



# ***An Assessment of the Status of Gender Equality in Uganda in 2020***

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## **Final Report**

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Submitted by:



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## List of Abbreviations

|         |                                                               |
|---------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| BFP:    | Budget Framework Paper                                        |
| BTVET:  | Business, Technical, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training |
| CID:    | Criminal Investigations Department                            |
| CSO:    | Civil Society Organisations                                   |
| EOC:    | Equal Opportunities Commission                                |
| FY:     | Financial Year                                                |
| GBV:    | Gender Based Violence                                         |
| GDP:    | Gross Domestic Product                                        |
| GEWE:   | Gender Equality and Women Empowerment                         |
| HC:     | Health Centre                                                 |
| HSDP:   | Health Sector Development Plan                                |
| ICT:    | Information Communication and Technology                      |
| JCU:    | Justice Centre Uganda                                         |
| JLOS:   | Justice, Law and Order Sector                                 |
| MDA:    | Ministries, Departments and Agencies                          |
| MFPE:   | Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development        |
| MGLSD:  | Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development              |
| MOH:    | Ministry of Health                                            |
| NDP:    | National Development Plan                                     |
| SDG:    | Sustainable Development Goals                                 |
| UBOS:   | Uganda Bureau of Statistics                                   |
| UN:     | United Nations                                                |
| UPE:    | Universal Primary Education                                   |
| UWEP:   | Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Project                         |
| UWONET: | Uganda Women's Network                                        |
| VAWG:   | Violence Against Women and Girls                              |
| VHT:    | Village Health Team                                           |
| YLP:    | Youth Livelihood Program                                      |

# Executive Summary

**Project Background:** The Uganda Women's Network (UWONET), with financial support from UN women through the European Union (EU) and United Nations (UN) Spotlight Initiative implemented an 18-month project titled 'Galvanizing the Strength of the Women's Movement: Voice and Accountability'. The goal of the project was an inclusive and strengthened women's movement with more effective influence and advance progress on GEWE and VAWG including SGBV/HP at local, national and international levels.

Women's movement building has been critical for mobilizing and organizing women as an important constituency with a clear political agenda and working with this constituency to choose targets, strategies and actions that would bring about social justice. UWONET puts movement building at the center of her work, believing that the change women want comes from the movements they build and It is against this background that the current gender assessment was commissioned by UWONET. The Assessment of the Status of Gender Equality in Uganda in 2020 is intended as a follow-up on, and update of the 2018 Gender Assessment study.

**Purpose of the assessment:** The overall purpose of the gender equality assessment was to analyze and update the progress of Uganda towards achieving gender equality across different social, economic, and political spheres, particularly generating data on areas of improvement, stagnation and information gaps that were not addressed by the 2018 Gender Assessment.

The Gender Equality Assessment was intended to provide evidence-based information and data sources on women and girls in order to inform programming around legal and policy development, women's inclusion and participation in, and their benefit from development activities, as men and boys and also assess gender mainstreaming strategies with targeted interventions promoting gender equality and focused women's empowerment, particularly where there are glaring instances of persistent discrimination of women and inequality between women and men.

**Thematic areas of focus for the assessment:** These included ; Gender equality and women's rights in decision making, leadership, political participation and governance, access to resources, Gender equality in agriculture and rural development, Gender equality and women's right to good health, Gender equality and women's right to education, Gender equality and women and girls' right to freedom from all forms of violence, Gender equality and women's rights in peace building, Gender equality framework and mainstreaming in national development processes, Gender equality and women's rights to poverty reduction, a livelihood, and full and equal participation in the economy, Gender and women in the informal sector, Gender equality in the formal workplace, Gender and women in technology, Gender equality in sports and Gender and women in crises or emergency situations.

**Methodology:** Highly flexible and innovative approaches employing both qualitative (majorly) and quantitative techniques (reanalysis of available data) was done. The assessment widely reviewed a number of secondary documents (Annex) and data were then triangulated thereby generating the required information that provided a clear situation analysis of the current gender issues in Uganda.

**Limitations of the Assessment:** Some of the limitations faced by the assessment team include limited access and availability of current documentation regarding some of the thematic areas of focus for the assessment and the break in the assessment resulting from the freezing of UWONET bank accounts during the elections period and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Covid-19 lockdown in Uganda in April 2021. Whereas the assessment had intended to conduct primary data collection in ten districts to obtain the views and voices of the people, this was no possible given the limitation with such fieldwork as a result of the Covid-19 lockdown restrictions on movement which affected the field teams to travel to the sampled districts. Nonetheless, interviews were conducted with government officials and some district officials through telephone interviews.

## Key Findings

The 2020 gender assessment shows that investments in reducing gender equality still hold important potential to improve women's rights and reduce gender gaps in Uganda. Since 2018, Uganda has achieved some progress towards GEWE courtesy of comprehensive laws and policies strengthening women's empowerment in different thematic areas like leadership and governance, resource allocation among others.

Some of the Key trends and figures from the 2020 gender assessment are presented below:

**Women's Participation in decision making:** The assessment revealed that most married women still participate in household decision-making and only a minority of households (9%) have men as the sole decision-makers, including on decisions concerning their wives' own earned income expenditure. Furthermore, the majority of women make decisions regarding their health and significant household needs. A minority of women (13%) do not have any decision-making influence at all, including with regard to their own health.

**Leadership and political participation:** Women's Participation in leadership hasn't changed much since 2018. Presidential election participation of women has remained stagnant with only woman standing as a presidential candidate, Current statistics in Uganda show that there are 15% of women in political party leadership, 45% in election monitoring bodies, 0% RAMA should we update these areas after the elections? of women mayors of cities, 12% in executive positions of the government (ministers and state ministers) and almost 33% of women in the 11<sup>th</sup> parliament. Overall, the representation of women in leadership and political participation is still low in Uganda. The new Stats from the recent appointments?

**Women in governance:** An analysis of staff levels in Uganda's Public Service as of December 2019, shows that it is still male dominated with 62% of males compared to their female counterparts (38%) for all categories except health where there are more female employees (54%) than males (46%). Overall there has been a 1% increase in the number of females employed in public administration from 37% in 2018 to 38% in 2019.

**Equal access to employment:** Although there are still more females than males in the labour force, the male share of employed persons is 54.7% compared to the female share of employed persons of 45.4% which results in more unemployed women (11%) compared to the males (8%). There are still more women engaged in self-employment activities compared to the men as of 2020. Young women still face more difficulty in finding paid work than young men. Also, social norms still reinforce discrimination in access and control over productive assets, particularly land and financial capital which still impact negatively on women's access to employment.

**Access to Livelihood Opportunities:** As of 2021, the government of Uganda has put in place a number of tools and resources to build self-reliance among its population and help hardworking people leave poverty behind. Some of the programmes put in place to provide improved livelihoods include; the Youth Livelihood Program (YLP), Emyooga, Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Project (UWEP). With such programmes put in place to support women and young girls, there has been an improvement in equal access to livelihood opportunities for women in Uganda. Any Stats as to how many are by women and by men?

**Equal access and use of land:** Despite significant policy strides, hurdles to overcome conflicts and violence between men and women regarding land still persist, with patriarchal norms deeply embedded in the Ugandan society. Although ownership of land for women has increased courtesy of their ability to purchase their own land, only 25.5% of women (who don't own their own land) have control over the land they cultivate and use rights for the land still stands at 16% for the women especially in rural areas of Uganda.

**Equal Participation in Agriculture and rural development:** Over 80 per cent of Uganda's population lives in rural areas and agriculture is their main source of livelihood. Subsistence farming is the main source of livelihood in the rural areas and women constitute 74% of the agriculture labour force compared to 65% of men. This trend hasn't changed much since 2018.

**Gender Equality and Women's rights to good health:** The health sector has over the years identified three (3) major gender and equity issues which include gender-based violence, high maternal and child mortality and high fertility rates. The government has continued to maintain and also put in place a number of interventions to these issues eradicate which include training health workers in sexual and gender-based

violence and prevention, rolling out and strengthening of Village Health Teams (VHTs), targeting male partners in family planning activities and provision of youth friendly health support services among others.

HIV prevalence rate has decreased to 5.8 in 2019 from 6.2% in 2017. However, the prevalence rate is still higher among women (7.1 from 7.6 in 2016) than among men (4.3 from 4.7 in 2016). HIV positive pregnant women not on Highly Active Antiretroviral Therapy (HAART), receiving antiretroviral (ARVs) for elimination of mother to child transmission (EMTCT) during pregnancy, labour, delivery and postpartum, increased by 3% to 94% from 91% in 2018/19 but short of the Health Sector Development Plan (HSDP) target of 95%. Intermittent Preventive Treatment (IPT) of malaria coverage for pregnant women declined to 60% from 66% in 2018/19.

**Gender Equality and women's rights to education:** Access to and utilization of education services has significantly increased. 92% of all parishes now have a government-aided primary school, while 71% of all sub-counties have a government aided secondary school. All major regions of the country also now have a public university. There has been a 22% increase in the number of students enrolling in primary education from 8,840,589 (4,395,513 boys, 4,445,076 girls) in FY 2017/2018 to 10,766,994 students in FY 2019/20, with more girls (5,421,749) than males (5,345, 245). The secondary education sub sector also registered an increase in total enrolment of 45% from 716,118 boys and 654,465 girls (Total, 1,370,583) in FY 2017/18 to a total 1,991,915 students (1,004,524 boys, 987,391 girls) in FY 2019/20. There are still fewer female (44%) candidates registered in TVET programmes compared to male counterparts (56%). The FY 2019/20 saw a 17% increase in the number of students enrolling into public universities from 90,359 students (34,744 females, 55,615 males) in FY 2017/2018 to 105,988 students with a major increment noticed among female students (52,906) compared to reduction in male students (54,731). An almost equal number of boys (60.8%) and girls (60.5%) transition from primary to secondary school. However, research indicates that gender inequalities are still reflected in the admissions, completion, science and engineering programmes and student leadership and drop outs at universities.

**Gender equality and freedom from all forms of Violence:** A total of 17,664 cases of Domestic Violence were reported to Police in 2020 compared to 13,693 reported in 2019, giving a 29% increase. 18,872 people were victims of Domestic Violence, of whom 18.1% were male adults, 69.7% were female adults and 6% were male juveniles while 6.2% were female juveniles. Kampala District registered the highest number of cases of Domestic violence in 2020, followed by Tororo District, Kiryandongo and Kabarole. GBV and VAWG saw a major increase in 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 lockdown instituted in the country to curb the spread of the virus. The increase in poverty levels in majority of households during this period also exacerbated the instances of GBV and VAWG amongst these households.

**Gender and Women in Technology:** Gender proportions of the ICT workforce in MDAs show that male employees accounted for 75% of total employees across all MDAs, compared to female employees at 25%. Employees in ICT functions/roles make up only 1.9% of the total permanent work force across all MDAs. The proportion of female ICT employees (2.3%) among all female employees is higher than that of male ICT employees (1.7%) among all male employees. There are no marked differences in the proportion of female ICT employees in Ministries as opposed to those in Departments and Agencies.

**Gender and Women in sports:** Uganda has made progress in diversity and inclusion of women in sports but at a very slow pace. With 51 National associations affiliated to the National Council of Sports (NCS), only six (6) out of the 51 presidents or general secretaries in key decision-making positions are women. This also still shows that there is a huge disparity in the number of technical officials and coaches in all the sports disciplines due to inadequate and competent women.

# Introduction, Background and Methodology

## 1.1 Introduction

This report presents the status of gender equality in Uganda in the year ending 2020. The assessment was anchored on four objectives and thirteen (13) key thematic areas.

## 1.2 Background to the Gender Equality Assessment in Uganda 2020

Uganda Women's Network (UWONET) implemented an 18 months' project titled 'Galvanising the Strength of the Women's Movement: Voice and Accountability'. The project was being implemented with financial support from UN Women through the European Union (EU) United Nations (UN) Spotlight Initiative. The project is in line with UWONET's mandate to nurture women's organizations, institutions and structures and the women's movement in general to create an independent space for voice on women's rights to transform gender inequality, for political and socio-economic development. The goal of the project was an inclusive and strengthened women's movement more effective influence and advance progress on GEWE and VAWG including SGBV/HP at local, national and international levels. My general question is, should we update this to include the laws passed on VAW in or we are bent on the period? Succession Act and the Sexual Offences Bill 2021.

Women's movement building has been critical for mobilizing and organizing women as an important constituency with a clear political agenda and working with this constituency to choose targets, strategies and actions that would bring about social justice. UWONET puts movement building at the centre of her work, believing that the change women want comes from the movements they build.

There is a continued need, however, to complement gender mainstreaming strategies with targeted interventions promoting gender equality and focused women's empowerment, particularly where there are glaring instances of persistent discrimination of women and inequality between women and men. To respond effectively to the needs of the women and bridge gender inequality in Uganda, it's important to assess the socio-economic, political and legal environment that affects the lives of women and hinders their full participation in the development efforts – this particular assignment will focus on the period 2018 - 2020. It is critical to build evidence-based information and data sources on women and girls in order to inform programming around legal and policy development, women's inclusion and participation in, and benefit from development activities, as men and boys.

It is against this background that the current assessment has been commissioned by UWONET. The Assessment of the Status of Gender Equality in Uganda in 2020 is intended as a follow-up on, and update of the 2018 Gender Assessment study.

## 1.3 Purpose and Objectives of the Gender Equality Assessment

### 1.3.1 Purpose

The overall purpose of the gender equality assessment was to analyse and update the progress of Uganda towards achieving gender equality across different social, economic, and political spheres, particularly generating data on areas of improvement, stagnation and information gaps that were not addressed by the 2018 Gender Assessment.

### 1.3.2 Objectives of the Assessment

The specific objectives were to:

1. Determine the extent to which the socio-economic, cultural and political situation and disparities between women and men in Uganda have changed between 2018 and 2020.
2. Identify gaps from the 2018 Gender Equality Assessment and provide information on each of the identified areas.

3. Identify new emerging gender inequalities and opportunities as a result of Covid-19 pandemic and other shocks.
4. Provide recommendations as per the selected thematic areas for stakeholders including Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) on concrete strategies for the empowerment of women and reduction of gender inequalities in Uganda that are aligned to the SDGs.

The Gender Equality Assessment was intended to provide evidence-based information and data sources on women and girls in order to inform programming around legal and policy development, women's inclusion and participation in, and benefit from development activities, as men and boys.

Finally, the Gender Equality Assessment data will be used to assess gender mainstreaming strategies with targeted interventions promoting gender equality and focused women's empowerment, particularly where there are glaring instances of persistent discrimination of women and inequality between women and men. This meant that in designing data collection tools, emphasis was put on ensuring that questions are designed in a gender sensitive manner and were age-appropriate.

#### **1.4 Thematic Areas of Focus**

The gender equality 2020 assessment focused on providing a status update on the following thematic areas on what has changed since the 2018 gender assessment study;

1. Gender equality and women's rights in decision making, leadership political participation and governance.
2. Access to resources: employment, livelihoods, natural and economic resources.
3. Gender, agriculture and rural development.
4. Gender equality and women's right to good health.
5. Gender equality and women's right to education.
6. Gender equality and women and girls' right to freedom from all forms of violence, Violence against women and girls /gender-based violence and access to justice.
7. Gender equality and women's rights in peace building.
8. Gender equality framework and mainstreaming in national development processes.
9. Gender equality and women's rights to poverty reduction, a livelihood, and full and equal participation in the economy.

In addition to the above 9 thematic areas that were updated, additional five thematic areas were assessed in the 2020 gender equality assessment;

1. Gender and women in the informal sector.
2. Gender and women in the formal workplace.
3. Gender and women in technology.
4. Gender and women in sports.
5. Gender and women in crises or emergency situations.

#### **1.5 Methodology**

##### **1.5.1 Assessment Study Design**

In conducting the gender equality assessment, highly flexible and innovative approaches employing both qualitative (majorly) and quantitative techniques (reanalysis of available data) was done. Primary data was collected through holding interviews on key aspects and themes identified on one hand, while on the other hand, the assessment widely reviewed a number of secondary documents. The two data were then triangulated thereby generating the required information that provided a clear situation analysis of the current gender issues in Uganda. I have not seen if at all the categories of persons interviewed.

### 1.5.2 Scope of Coverage and Target Districts

The assessment team had planned to conduct field visits in ten districts. The same 10 districts had been included in the 2018 study were maintained but with changes/replacements to capture emerging aspects included in the current study i.e., Hoima district to provide information on the new thematic area on oil and gas sector; Amuru to provide insight into land related issues; Yumbe to provide aspects related to emergencies particularly the refugee situation and Kasese to provide insight into gender issues around the Rwenzori region. The selection of the 10 districts was also done in reference to the recent Gender Issues Report of 2019 conducted by Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBoS) as well as based on regional representation by existing gender practices and patterns. Among the characteristics considered in inclusion in the sample were;

- UWONET districts of operation
- Prevalence rate of gender based violence and rights violations in the districts
- Rural and urban setting of the districts
- Regional representation
- Cultural background in terms of tribal representation
- Poverty levels

**Table 1:** Scope of coverage and districts for primary data collection / field visits

| Region                              | # of districts sampled for 2020 study | Sampled Districts           |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Central (Buganda & Busoga)          | 3                                     | Rakai<br>Bugiri<br>Mityana  |
| Western (Kigezi, Ankole& Bunyoro)   | 3                                     | Kasese<br>Hoima<br>Bushenyi |
| Northern (Acholi, Lango& West Nile) | 2                                     | Amuru<br>Yumbe              |
| Eastern (Bugisu, Teso& Karamoja)    | 2                                     | Amuria<br>Kapchorwa         |

**NOTE:** The research team was however not able to conduct the field visits given the fact that by the time of the study, the Covid-19 pandemic had caused a change in all spheres of life and movement restrictions had been imposed by government hence hindering free movement. This hence hindered the team from conducting physical field visits to the above districts but rather conducted some telephone-based interviews with some district officials and government staff to provide feedback on some of the gender issues which were being investigated.

