda indicated that the reform was advantageous because of the security and benefits of ownership it provided and the cooperation it ensured. More state support and agricultural freedom were, however, requested.

Keywords: *Rwanda, land reform, land registration, land consolidation, participation, land disputes*

La réforme agraire est un processus initié par l'État qui vise à redistribuer la terre de manière à ce que les pauvres et les vulnérables puissent en bénéficier. Pour surmonter les inégalités socio-politiques et économiques induites, plusieurs pays se sont engagés dans une réforme agraire pour améliorer la qualité de vie des habitants et remédier aux inégalités. La réforme agraire mise en œuvre en 2006 au Rwanda était un programme unique en raison de l'histoire spécifique de ce pays. Cet article présente l'évaluation des participants en 2014 sur la réforme agraire. A

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travers une enquête, des entretiens et des groupes de discussion, les acteurs de la réforme agraire dans la Province du Sud du Rwanda ont indiqué que la réforme était avantageuse en raison de la sécurité et des avantages de la propriété et de la coopération. Un soutien accru de l'Etat et la liberté de l'agriculture ont toutefois été demandés.

Mots-clés: Rwanda, réforme foncière, enregistrement foncier, remembrement, participation, litiges fonciers

1. Introduction

The objective of this article was to describe participants' evaluation of the land reform programme undertaken within Rwanda's Southern Province. In Rwanda, land reform was launched in 2006 for a radical restructuring of the rural agriculture sector. This was done by implementing new mechanisms of agricultural development and based on the Organic Land Law of 2005, which later was replaced by the Land Law 43 of 2013. The aim of the land reform programme was to mitigate poverty and increase agricultural production. For this purpose, the land reform programme included land registration and consolidation processes to deal with growing landlessness, small-land fragmentation, poor land productivity, and pressure on marginal forest land and the National Park of Akagera (Musahara 2001; MINITERRE 2004, MINAGRI 2009; Huggins 2012).

In general, land reform aims to promote development and reduce poverty (Hall 1998; Ntsebeza 2005). Land reform has therefore become prevalent, especially in developing countries, as motive in economic development (Sikor & Muller 2009:1308). In land reform the emphasis is on titling to strengthen land ownership and give the poor an opportunity to utilise their assets and skills. The lack of collateral kept individuals trapped in poverty as they had no means to partake in more profitable investments. Therefore, land reforms tended to be effected mostly through land redistribution to the benefit of the poor (Deininger 1999; Palmer 2000; Quan 2000; Brarel 2001; Musahara 2006; Bruck & Schindler 2009; Anderson 2010).

Adams (2000:1), who conducted several studies on this phenomenon in various countries, gives a general definition of land reform based on the state-led redistribution forms, which gives the concept a pro-poor cachet: "Land reform means the redistribution and/or confirmation of rights in land for the benefit of the poor including tenants, farm workers and other disadvantaged groups whose tenure is legally insecure due to the fact that they occupy land belonging to other persons, including the land registered in the name of the state" (Adams 2000). According to the same author, land reform is implemented through state intervention. The aim is to benefit the poor through legal control mechanisms and prohibitions. These entail measures such as nationalisation, collectivisation and redistribution; inducements or market-assisted incentives through privatisation of state farms; and the offering of state grants to acquire land and create credit schemes (Adams 2000).

According to Deininger (1999:662), theoretical motivations and empirical evidence suggest that land reform may provide equity and efficiency. But he indicates that notwithstanding its apparent potential, in several instances land reform has not delivered on expectations (1999:4). This article contributes to the evaluation of land reform by describing participants' assessment of the process by focusing on Rwanda's Southern Province.

2. Land reform in Rwanda

Land reform in Rwanda has a unique context. From the pre-colonial period to the eve of the new Land Law 43 of 2013, land tenure was governed by the customary law that did not guarantee tenure security and the socio-economic development of land owners. The Rwandan land reform altered this situation radically by registering and issuing titles to land owners. This was done to guarantee tenure security to all Rwandans without discrimination based on gender, region, or ethnic group, as well as to solve land-related conflicts (MINITERRE 2004). In addition, land reform implied new measures of land development through land-use consolidation. The aim thus was avoiding land fragmentation and improving productivity in agriculture (MINAGRI 2012).

