

NEWSLETTER

Land for Life – Year in Review 2025



Introduction

Greetings from the Land for Life initiative! 2026, a new year full of ideas and opportunities is fully in motion, and as we move into another busy and inspiring phase of our work, we'd like to take a moment to pause and look back. The road ahead may sometimes feel long, but acknowledging what was already achieved is essential—and motivating. We're happy to share some of our highlights of the past year with you!

Founded in 2017, the Land for Life initiative is funded by BMZ, supported by Welthungerhilfe, and implemented by local partners in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Burkina Faso, and Ethiopia. At its core lies a belief in the power of dialogue and partnership to drive lasting, people-centered change. Across all four countries, Land for Life

supports Multi-Stakeholder Platforms on land governance, bringing together civil society, government, the private sector, academia, and local communities. These dialogue processes—both national and grassroots—have contributed to tangible shifts in policies and practices.

The year 2025 brought many milestones: forging new partnerships, facilitating dialogue, influencing policy processes, engaging in international forums, and producing meaningful documentation and publications. We are delighted to share some of these highlights with you—and we wish you a fulfilling and impactful 2026, bringing us all closer to our shared goal of people-centered land governance

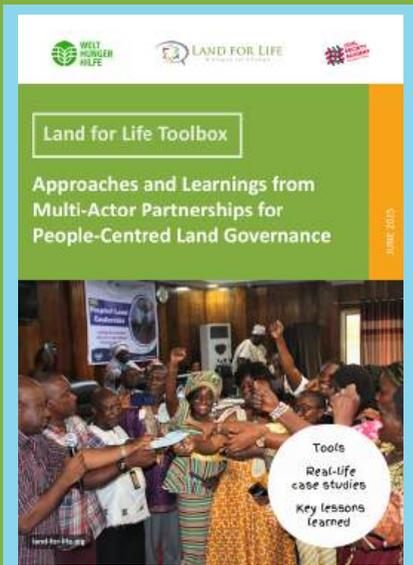


2025 International

1

We launched the Land for Life Toolbox

This year, we released the Land for Life Toolbox, a comprehensive collection of methods, tools, and insights gathered over more than seven years of practice. Its official launch at the Global Land Forum in Bogotá marked a major step toward making our approach more accessible to partners, practitioners, and policymakers working on land governance.



2



Mid-Term Self-Assessment and Capitalization Study documented our impact

Through our virtual mid-term self-assessment, we captured the initiative's emerging outcomes, including new policy processes such as Burkina Faso's Real Estate Law and behavioural shifts like improved compensation practices for smallholder farmers in Ethiopia. A joint capitalisation study with MRLG, ILC, and CTFD examined the Burkina Faso process in depth, offering fresh insights into how multi-stakeholder platforms like the PMAF can effectively shape policy change.



HIGHLIGHTS

3



A Policy Brief brought our Evidence into Policy Dialogues

With Welthungerhilfe, we developed the policy brief "Bringing Land Back to the Agenda", translating years of field experience into concrete recommendations for advancing land reform. Presenting the brief and amplifying partner voices at the Conference on Land Policy in Africa in Addis Ababa helped elevate community-driven perspectives in continental policy debates.

4



Advances in International Alignment and Partnership

Many activities this year aimed at deepening collaboration at the international level helped create stronger alignment among global actors supporting land reform. Together with many partners, like FAO, ILC, and GIZ, we co-organised coordination meetings at the World Bank Conference in Washington and the CLPA in Addis Ababa. We also initiated improved mapping of institutional roles and drafted the concept for a Land for Life Network that aims to secure equitable, long-term partnership within the initiative.



Ethiopia



Dialogue That Strengthened Communities and Partnerships

In 2025, agricultural investments in Batu and Modjo cities, Lume, and Adami Tulu woredas continued to create both opportunities and challenges for local communities. While jobs and development increased, limited consultation on land-related issues had previously constrained meaningful engagement. To address this, Land for Life Ethiopia sustained the Community-Investors-Local Government Forum (CILGF), providing a structured space for dialogue among communities, investors, local authorities, and traditional elders.

Through regular meetings and targeted awareness sessions, participants discussed land governance, labor

conditions, environmental management, and community priorities. Communities strengthened their understanding of rights and responsibilities, enabling more constructive engagement. As a result, workers negotiated safer conditions and fairer hours, while land and environmental concerns were formally documented and referred to government offices. Investors responded by improving environmental safeguards, reducing chemical use, and supporting local initiatives such as clean water access and youth employment.