### 1.5.3 Target population of Assessment study

The Gender Equality Assessment study respondents, the Government officials (in Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), District officials, Members of Parliament, Local Government Leaders (LG) leaders (women representatives) and UWONET partners and the project staff were the other respondents.

### 1.5.4 Qualitative Sample

The purposive and convenience sampling technique was used to select key informants who were drawn from Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), government officials, and ministries, based on their level of knowledge and the technical experience in relation to gender issues.

#### National level actors

At national level, the assessment interviewed a sample of key informants including line ministries and stakeholders at key authoritative levels (state actors). these will be selected purposively from

the wide range of government departments and committees in parliament charged with promoting gender equality and women empowerment.

**Table 2: Summary of KIIs for National Level Actors**

| Other Key respondent groups                                              | # of KIIs |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MoGLSD)               | 2         |
| Ministry of Local Government                                             | 1         |
| Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MOFPED)          | 1         |
| Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC)                                     | 1         |
| Office of The Prime Minister (OPM) - (Disaster and Relief, and Refugees) | 1         |
| Office of The Prime Minister (OPM) - National Covid-19 Taskforce         | 1         |
| Ministry of Health                                                       | 2         |
| Ministry of Trade, Industry & Cooperatives                               | 1         |
| Ministry of Education                                                    | 1         |
| National Council for Sports                                              | 1         |
| Members of Parliament (representing women)                               | 2         |
| Ministry of Public Service                                               | 1         |
| Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry & Fisheries                     | 1         |
|                                                                          |           |

**NOTE:** the above key informants were reached out by telephone-interviews given the restrictions on physical face-to-face interactions as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic at the time of the assessment.

### 1.5.5 Secondary data

A desk review of all the relevant documents and reports was conducted, to capture secondary information about the gender issues (with particular attention to the priority areas identified in the Women's Manifesto) across the different socio-economic and political sectors of Uganda. (See Annex)

The documents reviewed were mainly analysed to obtain an overview of the situation of gender issues and mainstreaming efforts in particular sectors in Uganda. The document analysis also facilitated clarification of interesting key areas which were used in designing the survey protocols.

### 1.5.6 Primary Data Collection Tools

The evaluation team used the following tools to conduct telephone-based interviews with selected key informants:

- I. **Key informant interview guide for national level state actors (Government and Parliament)**  
The respective Key Informant Interview guide was designed and administered to the different identified government (MDAs) and parliament stakeholders directly linked to advancing, promoting and policy making in the interest of gender equality in Uganda.
- II. **Key Informant Interview Guide for Non-State Actors /CSO**  
The study team designed a specific guide which was administered to selected CSO representatives at national level who are advancing the gender equality agenda in Uganda.

### 1.5.7 Data Analysis

The entry point of the data analysis was built on the premise that:

- All requisite knowledge of gender analysis exists among the people whose lives are the subject of the analysis and therefore the assessment fully utilised localised knowledge to uncover the extent of gender (in)equalities within a given social economic context.

- Gender analysis does not require the technical expertise of those outside the community being analysed, except as facilitators. As methodological concern and avoidance of prejudices the community was fully used to uncover the concerns in the given context.
- Gender analysis cannot be transformative unless the analysis is done by the people being analysed.

## 1.6 Limitations of the assessment

The assessment was limited by the following challenges;

1. **There was limited access and availability of relevant documents** to enable a detailed review of the status of gender equality. The assessment team was not able to find and obtain all the necessary documents especially those from government MDAs either due to absence of such documents or restrictions to their access. This greatly affected the process of document review hence the team relied on the few available documents to analyze and document the reported-on status.
2. **There was limited information of the 2020 Gender Assessment**; the findings of the 2020 assessment were limited in nature as the report was mostly referenced based on one document (i.e., OECD and UBOS, 2015) which limited the scope and depth of the assessment. There were also methodological limitations on how and from where primary data was collected as well as the respondents and their locations which affected guiding the current assessment to be able to update the 2018 report and also to include the new thematic areas. This therefore greatly affected the compilation of the current report.
3. **Unable to conduct Field Visits to Selected Districts**; whereas, the assessment team had planned and sampled ten (10) districts from which primary data was to be conducted, this was not possible given the Covid-19 pandemic for which travel restrictions were imposed by government. This greatly affected the entire arrangement of conducting field visits as it was not possible at the time. Nonetheless, the study team was able to conduct telephone-based interviews with some district key informants as well as some government officials.

# A Summary of the 2018 Gender Assessment

## 2.1 Introduction

The review comprised a desk review of gender equality framing and mainstreaming of national development processes and subsequent gender mainstreaming challenges in key social economic sectors highlighting sector-specific gender concerns for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. The literature mapped out the socio-economic, cultural and political situation and disparities between women and men in Uganda since 2018. The literature focused on the various sectors including: Education, Health, Decision Making, Political Participation and Governance, Freedom from Violence, Rights in Peacebuilding.

## 2.2 Overview of the legal and policy frameworks for GEWE (national, regional and global)

This section presents an overview of the legal and policy frameworks for the gender equality and women empowerment at different levels as captured in the 2018 gender assessment report.

## 2.2 Gender and Education

As one of the key gender empowerment indicators and pillars, education has been one of the main sectors to benefit from gender inclusive policies. Through various Girl Child Education initiatives, the introduction of both Universal Primary Education and Universal Secondary Education; and the affirmative action awarding female students an extra one and a half (1.5) points for public university entrance, the education sector in Uganda has made significant strides in promoting equal opportunities. These policies and initiatives have led to an expansion of access to equitable education at all levels and have seen enrolment rates rise with near equal enrolments for both boys and girls.

### 2.2.1 Universal Education

The key interventions in education include the Universal Primary Education (UPE) and National Strategy for Girls' Education (NSGE). UPE in particular is credited to have achieved parity in enrolment for girls and boys at primary school level. However, the declining quality of education in UPE schools, coupled with high drop-out rate, especially for girls; and threats to sustainability of UPE funding by government are likely to derail the achievements so far registered. The implications is that while UPE has improved enrolment especially for girls and the poor the declining quality may in the end worsen the divide between the poor and the rich for generations to come.

USE improved enrolment for both girls and boys much as the comparative ratio was in favour of the boys. However, on the part of girls the momentum has not been sustained due to high dropout rate for girls at primary level. The comparative quality of education between the public and private schools is compelling parents to opt for the latter. There are allegations of sexual abuse of the girls by their teachers and there are no strong sanctions for the vice. This issue is shrouded in secrecy because the affected families do not want such cases in the public domain yet they are capital offenses.

### 2.2.2 Education, training and skills development

The education sector has achieved gender parity at most levels but the gender parity tilts in favour of the boys because many girls' dropout before completing. The penetration of private investment into education institutions has created wide space for enrolment into education institutions, this created a general increment for both boys and girls, although this may still be fundamentally, locational and regionally skewed. The main beneficiaries of most initiatives come from well-to-do families and high performing urban schools already capable of competitive entry; yet the initiatives are applied equally across the board. There is need to assess the effectiveness of:

- Gender specific interventions targeting girls
- Strengthen advocacy

- causes of high drop-out rate at all levels
- Enrolment at all levels and examine factors for the continued state of affairs from UPE to BTVET
- Sexual harassment
- Gender bias against the girls
- Policy gaps in the education sector

### **2.2.3 Gender concerns on higher education**

Initiatives implemented to enhance female entry into tertiary level education, particularly the bonus 1.5 points; has been very effective in increasing female admission to university. However, the main beneficiaries of most initiatives come from well- to- do families and high performing urban schools already capable of competitive entry; yet the initiatives are applied equally across the board.

### **2.2.4 Gender concerns on business, technical, vocational and skills training**

The gender gap in enrolment is an issue of serious concern in BTVET institutions leading to women in the skill-oriented professions. The most critical challenges include cultural prejudices and gender bias against the girls in BTVET courses and the general negative attitudes toward technical/vocational education. Initiatives implemented include the BTVET policy and Strategic Plan aimed at promoting skilling for both boys and girls. The implications are that for the girls, have been deprived of the opportunity to acquire practical skills that would have been acquired via BTVET) which are critical in securing their livelihoods.

## **2.4 Gender and Health**

Despite great strides by government in ensuring child survival through effective immunization programmes, most mothers remain pronatalist (possibly also fuelled by lack of control over their sexuality and limited power in determining family size). A gendered analysis of reproductive issues in Uganda by several studies indicate that men generally hold sway over women's sexual rights and have high affinity for children. This has continued to expose them to high risk of child bearing with calamitous consequences of high MMR. While there have been significant improvements in establishing health facilities across the country, many people do not use these facilities due to poor quality services, manifested in lack of qualified staff, chronic drug stock outs, and lack of diagnostic equipment. The negative attitude and poor work ethics among health workers particularly midwives, possibly due to an overwhelmingly heavy workload amidst poor remuneration. The government has put more efforts on rehabilitation of health facilities including referral hospitals but these facilities remain largely inaccessible to majority poor women and men because of distance, costs and general dissatisfaction of the population with service rendered therein.

Access to maternal health services across the country is severely constrained and MMR has stagnated at high levels -currently 336/100,000 of live births before 2018. Most of the beneficiaries of the available health services are middle class urban women where health infrastructure is more accessible and can afford the services at private facilities. The poor women both in rural and urban areas who are the most vulnerable will hardly benefit from many of the key investments the government is making in improving health services.

Uganda has achieved substantial reduction in HIV prevalence. However, recent signs suggest resurgence of high prevalence; with the females being more affected than males. Much as the roll out of EMTCT, ART and other services has been generally impressive, limited holistic access to healthcare by pregnant women, may negate the registered achievements and derail the agenda

for gender equality. Lack of information, poor attitudes of health workers, limited awareness of sexual rights and unsafe traditional practices and behaviours in some communities continue to put women's lives at risk. Beneficiaries have been spread across the country though services may not be easily accessible by some in very remote areas. The implications are that the most vulnerable like the poor, the uneducated, prostitutes and those with spouses who engage in unsafe practices are at a great risk.

#### **2.4.1 Health services delivery**

Uganda is reputed to have one of the best health policies as enshrined in the National Health Policy 2010, where service delivery is based on the minimum healthcare package (MHCP). The essence is provision of integrated healthcare at HCIII/ sub county level. Despite the impressive physical infrastructural facilities, the health services delivery system faces many challenges leading to poor health indicators, the indices are extremely undesirable. Therefore, there is need to establish:

- The extent to which the *minimum health care package* (MHCP) as a model for integrated health care delivery has proved to be a convenient, efficient and effective tool for healthcare delivery benchmarking:
  - Health care delivery
  - The cost of health services
  - *Challenges the health workers*
  - Maternal health.
  - campaigns against harmful traditional practices,
  - Reproductive health services including access to adolescent-friendly services including levels of uptake of the services.
  - challenges of the end user vs facilities such as poor-quality services, chronic drug stock outs
  - Lack of equipment
  - Resurgence of HIV
  - Information collection, management and gaps
  - Limited awareness of sexual rights

#### **2.5 Decision Making at All Levels**

It is reported that men perceive women as productive at home rather than in the public domain. A proposal made by a man is apparently considered more seriously and is more vital for setting strategies and decisions for the home. In some communities, women noted that men did not offer them a platform to attend public debates and that many shielded away from speaking in public. Men argued that women's participation is lower due to their household responsibilities (OECD and UBoS, 2015:77). this situation goes beyond the households and community and transgress further to include the political sphere.

Persistent negative attitudes towards female political leadership limit women's access to leadership positions. Even if the majority of the population agrees that women and men should have equal opportunities to run for political office, 60% of Ugandans believe that men make better political leadership. Such discriminatory opinions are mirrored in practice (OECD and UBoS, 2015:77). Attitudes, beliefs and practices that serve to exclude women are still deeply entrenched in societies across the country. This negatively impacts women, their human capital development, and their ability to contribute equitably to Uganda's growth and prosperity (UNDP, 2015:3).

## Gender gaps in Decision making

1. This mandatory representation however does not extend at the local government level where representation at the grassroots is poor.
2. Few women compete against male candidates for the 'directly elected' seats; there is a fear that affirmative action may have had an adverse effect. Several Women MPs remain 'stuck' in the affirmative action seats which are consequently rarely freed for newcomers.

## 2.6 Leadership, Political Participation and Governance

### 2.6.1 Participation in community and local governance

While there has been improvement in women's participation at the local level, it is discernible that most representation is from affirmative action. This participation is still way below what it should be. The most critical challenges include cultural bias, lack of self-confidence and lack of resources to compete in elections. Elections have of recent become too commercialized and few women can afford the high cost of running as a candidate for elective offices. Initiatives include affirmative action to ring fence certain positions for women as well as 30% representation on others. The implications are that most of the rural and even urban poor / uneducated women remain largely excluded from benefiting from affirmative action which further exacerbates the marginalization of women.

Uganda is one of only eight countries in the world with more than 30% of the seats in the national parliament held by women. More than one in every three members of parliament (35%) is a woman. This is largely attributed to the affirmative action that requires every district to have woman MP-112 women representatives out of the 130 women MPs are elected in this manner.

### 2.6.2 National Leadership and Governance

General misconception of gender to mean women. This has negatively affected financing gender programmes for instance; many technical officers across MDAs assume that gender issues have specific budgets e.g., women's day activities yet financing gender equality requires mind set change which is a long-term activity. Shrinkage of political space for CSOs operations arising out of mistrust of CSOs by government. The critical issue is that CSOs have seemingly out competed government in service delivery particularly health and education. This has created bad blood including perceiving CSOs as opposition aligned.

While there has been improvement in women's participation in decision making at the national level (especially parliament and cabinet), the benefits have not cascaded at the grass-root level as evidenced in persistent high levels of domestic violence that is heavily skewed towards women; dominance of men's access to productive resources; land grabbing that has heavily affected widows, rural poor women; and rampant poverty among women. Among critical challenges include balancing "public and gender roles" and being a leader and "a good wife". The efficacy of affirmative action is being questioned given the reportedly dominance of a few women in positions of leadership and governance to the detriment of others who also need to participate.

While there has been improvement in women's participation at decision making levels in the public sector, their numbers are still grossly below men. Moreover, the influence of women in parliament, ministerial positions and other senior postings within government especially how it translates to improving the position of other women at local levels remains to be seen. Beneficiaries have been very few highly educated women occupying high positions but whose benefits are yet to be felt on the ground. The explanation is that there has been lack of role modelling / limited reach out to rural populace which has discounted potential benefits from highly placed women to cascade down. The most critical challenges include cultural bias in

education and training of a girl child, stalled career progression due to gender roles at household level and resource, patriarchal and institutional constraints to compete in elective politics, which is the basis for offices such as cabinet ministers.

## **2.7 Leadership, political participation and governance**

Uganda boasts of a strong system of governance based on a well-defined hierarchical system from local council system stretching to upward to the district and national levels. However, the participation of women at the various levels has been dismal. and the most constraining barrier to women progression has been attributed to lack of requisite qualifications, commercialisation of politics, lack of negotiation skills and also to structural barriers. these barriers need to be identified through:

- Engage with the political space to understand the extent of women participation since 2018
- Initiatives to encourage participate in political leadership.
- The requirement to increase women participation in public sector management
- hindering factors of participation of women in community, local and national governance including
  - Elections (institutional constraints to compete in elective politics)
  - Commercialized of politics
  - Exclusion of marginalization of women.
  - The influence of women in parliament,
  - Political positioning (ministerial and other senior postings)

## **2.8 Freedom from All Forms of Violence**

There is very high incidence of GBV in Uganda with women as the victims more than the men though it is believed that many men suffer silently for fear of being thought of as weak. The most critical challenges include; cultural acceptance of GBV as a buffer to power relations in favour of men and lack of access to efficient mechanisms for redress. Initiatives have been very many including laws and policies against GBV as well as sensitization programmes but their impact remains dismal largely due to heavily embedded culture and tradition that institutionalizes women's subdued position. Beneficiaries have been mainly the women victims especially the educated ones who are aware of their rights, wield more power and have access to justice systems. The implications are that the most vulnerable of the poor and uneducated women especially in rural areas are still largely at the mercy of their husbands most of who abuse them and go scot free.

Despite some improvements over time, the justice delivery system in Uganda is still inaccessible to the majority of the people, especially the poor and marginalized women and men. The most critical challenges include, delays in case resolution and corruption in handling of cases by the officer of JLOS. Initiatives have been very many including progressive laws and policies, decentralized services as well as staff training and community sensitization programmes but implementation remains a challenge. Beneficiaries have been mainly the women victims and men especially the educated ones who are aware of their rights, wield more power and have access to justice institutions. The implications are that the most vulnerable of the poor and uneducated women especially in rural areas are still largely under served by the formal systems and they resort to the informal alternatives or just suffer injustices silently.

## **2.9 Rights in Peacebuilding**

While women are increasingly participating in peace building and conflict resolution initiatives, their numbers are still dismal largely arising from society perception of "a woman" as having

limited capacity to contribute effectively in conflict management which is perceived as solely a male domain. Initiatives have included assigning peace building tasks to women especially in the armed forces and also in refugee camps but very few women are participating in peace building efforts yet they comprise the main victims of civil conflicts. Open witnessing of sexual offences in courts of law remains a deterrent in prosecution of gender related cases.

## **2.10 Freedom from violence, access to justice and peacebuilding**

The prevalence of Gender Based Violence is heavily reinforced in culture and other influences of power relations that are tilted in favour of the males than women. Therefore, there is need to identify and assess:

- programs and gaps for empowered women against Gender Based Violence since 2018
- National and international policy commitments against GBV
- Gaps and encumbrances in policy designing, implementation and enforcement

## **2.11 Section conclusions on Gaps in the 2018 Gender Assessment**

The entry point for the assessment and the follow up on the 2018 Gender Assessment was the interventions both at policy and stakeholder level. It is known fact that the Government of Uganda and its partners have supported many policy initiatives that have been geared towards promoting gender equality in various sectors since 2018 to date.

