



Beyond ownership

tracking progress on women's land rights in Sub-Saharan Africa

Ensuring equal rights in ownership and control over land for women and men is essential to achieve **gender equality** (SDG5) and **eradicate poverty** (SDG 1). Yet, capturing the real status of land rights and measuring progress in the SDGs targets related to land tenure is still a **challenge**, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa where:



1 Land tenure is often governed by **customary and statutory laws**

2 Large swaths of land remain **unregistered** and women's plots are less likely than men's plots to be documented

3 Few surveys collect **sex-disaggregated data** and inquire about the owners and the managers of land separately

4 Land ownership, management and other rights over land are often used **interchangeably**

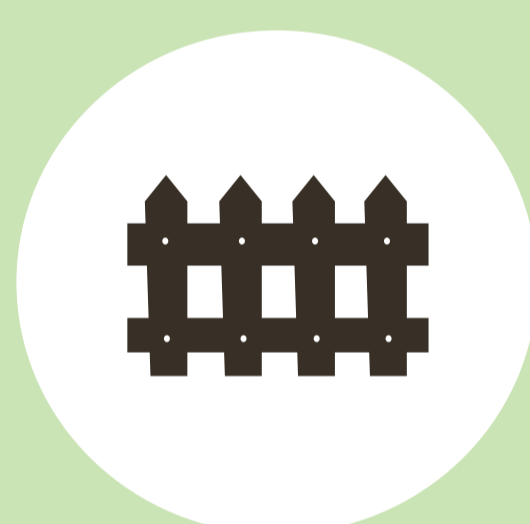
AN ANALYSIS IN 6 COUNTRIES FROM SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA SHOWS THAT:

- > a significant share of reported owners do not have the rights to sell or use the land as collateral and women are particularly disadvantaged
- > women often participate in the management of plots owned by men
- > for women farmers, management of land and decision-making about the use of the output are strongly linked to land ownership



To capture the **real status** of land rights in countries and monitor progress in the SDGs, surveys need to consider the **different rights and different levels of decision-making** of women and men over land.

THIS MEANS COLLECTING SEX-DISAGGREGATED DATA ON:



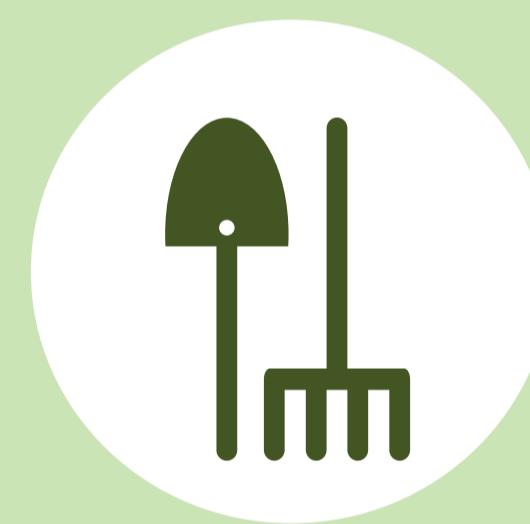
Land ownership

Land ownership is usually defined to mean the full set of rights, even if people often report being land owners while having only a subset of rights. Land ownership usually implies legal or recognized rights over the land. Yet, there may or may not be formal documents, such as a title, to support the claims.



Right to transfer land

The right to transfer land includes the right to sell, bequeath and rent the plot. In many countries, women and men may have the rights to alienate their plot through bequest, but not the rights to transfer it through sale or rental. In these cases, collecting only reported ownership does not work as a harmonized measure of land rights valid for cross-country comparisons.



