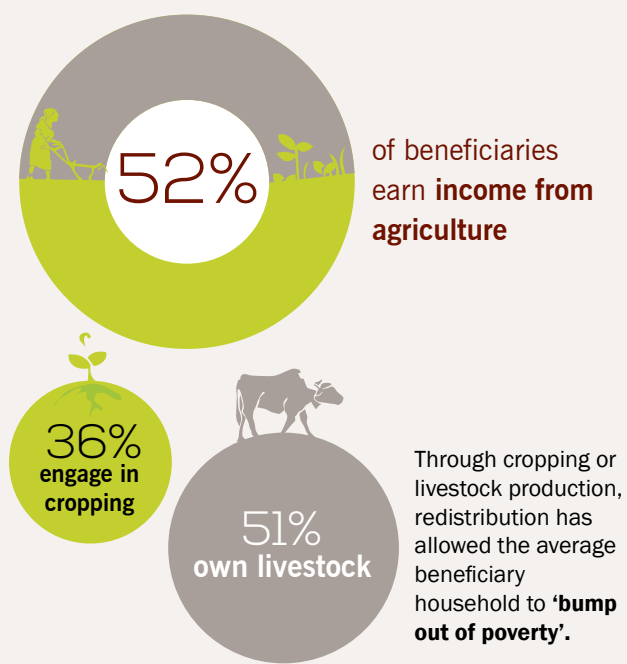


## Many land reform projects **improve beneficiary livelihoods**

Many land reform projects have improved the incomes and livelihoods of those who received land – despite inadequate government support for planning and production, and in the face of severe resource constraints.



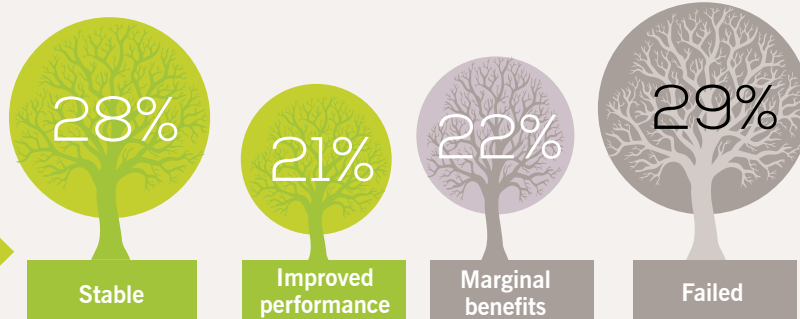
### Production on North West land reform farms

Source: Kirsten & Machete, 2005.



### National survey of LRAD projects

Source: Umhlaba Rural Services, 2008



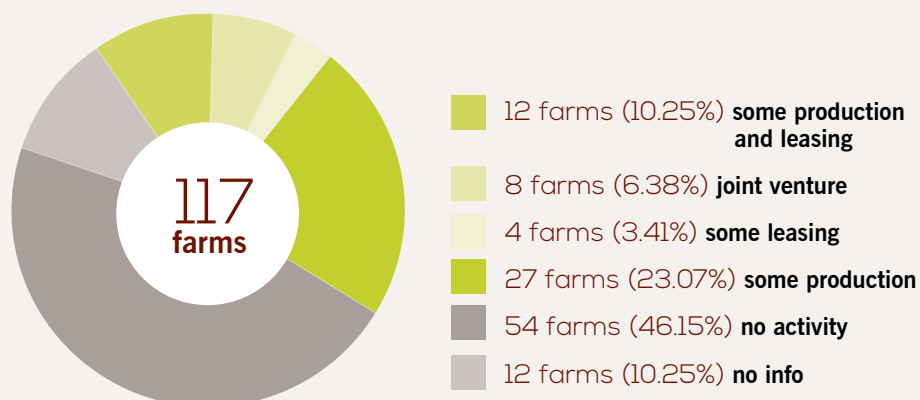
In a national survey of Land Redistribution and Agricultural Development (LRAD) projects, farming was the most important source of income for 41% of beneficiaries; 38% had seen incomes rise. Other benefits included improved tenure security (42%); food security (34%); and grazing access (34%).

Umhlaba Rural Services, 2008

## Full potential of land reform **not being realised**

### Status of land reform projects in Vhembe & Capricorn (Limpopo), 2007

Source: Aliber et al 2013



### Common problems:

- inappropriate business planning
- poor access to capital, credit and markets
- poor post-settlement support, training and extension services
- inadequate infrastructure and irrigation
- dysfunctional legal entities
- limited subdivision
- poor support for smallholder production systems.

**Many succeed despite the problems...**

## How do beneficiaries understand success?

In the Munzhedzi restitution claim in Limpopo, a self-appointed 'chief' bypassed the elected committee representing the 170 claimants and allocated land to another 800 non-claimant households in return for a modest fee. Project planning has been disregarded and people engage in multiple livelihood strategies, not full-time farming. Officials regard Munzhedzi as a failure.

Fenced plots of 30x50 metres contain dwellings and gardens, and some people also farm larger plots. Livestock owners use communal grazing. Beneficiaries appreciate the good quality agricultural land at Munzhedzi (including higher rainfall, better quality soil, and less steep terrain than where they had come from), and its convenient location. A busy road nearby enables them to travel to local economic centres such as Elim, which offer other livelihood opportunities (Aliber et al, 2013).

In the words of some residents:



"We are next to town and we can farm and have something to eat"



"We are next to the road and the land is beautiful"



"We are glad because we farm and harvest better than before"

## The challenges of measurement

Several national and regional studies have looked at the impact of land reform, and there are many case studies of individual projects (see Hall 2009 for an overview). Together, these provide substantial evidence – but major gaps still exist, for example in relation to crop yields on land reform projects.

Defining success and failure depends on the measure you use to assess impact.

- Some studies focus on the quality and sustainability of beneficiaries livelihoods, such as: improved food security and nutritional status; increased cash income; improved well-being through access to water, sanitation, housing; reduced vulnerability; and environmental sustainability. Since poor people are often the main beneficiaries of land reform, even modest success in these aspects can enhance livelihoods.
- Some argue that land reform should be assessed in terms of aggregate farm production and national food supplies, focusing on farm output, profitability, and 'efficiency', rates of financial return, or productivity per hectare or unit of labour. These are relevant for large-scale commercial farming ventures on land reform projects, but livelihood impacts are still important.

## Recommendations

**Systematically collect data on land reform impacts using both national surveys and in-depth case studies**

**Create clear measurement criteria appropriate to the project type (e.g. livelihoods-enhancing vs commercial production) and beneficiary category (e.g. smallholder vs large scale commercial farms)**

**Carefully analyse impact data to guide policy and implementation**

**Report data to parliament and make data available in the public domain**

**Strengthen monitoring and evaluation functions of the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform**

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