

Securing Your Family's Future:

**A MESSAGING GUIDE FOR
WOMEN'S LAND RIGHTS**

About Us



The Kenya Legal and Ethical Issues Network (KELIN) has advocated for a rights-based approach to HIV-related strategies and programmes at the national and county level since 2001. KELIN has done this through a variety of training programmes, advocacy campaigns, and litigation on matters relating to HIV law and the rights of people living with and affected by HIV. KELIN’s 2015-2019 strategic plan expanded its focus on HIV-related human rights to also include the right to health in the following four thematic areas: HIV and TB; Sexual and Reproductive Health; Women, Land, and Property; and Key and Affected Populations. Expanding KELIN’s scope of work was a strategic decision informed by the promulgation of the Constitution of Kenya 2010, which holds that every person in Kenya has the right to the highest attainable standard of health care services, including reproductive health care. By aligning their core mandate with this newly devolved system of governance, KELIN will not only ensure the right to health for persons living with HIV, but will also ensure the right to health for all of Kenya’s most disenfranchised communities. Special thanks to the KELIN staff who led this project: Jessica Oluoch, June Bosire and Kenneth Otieno.



Goodwin Simon Strategic Research (GSSR) is a public opinion research firm with special expertise in conducting research on emotionally and socially complex issues. GSSR’s cutting-edge approach is built on decades of experience in polling, social and political marketing, communications, and policy analysis, and rooted in the latest research on neuroscience, emotion, psychology, cognitive linguistics, and narrative theory. This unique methodology is used to unpack underlying attitudes and emotional reactions that impact behavior and decision-making and to develop effective message frameworks that enable deep attitudinal change.



Who Should Use This Guide?

This guide is designed to assist anyone working to increase public support for women owning land and property in Kenya—from community leaders and activists to nonprofit organizations and advocacy groups. In writing this guide, we attempted to focus on using language that is understandable and accessible rather than language that is academic or full of legal terminology.

As human beings, we are all driven by emotions, values, moral arguments, and personal motivations. For activists who engage with policymakers, judges, reporters, and others, it can be easy to lose sight of a simple fact: they are human beings too. Therefore, the values-based messaging and approaches that we recommend in this guide are also important to use when corresponding with reporters, in legal briefs, at events, during legislative testimony, and in many other places. Doing so will strengthen our ability to engage with these important audiences in deeper ways—and increase the likelihood that they and others will adopt and use language we know is effective in calming concerns and building acceptance and support for women owning land and property.

* What You Can Expect in this Guide:

- A “Guide at a Glance” that provides a high-level overview of the key findings, evidence-based recommendations, and messaging tools found within this guide.
- A deep understanding of our audience, their mindset, and how the messaging developed from this research can engage and move them in positive ways.
- A set of evidence-based recommendations and messaging tools that can equip activists to further develop their voice and messages in ways that are both effective and authentic.
- Multiple examples of effective messaging in action.

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Greetings

At the Kenya Legal and Ethical Issues Network (KELIN), we know how important land and property rights are to social inclusion and economic development. These rights serve as a cornerstone for poverty reduction and for the realization of human rights more broadly. That is why, for the last seven years, KELIN has been working to address the needs of Kenyan widows and their children who have been disinherited and left homeless due to the denial of their lawful rights to inherit and own property.

In doing this work, we have witnessed how certain factors, including cultural barriers, can make it challenging for people to change their attitudes and behavior. Women are discriminated against because of patriarchal attitudes, misunderstood cultural practices, and limited awareness of human rights—and this is worsened by their HIV positive status.

To confront these challenges, KELIN decided to embark on a new kind of research project—one that could help us to explore these issues more deeply and to develop a comprehensive roadmap for change. Today, I am pleased to bring you the results of this four-year research project (2018–2021).

Working with our research partner, we designed this project to first help us identify and better understand the audience we would need to engage to create positive change. We gained invaluable insights by conducting research in this way—including understanding the emotions, beliefs, values, and experiences that drive our audience’s thinking related to women’s land rights. Building on these insights across multiple research touchpoints, we were able to develop, test, revise, and improve communications and messaging that has shown immense promise in creating openness among our audience and building space in Kenya for positive conversations in support of women’s land rights.

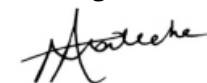
This messaging guide provides a detailed overview of our research process, a synthesis of the many things we have learned, and a set of messaging recommendations intended to guide the development of our communications. We hope others doing important work in this space find value in what we have learned and share with you in this guide.

We sincerely thank our partners involved in this work, especially our advisory group who provided their input, guidance, and knowledge throughout our research progress.

Advisory Group:

Kasuku Kalolo, Elder	Caroline Oyumbo, Widow Champion
Saline Adwar, Pro Bono Lawyer	Ruth Okara, Programme Officer Court
Eunice Owino, Community Based Organization	Users Committee
Judith Omune, Chief	David Achero, Kenya Land Alliance
Borlivia Hesbon, AGYW	Saline Adwar, Pro Bono Lawyer

With gratitude,



Allan Maleche
Executive Director, KELIN

KEY AUDIENCE MINDSET FINDINGS

• **MIXED AWARENESS OF LAW/LAND RIGHTS.** There is mixed awareness about the current state of the law in Kenya. Among those who are aware, many note that cultural customs still prevail over the Constitution. Participants in all groups noted that customs and traditions—including traditional beliefs held by family—dictated much of a woman’s ability to own and keep ownership of land whether or not she had a legal claim to it.

• **NUANCES IN SUPPORT.** Most participants—both men and women—are initially inclined to support women being guaranteed the right to own land, in principle, and become more supportive as they hear more about the topic. However, deeper discussion reveals more mixed attitudes and concerns about negative impacts of women owning land.

• **THERE ARE GAPS IN LIVED EXPERIENCES.** Women’s lived experiences on this topic differ from some men’s perceptions. In all groups, participants had personal knowledge of, or personal experiences with, women owning land in some form. Yet, the harms associated with a lack of land ownership were more obvious and intuitively understood and believed among women.

• **VALUES DRIVE DISCUSSIONS, NOT RIGHTS.** Most talk about supporting women’s land ownership not in terms of women’s rights or equality but as important for the well-being of women, families, and children. Women and men cited the well-being of the family and providing for children as primary motivations for supporting women’s land ownership.

• **CULTURE AND RELIGION BOTH IMPORTANT.** Cultural norms are important in informing attitudes and beliefs. In addition, religious values and beliefs are also important for many. Some view religion and churches as potentially playing an important role in supporting women. Both men and women raised religion and/or God as important in their lives, and they drew on religious values and beliefs to support their views that women should be treated more fairly with regard to land rights.



• **PEACE IS TOP OF MIND.** Peace, harmony, and security are powerful and recurring themes that motivate audiences to support allowing women to own land but also make women and men hesitant to broach the subject. The importance and value of peace was raised across all focus groups—from participants wanting a “peaceful life” to “keeping the peace” among family to “getting old in peace.” Having security was noted as key to achieving peace, with land ownership seen as granting permanent security.

• **BROTHER/SISTER DYNAMICS A SIGNIFICANT CONCERN.** Women and men both express concerns about fairness to men/brothers and potential conflicts women’s land ownership might raise in families. The idea that women may be able to gain land both from their fathers and from their husbands raised concerns for many when considering the fact that men would only be able to gain land from their fathers, which they would then be required to split with their wives and daughters.

• **EDUCATION IS LACKING AND IMPORTANT FOR PROGRESS.** For many, education and knowledge about the law is seen as important for the security of women and families now and in the future. There was a general consensus among participants that most women don’t know their rights and that this lack of knowledge makes women susceptible to being pushed off their land.

• **“PROGRESS” SEEN AS POSITIVE, BUT SLOW.** Certain aspects of social change and “progress” are seen as positive, yet many note changes regarding women and land are small and slow thus far. In various groups, societal/cultural advances that allow women access to higher education were seen as a sign of positive change that gave women a powerful voice.

• **GAP BETWEEN BELIEFS AND ACTION.** There is also a gap between many participants’ expressed beliefs about the need for marriage certificates, title deeds, women’s land ownership, etc., and the reality of taking action in their own lives and communities. Most note that they themselves do not have these documents in place (or, for women, are unaware of what the current status of their land ownership is), and many note they have not had conversations with spouses, parents, or children about the topic.

• **MARRIAGE CERTIFICATES SEEN AS PROTECTION AND CONFLICT PREVENTION.** Many participants suggest that marriage certificates could potentially help prevent disputes in the event of divorce or death—providing “evidence” to protect women’s land rights and prevent relatives or in-laws from driving her from her land. However, most note that they do not have certificates for their own marriages and note that there are some cultural and legal disincentives for getting them.

• **MIXED VIEWS ON DOWRIES.** There are mixed views of the role of dowries in the context of women’s land ownership. Some say a dowry, together with a marriage certificate, can act as a shield to protect women and is important because it shows respect and appreciation to the family. Yet, others say dowries have lost their importance or value or simply aren’t possible in some financial circumstances.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS



RECOMMENDATION: EQUIP EARLY ADOPTERS WHILE ASSISTING WIDOWS. Our research showed that focusing on certain groups—young people and elders in particular—provided the best opportunity to build a base of early adopters. As we continue to assist widows, it is also helpful to educate and equip them to help others.



RECOMMENDATION: EMPHASIZE SHARED VALUES. We need to connect with our audience first before sharing our messages. This can be done by lifting up values that both our messengers and the audience hold. Depending on the messenger and the context of the story being shared, these values could include family, family harmony, security and peace of mind, contributing to the family, and more.



RECOMMENDATION: COMMUNICATE WITH RESPECT FOR CULTURE AND RELIGION. It is important to show people being respectful of culture and operating within cultural norms. For many in our audience, including faith-specific messages is important to help them understand that land ownership by women is in alignment with the teachings of their faith.



RECOMMENDATION: PAINT A PICTURE OF THE PROBLEM AND THE SOLUTION, FOCUSING ON HAPPY OVER HARMS. When we paint a picture of the problem—the harms that real people face and how it impacts them—we activate a sense of emotional and moral urgency within our audience to protect other people and to care about what happens to them. It is important to also paint a picture of the solution—one that is aligned with culture rather than in conflict with it—and to focus much more on the happy outcomes that are possible rather than emphasizing the harms and pain caused by the problem. This is especially true when it comes to visuals, like photos and illustrations.



RECOMMENDATION: SHOW HOW THE SOLUTION ADDRESSES THE PROBLEM. Our research found it is important to define the problem we are working to address and to show how the solution we envision is connected to—and solves—that problem. Doing both helps our audience to better understand and become emotionally engaged in the situation at hand. They can also begin to see where they could help and why their support matters.



RECOMMENDATION: PROVIDE INFORMATION THROUGH CONCRETE EXAMPLES THAT CONNECT THE DOTS. We must provide our audience with information about the various legal documents (marriage certificate, will, land title, birth certificate, etc.) that will secure and protect their land ownership rights. However, it is just as important to communicate why these documents are important, why they are legally necessary, the positive impact of having them for individuals and their families, and the steps required to attain them. We cannot assume that our audience knows all—or any—of this information.



RECOMMENDATION: MODEL DESIRED BEHAVIOR. For our audience to be persuaded to change their thinking and behavior, our communications need to set examples for them of what it would look like if they were to believe and behave in the ways that we hope for. We need to provide our audience with examples and a model of how conversations about women’s land rights can happen in positive ways—ways that are not disruptive or damaging and that lead to positive outcomes.



RECOMMENDATION: TELL JOURNEY STORIES. Our research shows that people respond positively to ‘journey stories’—stories in which a main character changes over the course of the story. When our audience hears from messengers who share their own journey stories—starting from a place of discomfort, a lack of familiarity, or inner conflict, and moving towards support—it provides the emotional space and a model for our audience to begin their own journey.



RECOMMENDATION: SHOW DIFFERENT TYPES OF MESSENGERS. Hearing from a mix of messengers—including men and women of different ages and in different stages of life, and authorities such as elders and religious leaders—is important and impactful for many among our audience. Our research found that visual cues and emotional tone were also important. Visual cues include showing messengers together, such as a husband and wife with kids or a small group discussing the issue. Our messengers’ emotional tone needs to be calm, respectful, and show concern.





RECOMMENDATION: THE ANATOMY OF A STORY. The table below highlights key components to include in messenger stories, along with an explanation of why each is important for our audience. (An expanded version of this table that includes examples of messaging can be found on page 57.)

COMPONENT	WHY IT MATTERS
Start with shared values (these could include family, securing your family’s future, keeping peace and harmony, caring for others, culture, religion, respect, resolving disputes, etc.—see expanded list on page 35); weave in shared values throughout your story	We are asking our audience to behave in a way that many will feel, at least initially, is in contrast or conflict with culture. For them to even be open to listening, we need to lead with values they identify with and share with us. That way we can invite them in on this shared journey—together. Otherwise, we will be unable to engage them emotionally with our stories or our work.
Situate yourself within your family, community (if you are religious, share that)	This is another way of emphasizing shared values. Since we are emphasizing the need to secure your family’s future, if we don’t situate messengers within their family or community it won’t feel like a credible message to our audience.
Establish credibility/experience/background as it is related to women’s land rights; show why they have authenticity and credibility to talk about this issue	Our audience will ask themselves: Why should I listen to this person on land rights? It is important that messengers establish what specifically gives them the credibility to speak on the topic of women’s land rights. This could be accomplished in many ways, such as experiences as a widow or the adult son of a widow who experienced hardship as a child, being a mother-in-law dealing with the death of her own son, or an elder who has experience managing land disputes.
Share your motivations for speaking up about women’s land and property rights; continue to weave in shared values	Sharing why the messenger is speaking up—their motivations—is important to continue building credibility. Whether it is a young man who desires to secure his family’s future to avoid what happened to him as a child, or a young woman whose father is sick and wants to ensure she keeps peace with her brothers, or an elder seeking to avoid conflict among the families in his community, details about motivations are important opportunities for our audience to connect with the messenger.

COMPONENT	WHY IT MATTERS
Paint a picture of the harms/the problem	Many among our audience feel that things happen the way they do, and have been that way for so long, because it is part of culture. Addressing any issues or believing they can be solved may seem impossible to them. Therefore, it is powerful for our audience to see how we can do something differently, and that change is possible. When we paint a picture of the problem—the harms that real people face and how it impacts them—we activate a sense of emotional and moral urgency within our audience to protect other people and to care about what happens to them. As we do so, it is important to define the problem for our audience in a way that makes clear that something is wrong and that something should—and could—be done about it.
Paint a picture of how women inheriting and owning land is part of the solution; include the ways you feel that women’s land rights are aligned with culture (not opposed to it) and/or religion <small>*Note: Focus more on happy outcomes than on emphasizing harms and pain. See page 39.</small>	In addition to painting a picture of the problem or harms for our audience, it is important to also paint a picture of the solution—one that is aligned with culture rather than in conflict with it. As we explore further in the following two recommendations, our audience has many gaps in knowledge and lived experience when it comes to women’s land rights, so connecting the dots for them and showing how the solution is related to and solves the problem is key.
Provide information: Law allows women to own land, importance of documents (e.g., land title, will, marriage certificate, birth certificate); describe process and positive impact	To help fill our audience’s knowledge gaps, messengers need to provide information about the various legal documents (marriage certificate, will, land title, birth certificates, etc.) that will secure and protect their land ownership rights. Also, it is important to communicate why these documents are important, why they are legally necessary and what having them accomplishes, the steps required to attain them, and to show the positive impact of having them completed. We cannot assume that our audience knows all—or any—of this information.
Model and normalize conflicting feelings around women inheriting and holding land	Our audience may experience conflicting emotions or feelings of anxiety as they hear from messengers and consider the topic of women’s land rights. When messengers acknowledge these feelings—that some people may be uncomfortable, unfamiliar, or conflicted—it makes our audience feel a sense of relief that their feelings are being recognized rather than dismissed. Normalizing our audience’s conflicting feelings in this way is important because it allows them to more actively listen and be open to what our messengers have to say.

KEY SUMMARY OF KEY MESSAGES

MESSAGES DEFINING THE PROBLEM AND SOLUTION

It is important to communicate with our audience about the problem at hand, as well as what a solution to that problem looks like. As we do so, we must continue to weave our shared values throughout these messages. Below are examples of messages that were tested in our research:

Many communities like ours are struggling to come to terms with the changes made to land and property rights, in particular when it comes to the ability of women to own and inherit land.

Traditionally, our culture has maintained that if a woman faces the death of her husband, this widow has a right to her matrimonial home. In the past this may not have meant that she owned the land—more that she had a right to work and live on the land—but at the center of this tradition was ensuring that a wife whose husband died was protected from a situation out of her control.

Sadly, not every family is loving or fair. Some husbands fail to honor the bonds of marriage or don't meet their God-given responsibility to provide for their families. Some families care more about taking property than honoring their son or brother upon his death and protecting his family's future. In many cases, husbands have died suddenly without a will. Not having a clear agreement on inheritance creates turmoil and fighting amongst families.

The changes in land and property rights are an effort to make this tradition formal and provide legal protections to wives and widows—to guard against those people who prey on the vulnerable to exploit them.

If we disinherit the wife or the widow, we also disinherit the family. Over time, this puts the security of our entire community at risk.

More and more fathers and husbands in our community have come to feel it is their moral responsibility to provide some land for their wives, sons, and their daughters—just in case. They are starting to formally recognize their marriages with a marriage certificate. This is also why it is so important that our constitutional protections work together with culture—giving our elders the power to mediate land disputes—to help preserve family and community peace, harmony, and well-being.

Many in our culture may hold different beliefs and views on this issue, but we can continue to move forward, together, to protect families and to ensure complicated disputes around property don't come to be in the first place.

COMPONENT	WHY IT MATTERS
Share your journey story, if you have one: How did you come to support women's land rights?	Related to normalizing conflicting feelings, when our audience hears from messengers who share their own journey stories—starting from a place of discomfort, a lack of familiarity, or inner conflict, and moving towards support—it provides the emotional space and a model for our audience to experience their own journey.
Model how to raise the topic within your family, to elders, and in your community in a respectful way	Much of the information our audience receives will be new to them and potentially feel overwhelming. They will be navigating conflicting feelings related to culture, religion, and the law. They will also be worrying about what will happen if they raise the issue of land rights with their family or in their community. For them to be able to take the information we provide them and begin to create change in their own lives and the lives of those they love, it is important for our messengers to model how to raise the topic of land rights within their own family, to elders, and in their communities in a respectful and productive way.
Close with shared values and positive vision for the future	It is important to remind our audience of the values we share that are driving our desire for change and how that change will create a positive future.



+ MESSAGES WITH FAITH ELEMENTS

For many in our audience, including faith-specific messages is important to help them understand that land ownership by women is in alignment with the teachings of their faith. Below are two examples that were tested in the research, the first from a pastor and the second from an imam.

[Pastor as messenger] In the biblical context, we see the right of a woman to access and own land with the passage that tells of a woman in the church whose work was to find and to buy land for purposes of developing her family.

