On June 26th, 2019, LANDac launched the Professional Learning Programme on Land Governance and Field Mediation. The programme brought together professionals working on sustainable and/or inclusive land governance in a community of practice. Throughout one year, while working at NGOs, governmental agencies, universities or businesses, these LANDac fellows (based in different African countries) will conduct research and exchange experiences and best practices. Furthermore, they will bring stakeholders together in the field to identify ways to make land-based investments – whether in agriculture, infrastructure, nature conservation or natural resource extraction – more inclusive and sustainable. This programme brief provides the latest information about the programme activities and the LANDac fellows.

Programme Background
Over the years, we have found that when it comes to (foreign) investments in land in the global South, the quality of environmental and social impact assessments (ESIAs) tends to be poor and does not allow for mapping the full range of socio-economic impact pathways. Often, engagement with local communities takes place at the tail end of investment preparations and the level of community participation is limited. Due to the lack of information, expectations about the benefits of the investments are often not met and there is no systematic approach of monitoring or keeping communities ‘in the loop’. There is a clear need for more knowledge about ‘best practices’: how do we ensure Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), fair consultation processes and equal benefit sharing between investors and communities? Through learning and exchange, this programme aims to address those questions.

With the programme, LANDac creates an international network of land governance fellows that regularly comes together for learning and exchange. By expanding the network each year with a new group of fellows, LANDac aims to strengthen its ties with professionals on the ground and contribute to more sustainable and inclusive investments.

Introducing the LANDac fellows 2019-2020
After an inspiring training period in the Netherlands in June and July, LANDac fellows returned to the countries in which they work and have started to work on in-depth case studies on a variety of topics related to large-scale land-based investments across Africa. During the discussions in Utrecht over the summer, fellows committed themselves to conduct research and to continuously exchange knowledge, supported by LANDac, with the ultimate goal to find ways to better position communities to benefit from large-scale land-based investments.
Uganda

< Junior Sebbanja

Urban land governance, community empowerment

Junior Sebbanja, based in Uganda, is a physical planner currently working at ACTogether Uganda, an affiliate organisation of Slum Dwellers International. As an assistant program officer for the department of profiling, enumeration and mapping, Junior supports urban poor communities organized in the National Slum Dwellers Federation of Uganda. Junior specializes in participatory data collection and planning activities together with urban poor communities. In the next months, Junior will be looking at the impacts of urbanization processes and land-based investments on people living in the Kibugambata community in the municipality of Jinja, a town that is about to receive an official status as a city.

Teddy Kisembo >

Urban land governance, infrastructure, displacement

In Uganda, Junior will be working closely together with Teddy Kisembo. Teddy is an urban planner and researcher at the Urban Action Lab at Makerere University in Kampala, where she conducts research on a variety of urban resilience projects. As a LANDac fellow, Teddy will be focusing on infrastructure development. She will be researching the effects of a planned highway between the city of Kampala and Jinja, that goes hand-in-hand with the displacement of hundreds of families. In doing so, she will have a special focus on the effects of the infrastructure project on women.

Senegal

< El Hadji Faye

Rural development, multi-stakeholder dialogue

In Senegal, El Hadji Faye is a rural development expert working at NGO Enda Pronat, where he focuses on land and natural resource governance, land transactions and foreign investments. El Hadji represents his organisation in a network organization called CRAFS: the Framework for Dialogue and Action on Land in Senegal. CRAFS was initiated by Enda Pronat together with farmers associations, and supports local communities in securing their land rights. CRAFS also mediates when conflict is the result of land transactions. As a LANDac fellow, El Hadji will be looking into the establishment of special economic zones (SEZ) across Senegal, focusing on how these state-led developments will impact farming communities.

Fridah Githuku >

Grassroots development, women empowerment, alternative investments

As head of GROOTS Kenya, Fridah leads a grassroots movement that champions land tenure security for women and marginalized groups. Fridah advocates for a bottom-up and rights-based approach toward tenure security and has worked to build and disseminate evidence on the importance of land rights for women through the Women2Kilimanjaro Initiative and LANDac’s Women’s Land Rights Programme. As a LANDac fellow, Fridah is starting her research on alternative land investment models for large-scale land-based investments that include local women and men.
Ethiopia

Betelehem Fikre Beyene >

*Muti-stakeholder dialogue, company-community relations*

Betelehem is currently working for the Ethiopian Netherlands Business Association (ENLBA), where she brings together and assists Dutch companies that (want to) invest in Ethiopia. Betelehem has worked for different investment companies as a communication officer and business analyst, and advised on monitoring guidelines for rural job opportunity strategies. Together with colleague and LANDac fellow Hiwot Tadesse, Betelehem is working on the impacts of a Dutch floriculture companies across Ethiopia on local communities and innovative ways for the company and the community to work together on sustainable development.