The assessment established that Uganda's policy framework is supportive of the gender equality agenda. Despite the many positive policies in place and some progress of made; many facets of inequality between men and women; and boys and girls still persist

While some gains towards promoting gender equality in cultural norms, and traditions, that foster gender inequalities still exist programs with more stringent enforcement of the laws against harmful practices have been achieved in this sphere the most critical barrier underpinning the success and sustainability of the gender equality is the gender ideologies of discrimination against women.

The existing gender imbalances are reinforced by household power relations. Manifesting into limited lack of ownership of resources and this is worsening by the ultimate control of the output of proceeds by the spouses/male. Government has implemented programs specifically tailored for women economic empowerment. However, what is lacking at the moment is to understand the:

- Gender parity indicators in ownership of other property such as land,
- The successes and hiccups of the successful initiatives for joint ownership of land as provided for in the new land policy,
- The commitment to enact domestic laws and initiatives to by the micro-finance for women economic empowerment.

Therefore, there is a continued need, to complement gender mainstreaming strategies with targeted interventions promoting gender equality focusing on women's empowerment, particularly where there are glaring instances of persistent discrimination of women and inequality between women and men. To respond effectively to the needs of the women and bridge gender inequality in Uganda, it's important to assess the socio-economic, political and legal environment that affects the lives of women and hinders their full participation in the development efforts.

The most critical gender inequalities still persist in rights and access to economic opportunities/productive resources, education, health, participation in governance and access to justice.

## **2.12 Setting the gender equality assessment 2020**

### **2.12.1 Introduction**

Uganda has made tremendous progress in increasing opportunities for women, engineered by inclusive-centred policies and laws. Purportedly more females are involved decision-making positions at all levels, there is improved access to education, Health, political participation and governance. there has been an improved demand for fundamental freedoms from violence, torture inhuman and degrading practices in many cultures. Women's role in peacebuilding has also been recognised. However, an analysis of some socio-economic sector reveals discrepancies, indicating that females are still worse off. the gender terrain at the moment is presented by glaring discrepancies rendering the gender equality agenda still lacking and demanding continued efforts and interventions.

Women and girls in Uganda face a range of inequalities, including lack of economic self-sufficiency, greater risk of HIV/AIDS, and vulnerability to gender based violence. The Committee of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) most recently examined Uganda in 2010. It noted an increase in policies, programmes and legislation around gender equality in Uganda, but reported its concerns about the persistence of discrimination against women and girls in education, public life, decision-making, marriage, family relations and health. While the proportion of girls in primary school has been rising, there remains a clear literacy gap between women and men, and girls' dropout rates from school are higher than those of boys. Discrimination against women in the labour market is persistent. There is a high rate of unemployment affecting women and a wide wage gap between women and men. Female headed households are disproportionately represented among the chronically poor and women have limited access to land, capital and microfinance facilities.

### **2.12.2 Gender context**

Gender equality is upheld in local frameworks such as the 1995 Constitution, Vision 2040, the National Development Plan, the Equal Opportunities Commission Act (2007) and the National Youth Policy. Uganda has also ratified international instruments such as CEDAW, the Maputo Declaration on Gender Mainstreaming (2003), the African Youth Charter (2006) and the Sustainable Development Goals, among others. While this has seen progress in women's representation in decision-making, the benefits of these policies are yet to be seen in other socio-economic indicators. For example, statistics from the 2016/2017 Uganda National Household Survey (UNHS) show that the changes in opportunities for woman remain lower relative to widespread celebrations of women's successes in political leadership. For example, only 22.4 per cent of women have opportunities in modern wage employment compared to 36.6 per cent of men. The monthly wage for women is UGX 110.000, which is half that of men at UGX 220.000. Furthermore, 26.7 per cent of women own land compared to 33.5 per cent of men. According to the most recent Uganda Demographic Health Survey (UDHS) 2016 (UBOS and ICF 2017), 22 per cent of women (15–49 years) reported having experienced some form of sexual violence.

The status of women in Uganda is affected by high poverty levels, low literacy rates, limited access to resources, inadequate institutional capacity of national gender mechanisms and law enforcement agencies and negative sociocultural practices that foster violation of women's rights. Poverty in Uganda has a predominantly female face. Households headed by widows are particularly vulnerable to asset depletion and impoverishment.

# THEMATIC AREA 1: Gender Equality And Women's Rights In Decision Making, Leadership Political Participation And Governance

## 3.1 Introduction

In Uganda, politics, governance and decision-making processes at both household and community level remain male-dominated and women are hardly visible in these processes. Women who strive to take part in active politics and household decision making specifically to challenge male counterparts and assert their political rights are ridiculed as immoral, badly brought up and unruly. However, the extent to which such stereotypes, sexism and women's representation in the media has been inadequately documented.

## 3.2 Women's Participation in decision making

### 3.2.1 Participation in decision making at household and community Level

Evidence suggests that men and women have very different roles and priorities when it comes to household decision making. Women generally place higher premium on welfare related goals and are more likely to use their influence and the resources they control to promote the needs of the family, particularly children.

Evidence further indicates that household decisions are on many occasions made through a bargaining process which usually favors men than women. Factors underlying women's influence in decision making processes at household and community level include patriarchal attitudes, control of income and assets, age at marriage and their level of education. The consequences of women's exclusion from household decision making can be as dire for women themselves as it is for children. For example, in a household where a woman is involved in decision making, there is an increased likelihood that her children, particularly girls will attend school compared to a household where this is not the case.

A number of decisions to be made in the households by both partners or one of them usually include; Family Health dynamics, daily household expenditures and mobility of household members.

#### a. Decision making over health care needs

Decisions on family health care are vital to the well-being of both women and children. In many households in Uganda, many women report to having enough influence in health-related issues

#### b. Decision making on management of daily household expenditures

Household decisions on daily expenditures have a decisive impact on both women and children's well-being, education and particularly their health. In Uganda, for a family to decide on how to spend its financial resources whether on children or personal preferences of adults, mainly depends on which family members are involved in the decision-making process. In Uganda, men still have a firm upper hand in decisions on household expenditures.

#### c. Decisions on major household purchases

Household decisions on large expenditures such as land, cars and livestock can be crucial for any household financial independency. Money usually spent on large purchases may be regarded as a wise long-term investment, although such purchases can consume a large share of household income that would otherwise be used for more immediate household needs like food, medicine, and school supplies. The Uganda Demographic Health Survey 2016 still suggests that men generally decide how much the household will allocate towards major expenditures.

#### d. Decisions on mobility

Household decisions regarding women's mobility directly affect their ability to provide for their own needs as well as the needs of their own children.

**Box 1: Women's participation in decision making**

Uganda's 2016 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) reveals that most married women participate in household decision-making and only a minority of households (9%) have men as the sole decision-makers, including on decisions concerning their wives' own earned income expenditure. The survey further reveals that the majority of surveyed women (74%) make decisions regarding their health and significant household needs (64%). Women's decision-making is positively correlated with age and income: the older they are and the more they earn the more influence they have in decision-making. A minority of women (13%) do not have any decision-making influence at all, including with regard to their own health.

However, there is inadequate current sex-disaggregated data and gender statistics, particularly at sub national levels, on numerous aspects related to women's decision making at household and community level, which limits the comparison of data on this issue in relation to the 2018 gender assessment.

**3.3 Leadership and Political Participation**

Overall, in Uganda women political leaders have gained access to prominent public political positions in numbers that historically represent a breakthrough. The increase in the number of women at the parliamentary level is attributable to the mandatory district woman member of parliament (MP) position, especially with regard to the creation of new districts. Unfortunately, mandatory women representation does not apply to political positions such as district, municipal and sub-county chairpersons, accounting for low women's representation in the latter positions, as stated above. Nonetheless, women's access to these political spaces at local and national levels has introduced new relations between women and men by dealing a death blow to the expectation that women should passively look up to men in politics. Their presence in increasing numbers has normalised their status as political actors and gone a long way in redefining how men 'do' their politics.

During the 2016 presidential elections, eight candidates were nominated for presidential elections. Four aspirants came from political parties (People's Development Party (PDP), Forum for Democratic Party (FDC), National Resistance Movement (NRM), and Uganda Farmer's Party (UFP) and the other four were nominated as independent presidential candidates. Of these 8 presidential candidates, only one (1) candidate was female (Faith Kyalya, Independent) and the other 7 were male candidates. This hasn't changed much in the 2021 presidential elections, 11 candidates were nominated for the presidential race, only one (1) was female (Nancy Kalembe) who also came independent of any political party. This clearly depicts a gender biased trend in participation in the political parties and electoral process within the EC and political parties as well. Party leadership of the major political parties is also still male dominated.

In regard to parliamentary representation, Uganda has witnessed an increase in women's representation in parliament since 1995. During the 1996 general elections, before affirmative action was legalised women comprised 19% of the legislative arm of government while in the 2016 elections, women constituted 34.8% of the parliament. The main reason behind the increase in women's quota is because of increase in the number of districts in Uganda and affirmative action mandated in the Constitution. During elections in 1996, there were only 39 districts in Uganda, which increased to 112 districts by the 2016 general elections, which has further increased to almost 146 districts as at the 2021 elections. During the 2016 elections of parliament members, 427 positions were available, with 112 positions for District Woman Representatives to parliament. This number has increased drastically to 146 women district representatives. Despite all this increment, the proportion of female members of parliament has remained on average the same over the course of the past 20 years at 30%, This is not any different for the executive arm

of the government where there is no affirmative action as the number of male ministers doubles the number of women in the previous cabinet, there were 31 male ministers and only 20 female ministers holding ministerial positions.

Current statistics in Uganda show that there are 15% of women in political party leadership, 45% in election monitoring bodies, 0% of women mayors of cities, 12% in executive positions of the government and almost 33% of women in the 11<sup>th</sup> parliament.<sup>1</sup>

At an overall average of 27%, the women representation in the politics of Uganda is still low. The effective representation and participation of women in politics is still hampered by limited resources to finance election campaigns compared to their male counterparts. Women's participation in elections and party activities are hampered by many challenges. These include;

- Gender inequality remains prevalent because of societal norms of patriarchy and misogyny. Patriarchal norms endow men with power to dictate and impose their political views on women's participation in politics.
- The general lack of access to political and economic opportunities for them to engage in.
- High levels of under employment and unemployment
- Low literacy levels among women who would otherwise enhance self-confidence to enable them to qualify for presidential, local government and parliamentary candidacy.
- Men not accepting their spouses to participate in politics.

### 3.4 Women in Governance

An analysis of staff levels in Uganda's Public Service as of December 2019, shows that it is still male dominated with 62% of males compared to their female counterparts (38%) for all categories except health where there are more female employees (54%) than males (46%). Table 4 below shows that there was 1% increase in the number of females employed in public administration from 37% in 2018 to 38% in 2019.

**Table 3: Number of employees in civil service by sex as of 2019**

| Sector                                                 | Total          | % of Women | % of men  |
|--------------------------------------------------------|----------------|------------|-----------|
| Teaching Services (Primary, Secondary and Tertiary)    | 169,920        | 39         | 61        |
| Health Services (District Hospital and Health Centers) | 38,360         | 54         | 46        |
| Local Government                                       | 240,269        | 40         | 60        |
| Central Ministry                                       | 11,837         | 43         | 57        |
| Uganda Police Force                                    | 41,190         | 20         | 80        |
| Uganda Prisons Service                                 | 9,365          | 29         | 71        |
| Public Universities                                    | 6,937          | 37         | 63        |
| Regional and National Referral Hospitals               | 6,838          | 58         | 42        |
| Government Agencies                                    | 3,637          | 33         | 67        |
| District and Municipal Headquarters                    | 31,989         | 30         | 70        |
| Grand Total (2019/2020)                                | <b>320,073</b> | <b>38</b>  | <b>62</b> |
| Grand Total (2017/2018)                                | <b>314,501</b> | <b>37</b>  | <b>63</b> |

**Source: Active Payroll Dec' 2019**

Further analysis of the public administration profile of women in Uganda shows that in the teaching services alone, male employees still hold higher positions of governance (Head teachers, deputy head teachers and senior teaching assistants) compared to the females in all government schools and universities.

<sup>1</sup> Women's Political Participation – Afro-Barometer 2021

Although women employees dominate health services in public services, majority of high governance positions (Senior Medical Officers, Senior Clinical Officers, Principal Hospital Administrators and Principal Medical Officers) in various health facilities are still held by males compared to the females.

Local government employees consist of Political leaders, Chairpersons, Teachers and Health workers, Agriculture extension workers, Town Council employees, and other traditional LG workers. With the exception of health workers, all the other categories of local government employees are dominated by males (60%). Furthermore, staffing of critical positions of decision making at District LGs like Heads of Departments and some sections of Human resource are held majorly by male (83%) compared to the females (17%).

The direct appointment of women by the President to some key public positions has of recent provided the opportunity for capable women to be placed in positions of decision making, positions they might not have otherwise reached had they followed the usual public service system that rewards merit with promotion.

Although there has been an influx in the number of women in senior positions such as RDCs and heads of public agencies in the recent years, which is a result of the gains in women's higher education and some direct appointment by the President of Uganda, the above secondary analysis clearly shows that the proportion of women in Uganda's public administration hasn't changed much since 2018 and it is still very low as it does not match the representation of women in Uganda where women make up more than half of the country's population.

#### **Box 2: Gender in Staff Composition (Ministry of Water and Environment)**

##### **MWE Permanent Staff**

Data from the Human Resource Department indicates that MWE has 342 permanent staff a reduction of 5 staff from the 347 staff reported last year. A gender analysis of MWE employees indicates that 36% (124) of staff are female and 64% (218) staff are male. This is the same gender composition reported last year. The gender analysis of permanent staff composition for a period of 5 years (2016 to 2020) indicates that the number of female staff members has not significantly improved over the last five years and with the gender proportion of men to women remaining unchanged from last year.

##### **Gender by Management Position**

Further analysis of staffing position by management position indicates that there are 39 staff members occupying senior management position out of which only 15% (6) are female This is a reduction from 16% that was reported last year (2019). For the middle management level, the ministry has 114 staff members of which 26% (30) are female and 74% (84) male. The Percentage of female in this category has remained unchanged since last year. The operational level is well balanced with the number of female employees being equal to that of men.

**Source: MWE Annual performance report 2020**

### **3.5 Gaps and Opportunities**

1. Visible strides have been made since the implementation of affirmative action in 1989. However, Uganda still has a long way to go. For example, in many cases the justice system still treats domestic abuse as a family matter rather than a criminal offense; early or forced marriage is negotiated out of court yet it is a capital offense; women's equality in ownership of property and resources as well as access to services is still limited. With improved women representation, members of parliament are expected to put forward issues that have remained obstacles especially in terms of decision making at both

household and community levels and decisions on access to sexual reproductive health information and services.

2. Advocacy work around gender issues by parliamentarians, civil society and development actors is very strong. These groups have been very vocal on accountability for the elimination of gender-based, as well as ending discrimination in access to social and economic opportunities. However, there is still a disconnect between Uganda's very positive legal framework and the lack of effective enforcement of the gender-positive laws.

### **3.6 Gender dimensions and their impact on women's participation in decision-making during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020**

As a result of Covid-19, **markets were decimated, unemployment soared, incomes evaporated**, relationships strained, political differences exacerbated, and stress and uncertainty levels across the districts of Uganda all increased. Most importantly, as of 1<sup>st</sup> May 2021, over 40,734 cases of Covid-19 had been recorded in Uganda with 334 deaths. There is limited sex disaggregated data available on cases and deaths due to Covid-19 in Uganda. The pandemic has disproportionately affected women as the majority of health-care workers and those caring for the sick and elderly at home. Rates of violence have also escalated in many districts of Uganda as women are confined with abusive partners due to lockdown restrictions, while support services have declined. And women are also the majority of those in precarious work, including the informal sector and casual work. The pandemic has exacerbated pre-existing inequalities and created new constraints to women's participation in decision-making. While the impact of the pandemic and ensuing responses have been uneven across the country, a common element still exists: the pandemic and all its direct and indirect effects are mediated mainly through individuals making decisions within households.

**Key decision-making issues at the household level in the Covid-19** context are on how food and finances are managed. Women are currently supporting their families with their VSLA and SACCO savings, and through their subsistence farming, in the case of rural households. Nevertheless, current household decision-making is still dominated by men. However, it has been reported that men are spending more time with the family at home which has introduced some changes to the usual parental collaboration at household level. Men are spending more time with their children, spouses are collaborating more in their parenting roles.

**At community level, Covid-19 coordination platforms have been established** across the country at national, regional and district level to steer the prevention and response to the pandemic. Analysis of members on Covid-19 task forces shows that they are male-dominated, and men occupy the most influential positions. If women's voices are excluded from decision-making platforms, it is very unlikely that women and girls' distinct needs will be expressed, let alone addressed. Too few women have been included in Covid-19 decision-making at community level and this has had serious consequences on their health and wellbeing. Without women's voice, decision-making spaces will not be able to address urgent and pressing needs that women typically face, for example, adapting the provision of GBV and Sexual and Reproductive and Maternal Health (SRMH) services in the context of lockdowns and restricted movement and transport.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> COVID-19 Rapid Gender Analysis – Care Uganda

# THEMATIC AREA 2: Gender Equality And Access To Resources: Employment, Livelihoods, Natural And Economic Resources

## 4.1 Introduction

Uganda is a landlocked country but with a good natural endowment of both natural and human resources to support the economy and her people. A report on natural resources has shown depletions and gains over the past years. Whereas the forest cover is threatened, excessive demand for forest resources for timber and domestic energy consumption, there has been a discovery of new resources such as oil and gas to service this need. There has also been improved investment in hydro electricity generation through the construction of hydro dams at major sites

## 4.2 Extent both men and women have equal access to employment opportunities

The country's labour force increased over the past decade from 10.9 million persons in 2005/06 to 16.5 million persons by 2013/14. This represents an average annual labour force growth rate of 4.7%. About 75% of the labour force lives in rural areas. A gender analysis indicates that females and males account for 52.4% and 47.6% of the labour force respectively. About 48 % of the labour force in Uganda is self-employed or employed by someone else in the formal and informal sector. Although there are more females than males in the labour force, the male share of employed persons is 54.7% compared to the female share of employed persons of 45.4%. The share of employed persons in agriculture, forestry and fishing is 33.8%. On the other hand, the share of employed persons in manufacturing and services sectors is 21.1% and 45.1% respectively<sup>3</sup>

With regard to employment, a focus on the population aged 14 to 64 years showed that there were more unemployed women (11%) than men (8 %) (UBOS, 2017). Women spend 30 hours a week on unpaid domestic and care work, more than twice the amount of time spent by men (12 hours a week). The majority of the population, despite having attained primary-level education, earn only UGX 56,000 for women and UGX 129,000 for men (UBOS, 2017). According to the Uganda National Household Survey (2012/2013), there were more women engaged in self-employment activities (48%) compared to men (38%). Men tend to engage more in paid employment (51%) compared to women (35%). More women (17%) engage in family work than men (11%), (UNHS, 2016/17).