[Imam as messenger] Women having the right to own property is consistent with Muslim teachings. The Qu’ran makes it clear that women have the right to keep the wages they earn and to inherit property. Taking their earnings, including the land they helped pay for, or withholding their inheritance, is oppression.

MESSAGES WITH JOURNEY ELEMENTS

Including messages with journey elements can help our audience see how someone who holds values and beliefs similar to their own has evolved in their thinking—and that they can too. Some messages, like the first below, show the evolution by touching on the experiences that created the change in perspective and then what has resulted from that change. These messages are especially impactful coming from elders, faith leaders, and fathers. Other messages, like the second below, highlight situations and raise questions that our audience may not have considered. This can help them to begin their journey and be open to learning more. Messages like these are especially impactful when they come from daughters, wives, or widows who have experienced—or fear experiencing—negative situations due to the lack of protections around land ownership.

I have seen some very sad situations in my community—husbands abandoning their wives and children or husbands dying suddenly with no will—creating turmoil and fighting among families. These experiences have changed my perspective. Now, I feel it is my moral responsibility to provide some land for my daughters as well as my wife and sons, just in case. I have come to feel that, as a good father, I should provide some security for the futures of all my children and grandchildren.

We have all heard stories of wives being forced off their land by their husbands and widows being chased out by their husband’s family. Even when a wife takes out a loan to buy land for her family to live on and then works to pay off that loan, if her name does not appear on the land title, she can lose everything in a moment. Ask yourself, ‘Could something like this happen to me?’ Then, ‘What can I do to prevent these future problems, today?’

MESSAGES ON TITLES/WILLS/MARRIAGE CERTIFICATES

We must provide our audience with information about the various legal documents that will secure and protect their land ownership rights. However, it is important to also communicate why these documents are important and the positive impact of having them completed. Below are some examples tested in our research:

Because marriages are not always stable, it is very important that every marriage should be supported by a marriage certificate. If a husband were to die or if there was a divorce and a need for the distribution of assets, many families will lose their properties because they did not have a marriage certificate.

Co-ownership of land can help to minimize frictions after the death of a husband. We have seen many families fear domestic violence from their in-laws because of a land dispute. It is important to ensure both the husband and wife are on the land title.

It is important to write a will. Writing a will does not mean that you are going to die—it is simply a way of planning how things are supposed to be done after your death. It can provide security and peace during a troubling time.





Introduction and Research Overview

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Kenya Legal and Ethical Issues Network (KELIN) has done extensive work to advance women’s rights to access, use, control, and own land and property in East Africa. Currently, KELIN implements its program on women’s land and property rights in six sub counties of Kisumu and Homa Bay Counties.

Attacks on women’s land rights have been long-standing and persistent, and attempts to restore women to their land have been polarizing. While significant legal and structural progress has been made in recent years, deeper change to the attitudes underlying and driving these attacks remains challenging. In addition, discrepancies between what the law says ought to occur and the reality of women’s lives remain. People also come to this topic with a constellation of attitudes, beliefs, life experiences, values, and identities—separate from the issue of land rights itself—that impact the way they experience advocates’ messaging and persuasion efforts. The debate can be emotionally complex and culturally controversial and intersect with a broader array of issues, including attitudes about HIV, gender roles and the role of women in families and communities, women’s ability to provide for themselves and their families, tribal customs, poverty, and other topics.

People also come to this topic with a constellation of attitudes, beliefs, life experiences, values, and identities—separate from the issue of land rights itself—that impact the way they experience advocates’ messaging and persuasion efforts.

Given these complex dynamics, KELIN looked to address these problems, in part, by conducting deep messaging research—research that could produce effective messages to support both long-term and short-term change efforts. KELIN worked with Goodwin Simon Strategic Research (GSSR), beginning in January 2018, to conduct message testing research to map the current communications landscape, develop a deeper understanding of the dynamics that interfere with or provide opportunities to bolster support, and identify effective messages and messengers that can be utilized in KELIN’s communications work and the work of allied organizations going forward. GSSR is an independent opinion research firm based in the United States with specialized expertise conducting research on socially sensitive topics in East Africa, Latin America, and the U.S.

RESEARCH PURPOSE AND GOAL

The goal of this audience research is to learn how to develop effective messaging approaches and to use these tested approaches in communications to increase support for women’s land rights in Kenya. To achieve the project goals, GSSR’s research approach was designed to develop both a broad and deep understanding of how people generally perceive and feel about land rights, as well as intersecting issues, including attitudes about women’s roles and women’s rights individually and in the context of marriage, marriage and family generally, HIV/AIDS, women’s economic needs and opportunities, tribal authority and customs, and other related topics.

CHANGE HYPOTHESIS

To design a research methodology best suited for this project, a change hypothesis was first developed. A change hypothesis is a working theory, given all available information, of what a specific path toward achieving our goal might look like. Developing this change hypothesis helps to focus initial pieces of the research. What we learn as the research progresses allows us to test, modify, and strengthen this hypothesis:

- **The constitutional right to own land has not resulted in any significant increase in women’s land ownership. The Constitution was adopted in 2010, and today only six percent of land titles are currently owned by women—five percent held jointly with men and one percent by women alone.**
- **The law on its own will not be sufficient to achieve the change that is needed—it is going to require cultural change and adaptation.**
- **To build broad public support for women owning land and property, we first need to develop a segment of Early Adopters—people who are motivated by the idea that you could, and should, do something differently around women’s land rights.**
- **Therefore, the message development research should be focused on developing persuasive messaging for Early Adopters.**
- **If we equip Early Adopters with persuasive messaging—messaging that is both persuasive to them and that they can then use to effectively communicate their views and feelings to others—we can hasten the culture change and adaptation needed to build support for women’s land rights.**



WHO IS OUR AUDIENCE?

To support our ‘Early Adopter’ strategy, our research focused on identifying and researching specific groups of people across different communities in Kenya. **The groups we identified were: young men (18-29), young women (18-29), married women, widows, and men who are elders.**

Young people were selected as potential early adopters to research because they are generally more open to change and are more likely to have political power. They are also often more educated, more likely to be online, and tend to talk about social topics and communicate and express their ideas.

Married women and widows were selected as early adopters because they serve important roles as two groups most often impacted by women’s land rights issues. It is important to understand their mindset and to develop messages and communications they can effectively use as they share their stories and advocate for change. Similarly, elders are in a unique position to be early adopters. They have first-hand experience with the harm that comes from conflicts over land and property and, for many, are the first step in the legal system. Equipping them to be early adopters could help to advance the change we seek.

To be considered for our research purposes, participants needed to meet a certain set of criteria:

- Be born and raised in Kenya
- Have some secondary school education or more
- Consider themselves “very liberal,” “somewhat liberal,” “moderate,” or “somewhat conservative” when it comes to social issues
- Identify as either Christian or not religious

When it comes to their attitudes on women’s land ownership, potential participants were excluded if they said they were strongly opposed to allowing women to own land.

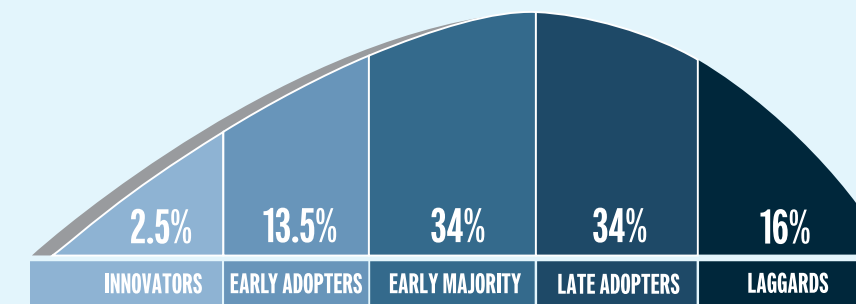
As we discuss our audience throughout this guide, please keep in mind that this audience is not monolithic. There are diverse segments of people within our audience—people with different backgrounds, beliefs, attitudes, and experiences. Therefore, it will be important to tailor our messages appropriately depending on the specific audience we are communicating with.



Key Concept: DIFFUSION OF INNOVATION

As we consider how to create and foster change, our research approach was informed in part by the ‘diffusion of innovation,’ a theory first developed by Everett M. Rogers. Rogers’ theory explains how ideas gain momentum and spread over time through a specific population or social system.

This theory helps to inform a model for how social norm change can spread through a community or society. It suggests that the adoption of new ideas or attitudes does not happen simultaneously in a social system. It begins with a small band of innovators—people who are leading breakthrough change in their field of expertise. In this context, people who are already engaging in conversations around women owning land and property are the ‘innovators’—those who are doing the work now and shaping the vision for the future. As you can see in the graphic below, the innovators make up a relatively small portion of the overall population. While necessary for creating change, they cannot do it alone. Ultimately, to be successful, you must engage a set of potential ‘early adopters’ who can help to spread these new ideas or attitudes and begin to build support among an ‘early majority.’



A number of social science researchers have found that those in both the early adopters and early majority groups are different from those who are innovators. These early adopters/early majority audiences, who adopt

a new idea earlier and influence change among others, also have different characteristics than people who are ‘late adopters.’ In our efforts to reframe the discussions and attitudes around women owning land, it is important to understand the characteristics and attitudes of early adopters, as well as the early majority, and how they may be different from—or similar to—those of your existing supporters. By focusing on these audiences, you can help to hasten a tipping point toward broader support.

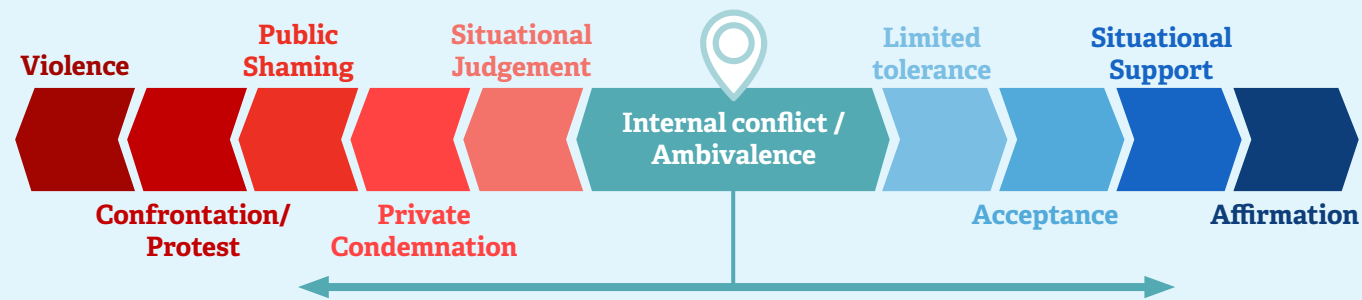
In this research, we excluded people who were very opposed to women owning land. Instead, we focused on persuading and motivating potential early adopters—people who are open to being supportive in their hearts but have internal conflict and a lack of information that prevent them from being more supportive. Messaging persuades them to become more supportive. It also equips them with the knowledge they need to be able to take action. It is important to note that these are two intentionally different steps—persuading them to be supportive and equipping them to take action.

Later in this guide, we share more about our audience—most of whom are early adopters, with some in the early majority—and the values, lived experiences, beliefs, emotions, and personal identities that shape how they experience and situate topics related to women and the right to own land.



Key Concept: SUPPORT ON A CONTINUUM AND THE ADJACENT POSSIBLE

Rather than thinking of people being supportive or opposed to women owning land and property, it can be helpful to imagine their attitudes as existing on a continuum. On one far end—the most oppositional end—there is a level of violence, or at a minimum disgust, toward the idea of women having these rights. On the other far end—the most supportive end—we see acceptance and affirmation of women having and exercising their rights.



As activists, our work is focused on moving people toward acceptance and affirmation, from wherever they may start. The good news is that we have learned it is quite possible to move people along this spectrum. However, it's not realistic to expect that someone who is currently at the violence and public shaming end of the spectrum will jump all the way to acceptance and affirmation. Reaching and moving people along this spectrum takes deliberate and purposeful work. Most importantly, it takes time.

The step-by-step process to move people along this spectrum is a concept popular science author Steven Johnson calls 'the adjacent possible,' which he adapted from evolutionary biologist Stuart Kauffman. In Johnson's book, *Where Good Ideas Come From*, he notes that while "we have a natural tendency to romanticize breakthrough innovations...[ideas] are, almost inevitably, networks of other ideas" that must evolve gradually, with each new innovation or insight opening up new possibilities that did not exist before.

The concept of the adjacent possible can represent a helpful way for us to consider and explore the pathways toward expanding support for women owning land and property. Understanding our audience's current attitudes and the circle of adjacent possibilities they may be open to and ready for gives us an opportunity to help them take one step—of many—towards the supportive end of the spectrum. It does not mean we accept that intermediate step as an end unto itself; simply that we use each step as an opportunity to expand an ever-greater set of new possibilities.



HUMANS ARE HEARTWIRED

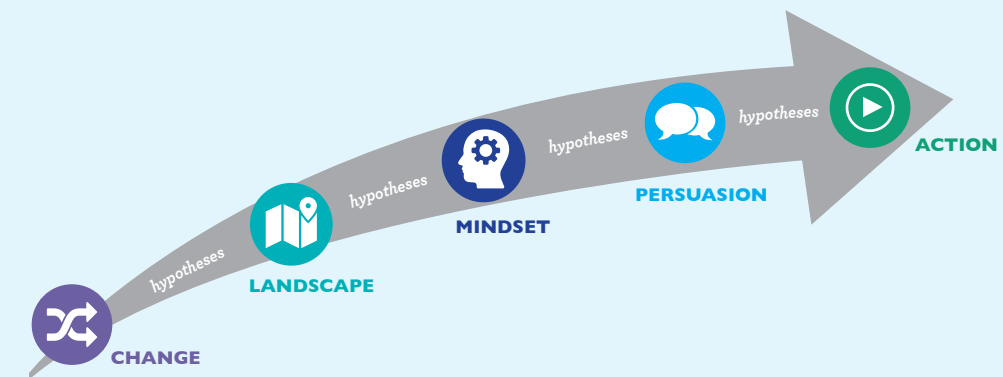
In 2017, Goodwin Simon Strategic Research and Wonder: Strategies for Good released a strategy guide called Heartwired that outlined a new, integrated approach to audience research, storytelling, and persuasion communication. We used this approach in conducting the research for this project.

In short, this research approach is based on the fact that human decision-making is influenced by how people are 'heartwired'—the mind circuits and connections that tie together their emotions, identity, values, beliefs, and lived experiences.

Whether conducting a single survey or launching a large-scale social change campaign that may take years and require deploying multiple research methods, applying the process outlined below helps to ensure that the research findings and communication recommendations best support your objectives.

This research process includes five phases that are interconnected and ongoing. Each of the five research phases are guided by the strategic questions below:

- **CHANGE:** What is the specific change you want to enact in the world?
- **LANDSCAPE:** What is the current landscape, or the playing field on which you have to compete, to create the change you seek—and what is already known about it?
- **MINDSET:** What is the mindset of the audience you need to persuade?
- **PERSUASION:** How do you translate your new heartwired understanding of your target audience to develop effective persuasion strategies?
- **ACTION:** Once you have the understanding and the persuasion strategies down, how do you integrate them into every facet of your work and put them into action, refining and strengthening as you go?



Mapping our change strategy makes it possible to accelerate momentum on our issue. By doing so, it gives us a bird's-eye view of the world in which we are seeking to create change, and it can transform how we approach our work on the ground to change hearts and minds.



BRIEF RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The findings and recommendations in this messaging guide are based on a four-year, in-depth qualitative and quantitative research effort that was conducted from 2018 through 2021.

CHANGE 	Change Convening (Spring 2018): To develop and refine our change goals and change hypotheses for this project, we held an in-person Change Convening with the Advisory Group.
LANDSCAPE 	<p>Media Audit and Social Listening (Spring 2018): We conducted a media audit and social listening analysis to understand the current nature, positioning, content, and tone of the public conversation on topics related to women’s land rights that the average person in Kenya is exposed to through news media. This work informed the development of an initial set of hypotheses about the kind of messages that might need to be shifted for change to happen. The results helped shape the content of the next phases of messaging research.</p> <p>In-Depth Interviews with Allies (Spring 2018): In April 2018, we conducted 15 in-depth interviews among potential or would-be stakeholders, advocates, and community leaders. The interviews helped to develop a fuller understanding of the ways that they see and experience this topic and their engagement on these issues.</p>
MINDSET 	Mindset Focus Group Discussions (November 2018): We conducted six focus group discussions from November 7 to 9, 2018, in Homa Bay, Kisumu, and Oyugis. These focus group discussions allowed us to understand our audience’s values, emotions, identities, and reasoning patterns as they engaged on issues related to women’s land rights in an interactive setting. They also provided a crucial platform for our initial development of values-based frames, themes, and messages to help build and solidify support for women’s land rights. The findings allowed us to refine these approaches in subsequent research phases.
PERSUASION 	Persuasion Focus Group Discussions (August 2019): We conducted six focus group discussions from August 6 to 8, 2019, in Kisumu, Homa Bay, and Oyugis. These focus group discussions allowed us to test how effective messaging developed from the research was with our target audience. Using various communication mediums, including written materials and messenger videos, allowed us to test messages in a way that combines content, context, messenger credibility, and emotional tone—just as typically happens in a real-world communications environment. This research allowed us to refine and strengthen messaging about women’s land rights and to explore which messages and messengers are most effective.
ACTION 	Asynchronous Online Focus Group (April 2021): We conducted an online asynchronous focus group among 28 residents of Homa Bay and Kisumu, ages 19-39, over four days from March 25 to 30, 2021. This research allowed us to test the effectiveness of campaign materials developed by Securing Your Family’s Future (SYFF) based on messaging recommendations from the Mindset and Persuasion phases of research. It provided opportunities to examine what, if anything, would further strengthen these materials, to understand if any materials may be confusing for participants, and to develop a sense of questions participants still have after exposure to these materials and the kinds of additional information they need to be supportive or take action.

(For a more detailed description of the methodologies used in this research, please see page 81.)



THE FIVE HEARTWIRED FACTORS

The heartwired research approach investigates how five factors combine, and often collide, to shape people’s attitudes and behaviors. Before you jump into the research insights and recommendations, it may be useful to familiarize yourself with the five heartwired factors—each of which influence people’s thinking and decision-making.

EMOTIONS

The feelings that human beings have in response to the stimuli within and around us are complex. Our emotions typically drive our behavior and lead us to prioritize certain concerns. Given how we are neurobiologically wired, we tend to make decisions based on emotions and back them up with logic, especially when we feel urgency and need to make a split-second decision, and this all happens on a largely unconscious level.

LIVED EXPERIENCES

The events and relationships people experience in their lives combine with the meaning they assign to those experiences to shape their response. The way we interpret and remember events—the narrative we construct around them—is just as important as what actually happened. Exploring and understanding those lived experiences is key to effective messaging strategies that drive behavior change.

