

Gender Dimensions of Youth Access to Agricultural Land under Customary Tenure System in the Techiman Traditional Area of Ghana

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Abstract

Youth are an essential human capital resource across the globe. Their sheer numbers, enthusiasm, strength are valuable assets required for economic development. The youth remains and will continue to remain sub-Saharan Africa's abundant asset due to the transition in the demographic structure. Sub-Saharan Africa alone will have more than 295 million people between the ages of 15 and 24 by 2035 and 362 million by 2050 according to the World Bank projections. The youth bulge of the region is expected to grow and the continent will remain youthfully compared with other regions of the world. The large youth numbers described as *demographic dividend* of resources gives Africa leverage in terms of human resource to drive up food production and supply of industrial labour force. Thus, youth access to agricultural land is crucial in harnessing their potentials for increased agricultural production and for their self-empowerment as well as economic independence. In the case of Ghana which is largely an agrarian economy, youth access to agricultural land is critical to economic progress and the future of agriculture in the country. However, very little has been done in the research arena in Ghana on youth land access especially youth gender land access dynamics. Research on gender land access has largely been skewed towards the adult population with very little attention on the youth. This study thus investigates youth access to agricultural land under the customary land tenure regime in Ghana focusing on gender dimensions. Using the Techiman Traditional Area as a case study, the study applied multiple sampling techniques in a multi-stage sampling process to select the study communities and the respondents. A total sample of 455 youth respondents comprising 299 males and 156 females were covered in twenty peri-urban and rural communities. The results from the study revealed that majority of the youth, especially female, accessed agricultural land under non-market mechanisms such as licence, gift and inheritance; while predominantly male youth also accessed land under market mechanisms such as rentals and sharecropping. The study also revealed that the youth both male and female have limited

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access to land on permanent basis through gift, inheritance and purchase. It further found that, majority of the youth, both male and female all held small land sizes of 1- 3 acres for farming purposes with the problem been more acute among the female youth respondents. The underlying challenges facing both male and female youth were in two-fold: demand-related such as high cost of accessing land, competition from residential developers and wealthy adult farmers, large scale land acquisitions etc and supply-related such as unwillingness of the elders to release land, scarce productive family land, land rather given out to outsiders among others. The study has developed an intervention model in response to the challenges to enhance youth land access. This model is anchored on improving local land governance to enhance youth access to agricultural land. Specific measures include; managing emerging land demands; legislative support; easing socio-cultural constraints, expanding access to credit and improving local level land governance. The proposed interventions need to function under a land policy which focuses on the youth. The study therefore recommends further research into youth access to agricultural land under the main customary tenure regimes across the country as a means of formulating an evidence-based youth agricultural land access policy in Ghana.

Key words: Gender, Youth, Land, Access, Customary Tenure, Techiman

Background of the Study

Youth are important human capital for the socio-economic development of Ghana and sub-Saharan Africa (SSA in general. Their sheer numbers and strength make them a valuable source of labour to drive economic growth. Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) has been described as the ‘youngest’ region in the world due to its demographic transition (Garcia and Fares, 2008). SSA alone is projected to have about 295 million youth by 2035 and 362 million by 2050 (World Bank, 2014: 26). In Ghana, the youth population is estimated to be about 34.1% of the entire population (GSS, 2014b). This youth bulge could be impetus for economic development if they are fully engaged in productive economic activities.

Despite this youth bulge in Africa, unemployment and underemployment is a common feature among the youth. In the SSA, the unemployment rate among the youth was estimated at 11.8% in 2014 and projected to remain close to 11.7% in the coming years (ILO, 2015 2013). The youth were the worst affected by the 2008/09 economic crisis in terms of job losses (Annan, 2013; ILO, 2012; Shankar, 2010). Government of Ghana for instance, has also noted in its youth policy document that, a large number of Ghanaian youth were affected by poverty, social exclusion and economic marginalization (MYS 2010). Unemployment rate among the youth in Ghana was estimated at 5.5% in 2014 (GSS, 2014b). The youth are often not the target of most governments and policy makers especially in developing countries and ministries set to cater for youth needs are poorly resourced combined with other sectors as education, sports and culture (Bennell, 2007). The youth in Africa are marginalized in the social and political discourse (Abbink, 2005).

This is a sheer waste of the energies and productive efforts these young people possess. Their economic marginalization and deprivation are a threat to peace and social stability. Lack of employment and economic opportunities make the youth vulnerable to manipulations and exploitations. Failure to channel youth into productive pursuits could prove too costly for the

society (World Bank, 2007). Arab Spring which occurred in 2011, reiterates the threat posed by huge numbers of unemployed and impoverished youth to the political order (Lintelo, 2011).

