

The International Federation of Surveyors (FIG) publication n. 24 “Guidelines on Women's Access to Land”: still relevant after 20 years.

Francesca Marzatico (New Zealand) and Marisa Balas (Mozambique)

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SUMMARY

Land tenure security is important for sustainable development. As pressure over land increases women find themselves in a more vulnerable position, more exposed to climate change shocks, and less able to fight against hunger and poverty.

Hence, women’s access to land has become prominent in several international and local efforts, including the Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

One of the efforts countries are taking to improve women’s land rights (WLRs) is the systematic land registration programs and campaigns, an effort to which land surveyors make a huge contribution. The FIG Guidelines on Women's Access to Land (Publication 24) is an important resource for surveyors and land professionals. It addresses issues related to gender equality in land tenure and land management and provides guidance to the aforementioned professionals on how to support women’s access to land through their work. The publication raises awareness of the importance of gender in land administration, development and management while recognizing the central role that women play in sustainable development. The publication also highlights the main legal, social and cultural obstacles to women’s access to land and it provides guidelines on how to establish land administration procedures that allow equitable inclusion of women.

Although still very relevant, the publication was written over 20 years ago and it needs to be revised taking into account the new knowledge in the field and allowing for integration with the new international standards such as SDGs.

The FIG Commission 7 Working Group (WG) on WLR, in collaboration with the School of Surveying at the University of Otago, is leading the process for the revision of these guidelines.

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A methodology for the revision was developed in the context of the University of Otago School of Surveying's Advanced Land Tenure paper (SURV456/556) and tested with a group of fifteen students. Students were initially asked to write a short research project on women access to land. This task was primarily to increase their awareness on the theme. They briefly described the land tenure and land administration system in a country of their choice and then highlighted the main socio-cultural and legal challenges women face in accessing land. The second task was to produce an assessment of Publication 24, using the findings from their country profiles and evaluating whether the publication is useful in addressing these challenges. This resulted in a report with proposed recommendations for the revision of Publication 24.

All groups had to follow the same reporting format in both tasks in order to ensure consistency of findings and information provided. These findings were first presented to FIG WG on Women's Access to Land and later discussed during the Commission 7 annual meeting (Deventer, the Netherlands) in a special session dedicated to WLRs.

This paper aims to discuss the methodology developed for the revision of the FIG Publication n. 24, its challenges and lessons learned, as a way to include other institutions, especially educational but not only, so that the revision process becomes more inclusive and based on different realities around the globe. With a comprehensive revision such as this being proposed, the authors believe it is possible to develop effective and user-friendly guidelines that can assist surveyors and land professionals in their efforts to support women's access to land all-over the world.

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