IDENTITY

Self-identity is how people see themselves in relation to the world around them. We are all driven to make decisions that align with our sense of self, and when we don’t, we experience uncomfortable cognitive dissonance. Every individual’s identity incorporates many facets (e.g., gender, race, faith) and traits (e.g., being hard-working, fair-minded, educated). Internal conflict related to behavior change on certain topics is often the result of a tug-of-war between different facets of a person’s identity.

VALUES

Values are ideals that individuals hold about what is good or bad, right or wrong, important or unimportant, appropriate or inappropriate. Values influence emotional reactions, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors and are often shared broadly within a culture or community. A person’s values help them make meaning in their lives. If those values are contradicted, people experience a sense of dissonance and incongruence, which interferes with their capacity to change attitudes and behaviors.

BELIEFS

Beliefs are ideas that people hold to be true. When we have significant experience with something, our beliefs are deeper and more nuanced. When we have little to no experience, we tend to fill in the knowledge gaps. Whether we have deep or scant knowledge, our beliefs are further shaped by our identity, our lived experience, and our values. In other words, facts alone do not shape beliefs.

UNDERSTANDING THE CONVERSATION LANDSCAPE

To better understand the nature of public discussions around women’s land rights specifically and land rights more broadly, we conducted a robust audit of news media coverage. We reviewed and analyzed more than 1,800 articles published in Kenyan news media from September 2016 to February 2018 on topics related to women’s land rights. News sources included Daily Nation, Ghetto Radio, Capital FM Radio, and Urban Radio.

This work was critical in providing insights into the current state of the conversation, how issues related to women owning land were being discussed or included in conversations, the messaging frames and language being used in coverage, the kinds of messengers who were speaking out, and the potential barriers and opportunities that may exist when it comes to developing effective messaging to build support. Below we detail the key findings from this research.

KEY MEDIA AUDIT: KEY INSIGHTS

Coverage is limited. On the whole, coverage of women’s land rights is extremely limited. Generally, coverage of land rights issues primarily involved either personal or tribal land disputes. Some coverage focused on discussions of gender equality, women’s empowerment, or social change—and some on affordable housing—with little specifically focused on women’s land rights itself. Overall, coverage is primarily focused on land disputes and provides little in terms of alternative visions or models of success. Also, the connection between an individual’s land or property dispute and larger social change is rarely, if ever, made.

Tone of conversation is abstract. When discussing land rights issues generally, the tone of the conversation is often abstract rather than concrete. It could be characterized as having a primarily academic or expert voice that is statistics- and data-driven, rather than having an ‘everyday’ voice that is values- or narrative-driven. On women’s land rights, emotional appeals are sometimes made. At the same time, there is a heavy use of academic ‘NGO-speak’ and a positioning of the situation as a settled matter, while at the same time debating it as a fight between ‘us and them.’

Voices of women missing in coverage. On land rights generally, messengers are almost exclusively men. They are often male judges, local elected or government officials, and chiefs, or men in farming groups, land developers or private corporations. When gender issues or women’s land rights are covered, messengers sometimes include male judges and chiefs and land policy experts. When women’s voices are included, more often they are women working at a national, international, or continental women’s rights NGO or at an affordable housing/ anti-poverty organization. Widows, women impacted by land issues, and everyday voices are largely missing.

Supporters focus on rights. Activists for women’s land rights focus heavily on rights. When discussing the problems at hand, they often frame them in terms of discrimination against women. When solutions are included in the discussion—which does not often happen—those solutions are most often framed in terms of empowerment of women and legal changes. In addition, supporters place a heavy emphasis on the importance of securing rights and benefits for women exclusively rather than on the broader community and society at large. They also place virtually no emphasis on values-based framing, culture, or changing attitudes.

Opponents voicing concerns outside of coverage. The matter of women having the legal right to own land and property is covered by the media and talked about by activists as largely a settled issue—as change

that needs to be implemented or enforced rather than an ongoing debate. Very little coverage includes voices of opponents who strongly believe that women should not own land because it goes against culture or their faith. There is a debate happening on this issue, however, it is just happening outside of direct coverage—online, in comments, from callers to radio programs, and through other channels.

MESSAGE FRAMES USED IN MEDIA

This research allowed us to see what message frames were currently prominent in the media—frames that the media put forward itself and that supporters often affirmed and amplified. Below are the frames that appeared most frequently in coverage, along with examples that illustrate the frame in use.

KEY:  FRAME  EXAMPLE



Women on the Margins: Women talked about as societal outsiders, excluded, sometimes exiled; emphasis on lack of decision-making/ agency generally in family and society and with respect to land rights; special attention to women living in poverty, slums; focus on women’s economic and social empowerment/inclusion

“Since women participate less in decision making and have less access to assets and resources, they also have less access to land and housing.”
- The Daily Nation



Gender Justice: Characterizes issues around women’s land rights as extension of historical, cultural oppression of women and girls; tends to use ‘us vs. them’/‘women vs. men’ framing; emphasizes empowerment and education of women as solutions; often connected to international, continental gender equality efforts; focuses on demanding rights, denial of rights

“The reason men feel like the boy child is in danger is that, as the dominant group, men have never had to adapt to a system that doesn’t favour them. The system has always favoured them. Boys are picked to go to school, traditionally. Women don’t get land from their fathers because they are going to belong to another man, anyway - heaven forbid that the woman never gets married. The girl child is not prospering at the expense of the boy child! There is space for everyone. Stop the crab-in-a-pot mentality; we’re not clamouring for limited space. Men need to do what women have been doing for years. Adapt.” - The Daily Nation



A Family Matter: Situates issues around women’s land rights as personal, individual, situational, or family disputes rather than connected to larger social context; solutions also largely discussed as individual (mediation, lawsuits, family decisions rather than policy, culture, attitude change)



Women as Victims: Emphasis on ‘threats’ to women, including physical and sexual violence, child marriage, genital mutilation, maternal death; focuses on economic victimization of women (low/no pay, being denied rights to own and control property, lack of representation in workforce and society); characterizes women as needing men, tribal authority, family members, society to protect them from harm

“Some Kenyan communities still practice oppressive customs that disregard widows’ property rights. Consequently, these helpless women are often neglected, mistreated and sometimes even evicted from their matrimonial homes.”
- The Daily Nation



A Modern Nation: Talks about women’s land rights/women’s empowerment as central to a developed economy and society and solving poverty and food insecurity; often invokes new pressures of globalization, population growth, urbanization as reasons for/against women’s land rights

“Kenya will attain little or no meaningful development as long as title deeds remain a preserve of men. Women should be given equal opportunities in acquiring the documents.”
- The Daily Nation



Law is Greater than Culture: Focuses on equality of women under the law; emphasizes the supremacy of law and the Constitution; advocates for legal/procedural/enforcement solutions; can be dismissive of culture and tradition

“Women should demand for an inclusive titling programme that embraces the letter and the spirit of the Constitution. Ultimately, this will be in fulfilment of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010 that expressly provides for elimination of gender discrimination in customs, law, and practices related to land and property in land.” - The Daily Nation



UNDERSTANDING THE ATTITUDES OF ALLIES

In order to build a deeper understanding of how activists, thought leaders, and other allies think and engage in their work, we conducted 15 in-depth interviews with such people. Interviews were conducted in-person in Kisumu and Homa Bay, from March 20 to May 21, 2018. Participants included men and women who are elders and chiefs, judges and lawyers, widows, youth, allied NGOs, and journalists engaged in work related to women’s land rights. This research was important to understand the perspective of those working on these issues and also to help identify potential challenges and opportunities to explore in later research.

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS WITH ALLIES: KEY INSIGHTS

Allies perceive certain landscape dynamics as impacting land rights. Most interviewees noted that the work being done around women’s land rights is greatly impacted by certain landscape dynamics. Below are the dynamics most commonly referenced.

A changing nation. Allies note that Kenya is changing—becoming more modern and developed—and changing in ways that the public sees as both positive and concerning. There is increasing access to education, technology, and information outside of one’s village and the nation, which is bringing innovation and new ideas. There is also rapid urbanization, and with it a growing urban/rural divide that is testing bonds of tribal cohesion and influence. There are also new governing structures that are challenging traditional customs and norms.

Increasing economic pressures. Globalization, development, and urbanization are causing changes to traditional economies. Land and housing are becoming more valuable and expensive, creating more competition and concerns about land scarcity.

Current and past culture of land-grabbing. Interviewees reported that the wounds of colonization—and the lost ancestral lands that resulted from it—remain fresh for people. At the same time, corrupt politicians will make and break land-related promises in order to serve their own goals. In addition, corporations seeking to profit off of Kenyan resources are making land grabs of their own, sometimes with support from the government.

Education and empowerment of women seen as core barrier to exercising rights. For most, the primary barrier to change on the issue of women’s land rights is educating women about their rights and empowering them to act. The assumption, among most, was that the reasons women don’t act on these rights is that they do not know about them or do not know how to act on them.

Activists rely heavily on legal and procedural solutions and structures to advance change. Almost universally, laws and processes were discussed as the primary way to advance change—and the primary change that is most needed in the future. At the same time, many also shared their perception that changes in the law had outpaced changes in attitudes—that more work was needed to change hearts and minds or they feared that any progress made may be undermined by a cultural backlash.

Skepticism of the law and Constitution. Several participants note that there is skepticism about the Constitution and a feeling among some that it was rushed, reinforces old problems, and creates new problems in trying to solve others. Some say people are not informed about the Constitution, so it does not carry great meaning or weight for them on this topic.

More attention needed to address cultural barriers to change. Some participants shared their view that education and empowerment and/or legal change is not enough. They felt activists needed to pay more attention to the cultural barriers that might interfere with women exercising their rights to land. Some also worried that without this change, women may have their rights and still face violent consequences.

Law and progress trump culture. On the whole, when responding to people’s concerns about the perceived conflict between the law and culture, participants note how the Constitution makes these aspects of culture null and void. While accurate, other participants noted that this can be experienced by our audience as dismissive, insulting, and threatening to culture.

Need to embed change within culture. A number of participants suggested that to make more progress, change on women’s land rights needs to be seen as a complement and support to culture rather than something imposed on it or threatening to change it.

Even among allies, support for women’s land rights depends on the details. While participants universally expressed support for women’s land rights, some said activists can be too rigid in their demands for equality, which can result in injustice for other parties. Others noted that the meaning of equality gets more complicated when you get into real-life situations with siblings, divorce, remarriage, multiple wives, and children.

Emphasis on benefits to women vs. benefits to society and community. On the whole, most report that they and others largely talk about the benefits of women’s land rights to women (and sometimes children), which can create a dynamic where men see gains for women as a loss for them.

The generational divide: an opportunity and a challenge. A number of participants noted that generations are changing, with younger men being more open to women’s rights in a range of ways. Some credited access to new media and the internet and movement to urban areas for part of this change. Middle-age men, they said, remain resistant to change.

UNDERSTANDING THE MINDSET OF OUR AUDIENCE

To understand our audience’s mindset and reasoning patterns as they engage on issues related to women owning land and property, we conducted six mindset focus group discussions—two each in Homa Bay, Kisumu, and Oyugis. These discussions were held among separate groups of married women and mothers-in-law, widows, elder men, young men, and young women (see page 82 for more information on focus groups). They provided an interactive setting to hear from our audience and a crucial way to explore the initial development of values-based frames, themes, and messages. Our findings from these groups also allowed us to refine these approaches in subsequent research phases.

As you read the key insights from the audience mindset research and reflect on the findings from the in-depth interviews with allies, it is important to note how deeply disconnected the worldviews of each are from the other. This is very problematic when developing persuasive communications. While activists and allies may feel that certain things are true and important—such as the law and Constitution taking precedent over traditions and cultures—it is not effective to ignore or dismiss the deeply held values and beliefs of the people we are trying to engage and help to create change.

AUDIENCE MINDSET RESEARCH: KEY INSIGHTS

Mixed Awareness of Law/Land Rights. There is mixed awareness about the current state of the law in Kenya. Among those who are aware, many note that cultural customs still prevail over the Constitution. Participants in all groups noted that customs and traditions—including traditional beliefs held by family—dictated much of a woman’s ability to own and keep ownership of land, whether or not she had a legal claim to it. Participants in two groups noted that a traditional belief/taboo still exists in some places around women owning land—that it will bring calamity to the women



What is an Audience Mindset?

Mindset research provides a window into the life experiences, identities, beliefs, emotions, and values of the people we are trying to reach. It reveals the most powerful points of connection—those that begin with what is fundamentally true for our audience rather than the worldview that we hold as activists who already understand and believe in our issues. By better understanding our audience’s mindset, we can draw on the emotional power that helps change hearts and minds. It allows us to develop messages that fit into their already deeply held values rather than trying to change their core values. Simply put, it means that our audience can come to the change themselves rather than activists trying to impose change upon them.

To develop effective persuasion communications that can advance progress on women owning land and property in Kenya, it is critical to first understand our audience’s mindset.

on the land. It was noted multiple times that constitutional protections for women are not known by many and/or they are not being discussed or implemented in all places across Kenya. Some felt it was important to change “customary law” as well as the Constitution in order to affect real change.

Nuances in Support. Most participants—both men and women—are initially inclined to support women being guaranteed the right to own land, in principle, and become more supportive as they hear more about the topic. However, deeper discussion reveals more mixed attitudes. Many people have internal conflict about women owning land. Most feel women should be able to own land they personally purchase with their own money. Many also feel women should share in land ownership with their spouses in some way, though there are differing views about holding joint titles and inheritance. Similarly, there are mixed views about how or whether a father should divide land among male and female children equally and whether women should be able to own land only in their home community, only in their community of marriage, or in both. There are also mixed views about how property ought to be shared in marriages with multiple wives. Potential conflicts between brothers and sisters are a sticking point for many.

Below is a summary of the various reasons that participants noted when expressing support or concern about women’s land ownership.

Reasons to Support Women Owning Land

- Women are playing an increasingly bigger role in providing for and supporting families
- Ensuring women can provide for and educate children in the event of the death of a spouse or in case her husband is irresponsible (a drunkard or dishonest man who might sell land without wife knowing)
- Provides peace of mind for families/wives
- Building a future for one’s children
- Building a good life and family prosperity
- Preparing for the future and providing peace of mind—you don’t know what might happen
- Preventing family conflict in the future between in-laws and wives or between sons and daughters
- Helping daughters to be protected in situations that mothers were not
- Making husband’s/father’s intentions known before death so women are not driven from land
- Can clarify ownership when there are multiple wives

Concerns about Women Owning Land

- May disrupt the peace with brothers or extended family
- May set marriage off on bad tone—husband and family might assume wife does not trust him or is only in the marriage to gain property
- May allow wife more power to leave the marriage, less likely to be committed to her husband
- Plots of land are already small—you cannot keep dividing them or there will not be enough to provide for your family
- If women can inherit land in ancestral and marital homes, they will be entitled to more land, while men will be entitled to less
- If women inherit land from their father and then sell it, then ancestral lands can be lost forever
- Undermines men’s roles as providers and heads of households

There are Gaps in Lived Experiences. Women’s lived experiences on this topic differ from some men’s perceptions. In all groups, participants had personal knowledge of, or personal experiences with, women owning land in some form. Yet, the harms associated with a lack of land ownership were more obvious and intuitively understood and believed among women. Men on the whole were more inclined to feel that the constitutional provisions were not as necessary for fair provision and distribution of land between fathers and daughters or husbands and wives. However, men who had personal experiences of their own mothers losing or being driven away from land also understood the need for this kind of protection.

Values Drive Discussions, Not Rights. Most talk about supporting women’s land ownership not in terms of women’s rights or equality but as important for the well-being of women, families, and children. Women and men cited the well-being of the family and providing for children as primary motivations for supporting women’s land ownership. Women’s ability to be productive and contribute to the family is seen as important for family stability and for educating and training children to care for themselves and their own families. Women, in particular, noted that this was needed to prevent against potential harm in the event of a bad marriage or the death of a spouse, which makes a woman and her children vulnerable to exploitation or being driven from their home and land. Notably, most did not talk about women’s ownership as “owning” land, but as “sharing land.” The idea that land would be shared within communities, families, and in marriages between men and women was important for many.

“ In fact, if your husband is dead, you don’t have a say in that land. Even if you have four kids, they’ll still go ahead and grab that land from you. They look for every way possible to take it from you. That’s why we want to inherit from where we are married and where we come from...” - Widows (Kisumu)

“ ...my reason is very simple. These are people giving birth to children, and you find that some men neglect even the children, so these women, they need a piece of land where they can grow crops. At least from the crops they can get food for the family.”
- Young Men (Oyugis)



Culture and Religion Both Important. Cultural norms are important in informing attitudes and beliefs. In addition, religious values and beliefs are also important for many. Some view religion and churches as potentially playing an important role in supporting women. Both men and women raised religion and/or God as important in their lives, and they drew on religious values and beliefs to support their views that women should be treated more fairly with regard to land rights. Religious messaging was important for many to see. A number of participants raised points about the Bible and Qu’ran from the narratives we presented to them and how these points supported their own position in favor of women’s land rights. Religion was also noted by a few participants as being helpful in softening harsh customs in Kenya and for teaching positive messages about equality for women. For many, religious voices were seen as drawing on deep and enduring wisdom to help guide individuals and communities on difficult issues.

“ I just feel, since we are equal before God, we should be entitled to own our land. Then what men can do, even us women can do better.” - Young Women (Oyugis)

Peace is Top of Mind. The values of peace, harmony, and security are powerful and recurring themes that motivate audiences to support allowing women to own land. At the same time, their desire for these values make women and men hesitant to broach the subject. The importance and value of peace was raised across all focus groups—from participants wanting a “peaceful life” to “keeping the peace” among family to “getting old in peace.” They fear that raising the topic proactively could cause tension or disrupt family harmony. Having security was noted as key to achieving peace, with land ownership seen as granting permanent security. However, intermediate steps were also critical in building a sense of security in this “digital age,” such as getting a marriage license, obtaining a title deed with your name on it, and having other proper paperwork like a will. A belief that “anything can happen” and taking steps to protect yourself and your family “just in case” was pervasive—doing so would help to avoid conflict and keep the peace within families and communities. Women with daughters often spoke specifically of wanting to provide them with protections and security they may not have had.

“ ...without peace, you don’t have the opportunity to express your love to your children. Peace is important.”
- Male Elders (Kisumu)


Brother/Sister Dynamics a Significant Concern. Women and men both express concerns about fairness to men/brothers and potential conflicts women’s land ownership might raise in families. The idea that women may be able to gain land both from their fathers and from their husbands raised concerns for many when considering the fact that men would only be able to gain land from their fathers, which they would then be required to split with their wives and daughters. For

“ But as for me, I think they should be given land, but only from one side. [...] The side in which they are going to be married, the husband’s side.”
- Young Men (Oyugis)

some, the concern was about fairness and equity. For others, the concern was that envy or competition between daughters and sons would create unwanted family conflict. Some also raised questions about whether a woman should inherit land in her place of birth if she is going to leave and be unable to work it. Others also noted that if she sells the land, families lose access to important ancestral lands.


Education is Lacking and Important for Progress.