### Box 3: Gender gaps in youth employment

Young women have more difficulties finding paid work than young men. Hence, youth unemployment rate stands at 7.0% for females compared to 6.1% for males. This gender difference has been attributed to the difficult transition to working life; limited access to information channels and job search mechanisms; lower pay in the informal economy; unprotected low-skill jobs as well as lack of access to training, social protection and other resources; making young women comparatively more vulnerable than young men to poverty and sexual exploitation. Although the economic activity rate for adult men relative to women is almost the same (78.9% for women and 81.5% for men), social norms still reinforce discrimination in access and control over productive assets, particularly land and financial capital.

Source: UNHS 2016/2017

## 4.3 Men and women ability to access livelihood opportunities

As of 2021, the government of Uganda has put in place a number of tools and resources to build self-reliance among its population and help hardworking people leave poverty behind. Many

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<sup>3</sup>Social Development Sector Plan

community-based models have been designed, refined and expanded over the years by the government, NGOs and CBOs to try and end intergenerational cycles of poverty.

Majority of programmes have been put in place to help the working age population, through loans and hands on skills training to build potential for sustainable employment. Also the government has put in place programmes targeting the empowerment of women through savings groups, skills training, education and access to loans which has improved their overall livelihood.

Below are some of the programmes that provide improved livelihood opportunities:

**1. The Youth Livelihood Program (YLP)**

Launched in January 2014, YLP is a Government of Uganda rolling Programme, targeting the poor and unemployed youth in all the districts in the country in order to enhance their incomes. The Programme is community demand-driven, being implemented under the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD) through the existing Local Government structures. Funds are advanced to the Youth Interest Groups (YIGs) in form of an interest-free Revolving Fund in order to increase outreach and enhance sustainability of the Programme.

As at June 2019, the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MFPED) had disbursed a sum of US\$160,238,246,586/= to 20,159 projects benefitting a total number of 241,799 youth out of which 46% are female.

YLP has had a positive contribution of 4% to job creation in Uganda. This has been achieved through the creation of over 200,000 direct jobs and 500,000 indirect jobs through multiplier effects at household and community levels hence an improved livelihood for both men and women in the beneficiary areas.

However, the project has been affected by a number of challenges including overwhelming demand for support across all the districts in the country amidst tight national budgets, Natural calamities, poor attitudes for some of the youth and reported cases of impropriety (corruption) by some Local Government officials and youth leaders.<sup>4</sup>

**2. Presidential Initiative on Wealth and Job Creation (Emyooga)**

*Emyooga* was launched by H.E the President of Uganda in August 2019 as part of Government's continuous strategies to transform 68% of Ugandan homesteads from subsistence to market-oriented production. One of the initiative's objective was to increase access to specialized financial services to both urban and rural areas particularly women. Although the programme was halted by the COVID-19 pandemic lock down, it has provided a number of women groups with seed capital to support development of these groups and hence act as an additional mechanism on improvement of their livelihoods.

**3. Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Project (UWEP)**

UWEP is an initiative of the Government of Uganda that is aimed at improving access to financial services for women and equipping them with skills for enterprise growth, value addition and marketing of their products and services. Implemented as a Rolling Programme under the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD), is intended to empower Ugandan women for economic development. The Programme is designed to address the challenges women face in undertaking economically viable enterprises including the limited access to affordable credit, limited technical knowledge

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<sup>4</sup> YLP Summary update of programme implementation – January 2021

and skills for business development, limited access to markets as well as information regarding business opportunities.

The programme is envisaged to increase participation of women in business development, increase their incomes, livelihood security and overall quality of life.

With programmes like those above put in place to support women and young girls, there has been an improvement in equal access to livelihood opportunities between men and women in Uganda.

#### **4.4 Equal access to natural resources in Uganda**

The Uganda Gender Policy, 1997 (Revised 2007), and the Second National Development Plan (NDP 11) 2015/16 – 2019/20 mandate all development institutions to promote gender equality and women empowerment while executing programmes and activities. To this end, the Ministry of Water and Environment (MWE) developed a Water and Sanitation Gender Strategy in 2003 (revised in 2010 and 2017) and an Environment and Natural Resources Gender Strategy in 2015 to guide gender equality and women empowerment efforts in the sector. During the reporting period, a number of activities have been undertaken to promote gender mainstreaming as outlined below.

##### **1. Rural Water supply and sanitation**

The performance indicator for gender mainstreaming in rural water interventions is “Percentage of Water and Sanitation Committees (WSC) with at least one woman holding a key position”. Key positions on WSCs include Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer. Data from the MWE water supply database as of June 2020, indicates that 86% of WSCs have women holding key positions. This is an improvement of from 85% reported in FY 2018/2019.

##### **2. Water for Production**

The performance indicator for gender mainstreaming in water for production interventions is “Percentage of Water User Committees (WUC) with at least one woman holding a key position”. Key positions on WUCs include Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer. In FY 2019/20, 75% of the water user management committees have women in key positions and 49% dams have women in key positions (Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer). This gender indicator has remained the same as last year for both dams and valley tanks.

##### **3. Catchment Management Committees**

The Performance indicator for Gender mainstreaming on Catchment Management Committees (CMCs) is the Percentage of CMCs with women holding key positions. Key positions on CMCs include the position of Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary and Vice Secretary. Data from 14 CMCs<sup>15</sup> from Aswa, Victoria, Albert and Kyoga Water Catchments indicates that 79% (11) CMCs have women in key positions. This is a significant increment from 35% reported last year. The CMCs with no women holding key positions are located in Kyoga Water Management Zone and include Lokok, Victoria Nile-Lumbuye and Lokere. Within CMCs a number of lower level Sub Catchment Management Committees (SCMCs) have been developed to operationalize the CMCs. Information from the management zones indicates that out of the 9 SCMCs formed, 100% have women occupying key positions.

#### **4.5 Men and women ability to access economic resources for productivity**

This section details the level of access of both men and women to economic resources for productivity among which include land, equipment, and markets.

##### **4.5.1 Equal Access and Use of Land**

In Uganda, overlapping formal and informal land rights systems – where land is administered through both statutory and customary law – lead to uncertainty and tensions. At the community level, land rights violations, including widespread land grabbing and forceful evictions, violate people's human rights. The marginalisation and exclusion of women and youth from land and property rights, development opportunities and processes for participation also generate tensions. The discovery of oil in Uganda has resulted in uncertainties over who should benefit and has accelerated the acquisition of land, leading to an influx of individuals and investors who acquire large swathes of land, at times fraudulently. Some of this land is obtained for large-scale infrastructural development, mineral exploration and commercial agriculture, with increasing incidences of rights violations against local populations, such as the destruction of people's crop fields and houses.

Despite significant policy strides, hurdles to overcome conflicts and violence between men and women at all levels still persist, with patriarchal norms deeply embedded in the Ugandan society. The 2017 Participatory Poverty Assessment revealed that women's inadequate control over livelihood assets such as land, labour and financial capital remains one of the root causes of poverty. For instance, although 83% of women are engaged in agricultural production, only 25.5% have control over the land they cultivate – such as deciding where and how much land to cultivate, what to plant and where, and how proceeds are used.<sup>5</sup> This scenario creates enormous challenges for women as they are increasingly taking on the burden of providing for their families (in particular food), as men are reluctant to engage in agricultural production and to provide for their families – thus seriously undermining the sustainability of household livelihoods, because women have too many responsibilities.

Land that is predominantly customary in nature is held in trust by either clans, family heads or individuals. A recent phenomenon is traditional leaders using customary regulations that are enshrined in the clan principles, practices, rights and responsibilities of the customary tenure system. Under this tenure system, decisions on land management and administration are made by household heads, who are usually men. Although the principles, practices, rights and responsibilities of customary tenure in some societies of Uganda defend the rights of marginalised groups (including women, people living with HIV/AIDS, people with special needs and youth), significant disparities between the rights of women and men still persist, and continue to fuel rights violations. Generally, land is 'owned' by men. However, in the event that a portion of land is given to a wife by her husband, she is supposed to divide it among her children. If a man has more than one wife and is well off, special consideration is given to the first wife when he dies; the second wife does receive a portion but this is not equivalent to the first wife.

Women may or may not be given land by their fathers. If a father apportions land to his children, the girls are usually given a smaller portion or none compared to the boys. This is because it is believed that women will eventually marry and leave their maiden homes, and are therefore entitled to land where they marry; while men will marry and settle with their families on the land apportioned to them by their father.

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<sup>5</sup> Uganda Demographic Household Survey, 2017/18

The above analysis shows that although a lot has been done and is still being done to attain equal access, use and ownership of land, none of the above sentiments have changed a great deal since 2018. Notably, the desk review showed limited updated information on equal access and use of land and their assessment did not find any major changes which happened between 2018 and 2020 regarding improving on access to and use of land as a factor of production.

#### **Box 4: Women's Land rights and Agricultural productivity in Uganda Report**

The study finds that women had ownership rights on 32% of the surveyed parcels and use rights on 16% of the parcels. It also finds that granting land rights to women enhances productivity, but ownership rights are more important than use rights. Yield was significantly higher on parcels owned by women compared to those where women only had use rights. Therefore, granting use rights alone is not sufficient to promote efficient land use by women, but granting ownership rights can and does enhance yield. These results suggest that there is a need to strengthen female land ownership rights to promote agricultural productivity and reduce poverty. Enhancing women's land rights is key in achieving the first and fifth sustainable development goals—alleviating poverty and promoting gender equality, respectively.

#### **4.5.2 Equal Access and use of markets**

Women are a significant economic entrepreneurial force whose contributions to local, national and global economies are far reaching. Women produce and consume, manage businesses and households, earn income, hire labour, borrow and save, and provide a range of services for businesses and workers. Women also produce more than 80 percent of the food consumed in Uganda.<sup>6</sup>

Clearly, women workers and entrepreneurs in Uganda are not an undifferentiated mass. A number of factors mediate their access to productive resources, prominent features include: age, literacy and numeracy, education, rural or urban location, ethnicity, language, health, and physical wellbeing. For example, individuals and groups with initial endowments of productive resources such as land wealth, and physical and financial capital, are better able to access additional productive resources and frequently face higher returns in existing markets. Women entrepreneurs with land wealth and capital are more likely to work in the formal economy, where their businesses are registered, they pay taxes on income, labour and capital and benefit from private and public sector programs. Women entrepreneurs with little more than their labour to sell, are likely to cluster in the informal economy, in small production units that are unregistered and where they may not pay taxes on income, labour, or capital. These women entrepreneurs face entirely different sets of opportunities and constraints scaling up their economic activities and entering new markets.

In Uganda women are considered both as producers, seeking to expand and scale up their existing market activities, and as potential market entrants, seeking to purchase inputs, goods or services that affect their productive activities.

#### **Market Access**

##### **a. Labour Markets**

Labour markets summarize both formal and informal settings where individuals sell their labour effort and are remunerated by wages. In some settings workers are able to bargain collectively with employers to secure contractual agreements about wages and benefits; in others, workers make individual bargains with employers that may, or may not, be guaranteed by binding and legal contracts. Workers hired in informal labour markets typically do not have

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<sup>6</sup> Enhancing Women's Access to Markets

contracts that legally oblige employers to provide benefits, and adherence to existing labour law is not enforced.

A number of factors that include gender and social norms, consumption patterns and time usage, which describe women's entitlements and capabilities in Uganda, can affect women's access to, and outcomes in, existing labour markets. Women and men in Uganda often work in distinct activities that offer different rewards and career opportunities even though they have similar education and labour market skills. In many economies, women work in jobs characterized by low wages, high job insecurity, low levels of unionization, and poor working conditions. For example, women tend to cluster in informal employment. There is also evidence, given the size, scale, and location of women's small and micro-enterprises, that when they contract workers, they do so informally. Consequently, women workers in Uganda still face more insecure employment with fewer benefits and lower wages than their male counterparts

#### **b. Goods Markets**

Goods markets summarize both the market for inputs into production processes and outputs from production processes. Markets for goods and inputs, like other markets, are frequently regulated. Trading is typically not anarchic and conventions and rules regulate participation and sales.

A variety of factors impedes women access to goods markets or increase the cost of entry into markets in Uganda and internationally. For example, distance from the market limits women's ability to sell or purchase in that market. The lack of permission or certification to trade in certain markets will prevent market entry: small farmers (majority are women) are still confined to domestic markets because they do not have the required certification to trade produce internationally. The volumes traded in some markets may be too large for majority of women who are small producers or buyers to enter, effectively precluding their access to large, centralized, domestic, and international markets.

Information is also not readily available about the type of goods sold or the prices at which they are sold. Finally, collusive activity on the part of buyers or sellers squeezes out women competitors and prevents them from gaining access to certain goods markets.

Some of these barriers to entry or costs of participation in are uniquely gendered. In parts of rural Uganda, women's mobility is limited after and during their monthly. In some societies of Uganda, it is not considered appropriate for women to travel alone or without the accompaniment of a male relative. As a result, women's mobility is highly circumscribed and their access to goods markets can be limited. Collusive activity on the part of buyers or monopsony can affect sellers. In parts of Latin America, women fishers receive lower prices for their produce because they sell in smaller volumes to powerful intermediaries who set the price. Women typically catch fish in lower volumes than men, are concentrated on more depleted fisheries closer to the shore, have limited storage and transport options, and are frequently forced to sell in spot markets at lower prices.<sup>8</sup> Barriers to goods markets affect both earnings and efficiency. The costs of unequal access have implications for women as well as their households.

#### **c. Services Markets**

A variety of services can help improve productivity and expand the scope and value of market activities. Access to training and workforce development can upgrade skills, raise productivity, and improve earnings and wages. Small business development services can

provide targeted assistance to expand existing activities, penetrate new markets and improve efficiency. Extension services can increase output, diversify and improve production, reduce risk, and raise the quality and price of the goods traded. While some of these services are traded, others may be provided by governments, intermediaries or NGOs, as partially or fully subsidized programs, to fulfil distributional or efficiency goals.

Women in Uganda still face particular barriers accessing service markets. For example, women's agricultural activities in Uganda are frequently oriented towards subsistence production and domestic markets: they produce lower value products, on smaller tracts of land, with more limited access to capital, labour, and chemical inputs. Women's inability to purchase or hire extension services that can transform their production, including social sanctions on engagement with male extension workers confine their activities, reducing their ability to benefit from liberalization or respond to price signals by shifting into tradable. Similarly, because of their household and reproductive responsibilities, women workers may be less able to participate in and benefit from workforce development initiatives especially in rural areas.<sup>7</sup>

#### **4.5.3 Equal access to credit/ capital**

Empirical evidence shows that financial inclusion can aid self-employment, improve household consumption, support greater local economic activity, and reduce inequality. There is also macroeconomic evidence to show that economies with deeper financial intermediation tend to grow faster and reduce income inequality. For these reasons, over 30 countries around the world have made commitments to improve financial inclusion and/or implement national financial inclusion strategies as part of their broader national development plans. Uganda was one of them.

##### **Box 5: Access to credit statistics**

The Finscope 2018 study conducted in Uganda reveals a gap when it comes to overall financial inclusion – only 77% adult women are financially included. There are several reasons why disadvantaged girls and women face this situation in Uganda, which manifests itself in 25% of women being less likely to own a mobile phone, being active users of mobile money, having an account at a financial institution, saving or borrowing money and understanding financial services. The levels of exclusion from any form of financial service are high, especially among households with low levels of education. This makes it difficult for women to own property and have independence in their decision-making, according to Uganda National Financial Inclusion Strategy (NFIS). The “Feminization” of poverty in Uganda does not stand out, women are 1.8 times more likely to access informal financial services via their village savings groups and co-operatives than formal services. In fact, 23% of adult women use informal services compared to 59% of adult men (Finscope 2018). Comprising over 51% of Uganda's population, women continue to be underrepresented as beneficiaries of government initiatives, voters, and political leaders and elected officials. This amplifies their voices in addressing their concerns as well as giving them a sense of independence, which usually breaks the barriers towards financial inclusion.

#### **4.6 Gender dimensions and their impact on employment, and access to resources during the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020**

Women and men around the world have been deeply affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, which has heightened the large and small inequalities both at work and at home that women face daily. **The Covid-19 (coronavirus) pandemic has laid bare many of the deep gender inequalities in Uganda.** Before the pandemic, women already spent about 3.5 times more hours than men each

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<sup>7</sup> Enhancing Women's Access to Markets

week on domestic labour (Time Use Survey-UBOS). With school closures, these care burdens have only gotten heavier, giving women less time to devote to economic activities. Some have left the labour market altogether, and women's businesses, which already were smaller and less profitable than men's, were the first to close as the economy contracted. Across the Sub-Saharan region, 43% of woman-owned businesses were closed in the early months of the pandemic, compared to 34% of those owned by men.