In view of the dangers pose by the youth especially if not directed into productive activities, there is a growing attention to youth issues. There is increasing acceptance that developmental policies should at least address the needs and aspirations of the youth (Lintelo, 2011). Abbink (2005) noted a number of responses have been suggested in the academic literature to cure the state of doom and despair surrounding the African youth. Abbink discussed the response as the ‘agency’, ‘interventionist’ and ‘a descriptive-analytic’. Abbink (2005:9, 10) noted that the agency response focuses more on the ability of youth to find their own answers to their problems and shaping their own destiny. Agency response is premised on the notion that the youth are versatile, resilient and can do whatever possible to survive and thus require minimal support. *Descriptive-analytic* response rather attempts to explain things happening to the youth over the years from a historical and sociological perspective and attempts to offer current scenarios. This measure does not really offer immediate redress to the youth problems. *Interventionist* response views the youth as deprived and requires that remedial policies should be developed and implemented to uplift the youth from their deprivation. It further calls for the active involvement of both local and international NGOs in developing and implementing remedial policies towards making young people attain independence, employment and social status and civil representation.

Interventionist response is relevant to the present discourse. As already noted, the youth are economically deprived and requires policy support to attain economic independence through employment creation. Interventions through educational training and acquisition of higher qualifications appear not to provide a holistic solution to the youth problem. Such intervention rather aggravates unemployment especially among the educated youth. While higher education is expected to reduce unemployment level, the situation in Africa is different. It is noted that, in Africa, education does not necessary reduce unemployment among the youth and in some countries, youth unemployment is rather very high among the educated youth (Garcia and Fares, 2008). In Ghana, there is even “Unemployed Graduates Association of Ghana (UGAG²)” with thousands of members. Jeffs (2010) also found high level of unemployment among educated young people in the Meerut, India. Another study in Mali similarly found high unemployment among the youth who have had some form of formal education but cannot find the kind of work their education is believed to have trained them for (White, 2012:4).

There is therefore the need to widen the intervention strategies to give equal attention to other sectors to complement the modest gain made in graduate training for the job market. Agriculture has been noted to offer enormous opportunities for the young people. It is the largest employer of people especially in Africa (Anyidoho, 2012; White, 2012; 2011; IFAD, 2010) and could be depended on to alleviate or curb the high level of youth unemployment. According to the World Bank (2014) and Brookes *et al.* (2013), more than two-thirds of the youth in SSA especially in the rural areas are already engaged in agriculture and majority will remain in the sector in the coming decades even if the non-farm sectors develop well. Agricultural sector according to the

² Unemployed Graduates Association of Ghana (UGAG) is an association of some graduates in Ghana, who are unemployed and still search for job. See <https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/Unemployed-Graduates-Association-registers-thousands-of-members-369789>

World Bank (2014) offers broadly three employment pathways for the youth. These are full-time work on family farms, part-time farm work and wage work.

Access to land by the youth is thus crucial for them to fully harness the employment potentials in the agricultural sector. Besides the technical, financial and other material support the youth would require to take up agriculture-based livelihood opportunities, land access remains hugely important. Land is an essential resource in any agrarian activity (Bennell, 2007). Its access encompasses availability of land and ownership security, desirable physical and economic attributes as well as transparency and fairness level of transactions (Ahene, 2009). However, the youth are noted to be ‘vulnerable and powerless in the land markets’ and in the hands of their local elders who control land (Kidido, et al. 2017a; Amanor, 2010, Boni, 2008; Richards, 2005). They thus require outside support to be able to access land for agricultural purposes.

Some studies in Ghana have shown that the youth experience land shortage occasioned by land alienation by their elders to outsiders. As a result, many local youth have been compelled to either abandon farming or seek alternatives means of survival such as ‘galamsey³’ and chainsaw activities (Amanor, 2010). Land access difficulty has been noted as a major “pushed” factor which forces the youth out of agriculture (Sumberg *et al.* 2012). According to the World Bank (2014), land as a key resource in agricultural enterprise could seriously hamper youth’s involvement in agriculture if they find it difficult to access it and set up farms. The Bank further noted that constraints underlying youth access to land need to be relaxed, in order to raise productivity of the pathways to agriculture employment for the youth.

Enhancing the youth land access prospects for agriculture-based employment opportunities would require deliberate interventions through policy support. But this must be developed backed by empirical appreciation of the scale and dimensions of the youth land access challenges and how it resonates among the different youth segments. In Ghana, Kidido *et al.* (2017a; 2017b) have studied youth land access dynamics, dimensions and emerging challenges in the Techiman area. Mortensen (2017) has also focused on agrarian change and youth access to land in the Atebubu area of Ghana. It is also instructive to note that, Amanor (2010) and Boni (2008) have also tackled youth land issues but within the context of land commodification; changing family values and land contestations in cocoa growing areas in Ghana. This study expands further the frontiers of research on youth land access in Ghana by focusing on gender dimensions of youth land access under the customary tenure system. This is to widen the understanding on the youth land access needs for all-inclusive intervention response. As would be shown later in the results, an intervention model has been developed to enhance youth land access in Ghana based on the underlying challenges facing the youth both male and female.

Brief Overview of the Study Area and land Ownership Arrangement

The geographical scope of the study was limited to the Techiman Traditional Area (TTA) in the Brong Ahafo region. The area lies within the middle belt of Ghana as depicted in Figure 1. The area shares political administrative boundaries with Offinso North district to the south, Nkroranza Municipality and Nkroranza North district to the east, Kintampo South district to the north and Wenchi Municipality in the West.