For many, education and knowledge about the law is seen as important for the security of women and families now and in the future. There was a general consensus among participants that most women don't know their rights and that this lack of knowledge makes women susceptible to being pushed off their land. Participants across groups noted that education is critically important for women to make advances in society—often cited as the key to empowerment—and that it would provide a form of self-protection when women face land disputes. In one group, a participant noted that women often focus on their family and community and do not know of, or follow, changes in the laws. In some cases, when they do bring up legal changes to their husband, women can face difficulties or even violence.

 I think the only way that problem can be solved is through education. Because that is true, you go to an aged man and you have to convince him and say, 'there is a Constitution that says a girl has a chance to own land where she was born' and he will not accept. He will say that is nonsense, there are taboos."

- Young Women (Oyugis)

"Progress" Seen as Positive, but Slow. Certain aspects of social change and "progress" are seen as positive, yet many note changes regarding women and land are small and slow thus far. In various groups, societal/cultural advances that allow women access to higher education were seen as a sign of positive change that gave women a powerful voice. Participants discussed living in "modern times" and noted how many customs and traditions were out of date—that more people today have an "open mind" and are adapting to change. When it came to women's land rights, most participants across all focus groups perceived that changes are happening but categorized them as small. A couple of participants noted no change at all—that land rights may be established, but they were not being implemented. When discussing change, some noted differences and inconsistencies in the culture from where they grew up to where they live now.

 For example, at home, my mother died and my father was given his portion of land. He said that this land will help my children, when I will not be there. We planted sugar cane on that land and it was used to educate us. In my place no one takes land back like here."


- Widows (Homa Bay)

Gap Between Beliefs and Action. There is also a gap between many participants' expressed beliefs about the need for marriage certificates, title deeds, women's land ownership, etc., and the reality of taking action in their own lives and communities. Most note that they themselves do not have these documents in place (or, for women, are unaware of what the current status

of their land ownership is), and many note that they have not had conversations with spouses, parents, or children about the topic. Many say women do not own land or exercise rights to land because they do not have a voice, do not have power, do not have "self-respect," are unaware of their rights, or do not have exposure to other ways of doing things. Cultural norms and taboos and community and family harmony are noted as important reasons that women do not or may not exercise their rights to land, even if they are aware of them. Some note that if a woman tries to exercise her rights it can create family conflict, she may be abused or abandoned, or a man may simply take the land from her or coerce her into putting it in his name.


Marriage Certificates Seen as Protection and Conflict Prevention.

Marriage certificates are seen by many as a potential way to prevent land disputes and protect women's land rights. Many participants suggest that marriage certificates could potentially help prevent disputes in the event of divorce or death—providing "evidence" to protect women's land rights and prevent relatives or in-laws from driving her from her land. However, most note that they do not have certificates for their own marriages and note that there are some cultural and legal disincentives for getting them. Some note that certificates may not be available for anyone other than the first wife and then may disadvantage other wives, but they also say it is important protection if your husband does take a second wife. Some worry that a marriage certificate may make it more difficult for a woman to leave a bad marriage. Some worry that asking for a marriage certificate will make a new wife seem difficult or greedy. Others, however, say that a marriage certificate and a dowry together provide important protections.

 If you register your marriage, there will be evidence that you got married, so when the husband passes away, the woman will have the right to the land based on the registration."

- Young Men (Oyugis)

Mixed Views on Dowries. There are mixed views of the role of dowries in the context of women's land ownership. Some say a dowry, together with a marriage certificate, can act as a shield to protect women—that if a dowry is not paid, it makes it easier for her rights to be disrespected. Some also say that a dowry is important because it shows respect and appreciation to the family. Yet, others say dowries have lost their importance or value or simply aren't possible in some financial circumstances. Others still say that dowries treat women as property to be exchanged and, once a dowry is paid, a man has little incentive to respect or care for his wife.

 They have to do that for their people to recognize you as one of them; if dowry is not paid, the woman is not part of the family."

- Married Woman (Homa Bay)

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE.

Our research showed that focusing on certain groups—young people and elders in particular—provided the best opportunity to build a base of early adopters. As we continue to assist widows, it is also helpful to educate and equip them to help others.

YOUNG PEOPLE In general, we found that young people are far more open to the idea of change than others. They are motivated by family and maintaining peace and see that they can help to prevent harm by being supportive of women’s land ownership. Both younger men and younger women responded very positively to the materials we tested in focus groups.

YOUNG WOMEN Young women, especially those who are married or who are considering getting married, are well positioned to be early adopters. They will likely be the ones to raise the topic and discuss it with their future husbands.

YOUNG MEN Young men and young husbands are also important potential early adopters. They care enough about their children—or the idea of their future children—to want to make sure their family doesn’t get disinherited if something happens to them. Ultimately, they are also going to have to agree to the arrangements they discuss with their wives.

In addition, young men whose mothers were widows and have experienced being driven off the land or out of their homes are in a unique position to be early adopters and to be vocal supporters of women’s landownership.

ELDERS Elders are in a unique position to be early adopters. They see themselves as protectors of culture and have first-hand experience with the harm that comes from conflicts over land and property. For many, they are also the first step in the legal system.

As important community leaders who seek to maintain peace and family cohesion in their communities, they are motivated by the idea of preventing conflict among families before it happens. Equipping them with what they need to promote culture change and prevent conflict can help to accelerate the change we seek.

WIDOWS Widows remain a focus because they are in immediate need. In addition, providing widows with effective communications about land ownership and their rights can equip them with the tools they need to carry that message to other widows.



 Putting it All Together

 **RECOMMENDATION: EQUIP EARLY ADOPTERS WHILE ASSISTING WIDOWS**

WHY IT MATTERS.

There are two different and important needs in our work. First is the immediate need of assisting widows who are at risk, including women who are being forced out of their matrimonial homes or chased off their own land. These women are often facing tragic situations with little resources and little knowledge of their rights. They need help, today, in order to manage their crisis and secure their future.

Second is the larger need for education and interventions to happen much earlier—before legal problems related to land ownership arise. This means equipping people with information, helping them to have conversations, and showing them how to get the necessary documentation in place before a tragedy occurs. By working to address both of these needs simultaneously, we can provide relief to those facing conflict today and help to promote peace by preventing conflict in the future.

As we address the need for education and earlier interventions, it is important to recognize that the idea of women legally owning land and property remains a very new issue for most people in Kenya. This is highlighted by the fact that only six percent of land titles in Kenya are held by women. If we desire to build significant understanding, acceptance, and support of women’s landownership, it will require much more than providing people with facts about the Constitution and compelling communities to recognize and follow the law—it will require culture change.

As with any culture change, a transformation in support is not going to be achieved overnight. Change takes time and work. The good news is that our research has shown there are many potential early adopters in Kenya who are very motivated by the idea that you could, and should, do something differently—they believe change is possible.

 **RECOMMENDATION:
EMPHASIZE
SHARED VALUES**

WHY IT MATTERS.

As human beings, we are motivated to act and make decisions based on the values that we hold, rooted in what we believe is right or wrong and how we should or should not act. Often times, our inclination as activists is to start or lead our communications with facts about the law or policy or logic—or to even cut right to the actions we want people to take. This approach misses steps that are critical to engage our audience. It puts people in a ‘head space’ that can make them emotionally unavailable, removing one of the most potent tools we have as change makers.

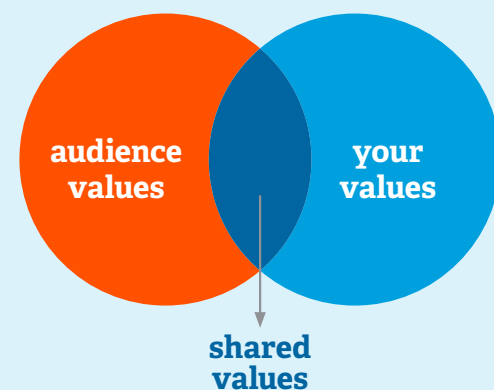
When we fail to lead with and to emphasize the values that we share with our audience, they can feel as if our goals or values are in conflict with certain core values they hold. This leads them to experience our messaging and our goals as inconsistent or in conflict with who they are and what they believe. For example, talking first about justice and rights, rather than the importance of family and community harmony, conveys a willingness or desire to exercise your rights at the expense of peace and harmony in your families or other relationships. For our audience, it doesn’t show respect or honor those relationships.

When we emphasize our shared values in communications, we can help our audience to situate women’s landownership in the context of the values and intentions we share. That way they can experience this issue and our goals as in line with, rather than in conflict with, their own values.

It is also important to recognize the real-world burden and implications for those we are asking to make a change or to support change. Whether it is a young woman being asked to start a conversation with her future husband or a wife and mother of three being asked to talk to their husband about making



**Key Concept: FINDING
THE VENN DIAGRAM OF
SHARED VALUES**



It’s not uncommon for advocates to strongly disagree with some of the deeply held values and beliefs of our target audience. This can lead advocates to dismiss, argue with, or even ridicule perspectives that are different from their own.

To effectively engage our audience, we have to understand their beliefs and integrate that understanding into our communications, even when we disagree. Otherwise, those beliefs remain roadblocks to change. It does not mean to abandon our values, but to reinforce those values that we do share with our audience. By exploring the Venn diagram of values—the places where the values of the audience overlap with those of advocates—we can leverage a set of shared values to support positive change.

a will, the cost of these actions may be very high for our audience. In addition to the financial costs, some may fear conflict or even violence if they discuss such things. If we want our audience to even consider risking these costs and possibly consequences, we cannot expect them to do it for our reasons. It is going to have to be for their motivations and their reasoning—because of the things they deeply value.

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE.

We need to connect with our audience first before sharing our messages. This can be done by lifting up values that both our messengers and the audience hold. Depending on the messenger and the context of the story being shared, these values could include:

- Family
- Family harmony
- Security and peace of mind
- Security in marriage; security in family
- Contributing to the family
- Respecting women/women respecting themselves
- Believing women are good stewards of the land; are hard working
- Women are custodians for the security of the children; hold land for the benefit of the children
- Working hard and building a better life for children
- Setting an example for and/or educating children
- Caring for and protecting children; they are valued
- Resilience is a value; bad things happen, but you persist to be able to protect and care for your family
- Responsibility for/providing for wives and children in the present and in the future (even after death)
- It’s about how you treat your family members; they will feel welcome and stay
- Being in meaningful relationships with people in your life, having common values, mutual respect
- Preventing the next generation from experiencing hardships that you experienced or saw other people experience
- Hard work
- Community harmony
- Respecting the law
- Coming together to address problems as a community, for betterment of all
- Protecting others from harm, especially the most vulnerable
- Role of land in life, custom, family
- Concept of landownership being very community/family based
- Valuing good and effective use of the land that is owned
- Dignity
- Living by God’s Word and wisdom
- All God’s children—treating everyone with dignity and respect
- Men living up to God-given duties to care for and protect family and children

On the following page, we expand on a number of these values. We also share examples of how these values might be expressed and provide examples of these values being used effectively in messaging.

Shared Value	Ways of Expressing These Values	Examples of These Values Used Effectively in Messaging
Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protecting the family Respecting family Preventing strife in order to achieve unity, happiness, and prosperity 	<p><i>A bit of argument came—supposing I die, and she sells and goes. Then I said, ‘those are the fears which you should not have.’</i></p> <p><i>Because why should she go? Yeah, she can only go if by the way we manage our family does not make somebody feel at home. Yeah, we need to manage such that everybody feels this is where I belong.</i></p>
Family harmony and community harmony	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Having peace and keeping peace Avoiding future family and community conflict 	<p><i>We all want peace and harmony within our families and our communities and to feel we have security for our future.</i></p>
Responsibility for/providing for wives and children in the present and in the future (even after death)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thinking ahead Being responsible Taking steps to secure your family’s future 	<p><i>...it is very important to be very careful on how you can make a brilliant future for your family by allowing your wife to continue owning the land.</i></p>
All God’s children—treating everyone with dignity and respect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Showing men and women as equal in God’s eyes 	<p><i>To me the faith has played a good role. To me I’ve used the pulpit machinery to tell them that women and men both are very special in land ownership, and when your wife is left behind when you’ve died, she will continue living and raising up your children behind you.</i></p>
Resilience is a value; bad things happen, but you persist to be able to protect and care for your family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facing challenges and working through them Not giving up Working within culture to secure legal land rights and security for family 	<p><i>I thank the Luo council of elders very much through their wisdom, because they talked to them that they were misinterpreting the culture—you are bringing curses to your families—and it was like they were now awake. They felt the words that were coming out of the elders and changed their mind. They managed to secure this land for me and my children, there was mediation, where the in-laws accepted to release my land.</i></p>

RECOMMENDATION: COMMUNICATE WITH RESPECT FOR CULTURE AND RELIGION

WHY IT MATTERS.

Embedding women’s land ownership in the context of culture (rather than separate from culture) is very important. Since elders are seen as the primary arbiters of cultural and familial disagreements regarding land, it is powerful and effective for our audience to see elders talking about how women’s land ownership is consistent with culture.

Our research also found that many elders accept current practices and cultural norms around women’s land use without question. At the same time, when they hear about another way it might be handled—that it is possible to do something differently—many are open and motivated to consider a new possibility.

It is critical to understand that if elders feel that our messaging diminishes, sidelines, or attacks culture or religion, it will be perceived as a direct attack on them. This will cause them, as well as many other early adopters that we need to advance change, to shut down and no longer be open to our efforts.

While culture and religion are not the same, they can serve a similar purpose in validating a certain kind of change as morally appropriate and not conflicting with a person’s sense of identity. Our research found that religious leaders who speak from a faith perspective resonated strongly with our audience.

The idea that you could have the law and culture work hand in hand was both credible and really appealing to research participants. In focus group testing, we found that while participants felt culture and the law should work hand in hand, some were not aware of the ways in which culture and the law were currently conflicting. After being presented with materials and messages, they both better understood the conflicts and still felt culture and the law should work hand in hand.



Additionally, there are conflicting and complex feelings about the Constitution that can interfere with our ability to engage and persuade our audience. Our research found that it is far more effective to frame the discussion in terms of the connections between the law and culture rather than supporting the Constitution and rights.

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE.

It is important to show people being respectful of culture and operating within cultural norms. Having messengers communicate how they are respecting and operating within culture, for example going to the elders before going to court, shows audiences they are not trying to be disruptive.

For many in our audience, including faith-specific messages is important to help them understand that land ownership by women is in alignment with the teachings of their faith. For Christians, elevating Christian values in addition to cultural values around caring for family and children—not mistreating or abusing them—was also impactful and persuasive.

Below are a series of messages tested in our research that, together, communicate about women’s land rights with respect to culture and emphasize shared values like community and protecting others:

<p>Many communities like ours are struggling to come to terms with the changes made to land and property rights, in particular when it comes to the ability of women to own and inherit land.</p>	<p>Traditionally, our culture has maintained that if a woman faces the death of her husband, this widow has a right to her matrimonial home. In the past this may not have meant that she owned the land—more that she had a right to work and live on the land—but at the center of this tradition was ensuring that a wife whose husband died was protected from a situation out of her control.</p>	<p>The changes in land and property rights are an effort to make this tradition formal and provide legal protections to wives and widows—to guard against those people who prey on the vulnerable to exploit them.</p>
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Below are two examples tested in our research that include faith-based messaging, the first from a pastor and the second from an imam.

<p>[Pastor as messenger] In the biblical context, we see the right of a woman to access and own land with the passage that tells of a woman in the church whose work was to find and to buy land for purposes of developing her family.</p>	<p>[Imam as messenger] Women having the right to own property is consistent with Muslim teachings. The Qu’ran makes it clear that women have the right to keep the wages they earn and to inherit property. Taking their earnings, including the land they helped pay for, or withholding their inheritance, is oppression.</p>
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 **RECOMMENDATION: PAINT A PICTURE OF THE PROBLEM AND THE SOLUTION, EMPHASIZING HAPPY MORE THAN HARMS**

WHY IT MATTERS.

Many among our audience feel that things happen the way they do, and have been that way for so long, because it is part of culture. Addressing any issues or believing they can be solved may seem impossible to them. Therefore, it is powerful for our audience to see how we can do something differently, and that change is possible.

When we paint a picture of the problem—the harms that real people face and how it impacts them—we activate a sense of emotional and moral urgency within our audience to protect other people and to care about what happens to them. As we do so, it is important to define the problem for our audience in a way that makes clear that something is wrong and that something should—and could—be done about it.

In addition to painting a picture of the problem or harms for our audience, it is important to also paint a picture of the solution—one that is aligned with culture rather than in conflict with it. As we explore further in the following two recommendations, our audience has many gaps in knowledge and lived experience when it comes to women’s land rights, so connecting the dots for them and showing how the solution is related to and solves the problem is key.

As we paint these pictures of the problem and the solution for our audience, it is critical that we focus much more on the happy outcomes that are possible than on emphasizing the harms and pain caused by the problem. This is especially true when it comes to visuals, like photos and illustrations. In testing materials that were developed for the Securing Our Family’s Future campaign, our research found that while highlighting the harms is important and helpful for our audience, they are drawn heavily to positive and aspirational aspects of messaging and visuals, such as photographs of women with big smiles and content that talks about keeping peace and securing their family’s future.

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE.

Ultimately, painting a picture of both the problem and solution is necessary and effective. At the same time, focusing more on happy over harms can provide more opportunities to reach, engage, and build support among our audience.

Below is a message tested during our research that was effective in painting a picture of the problem for our audience. As you can see, this message provides details on a few different situations and shows how they can often lead to a similar outcome—turmoil and fighting amongst families:

Sadly, not every family is loving or fair. Some husbands fail to honor the bonds of marriage or don’t meet their God-given responsibility to provide for their families. Some families care more about taking property than honoring their son or brother upon his death and protecting his family’s future. In many cases, husbands have died suddenly without a will. Not having a clear agreement on inheritance creates turmoil and fighting amongst families.

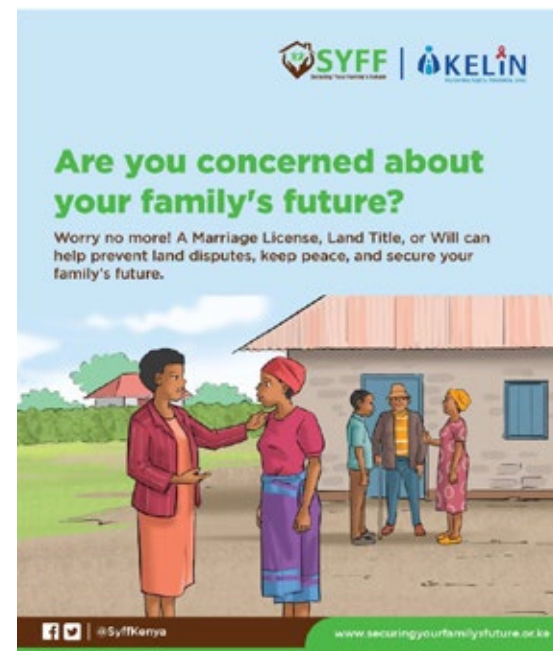
Below is a message tested during our research that was effective in painting a picture of the solution for our audience. This message focuses on how fathers and husbands are part of the solution, along with elders, to help preserve the peace within families:

More and more fathers and husbands in our community have come to feel it is their moral responsibility to provide some land for their wives, sons, and their daughters—just in case. They are starting to formally recognize their marriages with a marriage certificate. This is also why it is so important that our constitutional protections work together with culture—giving our elders the power to mediate land disputes—to help preserve family and community peace, harmony, and well-being.