The land reform was also important in view of the population of Rwanda that increased from 1,5 million people in 1934, to over 8 million in 2002, and to 10 537 222 people in 2012. It is estimated that the population may reach 13 million people by the 2020s (MINECOFIN 2000; MIFINECPL 2012). The dramatic population growth has resulted in a change of population density. The density on arable land had risen from 272 inhabitants per km² in 1990, to 321 inhabitants per km² in 2002. Currently, Rwanda is the most densely populated country in sub-Saharan Africa with an average of about 431 people per km². This includes the average family household that occupies 0.76 hectare of land, which is not that fertile (MIFINECPL 2012:25, Jones, Laura & Bizoza 2014:15).

In addition to the high demographic growth, the customary land tenure system is based on the tradition of distributing family land to all children heirs. These issues deepened the question of land, especially emphasising land scarcity, seeing that the available land was insufficient to meet the population's needs (Musahara 2006:5; USAID 2013).

When Tutsi rebels from the Rwanda Patriotic Front-Inkotanyi (RPF) violently entered the country from their exile in October 1990, the government rebuffed them. President Habyarimana stated that there was no place for the rebels in Rwanda due to the limited capacity of the already fully-inhabited country. After the victory of the RPF, the former refugees returned in large numbers (Lisa 2001:23). This rapid growth in the population density increased the pressure on marginal land and caused uneven distribution of land (Musahara 2001). Farm holdings became tiny plots of land due to

excessive land fragmentation (Boudreaux 2009:13). Seeing that the land was insufficient for agricultural production, people invaded forests and national reserves, including national parks (Ohlsson 1999:28; Musahara 2006:5).

It was therefore clear that Rwanda was in desperate need of a new approach to land usage. This matter was pointed out by several scholars (Musahara & Huggins 2004; Pottier 2006; Musahara 2006; Ansoms 2008; Ansoms 2009; Boudreaux 2009; Kairaba & Simons 2011). The opportunity arose in post-genocide Rwanda with the adoption of a new Constitution promulgated in the Official Gazette on 4 June 2003. Certain articles of Chapter 2 of the Constitution relate to property rights, including land, by guaranteeing the right to private property whether personal or owned in association with others.

The National Land Policy of 2004 followed, which elucidated the vision and orientation underlying land reform in Rwanda. This policy proposed an organic law and other regulations as mechanisms to help implement land reform (MINITERRE 2004). The main objective of this Land Policy was to guarantee security of land tenure to all Rwandans. This should provide a package that will guide all land reform activities to utilise and manage the national land resources in a rational way (MINITERRE 2004:22).

The Land Policy stated that security of land tenure should be formalised to boost the economy and help develop Rwanda sustainably and harmoniously. The policy also stressed that land-tenure reform based on land registration and a cadastral survey is a pre-requisite for investment and attracting investors, especially to rural areas (MINITERRE 2004:27). Furthermore, land tenure should be guided by the provisions of a newly written law. Thus, the customary law will cease to govern land tenure since this custom is not economically viable, neither for the people, nor the state. However, landowners who acquired land tenure under the customary law should still be given full rights of ownership (MINITERRE 2004:27). Furthermore, landowners should register their land. Thereafter, they are to receive registration certificates, which reflect the title deeds, as a long lease of up to 99 years. Landowners will also pay cadastral and registration fees (MINITERRE 2004:28).

Regarding land consolidation, the policy recommends that such modalities should be studied and encouraged to ensure economic development of land (MINITERRE 2004:28). In rural and urban areas, master plans should be drawn up for improved land use and management and individual cadastral cards distributed to landowners according to the prevailing use of land. In urban areas people will not be allowed to build a house without a registration certificate (MINITERRE 2004:29). Eventually, the Organic Land Law 8 of 2005 determined the use and management of land in Rwanda and was revised and amended to become the Land Law 43 of 2013. The revision of the former law aimed to comply with the provisions of the Constitution of Rwanda and to address various weaknesses found in the former law which made it difficult to apply during the implementation of land registration and consolidation.