Community representatives also shared their experiences at the International Rural Women's Day at the African Union, highlighting how inclusive dialogue enhanced participation in decision-making. Overall, the forum strengthened trust, reduced conflict, and promoted more responsible agricultural investment across the regions.



Sustained National Policy Dialogue on Inclusive Land Governance

In 2025, Land for Life Ethiopia convened several national, multi-actor dialogues on land governance, reinforcing its role as a trusted platform for inclusive, evidence-based policy engagement. Key activities included a capacity-building training on land governance and policy in Bishoftu, bringing together government, civil society, and private sector actors to exchange perspectives on land rights, administration, agricultural investment, and environmental sustainability.

This was complemented by a national consultation workshop that engaged policymakers, researchers, practitioners, and development partners to discuss land policy reform, pastoral land systems, and sustainable food systems. Across these dialogues, participants emphasized equity, institutional coordination, and the protection of smallholder and pastoralist land rights. Through this sustained engagement, Land for Life Ethiopia contributed to people-centered land governance debates with national, regional, and global relevance.

Celebrating the Third Ethiopian Land Day

In December 2025, Land for Life Ethiopia hosted the Third Ethiopian Land Day in Addis Ababa under the theme “Sustaining Our Land, Securing Our Climate.” The event convened over 50 participants from government institutions, smallholder and pastoral communities, private investors, academia, civil society, development partners, and the media, highlighting the value of inclusive dialogue in land governance.

Sessions addressed legal and institutional frameworks, urban land governance, and pastoral land management, supported by panel discussions and interactive exchanges. A central highlight was community testimonies, where smallholder farmers and pastoralists shared experiences on land access, investment impacts, and local governance. Their voices reinforced the importance of participation, legal awareness, and constructive engagement.

The event concluded with a communiqué outlining key lessons and recommendations, reaffirming Land for Life Ethiopia’s commitment to awareness-raising, partnership-building, and the promotion of fair, sustainable, and climate-resilient land governance.



Burkina Faso



Burkina Faso celebrates International Pastoralism Day for the first time

Ouagadougou, 20 May 2025 – Pastoralism, a key pillar of Burkina Faso's economy and culture, was at the centre of discussions during a national conference organised to mark the first International Pastoralism Day. The event, initiated by the National Multi-Stakeholder Platform on Land (PMAF), aimed to highlight the strategic role of pastoralism in the country's economic and social development. Although the sector contributes 4.1% of national GDP and accounts for one-fifth of Burkina Faso's export earnings, it faces many challenges. Climate change, land pressure and insecurity are increasing the difficulties faced by pastoralist

communities, threatening their resilience and the sustainability of their livelihoods. Collective reflection for a sustainable future

The conference, held at the Royal Beach Hotel in Ouagadougou, brought together experts, public institutions, civil society organisations and international partners around the theme "Pastoralism in Burkina Faso: what future?". Through panels and discussions, participants addressed current challenges and explored innovative solutions for inclusive and sustainable management of pastoralism. On the sidelines of the conference, an exhibition of pastoral products, led by members of the Tin Hinan and Femmes Pastorales du Sahel en Mouvement (FPSM) associations, showcased traditional knowledge and the adaptability of communities to climate change.



Guidance Document Developed to Integrate Land Issues into Burkina Faso's NDC 3.0.

In collaboration with the International Land Coalition (ILC), the PMAF produced a report on how land issues are taken into account in Burkina Faso's NDC 3.0. This document is the result of inclusive local consultations with all stakeholders affected by climate change, including communities. The report highlights the low level of community involvement and the limited consideration of land rights in current commitments and sets out ways to effectively integrate land into the new commitments. The findings were shared via the platform's website.

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Tuy Province Advances Inclusive Land Governance

Houndé, 11 June 2025 – A day of fruitful exchanges was held in the meeting room of the High Commission in Houndé. The event was a provincial multi-stakeholder dialogue workshop on land, organised by the National Multi-Stakeholder Platform on Land (PMAF) with support from the Land for Life programme of the NGO Welthungerhilfe (WHH). This initiative is part of the implementation of the National Policy on Land Security in Rural Areas (NSFMR). Its objective is to lay the foundations for a dialogue process towards more equitable, sustainable and inclusive land governance in the province of Tuy.