Land management

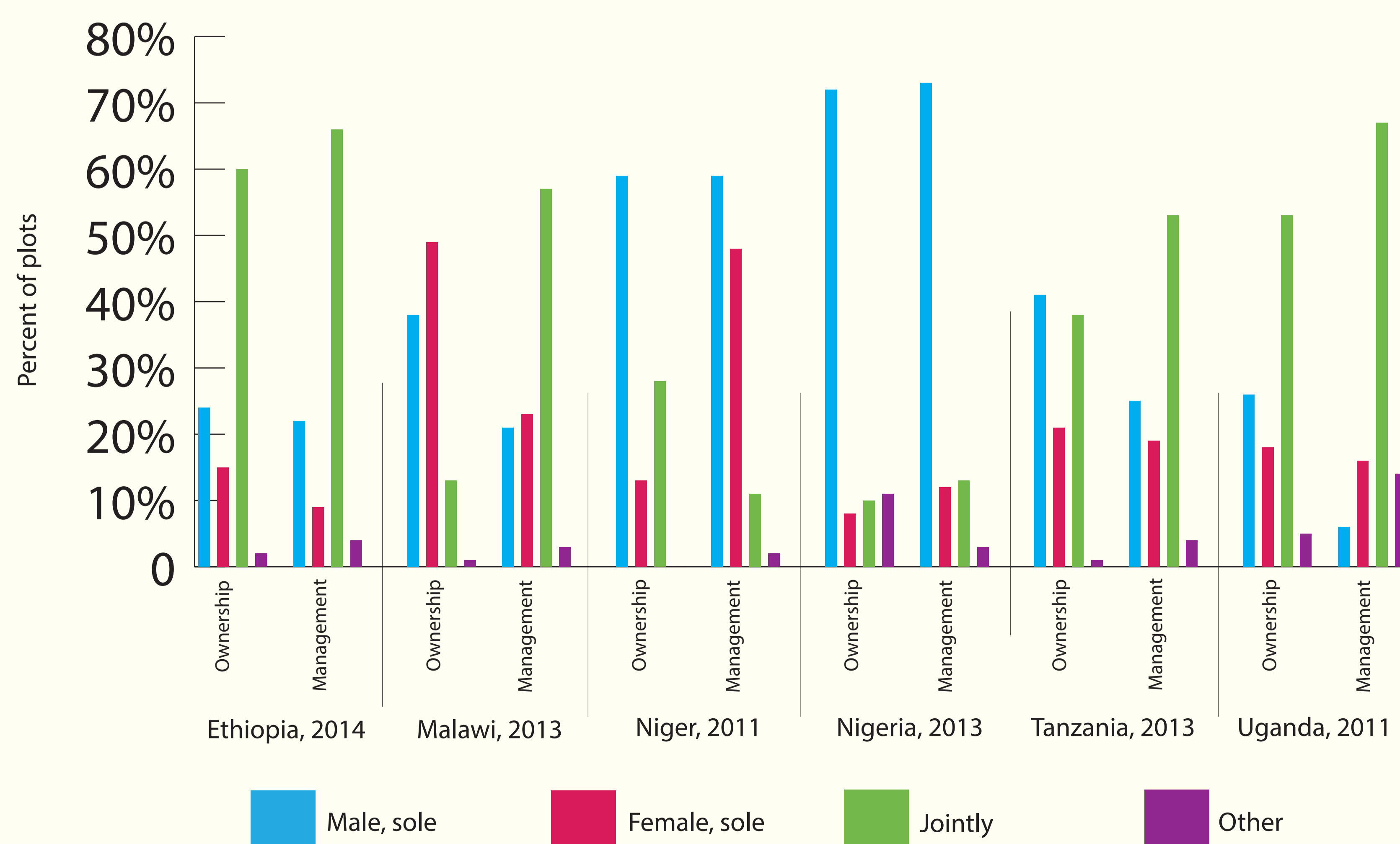
Decisions on land affect the productivity of the plot. That's why identifying the sex of the manager (that is the decision maker(s) about planting and input use) is important for understanding gender differences in farming practices and agricultural productivity.



Right to benefit economically from land

Economic benefits derive from accessing to agricultural production or selling the plots. Control over the use of these outputs captures women and men's rights to derive economic benefits from land.

Figure 1. Distribution of ownership and management of plots by sex



WHEN surveys consider different rights over land, the evidence shows that:

> **women** are **disadvantaged** not only in the ownership but also in the management of land (Figure 1)

> **ownership** and **management** are correlated but the **overlap** is **not complete**. For example, in Ethiopia and Malawi almost half of sole female owned plots are managed jointly with a male family member

> many **owners** do **not** have the **right to sell land or use it as collateral**. For example in Malawi male land owners report rights to sell for 55% of their plots while female owners report rights to sell for 46% of their plots