The government of Rwanda implemented systematic land registration and recorded land information from 2007-2009 throughout the country. This took place plot by plot and cell by cell, after a general boundary survey through orthophotos and satellite imagery (Sagashya 2012). By 2009, for the 30 districts of Rwanda with 2 148 administrative cells, approximately 2141 administrative cells (99% of all the cells in Rwanda) were covered by the land registration programme. In the process, 10.9 million plots were registered and demarcated throughout Rwanda with the participation of cell land committees; 83% had full information on claimants; less than 1% (10 600) land disputes were registered; 6.6 million plots were digitised; and 7.5 million plots were entered into the Land Tenure Regularisation Database (LTRSS) (Sagashya & English 2010).

According to Ngoga (2012), 1 087 cells had objections and corrections; 3.6 million leasehold titles to land were approved and 3.5 million printed; 1.4 million leasehold titles were collected by owners. In addition, 80% of all the registered private land owned by individuals in Rwanda belonged to married couples (co-owners); 5% was owned by men while women owned 11% of the individually-owned land as de facto or sole owners. The systematic land registration process was carried out in five steps, namely: notification of the Land Tenure Regulation (LTR) area, training of committees and a local information campaign, demarcation and adjudication, receiving objections and applying corrections as well as final registration and titling.

Regulations framing land registration and land consolidation established coercive measures punishing people who resisted the implementation of land and agricultural reforms as this impeded the economic growth targets of Vision 2020. The fact is that people who refused to implement land-use consolidation, faced strong measures, including confiscation or requisition if their land was unproductive or degraded (Art, 58-61 of Land Law 43 of 2013).

According to MINAGRI (2012), despite the numerous challenges facing land consolidation, it achieved positive results by increasing productivity through agriculture inputs such as fertilisers and pesticides. Studies conducted by GIEWS/FAO (2010), IFDC (2010) and the report of MINAGRI (2012) on land-use consolidation, revealed positive effects. For example, cereal production increased from approximately 320 000 MT to more than 600 000 MT in 2009/2010; cassava production tripled; Irish potatoes, and soybean and bean yields almost doubled (GIEWS/FAO 2010).

Despite extensive data available on land reform worldwide, and particularly on land-reform experiences in Rwanda, several gaps in the literature remain. Before the genocide of 1994, most studies focused on the link between high demographic density and land scarcity or land disputes. Other studies focused more on analysing land policy and laws, while certain scholars were concerned with women's land rights and the agricultural sector. In the post-genocide era, only a few studies were conducted on land policies. Palmer (2000) and Lisa (2001) criticised the draft land policy; Musahara and Huggins (2004) critically analysed the land policy of 2004; Huggins (2012) conducted a research

on land consolidation in the Northern Province of Rwanda; and Hahirwa (2012), Kairaba and Simons (2011) and Ansoms (2012) investigated the implementation of land reforms in the Eastern Province and in the city of Kigali.

The present study therefore contributes to the existing literature by evaluating the land reform process in the Southern Province. This is done by focusing on both land registration and consolidation, paying specific attention to rural farmers' assessment of these two processes.

3. Research methodology

The objective of this study was to describe participants' evaluation of the land reform programme in Rwanda's Southern Province. For this purpose, the views were collected of implementers and beneficiaries of land reform. A mixed-method approach was followed, which incorporated both quantitative and qualitative research paradigms. This approach was chosen in view of the need to explore, describe, and evaluate the process of land reform. The focus was on participants' assessment of the implementation of land reform and their recommendations in this regard.

The quantitative study was the primary part of the empirical investigation, with the qualitative study secondary. The latter supplied the results from the quantitative study to provide in-depth understanding of the responses. For the quantitative study, a survey was conducted and the qualitative study used personal interviews and focus group discussions from 2014.

A sample was drawn from the population of eight districts in the Southern Province totalling 2 594 110 inhabitants, according to the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR, 2012). The Southern Province of Rwanda comprises seven districts, namely: Kamonyi, Muhanga, Ruhango, Nyanza, Huye, Nyaruguru, Nyamagabe and Gisagara. From each district, two administrative sectors were selected randomly, thus 16 administrative sectors from a total of 101. Each sector has 4 wards. From the wards, households were selected systematically from a sampling frame. From each selected household an available adult was sampled who enjoyed permanent residence in the household, is literate, and 21 years or older. Eventually a sample was drawn of 385 households benefitting from land reform (i.e. farmers) who answered a questionnaire. From the 385 households, 378 owned registered lands and 346 had proof of ownership.