**Many women rely on agriculture or informal trade** for their livelihood, both of which have been adversely affected by the lockdown; and field studies of rural areas show a serious decline in household income, a drop in informal cross-border trade, and rising food insecurity. Refugees, 80% of whom are female and who primarily work in informal and agricultural sectors, feel these impacts acutely.

**An increasing number of young women are now more than ever likely to leave** school without joining the labour market. In 2016, about 25–30% of female youth between the ages of 20 and 24 were neither working nor in school, compared with 10–15% of male youth. These numbers had doubled already since 2012, and the pandemic has worsened them more still. And in the labour market, according to 2018 figures (World Bank), women earn about half of what men earn. Evidence from previous programs in Uganda shows that offering safe spaces for girls to gain life skills, learn trades, and financial literacy can boost income long after the pandemic ends.

## 5.1 Introduction

A look at the agriculture sector reveals that the transformation in education and political leadership of women is yet to manifest in the agriculture sector. Over 80 per cent of Uganda's population lives in rural areas and agriculture is their main source of livelihood. Subsistence farming is the main source of livelihood in the rural areas and women constitute 74% of the agriculture labour force compared to 65% of men. Though women constitute the highest proportion of the labour force in the agriculture sector, they are faced with several challenges, considering that agricultural employment is characterised by low skills, low wages and subsistence, and is generally rain-fed.

## 5.2 Participation of both men and women in agriculture and rural development

In Uganda, 35% of those employed in agriculture are unpaid family workers, a fact that increases women's double work burden. In rural areas, it is estimated that women's workloads considerably exceed those of men. Traditionally, men tend to be responsible for the cash crops such as sugar canes, maize, beans and cassava, but much of male labour is withdrawn if those crops decrease in profitability.<sup>8</sup>

Although the agricultural sector remains critical to local and regional economies, it is the basis for food security and an important source of employment, particularly for women. Agriculture studies consistently find that female farmers have lower rates of agriculture productivity than their male counterparts. However, research shows that gender gaps in agriculture productivity does not arise because women are less efficient farmers but because they experience inequitable access to agricultural inputs, including family labour, high-yield crop seeds, pesticides and fertilizer. Marketing of the farm produce and access to market information continue to be a domain of men, and this situation still perpetuates women's disadvantages in the agricultural sector. Equalizing women's access to agricultural inputs, including time-saving equipment like walking tractors and solar water pumps, and increasing the return to these inputs is therefore critical to close gender gaps in agricultural productivity. It also promises to yield important economic and social gains. Across the Uganda, it could raise crop production by up to 19 per cent, boost agricultural and overall GDP and lift hundreds of thousands of people out of poverty.

The agriculture sector is still struggling with three (3) main gender issues which include: Dominance of women's labour in agriculture, Women have meagre share in the factors of production that include land, capital, credit and technology and Marginalization of women in decision-making on the use of proceeds that accrue from the farm sales.

A number of gender mainstreaming interventions have been put in place to help eradicate these issues and these include:

- Gender analysis and commitment within policies and programmes,
- The development of new gender mainstreaming strategies, guidelines and manuals
- Gender sensitization/training.
- Researching and promoting labour-saving technologies;
- Use of high-yielding crop varieties,
- Agricultural trainings targeting all household members;
- Training to improve livestock husbandry, improved storage of agricultural products;
- Assisting households to access finance and credit;
- Supporting farmers' groups (especially those of the vulnerable);

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<sup>8</sup>A matrix and analysis of Gender Equality laws and Policies in Uganda Report - 2019

**Box 6: MAAIF Gender Responsive Activities 2019/20**

Additionally, the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry & Fisheries (MAAIF), with National Agriculture Advisory Services (NAADS) undertook a series of gender responsive activities in order to close the gender gap in agricultural productivity;

- In Kalangala District, the MAAIF has taken up mentoring of close to 150 households, majority of these being female headed households, in livelihood and diversification using 30 mentors (12 are women).
- Conducted 8 trainings for a total of 600 dealers, 45% being women, on safe use of agro-chemicals in Masaka, Bugiri, Kasanda, Gomba, Mbarara, Masindi, Mukono and Kabarole districts.
- Conducted two (2) trainings for 80 agronomists (40% women) of exporters of fresh fruits and vegetables on good agricultural practices and procedures to enable them meet standards for compliance to export to European Union countries.
- Five (5) sensitizations workshops for 800 stakeholders (47% women) that included extension workers, input dealers, farmers' associations and political leaders in 30 districts on counterfeit and banned products.
- Identified 105 women groups and trained them at Uganda Industrial Research Institute (UIRI) in beef and other animal by-products value addition.
- The National Agriculture Research Organization improved the skills of 488 farmer entrepreneurs (40% women) in agricultural machinery operations in Kitgum, Lamwo and Agago districts.
- A total of four (4) starter culture formulae for processing milk products (1 for ghee; 2 for yogurt and 1 for probiotic yoghurt) were developed. This has improved the quality of traditionally produced products (yoghurt, butter and ghee) of at least 2 cottage industries in which about 500 women are involved in dairy product processing and marketing.

*Source: Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Industry – Annual Performance Report (FY 2019/2020)*

### **5.3 Policy measures undertaken to stimulate participation of both men and women in agriculture production**

During the FY 2019/2020, the MAAIF has continued to register considerable achievements in the implementation of its gender and diversity programmes. In an effort to ensure that all gender categories (children, women, youth, the elderly and persons with disabilities) benefit from its technological development and dissemination initiatives at the grassroots, the ministry has endeavoured to develop technologies and knowledge generated in various disciplines to cater for production challenges. Furthermore, stakeholder skills enhancement programmes have been designed and implemented to cater for all.

The key achievements are:

- Forty-eight environmental social safe guard/gender focal persons in Public Agriculture Research Institutes (PARIs) were trained in gender analysis and strategy development,
- Gender assessment and monitoring tools developed for integrating of gender in research at all PARIs,
- Four institutes were consulted and guided on the implementation of gender actions in their projects especially ensuring that women's voices are included in decision-making, accessing and controlling production factors, engaged in research, extension and capacity building processes; and interests of youth in agriculture, food, income insecurity and poor nutrition.

The ministry has also been engaged in the management of social risks. This has involved building capacity of the local communities including institute workers, staff and community personnel to address social concerns including child-labour in Agriculture and Fisheries, HIV/AIDS, gender and sexual harassment.<sup>9</sup>

The rural development component goes beyond agriculture and fisheries – it includes other social development aspects like access to power – clean energy, water, improved sanitation, roads/transportation.

#### **5.4 Gender dimensions and their impact on the production sectors during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020**

The COVID-19 pandemic has put significant pressure on health systems all around the world. The drastic measures established to contain its spread are creating serious impediments to economic activity (including agri-food systems) and, consequently, to livelihoods and food security and nutrition. The COVID-19 outbreak demonstrates both how health and food systems are linked to one another, and how local food systems are linked to global systems. High rates of urbanization and the globalization of trade and travel have contributed to the spread of the virus across countries. Lockdowns and movement restrictions within countries and across borders have disrupted national and local food and agricultural output and input markets and have caused sharp reductions in overall economic activity globally. In Uganda, disruptions have further exacerbated the fragility of systems (including agri-food systems) and livelihoods.

Overall, crop production has not been affected by the COVID-19 lockdown. According to agricultural experts, the expected crop production from the first season (March-July 2020) has not been much different to that of the same season in 2019. The production and processing of food in Uganda continues without restriction. Postharvest and processing activities carry on countrywide. Farmers have been provided with e-vouchers to assist them to access high quality agricultural inputs, seeds and fertilizers. With regard to livestock, food produce can be transported from farmers to markets, but with strict observance of COVID-19 SOPs. While livestock markets were suspended, livestock sales continued to take place at the farms of origin, provided that no more than ten people were present at any one time. Veterinarians have been advised to continue to provide extension services, ensuring appropriate levels of bio-safety and bio-security measures. All veterinary laboratories, animal checkpoints, disease control infrastructures and slaughterhouses have been allowed to operate following SOPs provided by the MoH. Butchers and meat shops have been authorised to continue their activities, ensuring strict observance of the hygiene and sanitary conditions imposed by the MoH.<sup>10</sup>

Nevertheless, lockdown measures have had some adverse effects on agriculture. For example, the farm input supply system has been affected by the travel restrictions imposed on farmers and input dealers, who mostly rely on public transport. This is particularly true in the livestock and fisheries sectors. The COVID-19-driven volatility of the foreign exchange markets caused the depreciation of the Ugandan shilling against the USD, with a large fall in March 2020. This increased the cost of imported farm inputs. Commercial farmers and associated downstream agribusinesses, who rely heavily on imported inputs, have witnessed increases in the cost of the equipment and spare parts they need for production and processing. Many are already overly indebted and the depreciation could well challenge the survival of their businesses and will threaten associated employment.

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<sup>9</sup>MAAIF Annual Performance Report 2019/20

<sup>10</sup> National agrifood systems and COVID-19 in Uganda

However, in regards to gender dimensions, the current restrictions on movement in Uganda has only exacerbated the fragility of these women's livelihoods. Women and men's sources of income alike have been disrupted by the crisis, as they are no longer able to access the market places where they can sell their produce and engage in petty trade. Confinement of potential consumers at home, the closure of borders and markets has removed the most essential trading opportunities, which many rely on, on a day-to-day basis, to cover their basic family needs.

Furthermore, the businesses that have continued to operate mainly employ men (e.g. factories and boda-bodas) while those that typically employ women (e.g. salons, restaurants and clothes shops) have been closed. The situation is all the more difficult for female heads of households who have the sole responsibility for providing for their families and majority of these women are employed in the agriculture sector.

# THEMATIC AREA 4: Gender Equality and Women's Right to Good Health

## 6.1 Introduction

The Health Sector in Uganda comprises the public and the private health delivery systems. The public sector includes all Government of Uganda health facilities under the Ministry of Health (MoH), health services of the Ministry of Defence (Army), Ministry of Education and Sports, Ministry of Internal Affairs (Police and Prisons) and Ministry of Local Government. The private health delivery system consists of Private-Not-for-Profit (PNFP) providers, Private Health Practitioners (PHPs), and the Traditional and Complementary Medicine Practitioners (TCMPs).

A review of the Budget Framework Papers (BFPs) for the MOH show that its budgets always cater for gender and equity and HIV/AIDS and are basically covered in the functions of Health Systems Development, Clinical and Public Health and Pharmaceutical and Supplies. The ministry has a gender focal point person that supports other departments in integration of gender and equity in the budgets and some staff in the sector have been trained in gender and equity budgeting. However, the staff involved in planning and budgeting still exhibit inefficient knowledge and skills on how to integrate gender and equity issues in the work plans and budgets and also the MGLSD has not intensively disseminated gender and equity policies in the health sector leaving some of the sector staff not aware of their obligations, roles and responsibilities in the gender mainstreaming policies.

## 6.2 Government promotion of better and quality health service delivery

The health sector has over the years identified three (3) major gender and equity issues which include gender-based violence, high maternal and child mortality and high fertility rates. The government has put in place a number of interventions over the years through the Health sector to try and eradicate these issues. These interventions include:

- Training health workers in sexual and gender-based violence;
- Roll out and strengthening of Village Health Teams (VHTs);
- Supervision and mentoring of health workers to mainstream gender in their activities;
- Provision of standard equipment;
- Ensuring availability of medicines and supplies including Mama Kits;
- Improving access and quality of family planning.
- Targeting male partners in family planning;
- Maternal wards construction;
- Supporting the mobilization of blood for emergency obstetric and new born care and conducting maternal and perinatal death audits to address gaps and improve quality of care;
- Provision youth-friendly health support services.

### 6.2.1 HIV Prevalence and access to health services

Recent statistics indicate that an average of 1.4 million adults (aged 15 years and above) in Uganda are living with HIV, with majority of these being women (830,000) compared to males (530,000). HIV prevalence rate has decreased to 5.8 in 2019 from 6.2% in 2017. However, the prevalence rate is still higher among women (7.1 from 7.6 in 2016) than among men (4.3 from 4.7 in 2016)<sup>11</sup>. The fact that HIV prevalence is still consistently higher in women than in men demonstrates the existence of the underlying causes of transmission which include among others, gender based violence (GBV), low income, harmful gender norms including those that reinforce the submissive role of women, low status and unequal power relations within heterosexual

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<sup>11</sup> Uganda Population based HIV Impact assessment 2016/17

relations, cross generational sex, and concurrent partnerships which leads to increased vulnerability of women to HIV infection.<sup>12</sup>

HIV positive pregnant women not on Highly Active Antiretroviral Therapy (HAART), receiving antiretroviral (ARVs) for elimination of mother to child transmission (EMTCT) during pregnancy, labour, delivery and postpartum, increased by 3% to 94% from 91% in 2018/19 but short of the Health Sector Development Plan (HSDP) target of 95%. Intermittent Preventive Treatment (IPT) of malaria coverage for pregnant women declined to 60% from 66% in 2018/19.

The above statistics show that the government of Uganda is putting effort in addressing the underlying causes of maternal deaths.<sup>13</sup>

### **6.2.2 Distance to Health Facility**

By 2018, 75 percent of the population lived within a five-kilometre radius of a health facility. The health infrastructure network has improved in the country and currently consists of 5 national referral hospitals including Malago National Referral Hospital, China-Uganda Friendship Hospital, Kawempe Hospital, Kiruddu Hospital and Butabika Hospital, 19 regional referral hospitals, 147 district hospitals, 193 Health Centre Four (HC4s) (medical officers present); 1,250 HC3s (clinical officers present), and 3,610 HC2s (enrolled comprehensive nurses present).

### **6.2.3 Malaria Prevalence**

In-patient malaria deaths have reduced from 20 per 100,000 in 2016/2017 to 9.38 per 100,000 in 2017/2018 largely due to the effective distribution of insecticide treated nets (ITNS).

## **6.3 Extent has the government addressed the underlying causes of maternal mortality**

### **6.3.1 Maternal Mortality**

Regarding reduction in maternal and neonatal mortality, the trend of Maternal Deaths per 100,000 deliveries in a health facility have declined over the years to surpass the HSDP target of 98. In the same way, perinatal mortality including still birth rates have reduced beyond the HSDP target of 9 per 1000 deliveries. The reported number of maternal deaths at 21 MOH hospitals was 496 in 2019/20 compared to 424 in 2018/2019.

### **6.3.2 Infant Mortality levels**

In addition, between FY2012/13 and FY2016/17, infant mortality per 1,000 live births has gone down from 54 to 43 deaths of children, maternal mortality decreased from 438 to 336 deaths per 100,000 live births, and stunting has reduced from 33% to 29%, respectively. The aggregate impact of all this has been the increase in life expectancy by 9 years from 54.5 in 2012 to 63.3 years in 2017.

### **6.3.3 Institutional Strategies to Maternal and Infant Mortality**

The Department of Reproductive, Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health set up in the MOH which aims at reducing maternal and child mortality and reduction of total fertility rate by increasing contraceptive prevalence, and improving the sexual and reproductive health of women, which are all key elements for achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 3, and 5. In order to address the underlying causes of maternal mortality, the department, working with other departments within the Ministry, have used a number of activities and approaches to reduce the number of maternal deaths in Uganda. These activities and approaches include:

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<sup>12</sup> <https://www.unaids.org/en/regionscountries/countries/uganda>

<sup>13</sup> Annual Health Sector Performance Report 2019/20

- Conducted facility-based training and mentorship on Maternal Perinatal Death Surveillance & Review (MPDSR) in 14 Districts for 440 Health workers (390 in 13 Districts, 50 health workers in Mulago and Kawempe Hospitals who developed Quality Improvement (QI) plans for improving notification, review, and response.

#### **6.3.4 Specialised Maternal Services**

Significant progress has been made in the provision of specialized medical care in cardiology and gynaecology. A modern state of the art women's hospital with a capacity of 320 beds was opened in Mulago in 2018, and the heart and cancer institutes of Mulago hospital have also been expanded and improved. This has increased access and utilization of health services by women and men but the Women's Maternal Hospital cannot be accessed by poor women even with its excellent services because of the high charges and therefore much of the facility remains under-utilised.

#### **6.4 Provision of youth friendly sexual and reproductive health services**

Although the Ugandan government has made impressive strides in increasing access to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services for youth over the past 20 years, the unmet need for family planning services remains persistently high. Data from the most recent Uganda Demographic and Health Survey (UDHS) reveals that in 2016, only 10% of all women aged 15–19 and 43% of sexually active unmarried women in this age group were using a contraceptive method. A quarter of women aged 15–19 had already begun having children. Almost half (45%) of sexually active unmarried women aged 15–19 reported an unmet need for contraception in the UDHS. More recent data from the Guttmacher Institute suggest that the percentage of women with unmet need in this age group may be higher than 60%. Lack of access to family planning services has been particularly acute in Uganda's rural areas, where the actual fertility rate is 1.3 children higher than the wanted fertility rate, and 1 in 4 females become pregnant between ages 15 and 19.

Ministry of Health is focusing at accelerating efforts for the implementation of the new Roadmap for Improving Adolescent Health in Uganda in collaboration with its partners. The ministry seeks to galvanize and unite all adolescent health (ADH) actors across sectors to contribute towards achieving better adolescent health outcomes. This roadmap identifies a set of comprehensive interventions for realizing the health rights of adolescents through various interventions to strengthen country engagement process in support of adolescent health programmes, to be able set the course for sustained progress towards the adolescent health related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Currently the existing health threats and increasing risky behaviours among adolescents has kept the programming landscape for adolescent and school health changing with limited guidance and multiple piecemeal efforts. The fast changing policy, programme, medical, social and economic environment; the context, content and process used in the development of adolescent and school health policy has also been overtaken by events. At the same time, advances in technology, medical practice and policy environment have provided room to improve health services for adolescents both within and out of school.