³ Galamsey is term used in Ghana for illegal small scale mining.

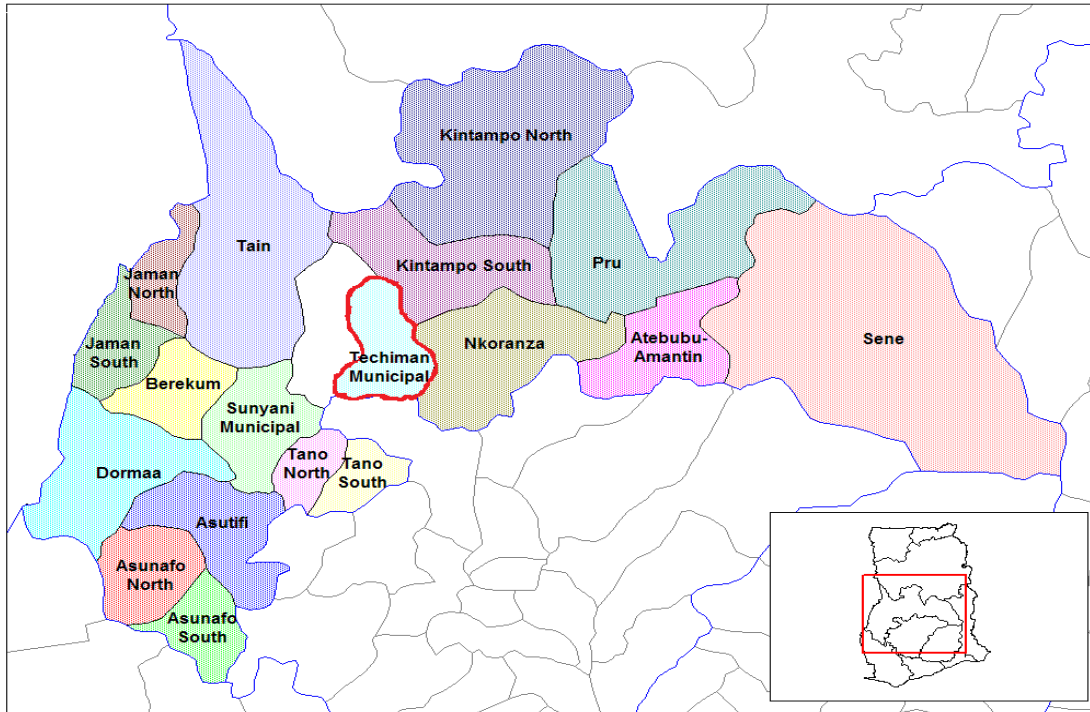


Figure 1: District Map of Brong Ahafo Region Highlighting the Study Area Districts

Source: Modified from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Brong_Ahafo_districts.png

The population of the area was estimated at 206,856 with 47, 627 households as at 2010 (GSS, 2012). There is a relatively more female in the area than male. From the 2010 Census data, the male population was estimated at 100, 498 (49%) while that of the female was also estimated at 106, 358 (51%). The youth population (15-34 years) in 2010 was estimated at 67, 197 representing 32.5% of the district population (GSS, 2010 Census Data). The area covers a total land area of 669.7 Km² (GSS, 2014a) with population density is estimated to be over 227.7 persons/Km² (TENDA, 2013). The population density in the area is very high relation compared to the regional density of 58 persons/Km² and the national density of 103 persons/Km² from the 2010 Census. This has implications for the socio-economic of the area (GSS, 2014a) and also access to land.

Methods

The study covered 20 communities in the Techiman Traditional Area (See Table 1). Multiple sampling techniques were employed to select the youth respondents. The youth respondents were purposively sampled based on the age criteria of 15-34 years and involvement in agricultural activities. Households were used as the reference point in sampling the youth respondents. In order to gain full appreciation of the issues underlying youth access to land and the associated challenges, the study targeted the youth both male and female who had accessed land for agricultural activities. The research was thus limited to the youth who operated farms. In all, 455 youth were interviewed using a structured questionnaire. Data from the youth respondents were coded and entered into Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software which was then used to generate descriptive statistics used in analysis.

Table1. Number of Youth Respondents in the selected communities in the Techiman Area

Community	Youth
Hansua	20
Krobo	27
Tuobodom	89
Nkwaeso	20
Bamiri	12
Twimia-Koase	21
Mesidan	8
Sansama	13
Kuntunso	12
Aworowa	39
Nsuta	18
Buoyem	14
Tanoso	53
Adieso	5
Tadieso	11
Amangoase	9
Tanoboase	6
Offuman	51
Kokroko	5
Fiaso	22
Total	455

Source: Field Survey, May 2016

Results and Discussions

Gender Composition of the Respondents

In this study, 299 (65.7%) male and 156 (34.3%) female youth were interviewed. There were more male than the female. Since the study purposively targeted the youth engaged in on-farm agricultural activities, it can be inferred that, more males were into farming and thus qualified to participate in the survey than the females. This is not surprising as engagement with the female respondents during the survey revealed that, the females were not very interested in the farming but rather preferred operating businesses as a means of livelihood. For instance, even among the female respondents who were engaged in agricultural activities and participated in this survey, 81 (51.9%) out of the 156 were running businesses such as hairdressing, tailoring among others as a secondary occupation compared to only 24 (8%) out of the 299 in the case of their male counterparts. The dominance of male youth in this survey clearly shows that majority of them eke out a living from the agricultural sector and this finding is corroborated by the national level data on youth engagement in agriculture. According to GSS (2014b), more male youth (45.1%) were employed by the agricultural sector compared to 38.3% among the female youth in Ghana.