The following participants were involved: 24 rural farmers; 8 district mayors; 10 officials of the Rwanda National Resources Authority (RNRA) primarily responsible for the implementation of land registration and titling; 10 officials of the Rwanda Agricultural Board (RAB) responsible for the implementation of land-use consolidation; and 29 members of civil society intervening in the land reform implementation process and those working in the agriculture sector. For the focus group discussions (FGD), 56

farmers (7 persons per district) were selected from the Southern Province. Participants of the FGD were selected with purposive and availability sampling.

4. Results

Land reform in Rwanda entailed two distinguishable processes, namely land registration and land-use consolidation. This section of the article firstly reports on interviewees' assessment of advantageous land registration and its implementation followed by their recommendations on land policy. Secondly, the focus is on land-use consolidation. The section concludes with the participants' general recommendations for both processes.

4.1 Assessment of the land registration process

Participants were asked to assess the land registration process. In response to whether the land registration was good, 95% agreed, whereas 5% disagreed.

4.1.1 Land registration as beneficial

The reasons why participants view land registration as a 'good process' are reported in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Reasons for declaring the land registration programme as good

Motivation for those who agree	Frequency	Valid %
People received proof of full ownership and security of tenure	261	79
It increased the value of the land	213	65
Individual land boundaries and sizes are known presently	185	56
Opportunity to acquire loans as well as reduce the cases of land disputes	145	44
Enables farmers to increase the land's productivity	62	19
Land seizure is curbed	52	16
Provides the opportunity to utilise land better	24	7

n=330

According to Table 1 above, the most prominent reasons for viewing land registration as beneficial: people received proof of full ownership of their lands and security of tenure (79%); it increased the land value (65%); and individual land boundaries and sizes became known (56%). Currently the land registration programme provides various opportunities where people use their lands more productively due to security of tenure. One of the interviewees asserted: "The land owner who holds the land ownership document is protected by the law and therefore holds tenure security. Moreover, he can easily be given loans" (Participant 22, February 2014). Land registration has also been useful for financial institutions such as banks and micro-financing schemes. The reason is easier control of loan reimbursing, seeing that the land title-deed document is kept by the bank as collateral for the loan.

In addition, land registration and titling has benefitted the survivors of the 1994 genocide. Those convicted of acts of genocide, or seized or damaged properties, were found guilty and ordered by the traditional tribunal, *gacaca*, to reimburse the victims. The office of the Rwanda National Revenue Authority (RNRA) retains the documents until the damages are repaid fully.

A further gain is that the RNRA can easily follow up the payment of any type of tax. The reason is that those who fail to pay taxes are prohibited by the Rwanda Development Board (RDB) from using the land title-deed documents as proof of ownership. These documents are also required when registering and starting a business, as well as acquiring any type of loan, or carrying out a transaction. A provincial official in RNRA pointed out that when institutions present the identity card of anyone prosecuted for various maladies or tax evasion, the RNRA officials can easily identify the individual and seize the land title-documents.

These above-mentioned positive aspects of land reform as listed in Table 1 above and the credits given by different participants confirmed the strengths of land reform in the Southern Province of Rwanda.

4.1.2 Land registration as detrimental

Those participants who assessed land registration as 'not a good programme' were also requested to provide reasons. The most common objection was that land registration generated other types of conflicts (according to all 16 interviewees who disagreed with the statement). The mentioned conflicts arose in families whose members live outside the country. When these members returned and found their family land registered in the name of only one member, disputes were unavoidable as the returned members claimed their section of land. Interviewees from the Nyanza District alluded to another type of conflict. This is the case where young men kill their parents to inherit their properties, including land, because they would not wait until their deaths.

Table 2 below gives an overview of participants' assessment of the land registration from highly positive to highly negative.

Table 2: Participants' assessment of the implementation of land registration programme

Assessment of land registration implementation	Frequency	Valid %
Very well implemented	50	14
Well implemented	243	70
Moderately implemented	19	6
Badly implemented	34	10
Total	346	100

n=346

Table 2 indicates that 84% interviewees confirmed that the land registration programme was implemented well, and very well. In contrast, only 16% viewed the programme in a more negative sense.