When it comes to more visual examples, below are two posters developed for the Securing Your Family’s Future campaign that were tested during our research. We showed research participants 12 posters in total, breaking them down into three groups containing four posters each. Then, we asked them to select the poster from each group that they found most compelling.

The first poster was selected most often as the most compelling by participants. Visually, this poster paints a picture of a calm situation, with people—likely family members—talking peacefully in front of a house, and two other women in a conversation. The messaging on the poster highlights the concern that land disputes could cause problems for your family’s future. At the same time, it focuses more on the solution: that having certain documents can help to prevent disputes, keep peace, and secure your family’s future.

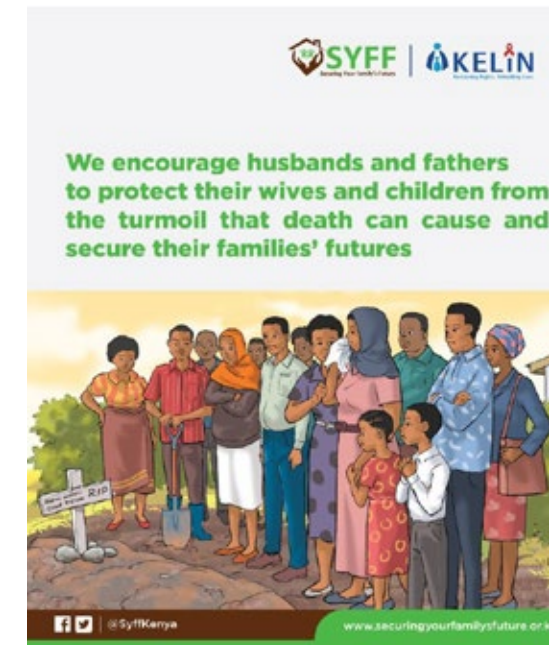
Participants note that this poster displays the “right documents” needed to “keep peace” and that it helps to reduce conflicts and prevent land disputes and “unforeseen problems in the future.” They also note that it gives a sense of “relief” because, by knowing the documents needed, people can begin planning early for how to get them.



“Family feuds are escalated when it comes to sharing and inheriting of properties, but when this is settled amicably through a well written will, then it will be a past tense.”
- Male, 26, Parent

“The poster gives relief to families who are facing land disputes and assures people of a secure future.”
- Female, 29, Parent

The second poster, shown at right, was not selected by any of the participants as most compelling. Visually, this poster paints a picture that focuses more on harms than on happy. It shows a family, including children, together at a grave. Everyone is sad and some people are crying. The messaging on the poster also focuses more on the problem—that death can cause turmoil—while encouraging people to take action to secure their family’s future.



“It shows death of a loved one which people would avoid or even not think of unless for the old, aged people it might be a less proper way to champion for will writing as it acts as a threat.”
- Male, 20, Not a Parent

 **RECOMMENDATION: SHOW HOW THE SOLUTION ADDRESSES THE PROBLEM**

WHY IT MATTERS.

Often, activists will overemphasize or focus solely on the problems related to women’s land ownership. Solutions are often minimized in importance or excluded. For many among our audience, this can convey the idea that the problems are so big they are insurmountable or that their support would not change anything in a meaningful way. This dulls their desire to act.

Our research found it is important to define the problem we are working to address and to show how the solution we envision is connected to—and solves—that problem. Doing both helps our audience to better understand and become emotionally engaged in the situation at hand. They can also begin to see where they could help and why their support matters.

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE.

As we show how our proposed solution addresses the problem at hand, we must continue to weave our shared values throughout these messages and to show the connection to culture (and religion when appropriate). On the following page are examples of messages tested in our research that, together, focus on defining the problem and show how the solution is connected to solving it:



Sadly, not every family is loving or fair. Some husbands fail to honor the bonds of marriage or don't meet their God-given responsibility to provide for their families. Some families care more about taking property than honoring their son or brother upon his death and protecting his family's future. In many cases, husbands have died suddenly without a will. Not having a clear agreement on inheritance creates turmoil and fighting amongst families.

If we disinherit the wife or the widow, we also disinherit the family. Over time, this puts the security of our entire community at risk.

Many in our culture may hold different beliefs and views on this issue, but we can continue to move forward, together, to protect families and to ensure complicated disputes around property don't come to be in the first place.

More and more fathers and husbands in our community have come to feel it is their moral responsibility to provide some land for their wives, sons, and their daughters—just in case. They are starting to formally recognize their marriages with a marriage certificate. This is also why it is so important that our constitutional protections work together with culture—giving our elders the power to mediate land disputes—to help preserve family and community peace, harmony, and well-being.

RECOMMENDATION: PROVIDE INFORMATION THROUGH CONCRETE EXAMPLES THAT CONNECT THE DOTS

WHY IT MATTERS.

It is important for our messaging to first connect with our audience on an emotional level, as we have outlined in previous recommendations. We also know that most among our audience know very little about women's land and property rights and will therefore have many gaps in their knowledge. If we do not address these gaps, the support our audience expresses may quickly diminish as they face challenges in their own lives.

While many research participants expressed positive beliefs about the need for marriage certificates, title deeds, wills, and other documents, those beliefs did not match the reality of their own lives: most noted that they themselves do not have these documents in place. For us to see concrete behavior change occur among our audience, it will be critical to provide them with a foundation of important and basic information about the documents they will need, why they are important, and how to get them.

As we engage with our audience and begin to provide them with this information, it will be very important that we help them to make meaning of that information—to 'connect the dots' and reinforce the importance, and the benefits, of securing their family's future. We can do this by providing practical and concrete examples that are relevant to their lives—from how to get a marriage license, to how to write a will, to how to begin a conversation around these topics with loved ones.

Our research found that the opportunity to discuss, learn more, and reflect leads many research participants to feel that the topic warrants more discussion—both in their homes and in their communities. After participants reviewed our test materials, a number of women shared how they were not clear on the status of their own land ownership or inheritance and planned to go home and investigate their situation—and potentially make their position of ownership more secure.

One important note: When developing messaging, we should take into account how class differences will impact how our audience will situate this topic. For example, those who are wealthy may be more likely to imagine giving land to their daughters, while those who have less resources may not be as open to the idea. Also, providing concrete information in various forms—verbally, written, and through illustrations—will help to communicate with people at various levels of literacy.

Key Concept: EMOTIONS COME FIRST, NOT INFORMATION

The work of many social change makers has often centered around the idea that if you want to create positive behavior change, you should first provide your audience with information. The belief has been that getting the 'right' information in front of your audience would lead them to consider an issue differently, which would generate changes in their attitudes. Ultimately, this attitude change would then lead to changes in behavior.



Over time, we have learned that this model is not how human beings actually change. While many of us pride ourselves on being rational thinkers, human beings are actually driven primarily by emotion. Our emotional reactions happen first, instinctively, and then our brains quickly provide us with a rationale, with reasoning, for feeling how we feel.

To generate change in our audience's attitudes, we first have to generate a new, different emotional reaction than they usually have in response to our topic. Then, we need to provide them with new information that supports new reasoning. This 'emotion first, reasoning second' dynamic enables them to develop and hold onto a new belief or attitude that is more supportive of our issue. Over time, having these new attitudes leads them to be able to behave differently on the topic.

Emotions are therefore vital entry points in creating change. When we connect with our audience using messaging that matches the feelings and lived experiences that they have, it can open pathways that enable emotional change within them. This emotional change then enables attitude change, which then enables bigger change to occur.

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE.

We must provide our audience with information about the various legal documents (marriage certificate, will, land title, birth certificate, etc.) that will secure and protect their land ownership rights. However, it is just as important to communicate why these documents are important, why they are legally necessary, what having them accomplishes, the steps required to attain them, and to show the positive impact of having them completed. We cannot assume that our audience knows all—or any—of this information. In addition, reminders, such as storing these documents in a safe place, are very helpful.

In our research, one effective way we helped to connect the dots for our audience was by providing information through a series of illustrations. A short message was developed to go along with each illustration, which was provided in writing and read aloud by the focus group moderator.




Since the Constitution was enacted in 2010, many communities like ours have struggled to come to terms with the changes made to land and property rights, in particular when it comes to the ability of women to own and inherit land.



Traditionally, our culture has maintained that if a woman faces the death of her husband, this widow has a right to her matrimonial home. At the center of this tradition was ensuring that a wife and children were protected from a situation out of her control.



Our Constitutional statements on land and property rights are an effort to make this tradition formal and provide legal protections to wives and widows—to guard against those people who prey on the vulnerable or exploit them.

 There is still hope that together, we can continue to move forward together—which means based on these issues, just like we have discussed here. Together, to protect families and ensure complicated disputes around property doesn't arise."
- Young Man (Kisumu)

 I can see that those people are sitting together, they are in harmony, you can just see... So, if the culture sits together with the law to solve such issues, there won't be any insecurity in the community."
- Young Woman (Homa Bay)



That is why fathers and husbands in our community increasingly feel it is their moral responsibility to provide some land for their wives, sons, and their daughters, just in case. They are starting to formally recognize their marriages with a marriage certificate. This is also why it is so important that our Constitutional protections work together with culture—giving our elders the power to mediate land disputes—to help preserve family and community peace, harmony, and well-being.



If we disinherit the wife or the widow, we also disinherit the family. Over time, this puts the security of our entire community at risk. Many in our culture may hold different beliefs and views on this issue, but we can continue to move forward together to protect families and ensure complicated disputes around property don't arise in the first place.



Sadly, not every family is loving or fair. Some husbands fail to honor the bonds of marriage or don't meet their God-given responsibility to provide for their families. Some families care more about taking property than honoring their son or brother upon his death and protecting his family's future. In many cases, husbands have died suddenly without a will. Not having a clear agreement on inheritance creates turmoil and fighting amongst families.

As we conducted each focus group, we learned from participants what resonated about the messages and what did not or what was unclear. This provided us with the ability to refine the messages and make them stronger after each focus group. The final illustrations and messages that were tested in our persuasion focus groups, featured on the previous page, were very effective with participants. Here is why these illustrations and messages worked for our audience:

- The stories matched participants' understanding of what happens in their communities.
- The ideal of women having the right to own and inherit land was important for many.
- Protecting women from discrimination and protecting women and children were motivational.
- Removes some of the fear of the impact of being widowed; gives some power to widows.
- Marriage certificates are important for the women—recognition you belong to the family.
- Men working together; culture and Constitution working together; harmony.
- Agreement that widows should not be chased from matrimonial homes.
- Some agreement that fathers feel moral responsibility now to also give land to their daughters.
- Young women are "saddened" that this is still a struggle for them; that a woman could be sent away after her husband's death with no protection.

Below is another example from our research of providing information through concrete examples that connects the dots. This comes from a messenger video of a male pastor, James Aguko, that we tested in focus groups. Note how the messenger talks about his faith and weaves in shared values, such as securing his family's future and keeping peace.

I can say that we have around four acres of land now. We're just in the process of registering, and my wife and me will both have our names on the land titles in one parcel number of land and the other parcel of land so that even if I die before her, then she will be able to manage those lands.

To me the faith has played a good role. To me I've used the pulpit machinery to tell them that women and men both are very special in land ownership, and when your wife is left behind when you've died, she will continue living and raising up your children behind you. So, it is very important to be very careful on how you can make a brilliant future for your family by allowing your wife to continue owning the land.



Marriage certificate is very paramount, because it gives a clear indication that these two married under a legal procedure. Therefore, when it reaches time of claiming any ownership or any property, there will be no chaos at all because the marriage certificate is there. Maybe another thing is [...] write up a will to explain fully how your intention was when you were still living.



RECOMMENDATION: MODEL DESIRED BEHAVIOR

WHY IT MATTERS.

It is important to remember that we are trying to change behavior at a personal level and in the context of family. The risks and consequences of disrupting those relationships and causing problems are very real for our audience, so they are resistant to any change that may cause problems. Therefore, we must provide our audience with models and guidance on how to start the conversation in the family in a way that is not dangerous or disruptive.

For our audience to be persuaded to change their thinking and behavior, our communications need to set examples for them of what it would look like if they were to believe and behave in the ways that we hope for. We need to provide our audience with examples and a model of how conversations about women's land rights can happen in positive ways—ways that are not disruptive or damaging and that lead to positive outcomes. This includes showing how they would behave, what they might say, how it might feel, and what the end result might be—in ways that feel credible, possible, and consistent with their values and identity.

For example, many mothers-in-law truly believe that driving widows off their land is the right thing to do. If we want to change this, we have to model behavior that we want mothers-in-law to adopt—to show them there is a different path they could take and how it could positively benefit them and their family. In focus groups, we found that modeling the behavior we would like to see—such as supporting a widowed daughter-in-law, instead of driving her away—was eye opening for participants who had not considered that idea or recognized the benefits of this different approach.

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE.

The following is an excerpt from a messenger video we tested in our persuasion focus groups. Rhoda Nafula Wekesa, a businesswoman from Kisumu Country, became a widow in 2002. She had two children and was pregnant at the time of her husband's death. As you can see from this excerpt, Rhoda models a number of things for our audience—she shows a respect for culture by first approaching her council of elders for support, she works with the council and her in-laws through mediation to peacefully resolve the situation, she discusses the importance of having official documents like her marriage license, she shares her story with other women to help educate and support them, and her behavior leads to a positive outcome for her and her family. Also, shared values, such as desiring peace, family security, and caring for others, are weaved throughout her story.

When my husband died, I was also hanging. I could have nowhere to go because after the death of my husband, the land was grabbed by my in-laws.

I thank the Luo council of elders very much through their wisdom because they talked to them—that they were misinterpreting the culture [in saying] “you are bringing curses to your families”—and it was like they were now awake. They felt the words that were coming out of the elders and changed their mind. They managed to secure this land for me and my children. There was mediation where the in-laws accepted to release my land.

The marriage certificate is very important. As for my case, if I could not have the marriage certificate, they could chase me easily. But for instance, when I went to the chief, and I produced the marriage certificate, it was like—now they were done.

Using my story, it encourages someone. It is like a testimony. As I talked to some women—some women are just seated not knowing even the name that is on the land—I advise them on what to do. I think what should happen when your husband is still living, people should do the joint titling. It can help so that if the husband goes first, then your in-laws cannot turn against you.



In another messenger video tested in persuasion focus groups, Margaret Ouma shared that, after the death of her sons, she had two widowed daughters-in-law living on her land.

I was left with two daughters-in-law--one has since moved out, and I am left with one whose house is that one over there.



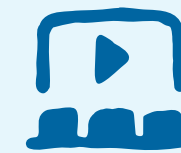
As she shared details of her story, she modeled a different way to approach the situation for our audience—to treat these women as if she were their parent by welcoming them and inviting them to stay instead of driving them off her land.

We are just helping because we have offered ourselves like parents. We should be parents—just be the parent who is ready to carry any burden that comes your way.

Also, she models going to speak with other mothers-in-law to share her story and to get them to consider how they would feel *“if it was their own blood that was being sent away.”*

I have taken it upon myself to go and talk to other mothers-in-law peacefully on how they can live with their daughters-in-law, but some don’t want to listen to me. [...] Therefore, I tell them how their daughters can face the same thing when they are married somewhere else. And I ask them whether they would be happy if it was their own blood that was being sent away?

Margaret’s story was impactful for participants. For example, some participants from our focus group of young women in Homa Bay expressed how the story showed women can successfully take care of land and are able to mediate (“bring peace”) among the children. They were glad that she was able to live in “peace” and “happiness.”



THE POWER OF STORYTELLING

Stories are uniquely human. No other species on the planet is wired for stories in the way that we are. Research has shown us that stories are also uniquely powerful at shaping attitudes and influencing behaviors on tough social issues. In fact, developing the right storytelling strategy is one of the most important strategic tools in a heartwired strategy.

The right story facilitates what social scientists refer to as ‘narrative transport,’ when people are so caught up in a narrative that they feel they are a part of it or strongly relate to the story’s characters or experiences. Being transported into a story means you are deeply immersed in the narrative. It also means you are most likely to empathize with a character in a story—and see the world through their eyes.

In his 2012 book, *The Storytelling Animal: How Stories Make Us Human*, Jonathan Gottschall describes this phenomenon:

When we read nonfiction, we read with our shields up. We are critical and skeptical. But when we are absorbed in a story, we drop our intellectual guard. We are moved emotionally, and this seems to leave us defenseless.

In other words, we will never win on our issues with facts alone.

At the same time, not all stories are effective. What research has shown is that people are most likely to be persuaded by the right story—a heartwired story. Heartwired stories feature familiar and relatable characters and create a shared sense of identity, lived experiences, values, and beliefs. Therefore, developing stories that are most effective as persuasion tools requires first understanding the identity, lived experiences, values, and beliefs of your target audience.



RECOMMENDATION: TELL JOURNEY STORIES

WHY IT MATTERS.

Our research shows that people respond positively to ‘journey stories’—stories in which a main character changes over the course of the story. When our audience hears from messengers who share their own journey stories—starting from a place of discomfort, a lack of familiarity, or inner conflict, and moving towards support—it provides the emotional space and a model for our audience to begin their own journey. In this research, we saw that it was important for audiences to hear journey stories and for our messengers to show why they have come to feel differently about this issue.

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE.

The most effective journey stories are carefully sequenced and constructed. Below, we outline the key sequencing and components that make journey stories more effective.




- **Establish credibility, foster identification, and embed messengers in family and community.** For our audience to connect with the messenger, they must first identify with them. Sharing key details about the person’s background—that they are a mother or father, where they live, how long their family has been on their land, that they are a Christian or Muslim, etc.—can be important in helping audiences to situate what the messenger is saying and provide opportunities for identification.
- **Affirm messengers’ good intentions.** Many among our audience have a strong impulse to judge and also to feel judged even implicitly by our messaging. By establishing upfront that the person always tried to treat people fairly, be welcoming and accepting, or understand others’ experiences, we are not only mirroring the emotional experience of our audience but also minimizing chances that our audience will feel judged or too harshly judge the messenger—both of which can interfere with persuasion. Similarly, by framing the discomfort or anxiety as ‘initial’ or ‘at first’ we can prevent the audience from seeing the messenger as too rigid or biased.
- **Mirroring or naming inner conflict or lack of familiarity or comfort.** It is crucial that the messengers in the stories reflect back the thoughts, conflicts, and emotions of the conflicted audience we are trying to connect with. Being asked to understand an opposing point of view can feel like you are validating it. However, when we do not acknowledge the inner conflict and emotional experience of our audience, they can interpret that conflict as a reason not to change or to be unsupportive. By naming it, we show empathy for our audience and help them to let go of the need to completely resolve their inner conflict in order to be supportive.
- **Elevate shared values.** We share many values with our audience, including caring for others, protecting women and girls from harm, and being responsible for and caring for family. When messengers include the shared values that have guided them and that ultimately led them to feel differently or to see an issue differently, it helps to foster identification among our audience. Expressing shared values also models for our audience how they can put more weight on the values and beliefs that lead them to be supportive than on those that interfere with support.