### **Box 7: Teenage/Adolescent Pregnancy**

Teenage childbearing and motherhood have remained high at 25% despite the policies and strategies put in place by government and other stakeholders. The Health Sector Development Plan targets to reduce teenage pregnancy to 14% by 2020. Teenage pregnancy has progressively declined from 43 percent in 1995, 31% in 2001, 25% in 2006 and 24.5% in 2011 (UDHS 2016). However, Uganda still has one of the highest rates in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The disparity between educated and uneducated girls is more pronounced with teenage pregnancy being higher among uneducated girls at 35% compared to 17% of girls with secondary education (UDHS, 2016). Teso sub region has the highest proportion of adolescents (31%) who have begun childbearing and Kigezi sub region has the lowest at 16%. Other sub regions include Busoga 21%, Karamoja 24%, West Nile 22%, Bunyoro 29%, Acholi at 24%, Lango 28%, Ankole 19%, Tooro 30%, Bugisu 28%, Bukedi 30%, Kampala 30% and North Central at 30% (UDHS 2016).

Butaleja district in Busoga sub region is ranked 3rd with the highest Teenage Fertility Rate (TFR) of 08 and teenage pregnancy rate of 40% way above the national average (WRA, 2016). Butaleja is being branded 'one of the most fertile' districts (third in the country). It perhaps has the world's youngest grandmother aged 30 residing in Mazimasa sub-county. While in Kalangala 48% of teenage girls are mothers, which is nearly twice as high as the national average. Therefore, teenage pregnancy and motherhood remains a major health and social concern in Uganda because of its association with higher morbidity and mortality for both the mother and child.

*Source: The Uganda National Adolescent Health Landscape and Recommendations for Improved Service Delivery Report 2019*

HIV and AIDS among adolescents remains a key issue in the current response with prevalence of HIV among adolescent girls four times that of male adolescents. UDHS 2016 notes that even when most adolescents in Uganda know of a place where they can be tested for HIV, only 45% of girls and 25% of boys have had an HIV test. The recent results of the 2016 UPHIA survey puts prevalence of HIV among children aged 0-14 at 0.5% (approximately 95,000 children living with HIV). Those aged 15-19 years was 1.1%, 3.3% among those aged 20-24 years and 6.3% among those aged 25-29 years. This means that new infections remain an issue in these age groups (UPHIA 2017).

Adolescents, especially adolescent girls, are the only population group for which AIDS related deaths are not falling (UNAIDS, 2015). Between 2010 and 2015, the number of new HIV infections among young people and adults has not decreased rapidly enough, and remains unacceptably high among young girls and women (10–24 years old). The prevalence of viral load suppression in children aged 0-14 is 39.3% (UPHIA, 2016). The 2016 UNAIDS World AIDS Day report, get on the Fast-Track – The life-cycle approach to HIV, stated that efforts to reduce new HIV infections among young people and adults have stalled, threatening to undermine progress towards ending AIDS as a global public health threat by 2030.

### **6.5 Menstrual hygiene in school's sexuality education in schools**

In light of the increasing population of pupils and students, a robust school health programme is paramount to provide quality health information and services for their growth and development. Parents, schools and public health education initiatives are still the common ways for delivering health education to adolescents in Uganda. However, there exist challenges at each level making adolescents not getting adequate information and services to address their health needs. The

School Health Policy which is meant to provide the overall strategic direction and guidance to school health programming and service delivery is not yet approved. This is the mandate of Ministry of Education and Sports in collaboration with interrelated sectors and its stakeholders. As part of guidance and addressing stakeholders' divergent views on sexuality education in schools, Ministry of Education and Sports developed a National Sexuality Education Framework for Uganda (2018), approved and launched it in May 2018. What remains is developing an implementation plan and education curricula, materials and teacher training to effectively offer sexuality education to the learners. The ministry has to meaningfully engage all stakeholders in all the processes to mitigate resistance and misconceptions about sexuality education by producing age appropriate, culturally and religiously acceptable curricula and materials.

Despite a seemingly weak school health programming in many schools and weak linkages between schools and health facilities, some activities targeting adolescents are conducted in schools and common among those are: talking compound (with messages); immunization programs especially HPV and Tetanus Toxoid vaccinations; deworming; information on menstruation and hygiene management; personal hygiene; sanitation; prevention of STIs and HIV; provision of sanitary pads and training adolescents in making sanitary pads, facilitating safe places in schools.

Many senior women and men teachers are not adequately equipped with knowledge, information, materials and other facilities to appropriately support learner's health needs. Mostly, Non-Government Organizations such as Medical Teams International, Straight Talk Foundation, Restless Development, and TASO are supporting some school health initiatives such as school clubs, menstrual hygiene management, and adolescent school friendly facilities in Karamoja, West Nile and Eastern Uganda. It is important to note that many of these initiatives are not sustained when the NGOs/donors phase out the support and also not all schools are covered.

#### **Box 8: Life skills and information to stay healthy**

Adolescent-friendly reproductive health education and awareness raising on HIV transmission and prevention, using various platforms like clubs, sports, music, dance and drama is still lacking in many schools. The Presidential Initiative on AIDS Strategy for Communication to Youth (PIASCY) program from the schools reached seems to have scaled down. Recent statistics show that by age 15, only 32% and 38% of young women and men between 15-24 years have never had intercourse respectively (UDHS 2016). Among the sexually active girls, 36% (29% in primary and 50% in secondary school) had ever used contraceptives (MOES 2016).

#### **School Health Programs**

No regular visits of health workers to schools to carryout health education. Health clubs are supposed to be formed in schools but it is not institutionalized. It's important to advocate for this in schools.

### **6.6 Access to maternal health care, during the COVID-19 lockdown**

The GoU has recognized the health sector as one of the key critical services that must remain functional during the COVID-19 crisis. Access to Sexual Reproductive and Maternal Health (SRMH) services is crucial for women and girls globally and particularly in fragile states affected by conflict and natural disasters, where there is a high rate of maternal mortality (61%).

In Uganda, there are on average, 4538 births per day, which illustrates just how crucial SRMH services are to the country. This is even more so the case during crises, when SRMH resources

are typically diverted to emergency response. Past crises have shown us that this leads to increased maternal mortality and a deterioration of SRMH outcomes.

Reports show that women of childbearing age, pregnant and lactating women (PLW), persons living with HIV/AIDS and children have the most at stake where a functional health sector is concerned as they respectively depend on SRMH services, essential antiretroviral drugs, and vaccines and immunization.

Health services in many areas of Uganda have also been affected by some of the restrictive measures introduced to contain the pandemic. The restriction of movement and the suspension of transport services apply to the whole country and people are not able to reach health facilities. Pregnant women are a particularly vulnerable group in this respect, as they struggle to reach health services if they go into labour or experience any maternal health complications. Some expectant mothers have opted to deliver at home which exposes them and their unborn babies to potential complications.

Worryingly, unplanned pregnancies are on the rise sharply in the Covid-19 context due to couples spending more time together at home and limited access to family planning services. However, even though couples heed to this advice, they may not even be able to access family planning services and products.

Women's GBV and SRH needs are a particularly pressing priority where access to health care services are concerned. Not only do crises typically increase rates of GBV, but the Covid-19 containment measures mean that it has become more difficult for survivors to reach the health (and other) services that they need.

Within the health facilities, there are also issues. Health workers themselves report being worried about their working conditions and not having adequate personal protection equipment (PPE) when treating potential Covid-19 patients. For community members who can reach health facilities easily, there is the concern that entering the establishment and being closer to potential Covid-19 cases could put them in danger.

# THEMATIC AREA 5: Gender Equality and Women's Right Education

## 7.1 Introduction

The Ministry of Education in Uganda is responsible for the delivery of equitable, relevant and quality Education, training and sports services for all. In order to ensure equitable and quality education, the Ministry, with support from Irish Aid established the Gender Unit in 2012 to spearhead gender mainstreaming in the Education sector.

Access to and utilization of education services has significantly increased. Government continued to invest heavily in the education sector over the NDP I and NDPII period. Consequently, 92% of all parishes now have a government-aided primary school, while 71% of all sub-counties have a government aided secondary school. All major regions of the country also now have a public university. In addition, government has promoted participation of the private sector in the provision of education. As a result, primary school enrolment increased to 8,841,000 children and 1,457,277 for secondary education in FY2016/17. Enrolment at the tertiary level now stands at about 259,000 of which 186,412 are attending universities. The aggregate impact of all this is an increase in literacy rate (of persons aged 10years and above) from 70% in FY2012/13 to 74% in 2016/17, and average years of schooling from 4.7 in FY2012/13 to 6.1 in FY2016/17.

## 7.2 Men and women equal access to quality education services

In a bid to ensure equitable and quality education, the ministry with support from Irish Aid established a gender unit in 2012 to spear head gender mainstreaming in the Education Sector. Objectives of the gender unit include

- Enhance Equal Access and participation for girls/women, boys/men in the education sector.
- Promote the provision of relevant knowledge and skills equally to males and females
- Improve the number of resources for the delivery of gender equality and girl's participation in education.
- Develop an enabling, protective and gender responsive learning environment for all.

## 7.3 Enrollment, retention and attendance improved for both boys and girls since 2018

The attainment of formal education starts with learners enrolling into school. The Ministry of Education and sports continues its commitment to provide access to equitable and education opportunities for all regardless of their origin, gender and physical disabilities.

### a) Pre-Primary Education

The Master list of education Institutions in Uganda (MEIU) compiled by UBoS shows that there are approximately 2 million learners in Pre-primary sub sector. This has seen an increase in the number of preprimary schools from 7,210 schools in FY 2017/18 to 28,194 in FY 2019/20. This has in turn increased on the number of children getting enrolled into early childhood and preprimary schools to attain education.

### b) Primary Education

The education sector saw an increase in the number of students that enrolled for primary Education. The sector saw a 22% increase in the number of students enrolling from 8,840,589(4,395,513 boys, 4,445,076 girls) in FY 2017/2018 to 10,766,994 students in FY 2019/20, with more girls (5,421,749) than males (5,345,245). This was realized as a result of the UPE program which remains the leading program in enhancement of access to quality and equitable primary Education to all primary school going children in the country.

### c) Secondary Education

As a result of USE programmes, Uganda has registered a tremendous progress in increasing equitable access to secondary education for all students. The secondary education sub sector also registered an increase in total enrollment of 45% from 716,118 boys and 654,465 girls (Total, 1,370,583) in FY 2017/18 to a total 1,991,915 students (1,004,524 boys, 987,391 girls) in FY 2019/20. This was also as a result of the increase in number of schools that were grant aided.

**d) Tertiary Education**

Enrolment at Business, Technical and Vocational Training (BTVET) increased significantly. Skills development has also been facilitated by the refurbishment and establishment of technical and vocational institutions, especially at the district level. Currently, 42% of all districts have at least one government aided technical and vocational institution providing varying levels of skills development. Consequently, enrolment into BTVET increased from 25,262 to 129,000 between 2008 and 2017. Progress has also been registered towards the establishment of four centres of excellence at Uganda Technical College (UTC) Elgon for civil works and building technology; UTC Lira for highways construction and drainage, bridges and road construction; UTC Bushenyi for food manufacturing and food processing; and Bukalasa Agricultural College for crop and animal husbandry. More investment and closer alignment of the training provided with the principles of NDP III will be required.

The BTVET sub sector realized an increase in the number of institutions registered and licensed by the Ministry of Education under the year of review. By the end FY 2019/20, the ministry had licensed 58 and registered 20 BTVET institutions. This in turn translated to an increase in the number of students enrolled into BTVET institutions. However, due to the challenges still existing in this sub sector like high costs involved (tuition and functional fees) and low awareness and poor sensitization about skills training, there are fewer female (44%) candidates registered in TVET programmes compared to male counterparts (56%).

**e) University Education**

The FY 2019/20 saw a 17% increase in the number of students enrolling into public universities like Makerere, Mbarara, Gulu, Kyambogo and Busitema Universities, from 90,359 students (34,744 females, 55,615 males) in FY 2017/2018 to 105,988 students with a major increment noticed among female students (52,906) compared to reduction in male students (54,731). In addition, the ministry recorded the highest number of females (34% of 1,851 students) being successfully awarded Students loans since inception of the scheme.

Therefore, statistics show that majority of adults have attended formal school, however many do not complete primary school. Retention rates in primary school is lower for females compared to males. An almost equal number of boys (60.8%) and girls (60.5%) transition from primary to secondary school. Similarly, there are more males who are able to read and write than women, with high literacy levels seen among males and females in the urban area than the rural areas (UNEB, NAPE 2019 report).

However, research indicates that gender inequalities are still reflected in the admissions, completion, science and engineering programmes and student leadership and drop outs at universities. A number of interventions should be put in place and supported at higher learning institutions to promote gender equality by all stakeholders majorly through the Gender Mainstreaming Directorates, and through the establishment and operationalization of Gender

Policy, Anti- Gender Violence Policy, Gender Responsive Budgeting, Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Programme, and Gender Monitoring and Evaluation.

#### **7.4 Policy strategies implemented since 2018 to stimulate education of girls at all levels**

Through the Education 2030 Framework for Action, SDG 4 aims at ensuring inclusive and equitable quality Education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all and SDG 5 aims at achieving gender equality and empower all women and girls. Also, the Education 2030 Agenda recognizes that gender equality requires an approach that will ensure that girls and boys, women and men not only gain access to and complete education cycles, but are empowered equally in and through education.<sup>14</sup>

Uganda has made significant progress in promoting gender equality. Policies improving access have led to a drastic increase in enrolment for both girls and boys, and more girls than ever are completing school at all levels. Policies like Gender in Education Policy and National Strategy for Girls' Education clearly highlight the importance of gender equality - seeking to ensure that all learners have equal opportunities to learn. Teacher Training and Quality Assurance, the provision of a Safe Pupil Learning Environment, Community Involvement, Strengthening Systems of School Governance and Accountability all these are steps building up to quality education yet directly or indirectly speak to gender equality.<sup>15</sup>

#### **7.5 Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on education in Uganda**

As the COVID-19 pandemic snowballs, the day-to-day reality has created a nightmarish situation in developed and developing economies. Although to date Uganda has less than 50,000 confirmed cases with 334 deaths, the numbers of those acquiring the virus and associated death globally is alarming. The impact of the pandemic is already taking a toll on communities already vulnerable or marginalized – the poor, the rural, the illiterate, women and girls. And similarly, to the Ebola epidemic in West Africa, education has been one of the first casualties.

The volatility of the virus demanded that the country take preventive measures to avoid acquiring and spreading it. To this effect, all Primary and Secondary Schools, as well as all Universities and Tertiary Institutions, were to close by mid-day 20th March 2020.<sup>14</sup> According to the Ministry of Education, more than 73,000 learning institutions closed, and consequently, 15 million learners and 600,000 refugee learners are out of school.

With children out of school indefinitely, COVID-19 threatens to reverse years of educational progress in Uganda where daunting challenges remain and the country's education system is still confronting three key challenges: access to, quality of, and relevance of. Dwindling incomes due to prolonged lockdown could mean that large numbers of children will never return to the classroom. There is overwhelming evidence that the longer children are out of school, the greater the risk of violence, rape, child marriages, child labour, prostitution and other life-threatening often criminal activities which in most cases affect marginalized girls and young women.

However, there is a window of opportunity to set-up learning systems that could enable the continuation of education through innovative and distance approaches.

##### **a. Learning using technologies in Uganda**

Innovative and distance approach to education is synonymous to learning 'using' technologies in the 21st century. Learning technologies, that is, print-material, radio,

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<sup>14</sup>The Education and Sports Sector Annual Performance Report (FY 2019/20)

<sup>15</sup>Gender Eye 2020

television, video, audio, telephone, computers and the internet – appear to offer an answer to not only enabling learning to continue where education has been disrupted but also to offer opportunities for overcoming geographical access and rigidities of conventional education. However, with 80% of Uganda’s school-age children and youth living in rural areas characterised with lack of basic living resources and underdeveloped educational and supporting infrastructure, the difficulty of accessing learning technologies and the digital divide between privileged and deprived groups continue to widen the educational gap.

#### **a. Radios**

In Uganda, the radio stations are spread all over the country and even most upcountry towns have at least two stations. Radio broadcasting has been used in Uganda for different educational purposes. It was very essential in the fight against the HIV epidemic in the 1990s and has increasingly been used to deliver different programmes to the masses. The decentralisation of radio ensures that cultural, social, and practical knowledge of the target population can be embedded into program design. This can be exploited to adapt the curriculum to a diverse set of mother tongues and allow broad participation. Although radio can serve to enable the continuation of education through the live or recorded broadcast sessions for many learners, the learners without access to radio especially girls should not be neglected. Efforts such as the Red Cross distribution of solar radios in remote villages in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone during the Ebola epidemic, should be studied and best practices used to roll-out similar campaigns to ensure that school-going children that still face grave difficulties in accessing formal education are not left out.

#### **Box 9: Usage Statistics**

- Listenership figures also support that radio is the most popular medium in Uganda. The BBC Monitoring Uganda Media Guide Report notes that radio is more popular medium than television mainly due to poverty and lack of electricity.<sup>26</sup> Most Ugandans receive their information from radio because of its high level of penetration and affordability. A Steadman Group (now Synovate) study, reported that 89% of Ugandans said radio was their main source of news. People especially in rural areas, listen to the radio at home, at their friends, relatives or neighbours, and at work.
- The National IT survey 2017/2018 found that 65.3 % of Ugandan households owned a radio, 21.8% owned a Television set, 5.9% had access to a computer at home, 10.8% of households owned a household telephone, and 10.8% of all households had at least one member who had Internet access.
- Despite the growth in active Pay-Tv subscribers, TV access is still low. The Uganda National Household Survey 2016/1730 found great variations in television ownership across regions: 42% of households in Kampala were reported to own a television; 3% of households owned a television in Kigezi; 2% of households owned a television in Teso, Bukedi and Acholi, and 1% in West Nile. The findings may be explained by the fact that resources are not evenly distributed across regions in Uganda. Persistent high levels of poverty in most regions mean that many households cannot invest in a television set, bear the cost of access to electricity and are unable to pay service subscription charges that range from a monthly fee of 11,000/= (\$2.89) to 219,000/= (\$57.54)
- According to UCC, Uganda has 63.9% mobile penetration and the National Information Technology Survey found that at an individual level 70.9% individuals owned a mobile device, and of this only 16 % owned a smartphone.