Participants recording a positive assessment had to provide reasons why the land registration was indeed well implemented. These reasons are presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Reasons why the land registration was well implemented

Reasons provided	Frequency	Valid %
People were given proof of ownership documents on time, each received a chart with land size and was familiar with his/her plot	258	98
Surveyors and registrars reached all the zones and homes	256	97
The programme was transparent, involved everyone and gave each full land rights, security of ownership and freedom, except those who were absent and those whose lands created problems	265	91
The programme used modern technology and pictures and showed real land boundaries clearly	221	72
It was done in a modern way with cameras, it was swift and done by experts	183	62
Land disputes were reduced and where problems occurred, they were solved quickly	182	62
The programme was known to people because authorities explained the setup and its benefits	65	22
The poor was assisted and all farmers kept on owning and cultivating their own land	59	20

n=293

According to Table 3 above the most prominent reasons for successful land registration are: people could acquire land title documents as proof of ownership on time, each receiving a chart with his/her land size and knew his/her plot (98%); surveyors reached all zones and homes (97%); and the programme was transparent, over-arching, and provided full land rights, security of ownership and freedom. This excluded those inhabitants who were absent and whose lands rights were an issue (91%).

The Deputy Director General of the RNRA explained in an interview that the success with land registration lies with the commitment of the implementers and the use of technology that improved and delivered services. For example, the same participant referred to a system that communicates to the people through Short Messaging Service (SMS) where their documents of land ownership are located – whether at the district or at the RNRA office – and which person is holding it. This information helped the landowners find the specific person at the site.

The findings above affirm that the land registration programme was implemented successfully in the Southern Province. These findings concur with those of other studies, confirming that land registration occurred successfully in Rwanda (Daley, Dore-Weeks & Umuhzoza 2010; Ali, Deininger & Goldstein 2011; Kairaba & Simons 2011; Huggins 2012). In addition, Rwanda's achievement with land registration was recognised even by the World Bank, which ranked the country first in Africa and eighth worldwide for the successful registration of property (World Bank 2014).

Participants also formulated several suggestions to help make land title-deeds more profitable to the poor landowners, as shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Suggestions to make land titles more profitable to the poor landowners

Suggestions	Frequency	Valid %
Banks and other micro-financing companies should give loans to title-holders without any other conditions except presenting the titles	321	93
Provide advice and training to title-holders on how to use land titles and acquire loans from the bank to utilise their land	314	90
Local government should explain the value and usefulness of titles and ensure disputes do not end up in the courts	307	89
Poor title holders must be sensitised about the value of titles in order to get their titles and use them; they must also be taught how to operate effective agricultural projects and master new agricultural techniques	234	68
People should feel free to present titles to banks and ask for loans and invest in modern agriculture or other non-agricultural income-generating activities	198	57

n=346

Table 4 above indicates that the most formulated suggestions tended to be about the acquisition of loans from financial institutions such as banks and micro-financiers, whereby 93% of participants wanted loans given by only presenting the land title document. The focus also was on state intervention to inform title-holders and facilitate loans from the banks (90%). This includes involving courts in land-related cases and training inhabitants about acquiring loans (89%). Participants suggested further (68%) that local leaders sensitise title holders among the poor, changing mind-sets and training them to apply new agricultural techniques.

Furthermore, to solve the land-related conflicts, interviewees formulated several suggestions to the government of Rwanda, as presented in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Suggestions on how land registration should solve the land-related conflicts

Suggestions on how land registration could solve land-related conflicts	Frequency	Valid %
All lands should be registered, and the land survey evaluated to ensure all the lands are covered	317	92
Give title deeds to everyone without set conditions	303	88
Government should direct land reform: ask people's views before launching any programme; also implement structures to address land-related conflicts, and chair the transfer of inheritance because of issues of corruption	268	77
Parents should treat children equally while giving them their inheritance	259	75
The judicial system should handle cases of land dispute rapidly and transparently. The government must implement the decisions of the courts, support people to be honest and help justice handle cases of land disputes	248	72
Bequeath land to children before the death of parents. Thus, each child receives a title to his/her land before the death of parents; children of the second wife must receive the inheritance from their fathers	135	39
Government set up strong land laws and ensure they are applied effectively and explained to people	110	32
Abolish the culture of giving land to each child as inheritance	36	10

n = 346

From Table 5 above, the most significant suggestions were to register the land and evaluate the land survey to ensure all sites were covered (92%); this includes distributing land-title documents to all holders (88%). Other participants suggested that Government should be involved directly in land reform by, for example, asking people's views before implementing programmes. Local government should also implement structures to follow up on land-related conflicts, and chair cases of bequeathing land to children, to avoid corruption (77%). Furthermore, the judicial system (assisted by Government) should handle cases of land dispute rapidly and transparently (72%).