- **Modeling reflection and a journey toward change.** Starting from a place of discomfort, lack of familiarity, or inner conflict, we can help guide people through conflicting emotions or feelings of anxiety toward support through social modeling. This includes:
 - » Showing how people who were initially unfamiliar with or opposed to the idea of women’s land rights became more aware and informed or learned from friends, neighbors, or colleagues and/or educated themselves about the topic. To do this effectively, we need cues that suggest an appropriate passage of time—something necessary to convey an authentic emotional struggle. Also, we need to include a precipitating event or events that led to a change of heart.
 - » Rooting people in their lived experiences with women they know and their desire to protect them from harm and do right by them. We can do this effectively by showing the messenger with their spouse or family or referencing their relationships when that is not possible; and
 - » The way in which we lay out the journey should recognize that when there is a higher level of discomfort and lack of familiarity and inner conflict, that will require a longer period of time and more ‘steps’ to process. The story also needs to clearly lay out the experiences, thinking, and values that led to a person feeling differently than they did initially. If the journey is too easy, it is not impactful.
- **Affirming positive outcomes.** Finally, helping our audience to see the positive impact of the journey provides important reassurance that, despite lingering doubt, discomfort, or internal conflict, the action we want them to take or position we want them to support ultimately has no serious long-term negative consequences. Even more, it can model how change can bring unexpected and positive outcomes—including stronger relationships and communities, living more in line with one’s values, setting an example for one’s children, and protecting others from harm.

In addition to having messengers share their full journey stories, as outlined above, there are other ways to effectively integrate journey elements into our communications. Below is a short excerpt from a story we tested during mindset focus groups. The story was about a meeting of elders, where the topic of discussion was the issue of women’s land rights and how the elders have experienced it affecting the community. This excerpt shows the journey of Ben, one of the elders, by touching on the experiences that created the change in his perspective and then what has resulted from that change.

Ben, an elder and a father to both sons and daughters, spoke next: “I have decided that, upon my passing, I will leave my land to both my sons and my daughters. I know my daughters may very well marry and have husbands to provide for them, but in my work as an elder I have seen some very sad situations. I have seen husbands abandoning their wives and children or dying suddenly and having no will, creating such turmoil and fighting amongst families. These experiences have changed my perspective. Now, I feel it is my moral responsibility to provide some land for my daughters, just in case. I have come to feel that as a good father, I should provide some security for the futures of all my children and grandchildren.

 Ben is responsible. He decided that if a person is still alive, he needs to have a will that can make families come together so that they can have unity and also they can have security too.”
- Young Women (Oyugis)

Other messages, like the one below, can have elements that highlight situations or raise questions that our audience may not have considered. This can help them to begin their journey and be open to learning more. Messages like these are especially impactful when they come from daughters, wives, or widows who have experienced—or fear experiencing—negative situations due to the lack of protections around land ownership.

We have all heard stories of wives being forced off their land by husbands and widows being chased out by their husband’s family. Even when a wife takes out a loan to buy land for her family to live on, then works to pay off that loan, if her name does not appear on the land title, she can lose everything in a moment. Ask yourself, ‘Could something like this happen to me?’ Then, ‘What can I do to prevent these future problems, today?’



 **RECOMMENDATION: SHOW DIFFERENT TYPES OF MESSENGERS**

WHY IT MATTERS.

Hearing from a mix of messengers—including men and women of different ages and in different stages of life as well as authorities such as elders and religious leaders—is important and impactful for many among our audience. Our research found that visual cues and emotional tone were also important. Visual cues include showing messengers together, such as a husband and wife with kids or a small group discussing the issue, using photos of women with their families in their village instead of alone, and showing local people who support change (avoiding stock photos of white people in meetings).

In terms of emotional tone, our messengers need to be calm, respectful, and show concern. Though the lived experience and situations that some messengers face are very tragic, it can alienate our audience if their tone is angry or if they display overwhelming emotion, such as sobbing. When the emotions our messengers display are too intense, it can cause our audience to withdraw or to assume that what is being shared is something out of the ordinary rather than something that happens every day—something they can help to change.

On the following page are the messengers we tested during persuasion focus groups. Each of the messengers tested were calm and respectful, allowing participants to easily connect with them, their story, and their message.



Joyce Orowe, elder
Focus Groups:
Kisumu Elders



Tom Minda, elder
Focus Groups:
Homa Bay Elders
Homa Bay Young Women
Oyugis Widows



Rhoda Nafula, widow
Focus Groups:
Kisumu Young Men
Homa Bay Elders
Oyugis Widows



Dan Inno, father
Focus Groups:
Kisumu Elders
Homa Bay Young Women
Oyugis Widows



Apollo Bwana, elder
Focus Groups:
Kisumu Young Men
Kisumu Elders
Oyugis Mothers-in-Law and Married Women



Margaret Omwa, mother-in-law
Focus Groups:
Homa Bay Young Women
Oyugis Mothers-in-Law and Married Women



James Aguko, elder
Focus Groups:
Kisumu Young Men
Homa Bay Elders
Oyugis Mothers-in-Law and Married Women

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE.

There are a range of messenger types that we have found through this research to be effective in connecting and moving our audience. In the table below, we provide details on these messenger types along with the key messages or elements of their story that were effective and why the messenger type is important for our audience.

Messenger Type	Key Messages/ Story Elements	Why it is Important
Religious leaders (both pastors and lay leaders), particularly older men	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embed women’s land ownership in the context of traditional religious values; make a faith-based case for supporting women’s land rights Speak from personal faith and religious/life wisdom 	Many participants talked about this issue in the context of their faith and God—God’s love for all people, obligations to care for women and families, and men’s obligations to care for their wives

Messenger Type	Key Messages/ Story Elements	Why it is Important
Elders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Model for audiences how elders can wrestle with this topic and come to support women's land ownership in ways that are consistent with culture, not in opposition to it Frame as a community benefit rather than a competition/zero-sum game between men and women Show concrete and positive outcomes of change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most participants felt that women's land ownership conflicts with culture and can cause conflict and disharmony Many participants noted that what happens in reality with regard to land is subject to the whims of individual communities and elders—which often results in women's land rights not being respected By modeling how change can occur, messengers can show that even difficult change can have positive outcomes
Fathers of both daughters and sons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tell a journey story about how a father came to support equal inheritance for both his daughters and his sons Talk about initial conflict or resistance to the idea and show what led him to change Model how he navigated conflict between sons and daughters and formalized inheritance to prevent future conflict 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A sticking point for many was the belief that women inheriting land from a father would cause family conflict or that brothers would simply take over a woman's land A number had concerns that daughters inheriting land would result in loss of ancestral lands and sons getting even less land By showing how change can occur within families, messengers can ease concerns about disrupting family peace
Younger, married man with both brother and sisters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Journey story about how the man moved from being conflicted about women's land ownership to supportive of sharing land with sisters and with wife/wives, and eventually daughters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For men, women inheriting and co-owning land with a husband can raise anxieties about their own inheritance and security Showing a man with whom younger men can identify can help to model how other men can come to be supportive of sharing land with sisters and wives and frame it as a shared benefit

Messenger Type	Key Messages/ Story Elements	Why it is Important
Son of a mother who was driven off of land when he was a child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tell a harms story about seeing mother driven from land after the death of her husband/his father Talk about the pain and hardship they experienced and how that has shaped his thinking on this issue with regard to his wife/wives and daughters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A number of men relayed stories of their own mothers suffering as a result of these situations and therefore intuitively understood why these protections are important By mirroring these real lived experiences and modeling a journey, we can help audiences to see what is at stake
Group of men of different ages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Model for men how to have effective conversations on this topic that are connected to their identity as men Remind men that not all husbands and fathers live up to their responsibilities as husbands, fathers, providers Acknowledge that times have changed, and families/customs have to change too Talk about how husbands and fathers want to make sure that wives and kids are protected—never know what the future might hold 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the focus groups, the perceptions of many men about the experiences of women related to land were very different from the real lived experiences of women We also heard some participants acknowledge that while many men want to do the right thing, some men do not treat their wives and children as they should By helping to bring these experiences into their awareness and situate women's land rights as connected to their identity as husbands, fathers, and protectors, we can help them to see current practices as out of step with these values
Mother-in-law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Journey story from mother-in-law who suffered as a child because of father's death and mother's loss of land—vowed not to have that experience when her own children got married Show how she helped counsel her sons and also how she supported her daughter-in-law after the death of a spouse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many participants acknowledged hearing stories about women reinforcing these community norms and being part of driving women from land By modeling a journey we can help audiences to see another way to approach these issues that helps to support family and community harmony/reduce a sense that wives are outsiders coming to take family lands



RECOMMENDATION: THE ANATOMY OF A STORY

The table below highlights key components to include in messenger stories. For each component, the table also provides messaging examples, many of which were tested in the research.

Messenger Type	Key Messages/ Story Elements	Why it is Important
Widow who has been harmed by lack of inheritance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As tested in focus groups, tell harms story about the impact on women and children when there is a lack of inheritance/marriage certificate Show ways in which she may be mistreated Model others, such as elders, stepping in to help and restore her land 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For many, hearing about these harms reminded them of what they already knew—that women do suffer without these protections By showing the potential harms as well as how women can be helped, we help make a case for these laws and foster empathy for women who are impacted
Young woman approaching marriage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tell story of potential harms/ concerns as a woman approaches her marriage Model how she and her parents help to protect her rights to land 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Similar to the story tested in the focus group, showing harms or potential harms can foster empathy and elevate parents' desire to protect their children from harm



COMPONENT	WHY IT MATTERS	MESSAGING EXAMPLE
Start with shared values (these could include family, securing your family's future, keeping peace and harmony, caring for others, culture, religion, respect, resolving disputes, etc.—see expanded list on page 35); weave in shared values throughout your story	We are asking our audience to behave in a way that many will feel, at least initially, is in contrast or conflict with culture. For them to even be open to listening, we need to lead with values they identify with and share with us. That way we can invite them in on this shared journey—together. Otherwise, we will be unable to engage them emotionally with our stories or our work.	<i>It is important for the security of our families and our communities to prevent conflicts before they arise and to quickly resolve them whenever they do—to show respect and to care for each other so we may live together in peace.</i>
Situate yourself within your family, community (if you are religious, share that)	This is another way of emphasizing shared values. Since we are emphasizing the need to secure your family's future, if we don't situate messengers within their family or community it won't feel like a credible message to our audience.	<i>As an elder... or As a pastor... I am an elder, in the rank of chief elder. I come from Homa Bay County. In our role as elders, we do a lot of mediation. We observe what is going on within the families, and at times we intervene because that is part of our duty—to resolve disputes within families.</i>

COMPONENT	WHY IT MATTERS	MESSAGING EXAMPLE
Establish credibility/experience/background as it is related to women's land rights; show why they have authenticity and credibility to talk about this issue	Our audience will ask themselves: Why should I listen to this person on land rights? It is important that messengers establish what specifically gives them the credibility to speak on the topic of women's land rights. This could be accomplished in many ways, such as experiences as a widow or the adult son of a widow who experienced hardship as a child, being a mother-in-law dealing with the death of her own son, or an elder who has experience managing land disputes.	<p><i>Many communities like ours have struggled to come to terms with the changes made to land and property rights, in particular when it comes to the ability of women to own and inherit land.</i></p> <p><i>Traditionally, our culture has maintained that if a woman faces the death of her husband, this widow has a right to her matrimonial home. In the past this may not have meant that she owned the land—more that she had a right to work and live on the land—but at the center of this tradition was ensuring that a wife whose husband died was protected from a situation out of her control.</i></p>
Share your motivations for speaking up about women's land and property rights; continue to weave in shared values	Sharing why the messenger is speaking up—their motivations—is important to continue building credibility. Whether it is a young man who desires to secure his family's future to avoid what happened to him as a child, or a young woman whose father is sick and wants to ensure she keeps peace with her brothers, or an elder seeking to avoid conflict among the families in his community, details about motivations are important opportunities for our audience to connect with the messenger.	<i>The changes in land and property rights are an effort to make this tradition formal and provide legal protections to wives and widows—to guard against those people who prey on the vulnerable to exploit them.</i>

COMPONENT	WHY IT MATTERS	MESSAGING EXAMPLE
Paint a picture of the harms/the problem	Many among our audience feel that things happen the way they do, and have been that way for so long, because it is part of culture. Addressing any issues or believing they can be solved may seem impossible to them. Therefore, it is powerful for our audience to see how we can do something differently, and that change is possible. When we paint a picture of the problem—the harms that real people face and how it impacts them—we activate a sense of emotional and moral urgency within our audience to protect other people and to care about what happens to them. As we do so, it is important to define the problem for our audience in a way that makes clear that something is wrong and that something should—and could—be done about it.	<p><i>Sadly, not every family is loving or fair. Some husbands fail to honor the bonds of marriage or don't meet their God-given responsibility to provide for their families. Some families care more about taking property than honoring their son or brother upon his death and protecting his family's future. In many cases, husbands have died suddenly without a will. Not having a clear agreement on inheritance creates turmoil and fighting amongst families.</i></p> <p><i>If we disinherit the wife or the widow, we also disinherit the family. Over time, this puts the security of our entire community at risk.</i></p>
Paint a picture of how women inheriting and owning land is part of the solution; include the ways you feel that women's land rights are aligned with culture (not opposed to it) and/or religion	In addition to painting a picture of the problem or harms for our audience, it is important to also paint a picture of the solution—one that is aligned with culture rather than in conflict with it. As we explore further in the following two recommendations, our audience has many gaps in knowledge and lived experience when it comes to women's land rights, so connecting the dots for them and showing how the solution is related to and solves the problem is key.	<i>More and more fathers and husbands in our community have come to feel it is their moral responsibility to provide some land for their wives, sons, and their daughters—just in case. They are starting to formally recognize their marriages with a marriage certificate. This is also why it is so important that our constitutional protections work together with culture—giving our elders the power to mediate land disputes—to help preserve family and community peace, harmony, and well-being.</i>

**Note: As we paint pictures of the problem and the solution for our audience, it is critical that we focus much more on the happy outcomes that are possible than on emphasizing the harms and pain caused by the problem. This is especially true when it comes to visuals, like photos and illustrations. See page 39 for more on this.*

COMPONENT	WHY IT MATTERS	MESSAGING EXAMPLE
<p>Provide information: Law allows women to own land, importance of documents (e.g., land title, will, marriage certificate, birth certificate); describe process and positive impact</p>	<p>To help fill our audience’s knowledge gaps, messengers need to provide information about the various legal documents (marriage certificate, will, land title, birth certificates, etc.) that will secure and protect their land ownership rights. Also, it is important to communicate why these documents are important, why they are legally necessary and what having them accomplishes, the steps required to attain them, and to show the positive impact of having them completed. We cannot assume that our audience knows all—or any—of this information.</p>	<p><i>I have seen some very sad situations in my community—husbands abandoning their wives and children, or dying suddenly with no will, creating turmoil and fighting among families. These experiences have changed my perspective. Now, I feel it is my moral responsibility to provide some land for my daughters as well as my wife and sons, just in case. I have come to feel that as a good father, I should provide some security for the futures of all my children and grandchildren.</i></p>
<p>Model and normalize conflicting feelings around women inheriting and holding land</p>	<p>Our audience may experience conflicting emotions or feelings of anxiety as they hear from messengers and consider the topic of women’s land rights. When messengers acknowledge these feelings—that some people may be uncomfortable, unfamiliar, or conflicted—it makes our audience feel a sense of relief that their feelings are being recognized rather than dismissed. Normalizing our audience’s conflicting feelings in this way is important because it allows them to more actively listen and be open to what our messengers have to say.</p>	<p><i>Because marriages are not always stable, it is very important that every marriage should be supported by a marriage certificate. If a husband were to die or if there was a divorce and a need for the distribution of assets, many families will lose their properties because they did not have a marriage certificate.</i></p> <p><i>Co-ownership of land can help to minimize frictions after the death of a husband. We have seen many families fear domestic violence from their in-laws because of a land dispute. It is important to ensure both the husband and wife are on the land title.</i></p> <p><i>It is important to write a will. Writing a will does not mean that you are going to die—it is simply a way of planning how your things are supposed to be done after the death. It can provide security and peace during a troubling time.</i></p>

COMPONENT	WHY IT MATTERS	MESSAGING EXAMPLE
<p>Share your journey story, if you have one: How did you come to support women’s land rights?</p>	<p>Related to normalizing conflicting feelings, when our audience hears from messengers who share their own journey stories—starting from a place of discomfort, a lack of familiarity, or inner conflict, and moving towards support—it provides the emotional space and a model for our audience to experience their own journey.</p>	<p><i>When I was growing up in my community, the men believed that a woman or a girl should not be given a piece of land. So, when the new Constitution came, there were mixed reactions. Some were not comfortable with the idea and feared it would change our culture. Today, many men are coming to realize the benefits of women having the right to own land and the peace and security it can bring to their families and community.</i></p>
<p>Model how to raise the topic within your family, to elders, and in your community in a respectful way</p>	<p>Much of the information our audience receives will be new to them and potentially feel overwhelming. They will be navigating conflicting feelings related to culture, religion, and the law. They will also be worrying about what will happen if they raise the issue of land rights with their family or in their community. For them to be able to take the information we provide them and begin to create change in their own lives and the lives of those they love, it is important for our messengers to model how to raise the topic of land rights within their own family, to elders, and in their communities in a respectful and productive way.</p>	<p><i>Last night, I talked with my sons. We discussed how do we write a will and how do we manage a will. Fortunately, one of my daughters was also there. We discussed freely until one of my sons asked, ‘Do daughters also have rights to get land?’ And a bit of argument came—supposing I die and she sells the land and goes. Then I said, ‘those are the fears which you should not have. Because why should she go if we manage our family such that everybody feels that this is where I belong?’ So, we shared until we agreed to allocate to my daughters some land as well as my wife and sons.</i></p>
<p>Close with shared values and positive vision for the future</p>	<p>It is important to remind our audience of the values we share that are driving our desire for change and how that change will create a positive future.</p>	<p><i>Many in our culture may hold different beliefs and views on this issue, but we can continue to move forward, together, to protect families and to ensure complicated disputes around property don’t come to be in the first place.</i></p>



Below is a transcript of a messenger video tested in our persuasion focus groups that contains many of the components listed above. This transcript includes a deconstruction noting a number of important insights and details about the story.

My name is Joseph Apollo Bwana. I am an elder—Luo council of elders—in the rank of chief elder. I come from Homa Bay County. I am a retired forester—I retired about 16 years ago. I have a family. Three boys are married, one girl is married also, and one is not yet married.

Our role as elders is that we do a lot of mediation. We kind of observe what is going on within the families and at times we intervene without being invited because, generally, that is part of our duty—to resolve disputes within families.