Ethiopia

< Hiwot Tadesse

*Inclusive agribusiness, company-community relations*

Hiwot is currently working for Resilience BV to consult (Dutch) agribusinesses in Ethiopia. Over the past years, through her work within agribusiness consultancy, Hiwot has knowledge and experience working together in a multi-stakeholder context with businesses, farmers and governmental actors. In a context in which land disputes have led to displacement, violence and political turmoil, Hiwot aims to assist both communities and investors to solve land disputes and set clear and effective agendas. As a LANDac fellow, Hiwot works closely together with Betelehem on the impact of Dutch Floriculture companies on local communities.

Sudan

Salah Abukashawa>

*Land mapping, land and environmental governance, new technologies*

As a land administration and mapping specialist from Sudan, Salah Abukashawa has worked on land governance for the past seven years. Before he initiated the Centre for Land and Environmental Governance in Sudan (the ISTIDAMA Centre), where he works as a strategist, researcher and lecturer, Salah worked as a strategy and quality manager at the Ministry of Physical Planning. In his role as a LANDac fellow, Salah is working on empowering women and men through community mapping tools in Sudan (in Khartoum, Butana or South Kordofan), where he is closely collaborating with the Dutch Embassy.

Mozambique

< Nzira de Deus

*Women’s rights, community empowerment, collective action*

At Fórum Mulher, a network of organisations that promote gender equality and women's rights, Nzira initiated a rural women's network where women farmers share their challenges and work together for their rights. Nzira has managed the LANDac Women's Land rights Programme and is part of the Coordination Committee of the International Civil Society Mechanism for the United Nations Committee for food security. As a LANDac fellow, Nzira will be working on a case of a Brazilian and Japanese land-based investment in the Nacala corridor, to find ways to empower local women and men to negotiate with the company and stand up for their rights and interests.

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Ethiopia
< Senait Getahun Worku
Food security, agribusiness, rural development
Senait Getahun Worku is a PhD student at Utrecht University working with the International Development Studies group and a lecturer at St. Mary’s University in Ethiopia. As a LANDac fellow, Senait will bring in her PhD research that focuses on the impact of foreign agribusiness investments on local food security in Ethiopia. The research is conducted within a wider multi-stakeholder research program called ‘Follow the Food’ that compares case studies of agribusiness investments from Ethiopia, Ghana and Kenya, with the ultimate aim to enhance food security.

Kenya
James Wangu
Food security, agribusiness, rural development
James Wangu is a direct colleague of Senait and a PhD candidate within the ‘Follow the Food research project’ at Utrecht University. As a LANDac fellow, James will bring in his knowledge and experience related to his research in Kenya. His research focuses on ways that foreign and presumed inclusive agribusiness investments in smallholder farming impact local food security. The overall objective of this project is to enhance food security in Ghana, Ethiopia and Kenya through targeted advice for (Dutch) agribusiness investors, policy makers and other stakeholders in the three countries on the possible impact pathways from global agribusiness investments to local food security, and the risks and opportunities involved.

> Next steps
All fellows will start their work by first looking into the local context: who lives around these investments and what are their ambitions, priorities and challenges? Fellows will share the findings of their research with each other through regular updates and will keep LANDac and partners updated through blogs and reports on the LANDac website.
The entire fellowship will meet again in Utrecht in the summer of 2020, where results will be presented and exchanged with the next group of fellows.
Would you like to know more?
Would you like to know more about their research projects or get in touch with one of the fellows? Or is your organisation interested to have one of your employees become a LANDac fellow and join the programme next year?

Contact coordinator Romy Santpoort (r.m.santpoort@uu.nl).

About LANDac
LANDac, the Netherlands Land Academy is a partnership between Dutch organisations and their Southern partners working on land governance for equitable and sustainable development. LANDac is sponsored by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs and hosted by the International Development Studies group of Utrecht University (UUIDS). LANDac brings together researchers, policymakers and practitioners that share a concern for increasing land inequality and new land-related conflicts, and how land governance – the rules and practices surrounding the access to land – can be used to promote equitable and sustainable development in the Global South. LANDac partners are International Development Studies (IDS) and Urban Planning at Utrecht University, the Sociology of Development and Change (SDC) group and Centre for Development Innovation (CDI) at Wageningen University and Research, Agriterra, Royal Tropical Institute (KIT), Land Portal, Oxfam Novib, VNG International, African Studies Centre (ASC) at Leiden University, ITC Twente University, Royal Haskoning DHV and the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

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