From this subsection it is clear that participants experienced land registration particularly positive. The main reasons were the transparent and professional way it was handled and the security and benefits of ownership it provided. More advice on the usage of title holding was requested and support in obtaining loans. In the following subsection, consolidation of land use is evaluated.

4.2 Assessment of land-use consolidation

Participants were asked to assess the consolidation of land use. In response to a question whether the land-use consolidation was good, 69% agreed and 31%, a considerable number, disagreed. Those who assessed the consolidation as good, provided several reasons, which are presented in Table 6 below.

Table 6: Reasons why land-use consolidation is a good and relevant process

Motivation for those who agree that land-use consolidation is good and relevant	Frequency	Valid %
People who practise land-use consolidation in cooperatives increase productivity	162	68
People are assisted by the government to enter the produce market; for technical and material support as well as training in agriculture to cultivate selected selected	70	29
The process benefits people by motivating investors and business in the agricultural sector; introduces regionalisation, which allows an increase in productivity and increases the availability of seeds to the local markets. This helps secure crops and the produce and increases the ability to store the produce and solve conflicts	68	28
People unify their workforce in cooperatives, which reduces disorder in agriculture and gives orientation to farmers	43	18
Agronomists are on hand and fertilisers are made available	7	3

n=240

Table 6 above indicates that the majority who declared land-use consolidation as good and relevant, tended to be members of cooperatives (68%). These participants reported that consolidation helps them increase agricultural productivity as well as strengthens and develops social cohesion. According to MINITERRE (2004), the main purpose of land reform is to increase agricultural productivity and develop a commercial agriculture. It was found that individual households did not participate in land-use consolidation collectively and actively as was expected (to which the further low percentages attest). However, such consolidation succeeded in the marshlands and plains where members of agricultural cooperatives grew selected regional crops.

Participants mentioned that the failure of programmes for land-use consolidation in individual households was due to badly selected regional crops to cultivate as well as inappropriate methods that certain local government officials used to get people involved in such consolidation.

A further benefit of the programmes for such consolidation was the organising of farmers into cooperatives. This approach increased productivity as people work collectively (according to 68% of participants). Cooperatives are better organised and effective to ensure produce and secure capital, markets as well as technical and financial support.

In contrast, 106 interviewees who disagreed with the assumption that land-use consolidation is relevant and good, mentioned a number of reasons, which are presented in Table 7 below.

Table 7: Reasons for disagreeing that land-use consolidation is good and relevant

Motivation for those who disagree	Frequency	Valid %
People are struck by hunger because the harvest is consumed and certain crops perishes	105	99
During low rainfall, crops are damaged	26	25
When crops are damaged there is no harvest	25	24
Transport prices to the markets rise continuously	23	22
There is no ownership of the programme since it is introduced by the state	14	13
People are forced to grow crops they do not need	11	10

n=106

The results from Table 7 indicated that land-use consolidation was considered unbeneficial, mainly, since the harvested produce were depleted which led to famine (99%). A number of participants also pointed out the effect of climate change (rain or drought) on the crops. Understandably, most members of civil society who were interviewed mentioned that land-use consolidation has certain shortcomings despite increasing productivity for agricultural cooperatives.

Firstly, the process does not enable farmers to save the produce as the custom was in the traditional agriculture. Effectively all the harvested produce is sold to Rwanda Agricultural Board (RAB) and the local food processing factories with no produce remaining at home. This undermines the culture of saving through household stores that existed under the traditional agricultural system. Secondly, land-use consolidation appears unprofitable since agents of the factories and RAB collect most of the produce at a low price. Thirdly, the farmers have to pay back the fertiliser, which they received on credit under the condition to reimburse it when they sell their produce regardless of whether their yield was successful or not. Fourthly, there was no exoneration even when farmers faced a deficit due to climate risks of limited rainfall or sun damage. As a result, the farmers income remained small, to the point that they were unable to afford the price of final products or food at the market.