I find if you really follow and respect what the culture is, then you find, automatically, a widow or a wife is respected. For example, in our culture you find a widow has a right to inherit land and a widow has a right to inherit the properties of the husband. So, it has changed my mind to the extent of feeling: what can be done before such a thing happens? Before death happens, what can we do?

Last night, I happened to have called my sons. We discussed a bit of ‘how do we write a will’ and ‘how do we manage a will.’

Fortunately, one of the daughters was also there. Then we discussed freely until they said, “ah ah.” The lawyer said, “and daughters also have rights to get land?” Then, okay, they joked about it—that, you see, if you give them [land], they sell and go to their husbands. And then I said, “but supposing they don’t go?” because one is not yet married. My younger daughter is not married. “So, if she stays here for good—or they lack land where they are married—can they have some portion?”

And a bit of argument came: “Supposing I die, and she sells and goes?” Then I said, “those are the fears which you should not have, because why should she go? She can only desire to go if, by the way we manage our family, does not make somebody feel at home. We need to manage such that everybody feels this is where I belong. And, at that level, nobody would think of selling, going away.”

So, we shared until we agreed to allocate to the ladies—the two of them—more than one acre. So, I am looking at family as a security. And I am happy about it.

The messenger starts with shared values by discussing his family. This also helps to situate himself within his community.

Here, the messenger begins to establish his credibility, noting that, as an elder, he often mediates and resolves disputes within families.

Next, the messenger shares a little about his motivation for speaking up about women’s land rights—to help prevent conflict before it happens. Included in this are elements of a journey story, where the messenger notes how his mind has changed on the topic.

Here the messenger models how the conversation was raised and how it was conducted within his family.

The messenger communicates important information—that women have the right to own land. Therefore, his daughter can legally inherit some of his land.

Here the messenger accomplishes a number of things. He discusses how conflict arose when discussing the issue of women’s land rights, which models and normalizes conflicting feelings our audience holds. Then, he models how to manage the conversation. He also weaves in shared values around the importance of keeping peace in the family and supporting each other.

The messenger closes by noting the shared values of family and security and by noting there was agreement—a positive thing.

Heartwired Messaging in Practice: Securing Your Family’s Future Campaign

For the concluding piece of research in this project, we conducted an online asynchronous focus group among 28 residents of Homa Bay and Kisumu, ages 19–39, over four days from March 25 to 30, 2021 (for more on our methodology, see page 81). Each day, participants logged in to an online platform at their convenience to complete a series of activities posted for that day, including reviewing the website of the Securing Your Family’s Future (SYFF) campaign, along with various messages, images, and videos used by the campaign (the website can be found here: securingyourfamilysfuture.or.ke).

This research allowed us to test the effectiveness of campaign materials developed based on messaging recommendations from the Mindset and Persuasion phases of research. It provided opportunities to examine what, if anything, would further strengthen these materials—and to understand if any materials may be confusing for participants. In addition, we developed a sense of questions participants still have after exposure to these materials and the kinds of additional information they need to be supportive or take action regarding women owning and inheriting land.

Overall, the campaign materials resonated very strongly with research participants.

In this section, we provide some key insights gained during this final piece of research that may be helpful as you work to develop your own messaging.

IMAGES

When reviewing the SYFF website, many participants feel moved by “the happiness in people’s faces.” The images selected as appealing most frequently are the image that shows “the happiness that comes with women getting land” as well as the image that “portrays a family happily working together on their land.”

An image selected as unappealing has an unsmiling woman sitting alone. Participants note that “there is no family in the picture that the woman secures for their future” and “that woman seems to be exhausted,” speculating that “maybe she spent a lot of energy trying to secure her inheritance.” One participant notes about the photo: “It’s quite grey and gives a neutral



feeling and no activity.” In the research we found that photos which visually communicate a happy outcome are often more emotionally engaging for the audience than those that show harms or are perceived as depicting negative outcomes for the people involved.

POSTERS

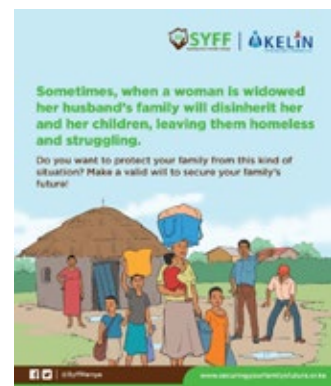
During the focus groups, we showed research participants a set of 12 posters, breaking them down into three groups containing four posters each. Then, we asked them to select the poster from each group that they found most compelling. Below are six posters selected as most compelling by participants, along with some insights on what participants find most compelling about each of the posters.

POSTER WHAT WAS COMPELLING

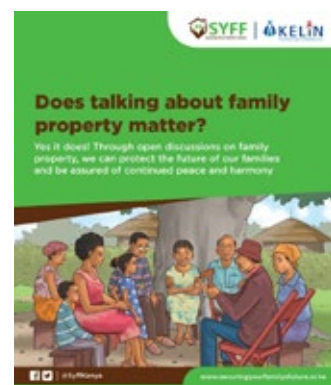


This poster displays the “right documents” needed to “keep peace,” reduce conflicts, and prevent land disputes and “unforeseen problems in the future.” It also gives a sense of “relief” because by knowing the documents needed, people can begin planning early for how to get them.

“The cartoon depictions and bright green color scheme is quite catchy. It gives a calming effect of a green field with a friendly effect (nostalgic to cartoon drawings in junior textbooks).”
- Male, 19-29, Not a Parent

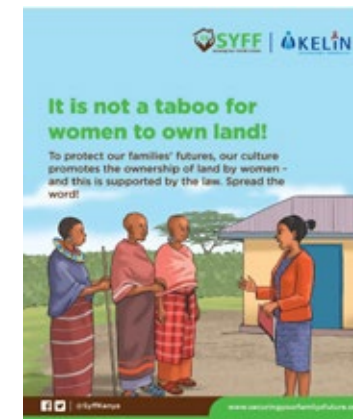


This poster, showing the sad end of the family of a man who didn’t write a will, motivates the viewer to take preventive action so his family does not end up like the family depicted. Some participants say that “death is always unpredictable,” and “the will safeguards the family,” protecting them from “negative moves” from relatives. Some participants say that men should be sensitized and encouraged to write a will, and women, especially widows, should be respected and their security ensured in the event of their husbands’ passing. A few participants hold that “writing wills should become a norm, so no property is left unclaimed or its ownership left in doubt.” They also feel that, while writing a will is important, enforcing it is equally important.



Some participants feel that an “open forum for discussion” creates “awareness,” “freedom for every member to express their opinion on the right platform,” “room for everyone’s views to be considered,” and “enhances satisfaction.” They believe discussion forums will also “minimize cases of future conflict,” “promote peace and understanding,” and help the family to “live in harmony” and “respect for one another.” A few say that “development will thrive in this family” because there is “unity, peace, and harmony.”

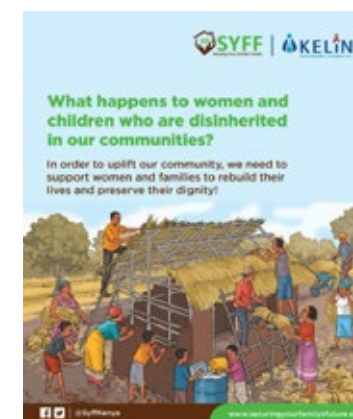
POSTER WHAT WAS COMPELLING



Some participants say this poster “enlightens” and corrects “misconceptions” that women are “unfit to own land” and by so doing “opens a door for women to be acceptable land and property owners” and to “freely fight for their land ownership rights.” A few participants say this is an “important message that the community should know and accept” that “culture promotes the ownership of land by women and it is also supported by law.”



Some participants say that “through joint ownership, land disputes will be very minimal.” The “woman of the house” has a sense of belonging, and land automatically goes to the wife when it is jointly owned. To some, jointly owning land set a positive precedent because children grow up knowing that land should be equally given to girls.



Many participants are glad to see the “team” and “community spirit” demonstrated as community members rally around and support disinherited women “so that they don’t feel rejected or isolated within the community.”

“The way the community takes responsibility for supporting its members. It helps everyone realize their worth.”
- Male, 27, Not a Parent

MESSAGES

Below are a set of messages we tested during this final focus group which participants found most compelling. After providing each of these messages to focus group participants, we asked them which statement they find the most compelling; what is compelling to them; and which, if any, they would be most willing to share with a friend, family member, or on social media.

The changes in land and property rights are an effort to make this tradition formal and provide legal protections to wives and widows—to guard against those people who prey on the vulnerable to exploit them.

This message was selected as the most compelling by participants and the one they say they are most likely to share with a friend, family, or on social media. Some participants note that they like that a law is a “requirement” and places a “responsibility” on everyone to adhere to it to avoid consequences.

To some participants, this statement is a source of hope that the right of owning land or inheriting land by women will be guaranteed and protected by law. They hope the public will be enlightened about “legal measures” that they can use “to help their own relatives and friends. Some participants appreciate that the “vulnerable” will be protected from those who want to acquire their properties illegally and from “biased laws in the future.”

“As we all know, women are the “neck” of a family, and most responsibilities fall to them. If a woman owns land, she is able to raise the family, and the community will in turn benefit.”

- Female, 20, Not a Parent

If we disinherit the wife or the widow, we also disinherit the family. And over time, this puts the security of our entire community at risk.

Several participants are struck by this sentiment that disinheriting women means disinheriting the family. They agree that disinheriting the wife or the widow is equivalent to disinheriting the family and believe it puts the family’s security at risk. Some note that children are placed in a particularly disadvantaged position where they are being cared for by a woman with little or no resources.

Many participants agree to share this statement on social media because it is “easy to understand,” “creates more awareness on the benefits of women and land inheritance in our societies,” “has a clear and direct message,” and “can act as a call to action.” While the message resonated with many, a few male participants question the link between disinheriting the wife or widow and negative consequences for the community.

Not having a clear agreement on inheritance creates turmoil and fighting amongst families.

Many participants find this statement “informative” and believe it encourages people to see that “a clear written will” is an effective pathway to end conflicts over land and “care for the people you love.” Many participants note being willing to share this statement on social media because they desire an increased awareness about the adverse effects that an “unclear inheritance agreement” has on families.

“I was once a victim of unclear agreement on inheritance which caused a little conflict which was later resolved. So, I always don’t like some people to go through the same.”
- Male, 26, Parent

Many communities like ours are struggling to come to terms with the changes made to land and property rights, in particular when it comes to the ability of women to own and inherit land.

This statement is compelling to several male participants who are not parents, who say it is an apt summary of the situation. They feel that many communities are, to an extent, now open to women inheriting land as specified by the law. Overall, participants express disapproval that communities are yet to accept ownership and inheritance of land by women.

“If someone did not read the other statements, and they only read this one, they would still understand the message comprehensively.”

- Male, 37, Not a Parent

Traditionally, our culture has maintained that if a woman faces the death of her husband, this widow has a right to her matrimonial home. In the past this may not have meant that she owned the land—more that she had a right to work and live on the land—but at the center of this tradition was ensuring that a wife whose husband died was protected from a situation out of her control.

Overall, this message was noted as compelling by the fewest participants. Also, the participants were the least likely to say they would share this message. However, two women did select this statement as compelling. They emphasize the importance of a woman’s continued right to her matrimonial home after the death of her husband and feel that it

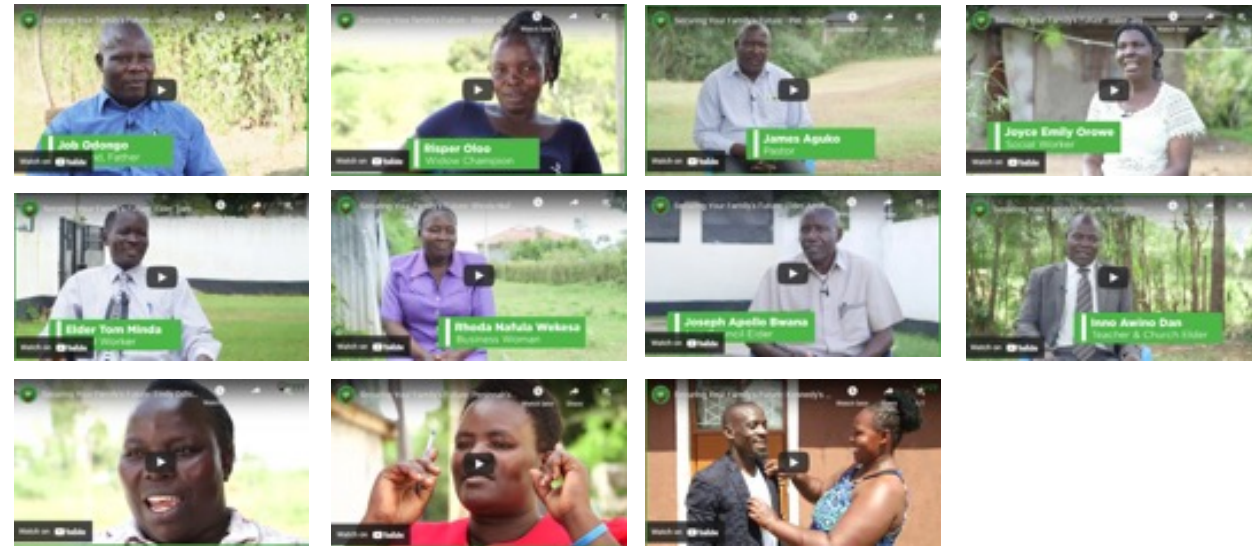
is commendable that these kinds of safeguards are provided by tradition. Some participants think the woman should own the land so in the future she is not “chased away” and can “divide the piece of land to her children.”

The Solution: Working together to support husbands and fathers in protecting their wives and children’s future through land and property ownership and inheritance. This will help to prevent conflict between husbands and wives, lead to peace of mind, family harmony and community development.

Some participants believe that men who are supported can share the steps they took with other men. They also feel that a transparent process will help ensure that women are better positioned to defend themselves. In addition to other outcomes stated in the solution message, “devastating” outcomes for orphaned children are also prevented, a benefit cited by many participants.

This solution message prompts some participants to note that they are interested in knowing the specific ways the SYFF campaign will support husbands and fathers. They want to know about the “personnel” that will facilitate these “sensitive” discussions and the other approaches that will be used to create awareness and educate men who are not on the internet.

“When the men are supported, they are motivated, and they can easily spread the information of securing their families future through land ownership and inheritance to other men in the community.” - Female, 29, Parent



MESSENGERS

We asked participants to select one of the many videos available on the SYFF website and watch it. Regardless of the video they chose to watch, participants rated them as either extremely compelling (15 participants) or very compelling (12 participants). Participants did not report being skeptical or hesitant about anything in any of the videos they selected.

A plurality of participants (11) selected Risper Oloo’s video. Most of these participants report that they chose this video because they are interested in the unique challenges faced by widows. Some women also report feeling compelled and inspired by her and wanting to relate to her experiences as a woman.

“I chose it because I wanted to know the exact challenges widows face and how she practically managed her life thereafter.”
- Male, 31, Parent

“The courage she had to push through and do what wasn’t expected of her. It went against the norms.”
- Female, 36, Parent

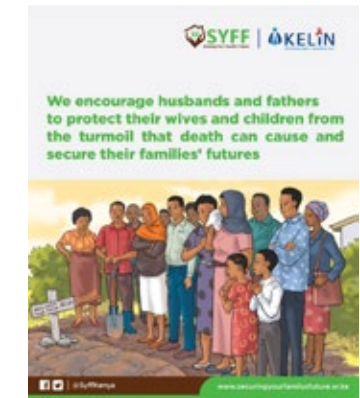
AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT AND QUESTIONS

In addition to learning what worked well, was effective, and compelling for our audience, we also gained insight on areas for improvement and the questions that begin to bubble up in people’s minds as they receive our messages and materials.

Focus more on happy outcomes than on the harms caused by of the problem. As we discuss in detail in our recommendations on page 39, across different campaign materials we tested—from images to posters to messages—research participants gravitate toward happy, positive outcomes. It is true that noting the harms and painting a picture of the problem is important to build empathy and to define what problem needs to be solved. At the same time, focusing too much on the negative can push our audience away emotionally and lead them to disengage rather than wanting to learn more or take action.

For example, when we asked participants to select compelling posters, the poster shown on the right was not selected as most compelling by any of the participants. The focus on the negative outcome instead of a positive outcome (such as showing happy people who avoided turmoil) was not as effective.

Another example, shown below, is one of three descriptive illustrations provided to participants. When asked if they would be willing to share this descriptive image, only one participant said they would.



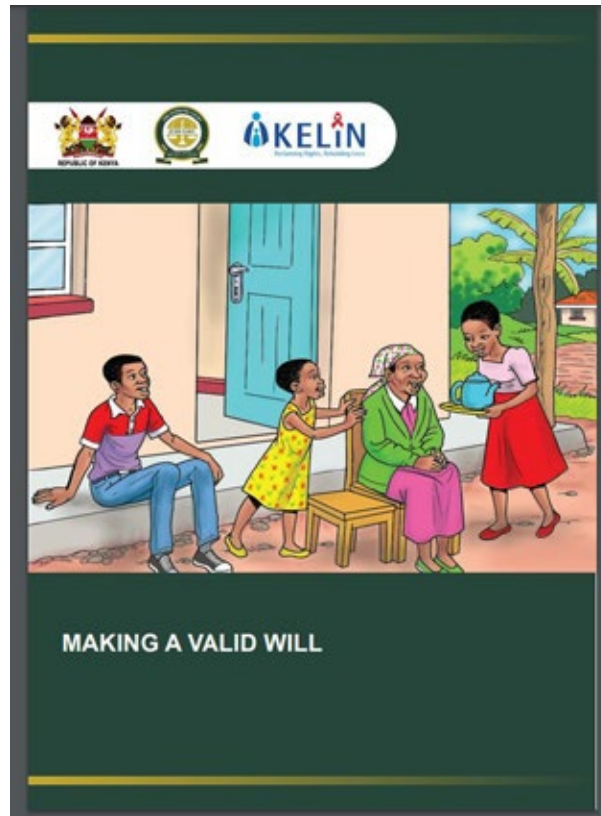
We all want peace and harmony within our families and our communities, and to feel we have security for our future!

What about them? Take a step to make a valid will today! Secure your family's future!



Research Participants’ Questions and Concerns. After focus group participants reviewed the various campaign materials presented to them, many still had practical questions about how this would work in the real world and within varied family situations. Public education campaigns working to advance progress on women owning and inheriting land should consider how to answer the kinds of specific questions that are on our audience’s minds and prepare the kinds of additional information our audience may need to be supportive or take action.

- **Making a will:** Questions and concerns related to making a will include:
 - » When in life should one start making a will?
 - » When should one update their will?
 - » What is the maximum number of witnesses?
 - » What happens when the witnesses die?
 - » Can copies of the will be kept in different locations?
 - » The possibility of the will being manipulated.
 - » Who should the custodian of the will be?
 - » How to make amendments to the will if it is disputed.
 - » If the children can be involved.
 - » How to implement the will.
 - » Whether or not a daughter who gets married before the will was drafted can still go back and claim her share.



