

Gerald Tumwesige

Meet Gerald Tumwesige.

Gerald is a 26-year-old pastoralist from Buliisa District Uganda, who is one of 17 children.

With a diploma in Development Studies and eager to help his community, Gerald volunteered to work with Cadasta as a community data collector to document community land rights in Buliisa District in Western Uganda along the shores of Lake Albert.



“Why did I want to be involved? Because you can see that people do not have land titles here so there are more chances of land grabbing. When the project came, I felt like, yeah, it is going to help. The quarreling over land is going to reduce. At least I feel part of the solution to the most important program, the most critical problem which is facing the people of the region.”

Gerald commenting on his involvement as a community data collector



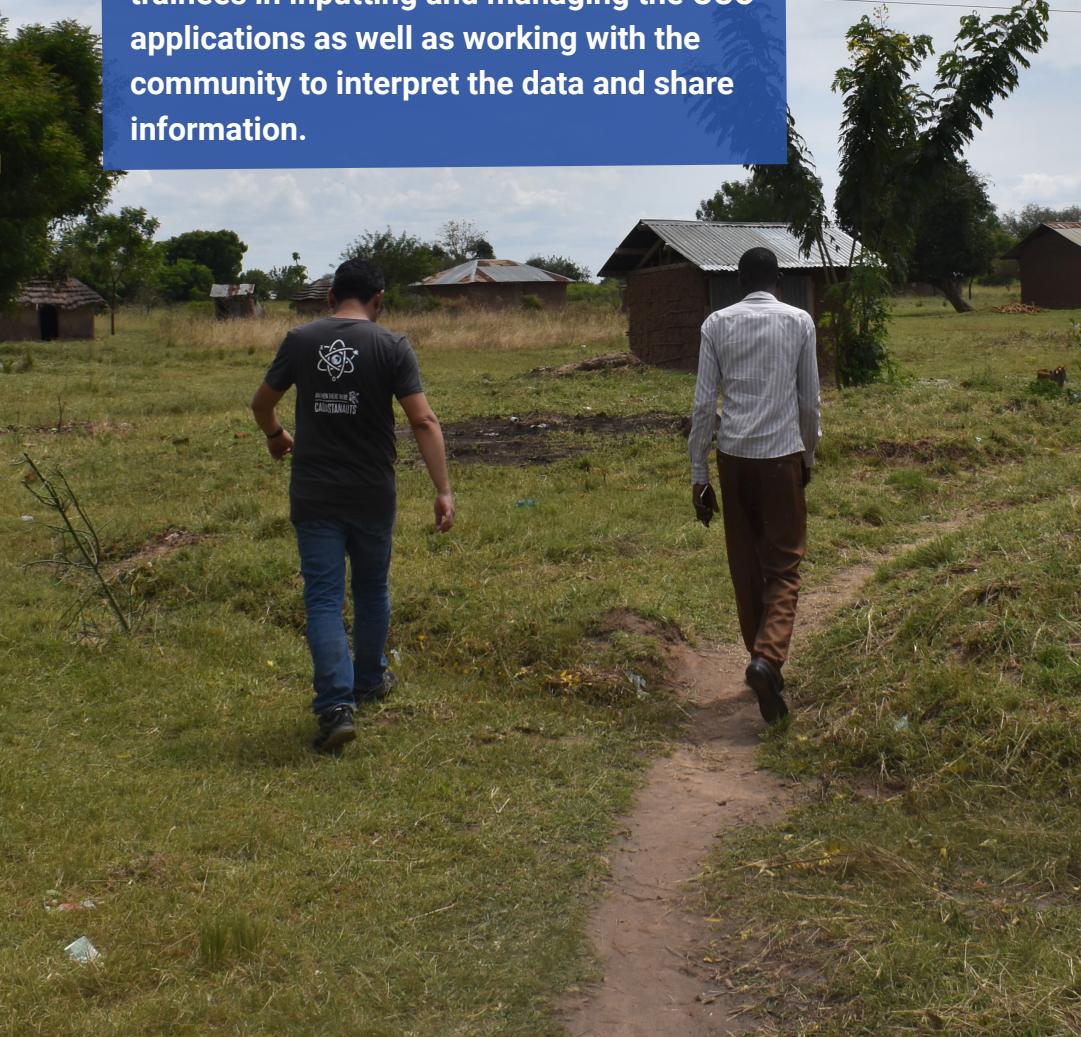
Community Land Rights in Uganda

With an estimated 84 percent of the land in Uganda held under customary tenure, the majority of Uganda's land claims rely on traditional arrangements rather than legal documents. While this may provide a traditional sense of security, recent events—including the influx of refugees, increased presence of extractive industries, and pressures of development and land acquisitions—have resulted in increased land vulnerability.

To document and secure the customary land claims, the Government of Uganda (GoU) has put in place a unique system of land recognition: Customary Certificates of Ownership (CCOs). This program is among the world's first to fully recognize customary land tenure on the same level with other forms of tenure.

Cadasta is working with the GoU Ministry of Land, Housing and Urban Development (MLHUD), district-level government representatives, and the local communities to systematically demarcate community lands in an effort to secure the land tenure rights of rural communities across the country.

Gerald was trained in-person by a Cadasta Program Specialist over the course of two days to use Cadasta's mobile hand-held tools built on Esri technology for data collection and mapping. Due to his ability to quickly learn and use the tools, the team chose him to be one of two people to collect data and assist with community interviews in the field. Gerald quickly became one of the most trusted and skilled trainees in inputting and managing the CCO applications as well as working with the community to interpret the data and share information.



Reflecting on his experience using Cadasta's tools to document community land rights, Gerald stated:

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"I can say the tools have been of great importance because really it has sped up the exercise. To measure almost 20 to 68 [points] using a meter, it would have taken a very long time. But in the case of [Cadasta's] software and the tools, just put your data point, move the data point. Some things you would have taken the whole day can just be done in just an instant."

When asked what outcome he would like to see as a result of his involvement, Gerald said:

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"Of course I would like people after the data collection to get their title, because as for now, the one who is taking his data is like, 'Wow, this is improved. Wow, we can see the feedback.' So people are just eager. They are eager to see their titles in their hands. So they are waiting seriously. They are like, 'Wow, these people are working and [the] day after you can see the progress.'"

Commenting on how he plans to use the skills he has learned as a Cadasta-trained community data collector, Gerald noted:

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"Now that I've learned how to do land documentation and manage the community, I know I can deal with the community in future projects and I have gained some computer knowledge and software skills that can lead to other things."