Considering the key provisions of the Land Policy of 2004 and the Land Law of 2013, the land reform programme developed by the Rwandan government tended to be “pro-poor” with the goal of mitigating poverty. The findings of the present study indicate that the land registration programme achieved the goal of supporting the poor. However, the land-use consolidation did not reflect the real pro-poor land reform views as championed by scholars such as Adams (1995), Borras (2002), Wolford (2007) and Anderson (2010). Anderson (2010), for example, links land reform to poverty reduction that benefits the poor workers/landless peasants. This should take place through changes of tenure relations and shifts in power relationships in favour of the working class at the expenses of those who accumulate wealth from their control over rural land and labour.

Therefore, it is important to note the participants’ assessment of the implementation of land-use consolidation, which is presented in Table 8 below.

Table 8: Participants’ assessment of the implementation of land-use consolidation

Assessment of the land-use consolidation’s implementation	Frequency	Valid %
Very well implemented	3	1
Well implemented	155	45
Moderately implemented	19	6
Badly implemented	160	46
Very badly implemented	9	3
Total	346	100

n=346

According to Table 8 above, a significant number of interviewees (46%) confirmed that the land-use consolidation programme was implemented badly, whereas almost an equal percentage (45%) were of the opinion that it was well implemented. This means that perceptions on the success of land-use consolidation were exactly divided.

Further analysis indicates that land-use consolidation was well and successfully implemented in the marshlands and expansive plain lands. In these areas, inhabitants regrouped in cooperatives of farmers who practiced mono-cropping. On the other hand, the consolidation failed in individual households where farmers could not survive through mono-cropping and decided to combine it with multi-cropping.

Table 9: Reasons why land-use consolidation was implemented well and very well

Motivations from those who deemed it well implemented	Frequency	Valid %
People were provided with selected and quality seeds and fertilisers	142	90
People kept their own land though they farm the same crops collectively	118	75
In cooperatives the produce increased	104	66
The cultivated crops are productive and commercial	98	62
There was no incidences of injustice and conflicts during the consolidation. Theft decreased and visits were undertaken to learn from others	82	45
Changes were made little by little in terms of regional crops and productive crops in the region	64	41

n=158

According to Table 9 above, success in land-use consolidation were ascribed to the following factors: farmers were provided with quality seeds and fertilisers (90%); they could farm collectively while retaining their own land (75%); productivity increased in agricultural cooperatives (66%); and people could cultivate productive and commercial crops (62%). These reasons underline the strengths of the land-use consolidation programme. In a nutshell, it regrouped people in cooperatives and provided them with agricultural means and expertise.

In contrast, participants also criticised land-use consolidation as implemented badly. These shortcomings are explained in Table 10 below.

Table 10: Reasons why the land-use consolidation was implemented badly and very badly

Motivations from those who believe it is badly implemented	Frequency	Valid %
Farmers were unable to collect harvest as some of the cultivated crops did not suit the region, and other crops were struck by a disease	159	94
There were no mechanisms to overcome drought; therefore, farmers could not produce	158	94
The consolidation brought about hunger since the needed crops were prohibited	149	88
The implementation took place while the level of understanding was low and people's wishes and views were ignored	38	33
People were forced to participate without sufficient knowledge of the process	49	29
Marshlands were taken from us while they were needed during droughts	36	21
Certain necessary crops disappeared, and people cultivated types they did not need	30	18
The process contributed to the high prices at the markets	10	14

n=169

Table 10 above indicates that 169 of the 346 interviewees considered the land-use consolidation to be a failure. The main shortcomings of this process were: farmers failed to collect harvest as certain cultivated crops did not suit the region, and other crops fell to a disease (94%). Furthermore, mechanisms were lacking to overcome drought (94%) and hunger, seeing that necessary crops were prohibited while farmers were forced to cultivate types that did not suit the region (88%).

Other factors were mentioned commonly by both surveyed and interviewed people. These include: the increase of unnecessary crops such as maize on the local markets and the decrease of traditionally grown crops such as sorghum, bananas, and sweet potatoes – which large numbers of people needed for food security. Government implemented the consolidation policy while the people still had limited knowledge; and used public force to involve them while ignoring their views on the matter.

