



# Securing land rights for the world's poorest



## Strengthening the Power of Girls in Rwanda . . . Aline's Story

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**Aline is an orphaned teenager who lives in a small village in northern Rwanda.** Since her parents passed away, Aline and her brothers have struggled with an ongoing conflict over the family's land. Her brothers insist that as a girl, she has no right to the land.

Aline knew better. Fortunately for Aline, so did the local authorities, who explained to her brothers that Rwandan law grants sons and daughters equal rights to inherit land.

Rwanda has one of the highest percentages of orphans in the world. No one knows how many children were orphaned by the 1994 genocide—the 100 days during which more than 800,000 men, women, and children were murdered. With so many child-headed households, land is critical for survival in land-scarce Rwanda.

RDI is working with authorities in Rwanda to help ensure that its new laws governing land rights and access are implemented in a fair and equitable manner for both women and men, to help strengthen and protect the rights of girls like Aline.

The results are paying off. After Aline fought for her rights, the local authorities intervened and Aline's brothers begrudgingly gave her a share of the family land—but not an equal share. Although she knows that she is entitled to more, she decided not to dispute her brothers' decision. "That would just make more trouble," said Aline.

Despite the result, Aline is happy just knowing that Rwanda's new laws provide equal land rights to women and men. Before she knew the law, "I felt that I had no value as a daughter." But having land rights that are equal to those of her brothers has sent an important message to Aline – she does have value.

RDI will continue to work with authorities in Rwanda on its new Organic Land Law and other laws, so that girls like Aline know that they have value.