Significant and promising mobilisation The workshop brought together 67 participants, reflecting strong engagement from local actors from diverse backgrounds: representatives of government technical services, local authorities, civil society organisations, traditional leaders, economic operators, farmers' organisations, women, media and even the mining sector. Participants committed to establishing a formal framework for dialogue on land in the province.

The PMAF supports the effective implementation of rural land law in Pouni



Pouni, 2025 – As part of the Land for Life Phase 3 initiative, the National Multi-Stakeholder Platform on Land (PMAF) organised training sessions for community members from 19 to 22 May and from 23 to 26 June. Supported by the municipal authorities, this activity is part of national efforts to strengthen land governance in rural areas.

The sessions took place in the Pouni village hall. The overall objective was to strengthen the operational capacities of local communities for a more rigorous, equitable and effective application of Law No.

034-2009 on rural land tenure. The training enabled 198 community members, including 48 women, to:

- Deepen their understanding of roles and responsibilities;
- Better understand procedures related to land security, in particular the issuance of Rural Land Ownership Certificates (APFR);
- Prepare to manage land conflicts more effectively by promoting endogenous conciliation mechanisms.



Capitalisation of Experience

Case study

Understanding policy engagement and the impact of a multistakeholder platform in Burkina Faso

Issa Soulé Issifou
Aka Nabé





Liberia



Community CLF meetings conducted by WOICI and ForumCiv Liberia in Jawajeh-Varney-Boh and sub-communities in Zeppeh Clan, Senjeh District, Bomi County in October 2025.

Community Engagement Advances Land Formalization in Bomi County

Monrovia, Liberia- In 2025, the Multi-Actor Platform on Land Governance and Responsible Agricultural Investment in Liberia (MAP Liberia) supported one of its Steering Committee members, the Women Care Initiative (WOICI), to strengthen community capacity on land formalization in Jawajeh-Varney-Boh and six surrounding villages in Bomi County. With funding from ForumCiv Liberia, WOICI facilitated a series of community entry, awareness, and stakeholder engagement meetings, using Liberia Land Authority (LLA)-approved visual tools to support self-identification and participatory land mapping.





Jawajeh-Varney-Boh community and CLDMC members sign finalized by-laws and constitution for customary land governance, supported by MAP Liberia Land Platform and ForumCiv Liberia.

Inclusive Governance Structures Established at Community Level

Youth, women, and men actively participated in documenting land history, identifying boundaries, and mapping natural resources. Six unit-level meetings were also held to clarify procedures for developing community by-laws and a constitution. An ad hoc committee was established to draft these documents and organize elections for the Community Land Development Management Committee (CLDMC).

LLA Validation Confirms Progress Toward Community Certification



LLA conducts validation meetings with Jawajeh-Varney-Boh community members to verify CLF activities implemented by WOCL and partners in Zeppeh Clan, Senjeh District, Bonni County.

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In November 2025, the LLA's Customary Land and Monitoring & Evaluation divisions validated the Community Self-Identification and governance processes through engagements with opinion leaders and focus group discussions with women, youth, and elders. The validation confirmed successful completion of required steps and recommended Jawajeh-Varney-Boh for community certification.



Sierra Leone



Picture of Head of Paramount Chiefs in Port Loko District appealing to colleague Paramount chiefs to support the land reform processes in the district

Traditional Authorities Embrace Stronger Role in Land Governance Reforms in Sierra Leone

In 2025, Land for Life Sierra Leone engaged Paramount Chiefs across Port Loko, Tonkolili, Kenema, and Pujehun districts, strengthening collaboration between traditional authorities, District Multi-Stakeholder Platforms (DMSPs), and other land governance actors. These engagements increased chiefs' understanding of the Customary Land Rights Act and the National Land Commission Act (2022) and reinforced their willingness to work closely with DMSPs to prevent and resolve land-related conflicts.

Across all districts, traditional authorities demonstrated renewed commitment to transparency and orderly land administration. Paramount Chiefs in Tonkolili, in particular, pledged to support coordinated conflict

resolution processes and called for clear protocols guiding DMSP engagement at chiefdom level.

At the national level, the National Land Commission reaffirmed its readiness to collaborate with Paramount Chiefs, highlighting ongoing reforms such as the establishment of a Grievance Redress Team and the rollout of chiefdom and village land committees. Development partners, including FAO and Welthungerhilfe, reiterated their continued support to both DMSPs and traditional authorities.