Participants were also asked for suggestions to improve land-use consolidation and thereby reduce poverty. These recommendations are presented in Table 11 below.

Table 11: Recommendations to improve the land-use consolidation programme and solve the problem of poverty

Suggestions for efficient land-use consolidation for poverty reduction	Frequency	Valid %
Allow the local people to choose their preferred crops, grow more than one crop and retain a part of land where multi-cropping is used	340	98
Use farming technology to overcome climate fluctuation; store water to use in drought periods	328	95
Provide livestock to those with unfertile land and fertilisers free of charge and on time; train farmers in modern agriculture and assist them in agricultural projects planning and management	302	87
Keep agronomists or cadres near people and work hand in hand with them; multiply mobilisation and sensitisation campaigns as well as training sessions on the relevance of land-use consolidation; and visit homesteads where consolidation was successful	299	86
Rotate seeds over time to see which suit the region; multiply various seeds in one region and place food stores in each region to combat hunger	298	86

n=346

Table 11 indicates that the majority of participants agreed that the local inhabitants should determine which crops are suited for their region and be allowed multi-cropping while retaining a part of the allocated land for such farming (98%). Furthermore, appropriate technology should be used and water stored to cope with climate change (95%). Farmers should be equipped with sufficient fertilisers timely and for free, and livestock provided to those with unfertile land; the latter should be trained in modern agriculture and assisted in planning and managing projects (87%). Agronomists should work closely with farmers through campaigns for mobilisation and sensitisation regarding land consolidation (86%). Finally, seeds should be rotated to determine which suit the region (86%).

Participants in the focus group discussions further recommended a reduction in the cost of land transfers and clearer motivation for taxes to be paid.

From the discussion above, it is clear that the participants viewed the advantages of land registration in terms of the security and benefits of ownership it provided. The implementation process was rated positively and described as transparent and professional. Most interviewees viewed the land consolidation process as advantageous

by emphasising the cooperation it brought about. However, the findings show that a third of the interviewees experienced increased vulnerability due to badly implemented state interventions. Thus, participants were divided in their view on how well the process was implemented.

Regarding land reform in general, the following recommendations were made: land owners should be advised on using their title holding to their benefit; the administration to acquire loans should be restricted to the minimum; farmers should be supported with the correct seeds and fertiliser; cooperatives should be strengthened; and Government should engage communities through participation and consultation to counter problems with logistics and protect against agricultural risks. To attain this objective, further agricultural research is necessary to inform the stakeholders. The farmers must be provided more agricultural options, support, and opportunities for cooperation. Assistance was also requested for issues of inheritance and dealing with land disputes.

5. Conclusion

The findings of this article indicated clearly that the land registration process in the Southern Province of Rwanda was successful. It provided security and benefits of ownership. However, further advice and support were requested to help use this ownership positively. Regarding land-use consolidation, the responses were more ambivalent. Most participants viewed such consolidation as advantageous due to the benefits linked to cooperatives. However, there also were concerns about the vulnerability it caused. Therefore, it is recommended that individuals are provided more options as well as the opportunity to participate and cooperate in the process. This would imply improved consultation as well as positive logistical and research support and assistance in dealing with land, inheritance, and disputes.

Based on the findings, the following recommendations can be made. Firstly, farmers' capacity of must be developed. This means advice on using title holding to their benefit within a context conducive to acquiring loans. Secondly, the farmers need protection from agricultural risks. This means that the state should provide applicable agricultural research, help farmers obtain quality seeds and fertiliser as well as eliminate logistic problems. Thirdly the state should provide structures to facilitate issues of inheritance and disputes. Finally, cooperatives are deemed extremely important in the success of land consolidation and must be encouraged and supported by the state. All of the mentioned measures must be taken in a participatory and consultative way involving the various stakeholders.

This article presented participants' evaluation of the land reform policy and process in Rwanda's Southern Province. It is evident that this far-reaching land reform had positive outcomes but also posed various challenges. Further comparative research in

Rwanda and Africa can provide a more in-depth understanding of success factors of land reform and how it can be enhanced. Follow-up studies can also be conducted in the mentioned Southern Province to evaluate the progress of land reform in this region.

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