Gender Dimension of Land Ownership and Access Mechanisms

In terms of gender dimension of land ownership among the youth respondents, out of the 299 male respondents, only 43 (14%) owned the lands they occupied while among the female respondents, 31 (20%) out of the 156 owned land. The data showed that land ownership was a bit prevalent among the female respondents compared with their male counterparts. This is not too surprising given the matrilineal cultural background of the respondents. As depicted in Table 2 below, the female youth were more likely to gain access to land through inheritance and gift which give complete ownership rights than their male counterparts. For instance, among the female respondents, 21 (14%) acquired their land through gift, and another 10 (7%) accessed through inheritance compared with 32 (11%) and 10 (3%) respectively among the male respondents. This is partly attributable to the matrilineal inheritance practices in the area. Mothers who owned lands prefer to dispose of their property to their daughters. For instance, Benneh *et. al* (1995) had also noted that most women in the peri-urban areas of Kumasi, a matrilineal society, would obligingly pass on their family agricultural lands to their daughters and granddaughters rather than to their sons. The male youth can only inherit from their maternal uncles. This limits their inheritance prospects under the matrilineal system compared to their female counterparts.

Table 2: Gender dimension of youth land ownership and access process

Item	Gender		
	Male	Female	Total
Owens land			
Yes	43 (14%)	31 (20%)	74
No	256 (86%)	125 (80%)	381
Total	299	156	455
Access mechanism	Male	Female	Total
Purchase	1 (0.3%)	0	1
Gift	32 (11%)	21 (14%)	53
Sharecropping	46 (15%)	14 (9%)	60
Inherited	10 (3%)	10 (7%)	20
Customary License	132 (44%)	92 (59%)	224
Pledged	1 (0.3%)	0	1
Rented	77 (26%)	19 (12%)	96
Total	299 (100%)	156 (100%)	455
Source of land acquired	Male	Female	Total
Community elders	0	1 (0.6%)	1
In-law	6 (2%)	5 (3%)	11
Chief/ Queen mother	2 (0.7%)	2 (1%)	4
Father/ Mother	126 (42%)	84 (54%)	210
Government	1 (0.3%)	0	1
Family head	13 (4%)	5 (3%)	18
Other land owners/Usufructs	129 (43%)	37 (24%)	166
Grand Father/Mother	14 (5%)	8 (5%)	22
Uncle	2 (0.7%)	3 (2%)	5
Others	6 (2%)	11 (7%)	17
Total	299 (100%)	156 (100%)	455

Source: Field data, 2016

It is also apparent from Table 2 that, notwithstanding the fact that a relatively more female youth owned land than their male counterparts, majority 92 (59%) of the female respondents were customary licence holders compared to 131 (44%) among the male youth. Their licence emanated largely from their ‘Fathers/Mothers’ and husbands in the case of those married. The female depended more on their households for land and in the majority of cases, they accessed the lands on licence basis waiting to be assigned full ownership rights through inheritance or gift.

On the other hand, the male youth respondents were more able to access land from outside their households or immediate family. Majority 129 (43%) of the male youth acquired their lands from other land owners compared to 37 (23%) among their female counterparts. The male youth were able to access land on sharecropping and rental terms outside their households than their female counterparts. A considerable number of the male youth respondents, 46 (15%) were engaged in sharecropping and 77 (26%) rental arrangements. Among the female youth however, only 14 (9%) were sharecroppers and 19 (12%) were renters (see Table 2). While the male youth were more able to negotiate their way with other land owners to rent or engage in sharecropping, the female youth mostly depended on their immediate family especially ‘Fathers/Mothers’ for land on gift, inheritance and licence terms. During the survey, the female respondents were more specific on their ‘mothers’ as those who gave them land. Mortensen (2017) study in Atebubu area of Ghana similarly revealed that female youth largely acquired land on licence basis, gift and inheritance from their households as opposed to their male counterparts who mainly accessed land through rentals or sharecropping.

It is important to point out that, the female youth despite depending mainly on their households for land through non-market access modes such as inheritance, gift and customary licence held small land sizes almost similar to their male counterparts who largely accessed their land through the market access modes.