Overall, the engagements strengthened trust, improved coordination, and reaffirmed a shared commitment among government institutions, traditional leaders, civil society, and development partners to advancing inclusive land governance and food security across Sierra Leone.



Photo: Symbolic signing of the MoU between Land for Life and the Media

Land for Life Sierra Leone and 16 Media Institutions Formalise Collaboration on Land and Food Security Engagement

Land for Life Sierra Leone strengthened its Media Alliance through the signing of one-year Memoranda of Understanding with 16 media institutions from Pujehun, Kenema, Tonkolili, and Port Loko districts. The two-day engagement, held from 28–29 August in Bo City, brought together print, broadcast, and online media actors to deepen collaboration on land governance and food security reporting.

The initiative expanded media engagement beyond Freetown into rural and semi-urban communities, enhancing coverage of land governance, climate change, environmental sustainability, and food security. Media leaders demonstrated increased commitment to accurate, accessible, and community-focused reporting, particularly on the implementation of the Customary Land Rights Act and the National Land Commission Act (2022).

Participants emphasized the importance of simplifying technical land issues to strengthen public understanding and citizen engagement. The MoUs formalized shared responsibilities and joint actions, while the inclusion of women journalists and community radio stations strengthened gender-responsive and grassroots reporting. The activity resulted in a more inclusive and coordinated Media Alliance, better positioned to amplify citizen voices and support transparency and

accountability in land governance across Sierra Leone.

#3 Land Governance Actors Build Practical Skills on Dispute Resolution and Legal Empowerment
Photo: Lead Facilitator, Emmanuel Gbondo, Esq, training Para-legals and other stakeholders on case management.

A two-day district-level cluster training held in Makeni, Bombali District, strengthened the capacity of land governance actors from seven districts to engage effectively in dispute resolution and legal empowerment. Funded by BMZ through Welthungerhilfe, the training brought together CSOs, DMSP members, government agencies, media practitioners, paralegals, and landowners.

Participants enhanced their understanding of recent land reforms, including simplified applications of the Customary Land Rights Act, and gained practical skills in resolving disputes through the Alternative Grievance Redress Mechanism. The training reinforced non-litigious, community-based approaches to conflict management.

Paralegals were equipped with practical tools such as case registers and record forms to support structured, transparent case management in rural communities. Media practitioners also strengthened their capacity to report accurately on land governance processes and project outcomes.

Overall, the training improved coordination, technical capacity, and collaborative action among stakeholders, contributing to more inclusive, transparent, and secure land governance systems across participating districts in Sierra Leone.

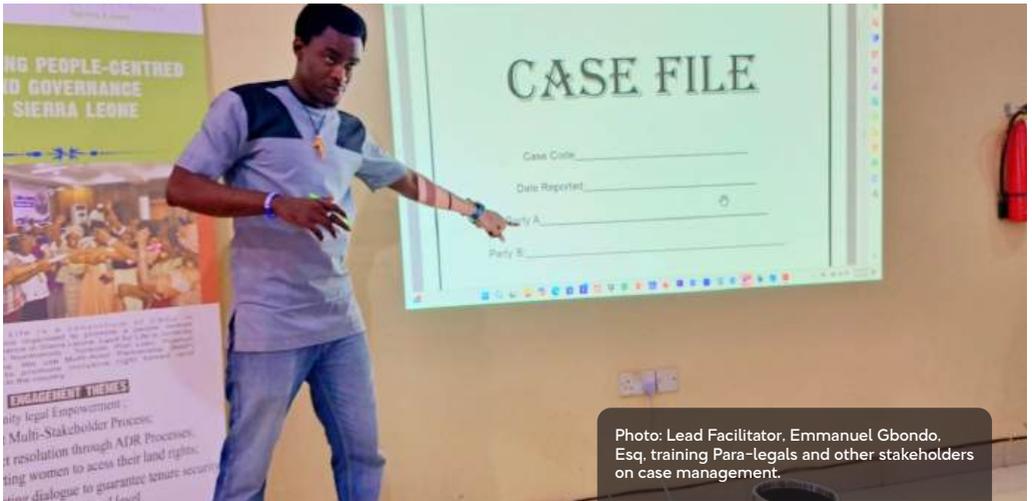


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Supported through Land for Life by Welthungerhilfe (WHH) and the German Ministry for Economic Collaboration and Development (BMZ).