**b. Televisions**

The low television ownership statistics across the country has important implications for developing a framework for the provision of continued learning during the COVID-19 lockdown and in the future in Uganda. Although television programming is being used to reach students, as a medium, it is inequitable with huge disparities between rich and poor. Therefore, it should not be used as a standalone solution but as a combination with other solutions like radios.

**c. Mobile Phones**

Uganda is uniquely advantaged to the use of mobile phones because of its young population. The young populace is knowledgeable about new technologies – smartphone features and are enthusiastic to explore and learn any technologies, and can learn fast. Also, mobile phones are still more affordable technology than laptops or a computer.

Mobile phones allow for interaction with broadcast lessons and have the potential to expand content limits through greater interactions. Following the abrupt closure of schools, teachers have extensively used mobile phone applications like WhatsApp, Facebook and Google hangouts to continue engaging their students. Holiday work packages that could not be provided at closure are being forwarded to parents via these phone applications and these have supported continuation of education especially for girls who are rarely allowed to move out to meet friends and discuss education material.

Partnering with mobile networks to offer special tariffs and bundle packages for learning purposes; exploiting offline mobile phone educational applications and open source software platforms, are a few of the strategies that have been adapted to overcome the aforementioned challenges and serve the educational needs of students and teachers.

Besides the national challenges of poorly developed ICT infrastructure, high bandwidth costs, unreliable supply of electricity, and a general lack of resources to meet a broad spectrum of needs, there also significant barriers to accessing the delivery platforms discussed. To ensure that any efforts towards distance/remote learning are sustainable, the issues below should also be addressed to maximise learning and accessibility potential for both young women and men during the COVID-19 pandemic:

- b. **Language of instruction:** Without planning, there may be difficulties in adapting the curriculum to a diverse set of mother tongues. For remote programming to be relevant to allow broad participation, mother tongue language provision must be a priority.
- c. **Content differentiation:** Especially for radio and television provisions, a lack of content differentiation by class level in delivery may leave content inaccessible or inadequate. Therefore, solutions allowing the provision of multiple class levels are paramount.
- d. **Relevancy and progression:** For most parents, the value-add of school is that it leads to qualifications and a job. Grades, tests and promotions are associated with relevant education and pathways to opportunity. Parents examining the opportunity costs usually

deprioritize poor quality education in lieu of alternate ways for their children to spend their time and contribute to the family especially for girls and young women in the households.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Covid-19 Education disruption and Response: Rethinking e-learning in Uganda

# **THEMATIC AREA 6: Gender Equality and Women And Girls' Right To Freedom From All Forms Of Violence, Violence Against Women And Girls /Gender-Based Violence And Access To Justice**

## **8.1 Introduction**

Gender based violence (GBV) in all its manifestations (physical, sexual, emotional and psychological) remains critical in human rights, public health and economic development (MGLSD, 2016). GBV is perpetrated against men, women, boys and girls however, the vast majority of cases reported involve women and girls. Existence of GBV violates one's rights and slows down progress in achieving sustainable inclusive human development. Furthermore, in Uganda, social beliefs, systems, perceptions, attitudes about women and men, boys and girls and their roles in society exacerbate the already fragile categories<sup>17</sup>.

## **8.2 State of violence against women/girls**

### **8.2.1 Status of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) and GBV**

A total of 17,664 cases of Domestic Violence were reported to Police compared to 13,693 reported in 2019, giving a 29% increase.

Domestic violence has mainly been caused by;

- i. Total lockdown of the country to stop the spread of Covid-19 pandemic kept families together, also in the process a number of people lost their livelihoods causing friction in the family thus fuelling domestic violence.
- ii. Dispute over family property
- iii. Failure to provide for the family
- iv. Drug and alcohol abuse, and
- v. Cases of infidelity.

A total of 1,359 cases were taken to court, out of which 400 cases secured convictions, 06 cases were acquitted, 88 cases were dismissed and 864 cases were still pending in court while 6,207 cases were still under investigations. 18,872 people were victims of Domestic Violence, of whom 18.1% were male adults, 69.7% were female adults and 6% were male juveniles while 6.2% were female juveniles.

Domestic violence was highest in Albertine Region in 2020, followed East Kyoga, Aswa, Rwenzori East. Regions with the least cases of domestic violence in 2020 were CID Headquarters with 28 cases, followed by Wamala with 84 cases, Rwenzori East had 94 cases, Busoga North had 188 cases, Kidepo with 211 cases and Katonga registered 231 cases.

Kampala District registered the highest number of cases of Domestic violence in 2020, followed by Tororo District, Kiryandongo and Kabarole. 10 Districts did not register any case of domestic violence which include Kyenjojo, Kumi, Kakiri Division, Kalaki, Bududa, Luuka, Madi Okolo, Kalungu, Kakumiro and Kitagwenda.

### **Sex related crimes**

This category includes crimes such as rape, defilement, indecent assault and unnatural offences like sodomy, lesbianism and bestiality. 8.2% of all the crimes reported in 2020 were a result of Sex Related Crimes (16,144 cases) compared to 15,638 cases reported in 2019, giving a decrease of 2.7%. A total of 16,257 persons were victims of Sex Related crimes, out of whom, 14,320 were female juveniles, 202 were male juveniles, 1,632 were female adults and 103 were male adults.

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<sup>17</sup>Gender Issues in Uganda 2019 - UBOS

## Defilement

This is unlawful sexual intercourse with person who is below the age of eighteen years, and the guilty party on conviction is liable to life imprisonment under Section 129 of the Penal Code Act. A total of 14,134 cases of Defilements were reported to Police compared to 13,613 cases reported in 2019, giving an increase of 3.8%. Of the cases of Defilement reported in 2020, 10,413 were defilement while 3,721 were Aggravated Defilement. By the end of the year, 5,745 cases were taken to court, out of which 794 cases secured convictions, 22 cases were acquitted, 168 cases were dismissed and 4,761 cases were still pending in court. A total of 5,058 cases were still under investigations. 5,943 suspects of defilement were arrested and charged to Court, out of whom, 845 were convicted while 4,907 were still awaiting trial in the period under review. A total of 14,230 victims were defiled in 2020, of whom, 98.9% were female juveniles, 1.1% were male juveniles.

The category of 15 – 17years are still the main victims of defilement due to the following;

- i. Some cultural norm still practiced where girls who have developed breasts are considered ready for marriage.
- ii. Adolescent age where many young girls are taken advantage of, and
- iii. Some of the girls are defiled in the process of doing domestic chores like collecting water and firewood especially when they are sent alone.<sup>18</sup>

### 8.3 GBV as affecting both women and men

While women and girls remain highly prone to GBV, men too, can and do experience GBV from women or fellow men e.g. emotional, sexual, and physical violence. Studies on men and gender based violence indicate that men experience violence as perpetrators, survivors and duty bearers.

- a. Physical violence against men and boys commonly manifests in form of male murders over inheritable properties motivated by men's gender role of inheritance, accumulated anger and self-defence from women.
- b. That when men are hit physically, they hit hardest due to the social perception that they are the 'natural' aggressors.
- c. Men rarely report cases of GBV against themselves especially if its perpetrated by their spouses for fear of being seen as weak and subordinate to women. Those who report, do so in GBV cases which they can no-longer put up with.
- d. Men experiencing GBV tend to relinquish all social responsibilities at home as a sign of protest.
- e. While men are portrayed as strong, powerful, and aggressive, they too, have proved to be very fearful especially in the face of vulnerability. They, for instance, do not want to be told that they are HIV positive, or be refused when they initiate relationships.
- f. Conflict, post-conflict and humanitarian crisis settings have a tremendous impact on gender roles and relations, as well as on men's attitudes and behaviours. Because those settings are often characterised by instability, violence, poverty, unemployment and ever-changing social values, men often lack the social identity of being providers.
- g. Men's loss of identity as household providers and decision makers tends to translate into antisocial behaviour and violence directed at women.

### 8.4 Access to Justice of women and girls' victims of VAWG and GBV since 2018

Effective and accountable justice, law and order institutions, rule of law and the protection and promotion of human rights is essential for sustainable peace building and development objectives. The Justice, Law and Order Sector (JLOS) is pivoted on advancing a society governed by the rule of law, the latter being a pre-requisite for development. The poor and marginalized groups still bear unreasonable burdens in form of physical distance to JLOS institutions, cost of access,

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<sup>18</sup> Annual Crimes Report 2020 – Uganda Police Force

language and attitudinal barriers and existence of conflict situations. JLOS also recognizes that the people's needs and aspirations of the justice system are closely intertwined with their livelihood opportunities. The focus of JLOS remains the same, enhancing human rights awareness; instilling measures to reduce human rights violations by state agencies; strengthen measures to reduce incidences of corruption; ensure Open Government and access to information; and affirmative action for the disabled and vulnerable persons.

In order to support women & girls' rights to freedom from all forms of violence, The Justice Centre Uganda (JCU) was established within the Judiciary by Chief Justice Circular number one of 2010 as a project of JLOS to provide free legal services to the poor, vulnerable and marginalized. JCU operates One-Stop-Centers with a broad range of legal aid services to all categories of vulnerable people in the community, identified through a means and merit test. Some of these services include legal representation, mediation, referrals, awareness creation and outreach, as well as psychosocial support. JCU seeks to bridge the gap between the supply and demand sides of justice while at the same time empowering individuals and communities to claim their rights and demand for policy and social change.

JCU continued to implement its arrangement with Family Division of the High Court that sought to reduce the court case backlog by supporting the court to handle some cases through mediation. JCU also supported other courts by offering mediation services- with a view to reducing the court case backlog. A total of 744 (314 females and 430 male) mediation cases were registered from which 457 (155 females and 302 male) mediation sessions were held against a set target of 300. As a result, 174 (70 females and 104 male) cases were successfully concluded in 2020.

As one of the ways to enhance crime prevention among the youth and children, JCU reached out to various schools empowering the students with crime prevention techniques while at the same time sensitizing their communities about the need to fight crime. The outreach topics focused on GBV, sexual reproductive health rights, children's rights and justice issues that they faced were identified. In the course of the reporting period (FY 2019/2020), JCU held 260 school outreaches reaching out to 35,407 (18,275 females and 17,132 male) students against a set target of 26,740. Additionally, 357 (130 females and 227 male) teachers were also sensitized.

With support from various development partners, the sector developed a gender strategy and gender is mainstreamed in all aspects of the JLOS service delivery. Special attention was placed on addressing SGBV cases. This has resulted into an increase in cases cleared and in rates of conviction to 60.1% (2019/20) from 50.5% (2016). JLOS Institutions now have functional gender desks, however these needs strengthening.<sup>19</sup>

To enhance the quality-of-service delivery, the sector undertook the following capacity building programmes on gender and diversity:

- Seventy-five Judicial Service Commission (JSC) staff were trained in gender and diversity.
- Five trainings for police detectives in the CID department, Scene of Crime Officers (SoCO) and forensic officers in the effective handling of cases of SGBV.
- A training workshop of Judicial Experts in SGBV to build professional and institutional capacity of national trainers in the delivery and coordination of SGBV training in order to strengthen prevention and response strategies in the Great Lakes Region. In additional meetings with the national Medico-Legal Working Group whose aim among others is to strengthen referrals between the medical and legal professionals working with survivors,

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<sup>19</sup>Annual JLOS Report

discussing issues pertaining collecting medico-legal evidence, identify and address challenges prosecution faces in addressing GBV Cases.

- The Judiciary is the lead Agency in the development of Gender Specialized Framework strategy that is meant to guide mainstreaming of initiatives towards promotion of gender equity in service delivery among JLOS Institutions in the criminal justice service delivery chain (Judiciary, Office of the Directorate Public Prosecution (ODPP), Police, Directorate of Government Analytical Laboratory (DGAL) and MoGLSD). The strategy was developed with support from UN WOMEN with consultancy services from Kampala Law Reports.

JLOS continues to enforce legislation against harmful cultural practices that undermine human rights. There was an increased advocacy in promoting culture that is more supportive of women's empowerment to eradicate harmful practices such as FGM, the refund of bride price and violence against women, all of which reinforce the superiority of men and expose women to health risks, physical harm and emotional distress.

The Law Reform Commission reviewed 8 bills which include: The Succession (Amendment) Bill, 2018; The National Insurance Scheme Bill, 2019; The Employment (Amendment) Bill, 2019; The National Coffee Bill, 2018; The NSSF (Amendment) Bill, 2019; Sexual Offences Bill, 2019; Administration of Estates (Small Estates) (Special Provisions) (Amendment) Bill, 2019; and the Labour Disputes (Arbitration and Settlement) (Amendment) Bill, 2019. The reviews indicated that some clauses of the Bills were glaringly discriminatory and marginalizing in nature which would impair equal opportunities. Thus, EOC made appropriate recommendations to Parliament for consideration;

- 99.2% of the vulnerable and marginalized groups had knowledge on the existing Justice Institutions in the country where they can seek Justice
- 67% of responded had an engagement with one or more justice institutions. With regard to disability, 64% of persons with disability revealed that they had an engagement with at least a Justice Institution as compared to 68% by persons without disability.
- 36% of respondents had disputes related to land matters, 17% reported family related disputes, 16% domestic violence cases, and 11% theft and commercial (debts, contract, loan) related disputes. Other disputes including; sexual assault, unpaid government compensation and inheritance accounted for less than 10% of disputes reported.
- 62% of disputes were majorly among family members compared to 28% against members of the community
- 13.5% of the respondents among marginalized groups revealed that they had engaged Courts of Law. Among those who engaged court, only 7% of older persons, 13% persons with disability, 14% women and 18% youth had legal representation.
- 41% of the complainants that had engaged the services of a lawyer were not satisfied with their services. This was attributed to high legal costs and delay in prompt conclusion of cases
- Only 13% (15% male and 11% female) of the respondents had used informal justice system to solve disputes. By region, Eastern Uganda had the highest percentage (17%) of people using informal justice system compared to other regions with each having less than 15% (Northern 14%, Kampala 11%, Central 12% and Western 10%). The reason for the low usage of the informal justice system was attributed to male-controlled system or norms in the Uganda, which favour males at the expense of women and girls.
- Much as the Office of the Directorate Public Prosecution was ranked among the least known justice institutions, the assessment revealed that, it is the most trusted institution. 72% of the respondents that knew it demonstrated trust in it compared to Courts of Law (54%), Uganda Prisons Service (51%), Uganda Police (48%), Local Councils (32%) and Probation and Juvenile Justice (26%).

## **8.5 Access to justice during the Covid-19 lockdown**

In line with the standard public health guidelines, Uganda had to institute a partial lockdown of the country when it was confirmed that there was an outbreak of Covid-19 within the country. When the lockdown was instituted only “essential” services were allowed to operate, those deemed basic and yet indispensable without which the nation would collapse.

Following the announcement of the nationwide directives, the Chief Justice of Uganda released guidelines of mitigating and preventative measures that would be taken by the judiciary in response to the pandemic. These included the suspension of all court hearings, appearances, and local and foreign conferences. Staff was encouraged to work from home and use video conferencing where possible. In addition, they were encouraged to deliver submissions strictly in written form via electronic means, as opposed to either delivering them orally or in written form. Another guideline permitted the hearing of urgent cases only. Under these circumstances, an urgent case is a criminal case that requires bail – e.g., murder, aggravated robbery, domestic violence (assault).

All of these guidelines were put in place to ensure business continues as usual without risking further spread of the disease. However, the implementation of these guidelines has limited access to justice in a number of ways, particularly for women, who already struggle to access justice under ‘normal’ conditions. By considering criminal cases urgent, these cases get prioritized over legal issues predominantly reported by women. These include family cases, which women are 32% more likely to report than men, and children’s cases, which women are 4% more likely to report than men. In addition, the physical restrictions on movement have made it difficult for women to access courts and lawyers for legal help.

### **Box 10: Digital technology statistics**

Further, while making access to justice more of a digital experience has served as part of a solution, it has also created another issue by ignoring the digital gender gap. According to the Groupe Speciale Mobile Association’s (GSMA) Mobile Gender Gap Report 2020, women have a harder time accessing digital technology and the internet compared to their male counterparts because of obstacles such as affordability and IT illiteracy. The report states that the digital gender gap in Uganda for mobile ownership is 17% and 48% for mobile internet use, both in favour of men. Making judicial practice digital limits women’s access to justice at a time when they may need it the most.

# THEMATIC AREA 9: Gender Equality And Women's Rights in Peace Building

## 9.1 Introduction

Conflict often changes women's roles and positions in some situations, women have to take over a male role because the men are absent. (Pankhurst, 2003). By doing this, women have to ignore cultural restrictions and live their lives in another way. Peace building (PB) strategies normally do not directly address this tension between commonly accepted gender roles and the major differences and divisions caused by women assuming male responsibilities. Women who have taken on male responsibilities are often expected to return to their old traditional roles when the violent conflict ends and the men return, which can influence the women's wellbeing. Denying women's agency is also a potential outcome of the crude deployment of a "gender" concept in policy, where all women are presumed to act in the same way and are powerless to do otherwise. Highlighting the difficulties that women face as a group easily results into seeing them as all as innocent victims and does not allow for the great variety of role as actors that women actually embrace.

## 9.2 Extent to which women are involved in the process of peace building

If men have been seen as agents in the provision of national security, women have been associated with an essentialized notion of peace that lacks agency. It has often been claimed that women are more peaceful than men and less prone to conflict. While there is evidence to suggest that women have shown less support for men's wars (Tickner 2001: 60), the relationship between women and peace has been a contentious one. This is because in male dominated societies the association of women with peace reinforces gender hierarchies and false dichotomies that contribute to the devaluation of both women and peace. However, even though many of the leaders of peace movements have been men, it has been the case that women have constituted the majority of peace activists, often forming separate movements that draw on maternal imagery to make their case.