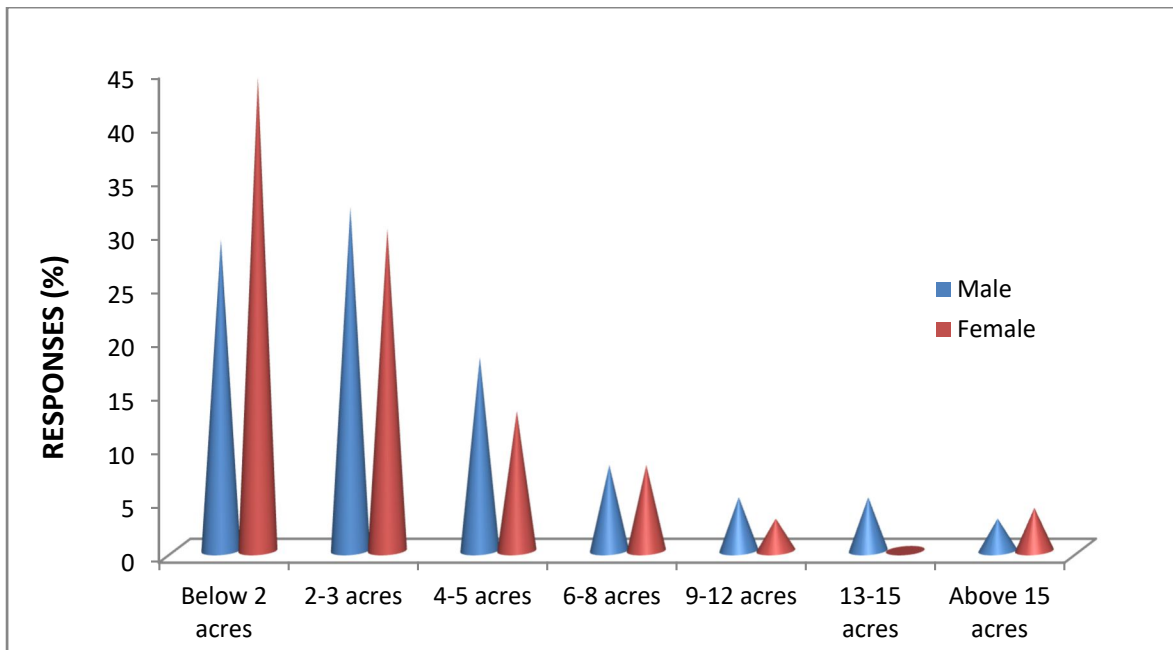


Figure 2: Land sizes both male and female in the Techiman Area.

Source: Field data, 2015

As depicted in Figure 2, small landholdings cut across both male and female youth respondents albeit a bit more pronounced among the female respondents. For instance, 44% of the female respondents held land sizes less 2 acres, while among the male youth respondents 29% also held lands of the same size. However, there is really no significant difference in the landholding sizes among the respondents as shown in Table 3. For instance, 60.9% of the male youth respondents held land sizes not exceeding 3 acres compared with 73.1% among the female youth respondents. This difference is not statistically significant (**Chi-square value= 6.720, df =1, p-value=0.01**) at 95% confidence level and margin of error of 5%. Across the genders, overwhelming majority indicated they wanted more land for their agricultural activities. For instance, 86% of the male youth and 81.4% of the female youth respondents wished for more land. As noted by Ahene (2009), access to land encompasses desirable physical space. However, the youth (both male and female) access to agricultural land in the Techiman area is limited in terms of desirable size among the majority of the respondents. Thus, regardless of gender, the youth respondents were constrained in their ability to access desirable landholdings for agricultural purpose.

While the male youth appeared to be constrained by cost due to their heavy reliance on the market access modes, the female youth also appeared to be constrained by certain socio-cultural factors at the household level which also impeded their ability to access desirable land parcels. The real challenges defining the youth land access outcomes in terms of quality of rights and size of holdings as revealed in this study are considered in the next section.

Table 3: Analysis of land size of Male and Female Youth in the Techiman Area

<i>Residence</i>	<i>Land Size²</i>		Total
	1- 3 acres	≥ 4 acres	
Male	182 (60.9%)	117 (39.1%)	299 (100%)
Female	114 (73.1%)	42 (26.9%)	156 (100%)
Total	296	159	455

Source: Field data, 2016

² Land size categories not exceeding 3 acres were merged and other remaining categories exceeding 3 acres were also merged together to allow for Chi-square statistical analysis.