- **Registration of marriages:** Participants have questions about:
 - » The process of registering a marriage
 - » The requirements of registering a marriage
 - » The benefits of registering a marriage
 - » If registering a marriage or traditional marriage is better
- **Starting a new family:** Some participants would like to know if a woman can start a new family with another man once she has inherited a home.
- **Divorce:** Some participants would like to know what happens if a couple divorces after acquiring a joint title.
- **Impact on culture:** Some participants raised questions and concerns about how women owning and inheriting land would impact culture:
 - » Will discussing this issue cause conflict within families and communities?
 - » Will men lose power or status in society if women are allowed to own land?
 - » Will owning land make it easier for a woman to divorce a man?
 - » What happens if a woman sells the land and runs from the community?
 - » What happens if a woman sells the land to outside “foreigners,” which may change the community?
 - » How can women support each other when it comes to owning and inheriting land?



Looking Forward

Thank you to all of the organizational partners and advisors who contributed their time, ideas, and resources to help make this research and messaging guide possible. Through this research, we have gained considerable insights into the minds and hearts of the audience we know will be critical to growing support for women’s land and property rights.

Of course, there are still many unanswered questions—many of which were raised by our research participants. As people become engaged in our messages, they begin asking genuine questions about how land rights intersect with their own lived experiences. What would you recommend doing if you have more than one wife? Should you leave property to children and wives equally? If daughters should inherit land, which land should they get—their ancestral land or matrimonial land?

Over time, we will need to begin developing and testing responses to important questions such as these. In the meantime, thank you for taking the time to read this messaging guide. We very much look forward to working together to put the findings of this research into action.

Appendix: Training Tools

WORKSHEET: DEVELOP EVIDENCE-BASED CONTENT

This worksheet is intended to support you to develop evidence-based messaging.

Once you have reviewed the messaging and learned more about our audience, you can begin to develop messages and stories that reflect their values, beliefs, and lived experiences. Before you develop a piece of content, you might choose to outline your main messages. This worksheet may help you to structure your thinking.

Instructions: As you fill out each of the four narrative message categories, consider the journey you want your audience to make from their current attitude and understanding of your issue to the supportive action or behavior you want them to take after hearing your message. Develop a few sentences for each of the categories below, and at the end combine them to develop a clear narrative message.

Connection Message

This message communicates the identity, emotions, lived experiences, values, and beliefs that you share with your target audience. We start here because it signals to your audience that you have important things in common. What is your short connection message? Share a few sentences here to communicate your connection point.

Example: We want to ensure our families are secure now and in the future, that wives and children continue to have a home if the father dies, and that families live in peace and harmony in our communities.

Problem/Need Message

This message spotlights the barriers or challenges that make it difficult for your audience to take action on your issue. What is the short problem/need message? Share a few sentences here to communicate the problem or need your audience is facing.

Example: Not every family is loving or fair. Sometimes, when a woman is widowed and does not have important documents that prove her right to their land and family home, her husband's family will disinherit her and her children and chase them away. This leaves the mother and children homeless and struggling to survive, which disrupts the peace and security of the entire community.

Solution Message

This message communicates how your audience can use one or more of the five factors (emotions, values, beliefs, identity, and/or lived experiences) to resolve internal conflicts. What is your short solution message to help your audience address the problem or needs you identified above?

Example: I realized that it is very important for each family to have certain documents to prove their right to land—such as a marriage license, land title, and a will—that can prevent land disputes, keep peace, and secure our families' futures. Also, that it is important to include both sons and daughters as we consider our land for inheritance.

Vision Message

This message describes to your audience how the world will be a different place. Include your call to action here, which might be different for your various audiences. What is your short vision message? Share a few sentences here to paint a picture of your vision and to ask your audience to do something to make that vision a reality.

Example: While some in our culture hold different beliefs and views on this issue, we can continue to move forward, together, to protect families and to help ensure disputes around property don't occur in the first place. That's why I'm working to educate myself and others about women's land and property rights. Are you interested in learning more?

Your Narrative

Put all your messages—connection, problem, solution, vision—together here. Read it out loud.

Strategic Questions To Consider:

- Do all the messages work together as a complete narrative?
- Can you imagine this narrative persuading your target audiences who might be conflicted or confused about your work?
- Is it plain spoken and easy to understand? Or, do you use jargon or abstract concepts?
- Can you imagine many different messengers using it to communicate with your target audiences?
- Can you use these messages as the inspiration for a new piece of content like a short story or video?

HANDOUT: ANATOMY OF A STORY

- > **Start with shared values around family, securing your family's future, keeping peace and harmony, caring for others, culture, religion, respect, resolving disputes, etc.** to meet our audience's emotional needs and invite them in on this shared journey.
- > **Share details to situate yourself within your family, friends, and community (if you are religious, share that)** as a way to emphasize the values we share with our audience and increase our credibility with them.
- > **Establish credibility or experience as it is related to women's land rights** to help our audience understand what perspective we bring, believe what we are saying is credible, and provide opportunities for identification.
- > **Share personal motivations for speaking up about women's land and property rights** and continue to weave in shared values to help our audience understand why we are speaking up and to continue building credibility.
- > **Paint a picture of the harms/the problem with the current situation related to women's land rights** to show how it impacts real people and to activate our audience's sense of emotional and moral urgency to protect other people.
- > **Paint a picture of how women inheriting and owning land is part of the solution (including the ways you feel that women's land rights are aligned with culture and/or religion—not opposed to it)** in order to connect the dots for our audience and show how the solutions we offer are related to and solve the problem.
 - *Note: As we paint pictures of the problem and the solution for our audience, it is critical that we focus much more on the happy outcomes that are possible than on emphasizing the harms and pain caused by the problem. This is especially true when it comes to visuals, like photos and illustrations.
- > **Provide information about the law and important documents, describe the process to get them, and show the positive impact** to help fill our audience's knowledge gaps.
- > **Mirror and normalize conflicting feelings around women inheriting and holding land** to make our audience feel a sense of relief that their feelings are being recognized rather than dismissed, allowing them to more actively listen and be open to what we have to say.
- > **Share your journey story about how you came to support women's land rights**, if you have one, to model for our audience how a journey can happen.
- > **Model how to raise the topic within your family, to elders, and in your community in a respectful way** to provide them with the tools they need to be able to take the information we provide them and begin to create change in their own lives and the lives of those they love.
- > **Close with shared values and a positive vision for the future** to remind our audience of the values we share that are driving our desire for change and how that change will create a positive future.

MESSAGING CHECKLIST

Below is a helpful checklist with questions to consider as you develop your messaging.

- How can I start and frame my message using shared values such as family, securing your family's future, keeping peace and harmony, caring for others, culture, religion, respect, and resolving disputes?
- How am I establishing my credibility as someone speaking about women's land and property rights?
- What am I sharing about myself and my life experiences that shows my values and situates me within my family, friends, and community?
- How will I describe my personal motivations for speaking up about women's land and property rights?
- How will I paint a picture of the problem and harms and how they impact real people? How will I make it clear that something is wrong, that something should be done about it, and that something could be done about it?
- How will I paint a picture of how women inheriting and owning land is part of the solution? How will I show that women's land rights are aligned with culture and religion—not opposed to it?
- What information do I need to provide about various legal documents (marriage certificate, will, land title, birth certificates, etc.) that will secure and protect land ownership? How will I communicate why these documents are important, why they are legally necessary, what having them accomplishes, and what the steps required to attain them are? How will I show the positive impact of having them completed?
- How can I mirror/normalize conflicting feelings on women inheriting and holding land?
- How can I describe my journey in coming to support women's land and property rights? What are the important milestones and steps along the way? What experiences/values led to the decisions I made?
- How will I model raising the topic within the family, to elders, or within a community in a respectful way? What story can I share as an example, and what details will I include?
- How will I close my story using shared values?
- What will my call to action be in the closing of my message?

WORKSHEET: TEST YOUR DRAFT CONTENT

Testing your content is a great way to learn how your messaging content can affect and motivate your audience. This worksheet is intended to support you in testing content that you have developed in a low-cost way.

Step 1. Choose a safe, low- or no-cost way to conduct your messaging research.

Any testing of your communications will allow you to gain valuable insights about your messaging. There are a number of inexpensive ways to test your content.

For example, you can integrate testing into your current programmatic work. If you're leading a sensitization training with potential supporters, key stakeholders, or allies, you can set aside time to test a piece of content before, during, or after the training. If you currently have billboards or street posters up around town, you can ask passersby to participate in a short interview.

It is important to make safety plans when testing content on social issues. For your safety and to ensure that you are getting honest answers, consider telling your interviewees that you have been hired to gather impressions, did not develop the content, and are not affiliated with the organization running the posters or billboards. This will allow the interviewee to focus on the content.

You can also ask someone you know and trust—like a friend, an ally, or a professional acquaintance—to stand in for your target audience.

Step 2. Develop research questions to test based on your audience sample.

Develop your research questions to match the way that you will be collecting the data. For instance, during a sensitization training or other group setting, you may need to collect feedback using a short questionnaire because it will be more efficient to collect and easier to compare.

If you have an opportunity for a one-on-one interview, you can ask open-ended questions to your research participant in order to gain deeper insights on their review of the content through follow-up questions. Below are some sample questions to help get you thinking about open-ended and close-ended questions you can use to test your content.

Sample open-ended questions for one-on-one interviews:

- What is your overall impression of the content? What are the first words that come to mind after reading this?
- How did this story/piece of content make you feel?
- If you were to describe the purpose of this piece of content, what would you say? What important lesson is the content trying to communicate? [Does it make them feel: Sad or emotional? Does it move or is it compelling to them?]
- [For stories] What parts of the story felt important to you? Are there specific parts of the story that stayed with you?

- [For stories] Did you relate to specific characters? What made them feel relatable? Were the characters believable?
- What, if anything, did you not like about this piece? Did you find anything confusing or unclear?
- Would you share this piece of content with your friends or co-workers?

Sample close-ended questions (for example, 'yes' and 'no' response questions) for questionnaires and group settings:

- The purpose of this piece of content is clear. Yes / No
- On a scale of 0 to 10, with 10 being that the purpose of this story/content is extremely clear, I would give this story/content a ____.
- After reading this piece of content, I am more likely to [speak up, volunteer, give money, etc.] ____ . Yes/No
- On a scale of 0 to 10, with 10 being that I am extremely likely to [speak up, volunteer, give money, etc.] ____ , I would give this story/ content a ____.
- After reading this piece of content, I now think differently about ____ . Yes/No
- On a scale of 0 to 10, with 10 being that I am definitely likely to think differently about _____, I would give this story/content a ____.

Step 3. Prepare yourself for interviewing (if that is your research method).

It is often difficult to conduct research and test content with people who are unfamiliar with our issues and disagree with your point of view. If you are conducting interviews, here are some tips to help you prepare for the interview, listen with empathy during the interview, and create space to process and decompress after the interview:

1. Prioritize your own health and wellness. This work can be emotionally tough. Check in with yourself. Is this the right time for you to engage in this process? Do you feel that you have places where you can be heard? Are you safe? Do you have people with whom you can discuss your own emotional reactions to what you hear? Do you feel ready to listen?
2. Acknowledge that this work is hard. Many of us have experienced profound pain as a result of the ignorance or violence of others. Having survived these experiences, it can be difficult to consider willingly placing ourselves in a situation where we must listen to and even empathize with someone who holds or expresses ignorant views.
3. Focus on the human being in front of you—not their political, religious, or social opinions. Focus on what you hope to learn by leading this research instead of on persuading this person. This will help you to suspend judgment and listen to the feedback from your audience with empathy.
4. Set aside time to process and decompress after the interview. Give yourself space to address the emotions and reactions that may come up for you after the interview, both as an activist doing this hard work and as a researcher gleaning insight from an interview.

Step 4. Conduct your research.

During interviews, remember to listen for the five heartwired factors for evidence-based messaging. Look out for clues based on the emotions your audiences show/express, the words they use to describe themselves (open-minded, Christian, parent, etc.), the values and beliefs they express, and the lived experiences that they share.

When asking follow-up questions or probing deeper, try asking, “Tell me more” or “What led you to say/believe/feel that?” These types of responses encourage the speaker to provide full and rich answers by cueing them that you are listening. Try to avoid asking questions that begin with “why”—like “why do you feel that way?” Why questions tend to come across as judgmental and might make your research participant feel judged.

Take a few moments following interviews to make notes of these observations.

Step 5. Analyze the results.

When analyzing the results, you will be looking for both obvious and more subtle reactions to your content. If someone says that a piece of your content is confusing and that they do not understand a term (for example, SRHR), that may feel like a very clear finding with a simple solution (for example, change it to read “sexual and reproductive health and rights”).

If someone says that they don’t find something “believable,” it may be because it contradicts existing beliefs or doesn’t match their lived experiences of how the world works. This emphasizes why it is so important to ask follow-up questions during interviews to get a deeper understanding of what people really mean.

Finally, you’ll be looking for themes in your research. If eight out of ten people have positive reactions to your story overall, that’s enough to suggest that it’s a strong story that resonates with a majority of your target audience— despite the two people for whom it did not align.

On the other hand, if three out of ten people found an element of your story confusing, and they were otherwise supportive of your issue, that’s probably enough to suggest that you should fix the problem.

Step 6. Refine your content based on testing.

See the next section for an example of how to update your content based on your research.

Use the space below and draft sample questions you might use to test your content

WORKSHEET: DEVELOPING YOUR OWN VALUES-BASED MESSAGING

To help organize your own messaging for future content—or prepare for a practice interview—use this worksheet. Keep the needs of your audience in mind as you complete this worksheet. As you develop your messaging, ask yourself: what does my audience need to hear to help them manage their complex and conflicting feelings?

Instructions: Develop a few sentences or talking points for each of the message categories below.

1. As you develop this messaging, who are you communicating with? What is the purpose of this communication?

My Audience: _____

Purpose: _____

2. How would you describe yourself, your experience, or your values to build connection with the audience? What values or beliefs draw you to this work that our audience may also share?

3. How would you describe your journey to feel as you do today about women’s land and property rights in ways that might resonate with your audience? What events stand out as turning points? What did you learn from those experiences? What were some of the things you struggled to understand at first? How did you come to learn more? How did you come to be more involved in this work? What was that experience like for you?

4. For people who are not as familiar with women’s land and property rights, how would you talk about the harm experienced by women and their children? Is there a story or two that especially stands out in your mind?

MINDSET RESEARCH

Mindset Focus Group Discussions (November 2018): Six focus group discussions were conducted from November 7 to 9, 2018, in Homa Bay, Kisumu, and Oyugis. Two groups were held in each of the three locations. The different groups studied included married women/mothers-in-law (Homa Bay), widows (Homa Bay and Kisumu), elder men (Kisumu), young men (Oyugis), and young women (Oyugis). A total of 58 participants took part in this research. The language used in focus group discussions (English or Luo) varied depending on the location.

Location/Research Audience	Number of Participants
Homa Bay	
Married Women/Mothers-in-Law (ages 30 to 70)	10
Widows (ages 30 to 70)	10
Kisumu	
Elder Men (ages 65 to 80)	8
Widows (ages 30 to 70)	10
Oyugis	
Young Men (ages 18 to 29)	10
Young Women (ages 18 to 29)	10
Total participants	58

These focus group discussions allowed us to understand our audience’s values, emotions, identities, and reasoning patterns as they engaged on issues related to women’s land rights in an interactive setting.

They also provided a crucial platform for our initial development of values-based frames, themes, and messages to help build and solidify support for women’s land rights. The findings allowed us to refine these approaches in subsequent research phases.

WHAT IS A FOCUS GROUP?

A focus group is a discussion that is held on a specific research topic and is led by a neutral, trained, and culturally appropriate moderator. Ideally, these groups consist of eight to ten participants who all belong to a certain demographic (e.g., young men, elders, married women, mothers-in-law, widows).

Focus group discussions are confidential and anonymous. Nametags only have participants’ first name, and researchers are not allowed to be in the room—they watch from a separate space via a camera and television screen.

The tone for a focus group discussion is balanced and neutral. Participants are asked to respect any differences of opinion they may have with their fellow participants.

When it comes to attitudes on women’s land rights, potential participants were excluded if they said they were strongly opposed to allowing women to own land. The demographic criteria for participants to be included in this research were as follows:

- Born and raised in Kenya
- Education level: some secondary school or more
- Participants consider themselves “very liberal,” “somewhat liberal,” “moderate,” or “somewhat conservative” when it comes to social issues
- They identify as either Christian or not religious

PERSUASION RESEARCH

Persuasion Focus Group Discussions (August 2019): To test how effective messaging developed from the research was with our target audience, six focus group discussions were conducted August 6–8, 2019 in Kisumu, Homa Bay, and Oyugis. Two groups were held in each of the three locations. The criteria for participants in these discussions mirrors the criteria for participants in the mindset focus group discussions.

Using various communication mediums, including written materials and messenger videos, allowed us to test messages in a way that combines content, context, messenger credibility, and emotional tone—just as typically happens in a real-world communications environment. This research allows us to refine and strengthen messaging about women’s land rights and to explore which messages and messengers are most effective.

The groups studied in these discussions included married women (Oyugis), widows (Oyugis), elder men (Kisumu and Homa Bay), young men (Kisumu), and young women (Homa Bay). A total of 60 participants took part in this research. The language used in focus group discussions (English or Luo) varied depending on the location.

Location/Research Audience	Number of Participants
Kisumu	
Elders (men)	10
Young Men	10
Homa Bay	
Elders (men)	10
Young Women	10
Oyugis	
Widows	10
Married Women	10
Total participants	60

ACTION RESEARCH

Asynchronous Online Focus Group (March 2021): An online asynchronous focus group was conducted among 28 residents of Homa Bay and Kisumu, ages 19-39, over four days from March 25 to 30, 2021. Each day, participants log in to an online platform at their convenience to complete a series of activities posted for that day, including reviewing the website of the Securing Your Family’s Future (SYFF) campaign, along with various messages, images, and videos used by the campaign (the website can be found here: securingyourfamilysfuture.or.ke).

This research allows us to test the effectiveness of campaign materials developed based on messaging recommendations from the Mindset and Persuasion phases of research. It provides opportunities to examine what, if anything, would further strengthen these materials—and to understand if any materials may be confusing for participants. In addition, we develop a sense of questions participants still have after exposure to these materials and the kinds of additional information they need to be supportive or take action regarding women owning and inheriting land.

Participants included 14 women (six parents) and 14 men (five parents). The language used in the focus group discussion was English, though some of the materials tested were in Luo.

Location/Research Audience	Number of Participants
Kisumu	
Women, not parents	4
Women, parents	3
Men, not parents	3
Men, parents	3
Homa Bay	
Women, not parents	4
Women, parents	3
Men, not parents	5
Men, parents	2
Unknown County	
Men, not parents	1
Total participants	28



<https://www.kelinkenya.org/> | <https://securingyourfamilyfuture.or.ke/>