



# Securing land rights for the world's poorest



*“We Always Have Our  
Land to Rely On . . .”  
Lin’s Story*

**In Neilu village in China’s Fujian Province**, Lin Lianhua and her husband, Su Yuan, spent their lives farming a small piece of land. It was a hard life, one of physical exhaustion and a meager income.

Three years ago, their village decided to allocate the collectively owned land to individual farm households like Lin and Su. They obtained secure rights to five hectares of land and their lives changed dramatically.

RDI has been working closely with China’s government since 1987 to ensure that rural families like Lin’s receive secure, documented 30-year rights to land. Secure land rights allow families to invest in their land without fear that their land might be taken and redistributed, providing them a safety net and a valuable asset.

With the new opportunities that their land provided, Lin and Su decided to invest in growing bamboo. Without secure, long-term rights, they never would have made such an investment, as bamboo typically takes about 3-4 years to mature and their land could have been seized by the government without warning. Now, with the price of bamboo growing steadily, Lin and Su expect the net profit from their bamboo sales to reach 75,000 yuan (nearly US \$10,000), an enormous sum for this rural family.

Land provided Lin and Su with new opportunities. With the security and assurance of future income from their land, they decided to pursue a dream they never thought possible – a life outside of farming. They used their savings to open a small convenience store in the nearby city of Yongan. They are able to support their parents, who live in the village about 30 miles away, and a portion of their land is now leased to neighbors for farming.

“Even if my store fails,” said Lin confidently, “We can always go back to the village – we always have our land to rely on.”