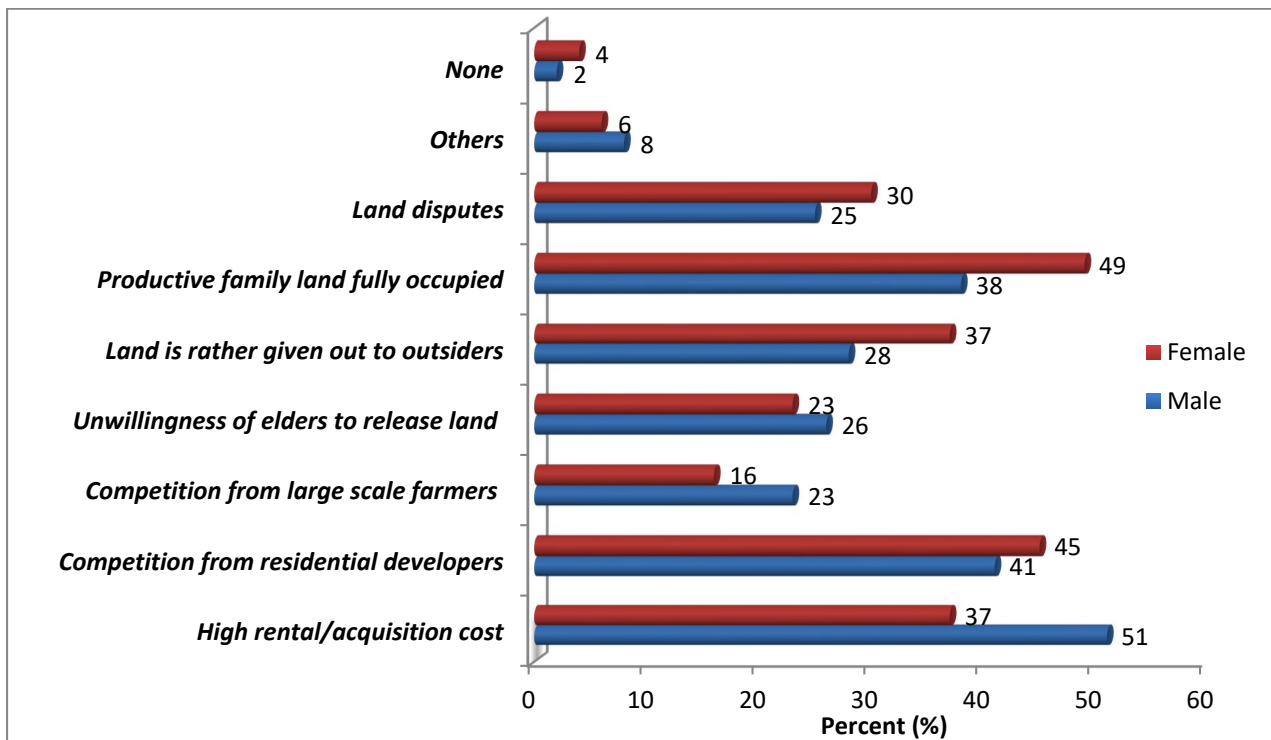
Gender Dimensions of the Challenges

In terms of understanding the challenges from the gender perspective, it can be seen from Figure 3 that, among the male youth respondents in this study, the dominant challenges included high rental/acquisition cost and competition from large scale farmers. For instance, 51% of the male respondents out of the 299 noted ‘High rental/ acquisition cost’ as a key challenge compared to 37% among the female respondents. This situation is not so surprising considering the fact that, the male youth largely depended on market access mechanism such as rental which is cost driven. The male youth were exposed to the market access mechanism than the female youth who depended largely on non-market mechanisms such as gift; inheritance and licence from their households compared to their male counterparts (see Table 2).

Moreover, among the male respondents more (26%) mentioned ‘Unwillingness of elders members to release land’ as a challenge compared to 23% among the female respondents. This

reinforces the point that, the female respondents in this study generally have leverage in terms of accessing land from their immediate households or families than the male respondents.

The high dependency of female youth on their immediate households for land also explains why, challenges such as ‘Productive family land fully occupied’ and ‘Land rather given out to outsiders’, ‘Land disputes’ and ‘Competition from residential developers’ a bit more prominently among them than the male youth. For instance, 49% of the female respondents cited ‘Productive family land fully occupied’ as a key challenge compared to 38% among the male respondents. The female respondents were more affected by appropriation of productive land by the senior household members due to their dependency on their households for land.



Male (n=299), Female (n=156)

Figure 3: Youth land access challenges from gender dimension

Source: Author’s construct based on field data, 2015

Again, the decision of elders to give land to outsiders especially residential developers in the peri-urban areas affected female more than the male as confirmed in Figure 3. The male respondents largely rent and do sharecropping outside of their households/families and so decisions of their elders to give out land to developers do not affect many of them. Additionally, land disputes as a challenge in accessing land was more of a concern for the female (30%) than the male respondents (25%). This is explained by the fact that, more of land disputes emanated largely from family holdings and actions of other extended family members. As the youth category that depended more on the household/family land stock, the female tended to suffer a bit more from the effects of family land disputes compared to the male.

As clearly shown in Figure 3 above, despite the minor variations in terms of the challenges facing the both male and female in accessing agricultural under the customary tenure regime in

Ghana, the identified challenges remained impediment to the youth in their land access effort. This therefore requires *interventionist* response as noted by Abbink (2005). This study has proposed an intervention model aimed at easing the constraints and challenges underlying the youth (both male and female) land access. Since the challenges identified which defined the youth landholdings and access terms are virtually the same, the model as discussed below attempt to tackle the challenges holistically without much disaggregation on gender basis. This is because, when the constraints are eased, both male and female will all enjoy enhanced land access environment.

