

Registering Land Title in Benin

In **Benin**, agricultural productivity growth has been suppressed by the absence in some areas of written ownership records and a customary land tenure system that can make land transactions difficult.⁶ Many families lack legal evidence of tenure and the boundaries of the landholding itself are often disputed, even within the family. Female-headed households can be especially vulnerable to eviction.

As part of the **Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC)** compact between the U.S. and Benin governments, the MCC invested \$31 million (USD) in the **Access to Land Project** to support land policy reforms, strengthen the land tenure security of landholders and support rural land governance. In 2007, Benin passed a **Rural Landholding Law**, which recognized customary tenure rights as equal to civil property rights. The Compact worked to extend Benin's pilot efforts at establishing community-level rural landholding plans, or **Plan Foncier Rural (PFR)**. PFRs are implemented at the village level and attempt to demarcate the boundaries of parcels, including agricultural fields. Residents in PFR villages were able to receive, for a fee, individual land use certificates, which constitute legal evidence of recorded land rights.

An independent randomized control trial (RCT) evaluation, measuring early results (approximately one year after PFRs were issued) found that land demarcation through the PFR led to an increase in long-term investments, such as tree planting and perennial crops.⁷ In addition, women in PFR villages were more likely to leave land fallow — an important soil conservation practice. The final evaluation of the Access to Land Project is expected in 2017 and will assess whether there was a continued increase in long-term investment, as well as increases in agriculture output, farm yields and the use of productivity-enhancing inputs such as labor, fertilizer and improved seeds.

Harvesting Water for Dry Seasons and in Drylands

Around the world, farmers with rainfed crops and livestock herds are struggling to adjust to climate change and shifting weather patterns. Farmers observe that the rain seems to come too early or too late; when it does come, there is either too little or too much. For millions of farmers, extreme and interminable drought means no crop and no food.

For these farmers, harvesting water is as important as harvesting their crop. They need tools and techniques to more efficiently capture, store and manage water in order to remain productive during dry seasons and to mitigate the impacts of climate change. In rural **India**, consistent access to water is a critical issue. Two thirds of agriculture in India is rainfed, but the

seasonal monsoons alternate with long, dry periods, making it difficult for communities to maintain an adequate groundwater supply.⁸

The **Mosaic Villages Project**, a partnership between **The Mosaic Company** and the **Sehgal Foundation**, funded the construction of four new check dams in Santhawadi, Pathkhori, Nangal Hasanpur and Khohar. A check dam is a barrier across a drainage ditch or small waterway that counteracts erosion by reducing water flow velocity. The check dams capture and store rainwater, which is then funneled into the underground aquifer, recharging groundwater levels and reducing salinity so that water can be used for consumption or irrigation. Together, the check dams have directly and indirectly benefitted more than 30,000 people, and have a total reservoir capacity of more than 14 million gallons.

80%

of global agriculture is rainfed and is responsible for much of the food consumed by poor people.



The Mosaic Villages Project funded the construction of several “check dams” in India, allowing monsoon rainwater to be captured and stored, recharging groundwater levels.

Credit: The Mosaic Company