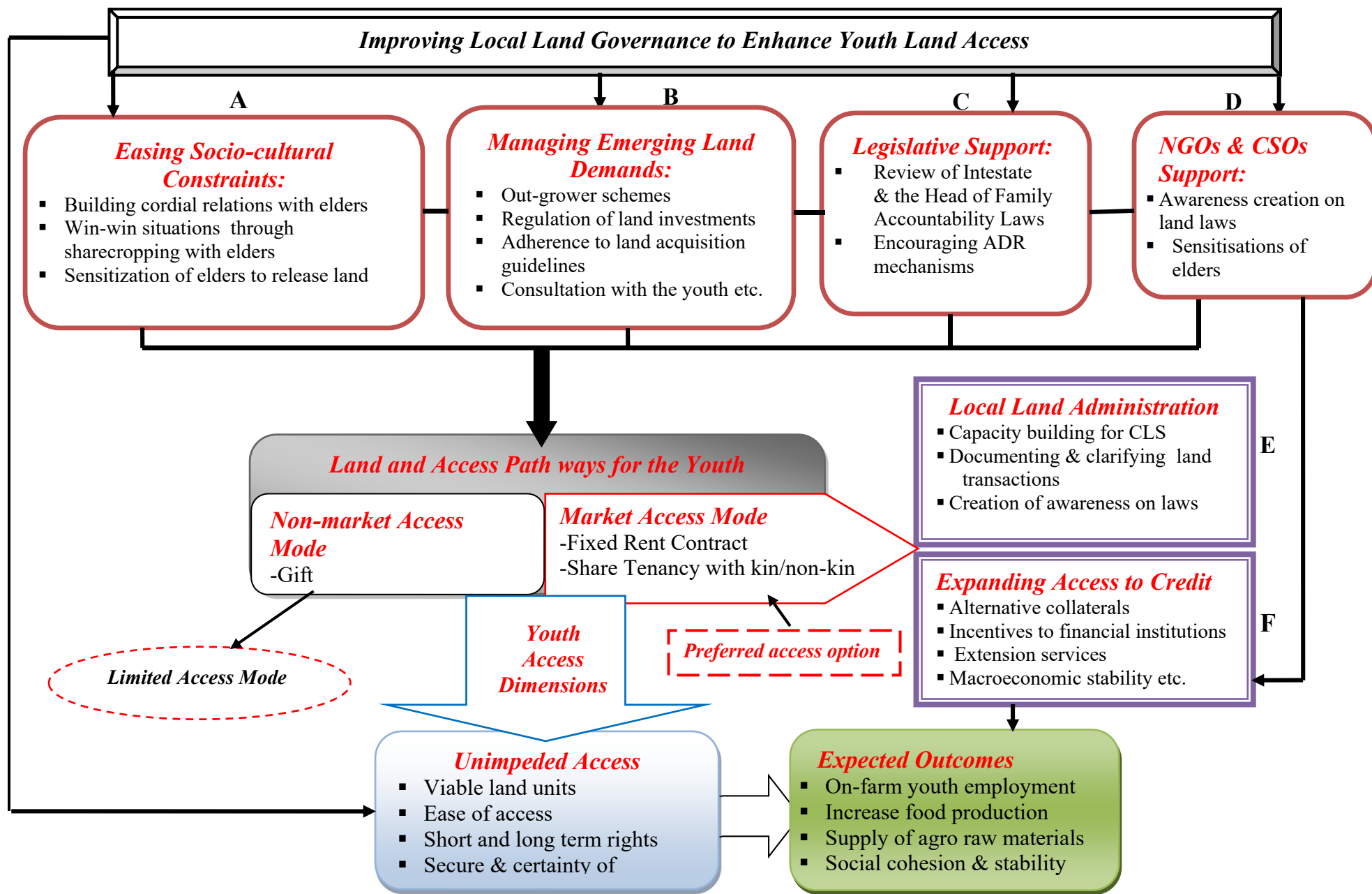
Intervention Model to Enhance Youth Land Access

The results revealed that the youth, both male and female are faced with numerous challenges in accessing land for agricultural purpose. Their land sizes were generally small and on temporal basis. Kidido *et al.* (2017a; 2017b) have similarly affirmed this state of affair among the youth in their access to land in Ghana. However, in this study, the female youth despite having leverage under inheritance and gift land access channels, majority were still licence holders from their households. They suffer most from family land scarcity and contestations as compared to their male counterparts. On the other hand, the male youth who largely engage in sharecropping and rentals are also faced with the challenge of high access cost as these mechanisms are cost driven. Additionally, some of the challenges facing the youth were induced by socio-cultural factors. For instance, among both male and female youth respondents ‘unwillingness of elders to release enough land’ featured prominently as one of the key challenges. This situation is largely driven on the wheels of socio-cultural factors such as lack of respect for the elders among others. For instance, Kidido *et al.* (2017a) found that lack of respect for the elders by the youth emerged as one of the reasons the youth were denied access to land on favourable terms.

The intervention model as depicted in the Figure 4, seeks to ‘*Improve Local Land Governance to Enhance Youth Land Access*’ under the customary tenure regime as indicated at the topmost section of the diagram. This is premised on the evidence from the TTA and in the literature which revealed that youth access to land for agricultural purpose under the customary tenure is beset with challenges. To achieve the goal of the model, some specific actions namely; A, B, C, D, E and F as captured in the framework need to be considered and implemented. These specific actions are under the broad themes of ‘*Easing Socio-cultural Constraints*’, ‘*Managing Emerging Land Demands*’, ‘*Legislative Support*’ and ‘*NGOs and CSOs Support*’. These measures constitute the key pillars of improving local land governance to ease land access constraints confronting the youth.

When measures (A, B, C, D) in the model are fully implemented, it will ensure that land is made available to the youth which they can access through both market and non-market access pathways as depicted in the model. However, evidence of this study revealed that access mechanisms for the youth through non-market modes such as gift and inheritance are limited due to a number of factors including increasing number of inheritors and the desire of elders to retain land ownership rights. The female youth who largely accessed land under these mechanisms progress through licence landholding period to eventually inherit or receive land as gift under the matrilineal system. This will require a period of waiting. The customary licence land holding terms is also restrictive and subsists at the will of the grantor. Options to improve youth land access through gift, inheritance and licence are limited.

Figure 4: Interventions model to enhance youth land access



Therefore, market land access pathways are better access option for the youth and are emphasised as preferred access option in this model to enhance youth access to land for agricultural purpose under the customary tenure regime. The model in Figure 4 depicts two market land access mode for the youth (***fixed rent contract and share tenancy with kin/non-kin***). These access modes have the potential to prepare the youth to climb the agricultural ladder. Agricultural ladder is where 'landless households lacking capital can start as renters or share tenants, build up knowledge and savings and eventually become small owners' (Deininger, 2003:86).

This can be done by implementing measures E and F which are centred on '*Local Land Administration*' and '*Expanding Access to Credit*' as depicted in the model. It is important to explain how these measures targeted at improving youth participation in the land market will function. These are elaborated below.

Increasing demands for land in Africa makes decentralisation of land decision-making and local level land administration critical (Brooks *et al.*, 2013). Documenting and developing data on land owning families at the local level by Customary Land Secretariats (CLS) to facilitate identification of potential sources of land is important for effective functioning of the land market access mechanisms for the youth. Again, it is also significant to document and clarify share and rental contracts to reduce potential conflicts and unfair agreements. According to Kasanga and Kotey (2001), market land access mechanism of rental, hiring and leasing are based mostly on verbal and unwritten arrangements with potential land conflicts emanating from these unwritten arrangements between powerful landlords and unsuspecting tenants. Again, as noted by Deininger (2003), clarifying and formalizing land rental and share contracts could have benefits of land productivity and conflict avoidance. CLS should be resourced by the government to undertake the exercise of documenting, clarifying land rental and share contracts and also assisting to enforce those contracts at the local level. The tendency for some landlords to deny the youth opportunity to have a share in the cash crops as exist in the TTA could be minimised through the process of documenting and clarifying sharing arrangements mediated by the CLS.

Youth participation in the land market especially through rental arrangements is contingent on their financial ability to pay for the rental charges. Fixed rent land access arrangement may not be feasible or optimal for many potential market participants due to wealth constraints (Deininger, 2003). High cost of accessing land under rental arrangement emerged among the top most challenges the youth especially the male faced in the Techiman area. Most youth lack resources and collateral securities to access credit in the market to finance their land access cost and agricultural operations in general. There should be deliberate programmes tailored towards making credit facilities available and affordable to the youth. Tax exemptions, partial guarantee schemes and other incentives can be provided by the government to financial and corporate institutions that offer credit facilities to the youth to acquire agricultural land and cultivate same. In Mexico, the government in early 2000s initiated 'Youth Rural Entrepreneur and Land Future Program' which provided credit to the landless rural youth to acquire land for agricultural purpose. The programme also helped older landowners who transferred their lands to the youth to access social welfare schemes for their retirement. It was highly successful and accelerated intergenerational land transfer to the youth in Mexico (see Brooks *et. al*, 2013:27). A similar programme can be modelled in Ghana through the Youth Enterprise Support (YES) operated by the Youth Employment Agency (YEA). A proportion of Youth Enterprise Support funds could be dedicated to support youth investment in agriculture including land acquisition financing.

The net effects of interventions (A to F) as shown in the model will result in unimpeded access to land by the youth for agricultural purpose. The dimensions of this unimpeded youth land access include; viable land parcels, ease of land access both on short and long term basis, secure and certainty of holdings which will be conducive for agricultural investments. With unimpeded land access by the youth, the expected outcomes will be but not limited to on-farm youth employment, increase food production, social cohesion and stability.

It is important to state that, the measures outlined above to improve youth access to agricultural land under the customary tenure as conceptualised in Figure 4 need to function under a land policy which focuses on the youth as well as sustainable land management regime. According to the World Bank (2012), “Sound land policies can safeguard the livelihood of the very vulnerable by giving them access to land and income-earning opportunities through rental markets or redistribution of land”. Therefore, youth agricultural land access policy or a review of the existing National Land Policy to capture the above interventions and also include special provisions to assist the youth is important to improve youth access to land. To this end, the study recommends further *research into youth access to agricultural land under the main customary tenure regimes across the country as a means of formulating an evidence-based youth agricultural land access policy*. Appreciating what pertains elsewhere regarding youth (both male and female) access to land within the rest of the customary areas across the country is important for a holistic resolution of youth land access constraints under the tenure regime in Ghana for increased agricultural production and economic empowerment of the youth.

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