Women's participation in decision-making on peace building and post-conflict recovery processes (e.g., disarmament and reintegration, security sector reform, economic recovery programmes, legal, judicial and electoral reform processes) has been markedly low, especially at district level and within refugee hosting settings. This is often attributed to a shortage of trained women leaders, the absence of an enabling environment for women leaders' engagement, or strategic interventions that promote collaboration between government and non-government actors to implement national commitments. Uganda's National Action Plans on UN Security Council Resolutions 1325, 1820 and the Goma declaration provide a national framework for a wide range of actors to advance the women, peace and security (WPS) agenda of enhancing women's participation in peace processes, protection from sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and ensuring women's needs are fulfilled in post-conflict recovery processes.

With help from Women International Peace Centre, Women Peace Mediators Networks have been set up and identified, reported and mediated conflict incidences including, cattle raids, conflict between refugee and host communities and gender-based violence specifically early marriages that led to withdrawal of girls from schools. Refugee Welfare Council II and III, Assistant Settlement Commandants, Sub-county authorities and the District Security Committee through Resident District Commissioners (RDC) worked with the network to address incidences reported. The women mediators are present in the five zones of Bidi Bidi, Nyumanzi, Agojo, Majji 1 and 3 refugee settlements of Adjumani, in Kululu, Romogi, Dzaipi, Ciporo, Rengen, Nakapelemoro, Panyagara sub counties of Yumbe and in Kotido Town council. Trained women are now using skills acquired to profile their personal agency (power to) by demanding for inclusion and mediating conflicts.

The Women's Situation Room Uganda (a women-led early warning and response mechanism to curb electoral violence) co-convened by The Peace Centre, demonstrated the value of women's conflict mitigation efforts and the need for early warning and response work to be done throughout the electoral cycle to ensure peaceful elections. In the lead up to 2021 presidential and parliamentary elections, and with newly formed districts undergoing elections, The Peace Centre, in 2019 targeted 5 districts in Eastern, Northern, Central and West Nile regions to support youth and women's leadership in ensuring government accountability to citizens for peaceful electoral processes.

To create an enabling environment for women's peace building work and support district and sub county efforts to promote peaceful elections, The Peace Centre has also signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs) with district local governments and held 12 meetings with leaders in 3 districts and 9 sub-counties (including political leaders, Electoral Commission, Uganda Human Rights Commission, Police and Civil Society).

### **9.3 Policies and laws harmonized towards an active gender participation in peace building**

Although the inclusion of women in peacebuilding processes has gained momentum in policy discussions, the number of women in decision-making positions remains relatively small. UNSC resolution 1325 recognises that women are disproportionately affected by conflict, and to address this, women should play a key role in achieving lasting peace after conflict.

Although Uganda has passed laws that re-echo the important role of women and gender equality in peace making processes, they do not guarantee it in practice, and cannot ensure that women will receive the necessary space to be part of the peace process. Traditional and/or religious practices often carry more weight than a country's constitution, even in places where the law calls for women to play a greater role in decision-making forums.

By being included in prevention and response strategies, women can play an active role towards sustainable peace. A start would be to engage with women at the very beginning of peace processes. Studies have shown that gender mainstreaming can only be effective when accompanied by strong empowerment structures – where women have greater voices in the public sphere, and resources are allocated to human development priorities. The AU Commission on Women, Peace and Security also recommended that women, peace and security should be mainstreamed into national strategies.

There is a need to fast track the involvement of women in the peacebuilding process, and to ensure that women viewed as agents of positive change in post-conflict settings. As long as a clear strategy is not developed on how to put the resolution into practice, significant improvement in women's representation in peacebuilding will remain low, and prospects for sustainable peace will stay hazy.

A major challenge is that women are often not perceived to have the skills, knowledge or social status needed to bring about change in post-conflict environments. Changing this requires a mind-shift by negotiators and mediators on how they view the role of women. To make policies more effective, strategic steps need to be taken. Women are still primarily seen as victims of conflict – as opposed to perpetrators, or agents of change – which means that responses mostly deal with aspects of sexual and gender-based violence.

# THEMATIC AREA 10: Gender Equality Framework And Mainstreaming In National Development Processes

## 10.1 Introduction

In October 2013, The Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MFPED) issued the Budget Call Circular requiring sectors to mainstream gender and equity, HIV/AIDS and environment concerns in their budget framework papers (BFP). Over the years, sectors had been requested to articulate gender and equity issues, HIV/AIDS and Environmental Protection and Management in their BFPs. Analysis of BFP submissions over those years revealed that most sectors just put blanket/general statements that they are addressing the issues. However, effective FY 2014/15 after amending of the Public Finance Management Bill, all sectors were ordered to clearly make budget statements in their BFPs highlighting the gender and equity issues, HIV/AIDS and Environmental management issues and the actions proposed to address these issues through the budget. The budget statement would show what the sector wanted to achieve, the issues of concern, and the actual selected interventions with proposed budget allocation.

## 10.2 Frameworks are in place to mainstream gender across sectors

In a bid to promote gender equality for all Ugandans, the Government has put in place a solid legal and policy framework and additionally ratified international and regional conventions, treaties, protocols and declarations whose implementation by stakeholders will contribute to the achievement of State's vision 2040 and goals to promote sustainable inclusive growth and development.

### 10.2.1 National Legal Framework

- a. **The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, 1995** as amended provides the overarching legal and regulatory framework on promotion of equal opportunities for all. Chapter IV promotes equality and enjoyment for everyone in all aspects of life including political, economic, social and cultural life with the protection of the law. Under Article 21(2), the Constitution provides for the eradication of discrimination against persons based on their sex, race, colour, ethnic origin, tribe, birth, creed or religion or social or economic standing, political opinion or disability and the Article 32(1) provides for administration of affirmative action in favour of marginalised groups for the cause of redressing imbalances that exist against them.
- b. **The Public Finance Management Act, 2015 (PFMA)**: was introduced with the aim of promoting equal opportunities in Planning and Budgeting processes with three sections on compliance with gender and equity requirements and these are;
  - I. Section 9 (6) (a) and (b): states that, the Minister shall, in consultation with the Equal Opportunities Commission, issue a certificate; (a) certifying that the Budget Framework Paper (BFP) is gender and equity responsive; and (b) specifying measures taken to equalise opportunities for women, men, persons with disabilities and other marginalised groups.
  - II. Section 13 (11) e (i) and (ii): states that a certificate shall be issued by the Minister responsible for Finance in consultation with the Equal Opportunities Commission (i) certifying that the budget is gender and equity responsive; and (ii) specifying the measures taken to equalise opportunities for men, women, persons with disabilities and other marginalised groups.
  - III. Section 13 (15) g (i) and (ii); Section 13 (15) (g): states that a certificate shall be issued by the Minister responsible for Finance in consultation with the Equal Opportunities Commission; (i) certifying that the Ministerial Policy Statement is Gender and Equity responsive; and (ii) specifying measures taken to equalise opportunities for men, women, persons with disabilities and other marginalised groups.

- c. **The Equal Opportunities Commission Act, 2007:** Articles 32(3) and 34(4) of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda 1995 as amended mandates the Commission to eliminate discrimination and inequalities against any individual or group of persons on the ground of sex, age, race, colour, ethnic origin, tribe, birth, creed or religion, health status, social or economic standing, political opinion or disability, and take affirmative action in favour of groups marginalised on the basis of gender, age, disability or any other reason created by history, tradition or custom for the purpose of redressing imbalances which exist against them and to provide for other related matters.
- d. **The Employment Act, 2006:** Section 6 (3) states that discrimination in employment shall be unlawful and it includes any distinction, exclusion or preference made on the basis of race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction or social origin, the HIV/AIDs status or disability which has the effect of nullifying or impairing the treatment of a person in employment or occupation or of preventing an employee from obtaining any benefit under a contract of service.

### 10.2.2 National Policy Framework

Uganda's Vision 2040 is a fundamental policy framework developed with the aim to propel Uganda towards achieving an upper middle-income status by 2040. In the pursuit to attain the Vision 2040 under the theme "leaving no one behind", the Government of Uganda has developed and implemented National Development Plans with a span of five years each and is currently embarking on its third National Plan (NDP III 2020/21 – 2024/25) under the theme "Sustainable Industrialization for inclusive growth, employment and sustainable wealth creation". The third National Development Plan commits to extend on the milestones of NDP II that focused on "Strengthening Uganda's competitiveness for sustainable wealth creation, employment and inclusive growth".

There are a number of other policies that relate to gender equality in Uganda which include;

1. **The National Development Plan II (2015/2016-2019/2020):** Implemented under the theme, "Strengthening Uganda's competitiveness for sustainable wealth creation, employment and inclusive growth", NDP II was underpinned by key investment areas with a focus on inclusion for all and empowerment of men, women, youth, children, older persons and PWDs to participate effectively in development; emphasise equal opportunities in access to and benefit from development initiatives; and promotion of a progressive and developmental culture that blends well with traditional beliefs and national values.
2. **The Uganda Gender Policy, 2007:** aims at reducing gender inequalities so that all women and men, girls and boys, are able to move out of poverty and to achieve improved and sustainable livelihoods.
3. **The Uganda National Youth Policy, 2016;** The policy is premised on the need to address a range of challenges that the youth (both men and women) face in the development process as well as harness their potential to contribute to national development. It provides a basis for a holistic integration and inclusion of the youth in Uganda's development while appreciating the current impact of globalisation and its associated advantages and disadvantages.

4. **The National Social Protection Policy 2016:** aims at reducing poverty and social economic inequalities for inclusive development through provision of platforms upon which Ugandans can build productive and sustainable livelihoods, improve social welfare and consequently reduce poverty among the vulnerable groups.
5. **The National Equal Opportunities Policy, 2006:** Aims at promoting equality of opportunities for all persons in Uganda, irrespective of gender, age, physical ability, health status or geographical location, in all activities, programmes, plans and policies of Government, private sector and Non-Governmental Organizations in all spheres of social, economic, political and civil life.
6. **The National Child Policy (2017):** Provides a framework to address the concerns, needs and ensure equal enjoyment of opportunities for orphans and other vulnerable children.
7. **The Equal Opportunities Commission Strategic Plan, 2015/2016 – 2019/2020:** The Five Year EOC Strategic Plan focuses on the theme “Promoting Equal Opportunities for Inclusive Growth” through strengthening the service delivery standards and systems to enhance the services delivered to Ugandans, especially the vulnerable and marginalised groups of people (women and children). The plan emphasises equal access to opportunities across all aspects of life as a major prerequisite for inclusive growth, socio economic transformation and sustained improvement of both human welfare and development.

### **10.2.3 Regional and International Legal and Policy Framework**

#### **Regional Legal and Policy Framework**

The regional conventions, treaties, protocols and declarations relating to the promotion of equal opportunities to which Uganda is party, include the following:

- i. **The African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights, 1986:** this is a human rights instrument that is intended to promote and protect human rights and basic freedoms on the African continent. Article 13 of this Charter recognises civil and political rights for all individuals.
- ii. **The African Youth Charter 2006:** the second key objective of the Charter is to ensure the constructive involvement of youth in the development agenda of Africa and their effective participation in the debates and decision-making processes in the development of the continent. The Charter sets a framework to enable policy makers to mainstream youth issues in all development policies and programmes. It thus provides a legal basis for ensuring youth presence and participation in government structures and forums at national, regional and continental levels.
- iii. **The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child 1990;** The ACRWC defines a “child” as a human being below the age of 18 years. It recognizes the child’s unique and privileged place in African society and that African children need protection and special care. It also acknowledges that children are entitled to the enjoyment of freedom of expression, association, peaceful assembly, thought, religion, and conscience. It aims to protect the private life of the child and safeguard the child against all forms of economic exploitation and against work that is hazardous, interferes with the child’s education, or compromises his or her health or physical, social, mental, spiritual, and moral development.

- iv. **African Agenda 2063:** strategic framework for the social economic transformation of the continent by 2063. It builds on and seeks to accelerate the implementation of past and existing continental initiative for growth and sustainable development.
- v. **The African Union Gender Policy (2009):** This regional policy is committed to socioeconomic development, takes into account the diversity in social, cultural, and traditional setting, and is making effort to address cultures and practices which militate against enjoyment of freedom and rights by women and girls.
- vi. The other legal instrument includes: Maputo protocol, African protocol on disability

### **International Legal and Policy Frameworks**

The International conventions, treaties, protocols and declarations relating to the promotion of gender equality to which Uganda is party, include the following:

- i. **Universal declaration of human rights 1948:** Article 2 provides that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without discrimination of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.
- ii. **International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 1966,** ratified in 1987 by Uganda: Article 3 states that there should be equal opportunities for all men and women in the enjoyment of all economic, social and cultural rights.
- iii. **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights 1966,** ratified in 1995: Article 26 highlights that all persons are equal before the law and are entitled to equal opportunities without any discrimination. The law prohibits any discrimination and guarantees to all person equal and effective protection against discrimination on any ground such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property and birth among others.
- iv. **The Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989,** ratified in 1990; Article 2 states that parties shall respect and ensure the rights set forth in the present convention to each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national ethnic or social origin property, disability, birth or other status.
- v. **Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW),** 1979 ratified in 1985: Article 10, calls upon State parties to take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in order to ensure equal rights with men in all the fields.
- vi. **Convention on the rights of Persons with Disabilities 2006:** this is an international human rights treaty of the United Nations intended to protect the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities. Parties to the Convention are required to promote, protect, and ensure the full enjoyment of human rights by persons with disabilities and ensure that they enjoy full equality under the law. The Convention has served as the major catalyst in the global movement from viewing persons with disabilities as objects of charity, medical treatment and social protection towards viewing them as full and equal members of society, with human rights.

- vii. **The Sustainable Development Goal:** aiming at reducing inequality within and among the countries and promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.
- viii. **The United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women** (DEVAW, 1993); Article 4 of the declaration highlights that States should condemn violence against women and should not invoke any custom, tradition or religious consideration to avoid their obligation with respect to its elimination.
- ix. **The Declaration on the rights of Minorities 1992;** Article 4 highlights that states shall take measures required to ensure that persons belonging to minorities exercise fully and effectively all their human rights and fundamental freedoms without any discrimination and full equality before the law.
- x. **Article 27 of ILO Convention No. 169 on Indigenous and Tribal People's Convention** reflects the fundamental philosophy of the Convention, which is to promote and protect indigenous peoples' right to simultaneously be able to maintain and develop their own cultures, ways of life, traditions and customs, and to continue to exist as parts.

# THEMATIC AREA 11: Gender and Women in Informal Sector

## 11.1 Introduction

The International Labour Organization defines informal enterprises as “non-agricultural enterprises that are unincorporated and unregistered or small in terms of the number of employed persons. “Although it is widely understood that workers in the informal economy are more vulnerable than their counterparts in the formal economy due to poor pay, unsafe working conditions, and the lack of social benefits owing to the poor penetration of labour laws and standards, the absence of regulation and social prejudice towards the fields in which they work undermine sustained attention. In Uganda, the informal sector is an important part of the economy at large. In 2010, it was estimated that 2.7 million Ugandans were employed in the informal sector.

In 2014, it was estimated to contribute to over 50% of Uganda’s GDP and employ 80% of its labour force. Although Uganda’s economy has been growing consistently over the last few decades, it is struggling to incorporate a rapidly expanding population and development is uneven. The economy has grown steadily at about 4-5% a year for the last five years, but concurrently, the population is expanding rapidly, at a rate of about 3% per year. The youthful population (over 55% of the population is younger than 18) releases approximately 400,000 youth into the job market each year. Yet only about 9,000 salaried jobs are on offer. The unemployment rate stands at 9.4%. These rates are higher among youth, and women face higher levels of unemployment than men (11% compared to 8%).<sup>20</sup>

Uganda’s labour force participation is among the highest in the world, with 84% of the population being economically active. The scarcity of job opportunities in Uganda has led the emergence of a bulging un-employed or under-employed and underproductive work force of young men and women. Many of them are forced to take up work in the informal sector, in jobs that are precarious and poorly remunerated, with little access to social protection. Employees in the sector are generally not covered by social security in accordance with Ugandan employment law. The majority of participants in the sector are poor and engage in the sector because they lack other options. Most of them remain poor despite their economic activity because of the low rates of return it offers. Yet the sector offers some possibility of income for some of the most vulnerable social population.

## 11.2 Extent to Which there is Gender Equality in the Informal Economy

Both women and men are disproportionately affected by the realities that drive individuals into the informal sector. However, women more likely to be poor; experience gaps in education; lower access to finance, land and assets; lack child care; and face both legal and social discrimination that leave no option other than informal employment.

In Uganda an estimated 62.2% of women who work outside the home are employed informally. Women’s work in the informal sector is varied. Some women take on domestic work as cleaners or cooks. Others may support their own or family businesses, either paid or unpaid. These are often very small, subsistence level businesses. Even within the informal sector, however, women are often invisible. In many cases, there is no gender disaggregated data which makes gender sensitive analysis and policy making next to impossible.

However, in Uganda, it is estimated that women own 66% of all informal businesses and make up a majority of informal workers as well. A recent increase in women-headed households

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<sup>20</sup> Uganda’s Key Statistics – US Embassy in Uganda

coupled with rampant poverty has made it unsustainable for women to remain in their traditional domestic roles and as a corollary more women have been compelled to seek work outside the home. Despite the vitality of their roles, their experiences are often overlooked.

While some women have managed to create a more stable work environment in their own market stalls or other businesses, these tend to be smaller and less profitable than those of their male counterparts. Many do not even have that option, a large number are engaged in the unpredictable and mobile businesses of street vending and hawking, mostly trading in food, beverages, textiles, and other cheap/perishable commodities. The absence of social security entitlements exacerbates these vulnerabilities and leaves women at risk of ill health and impoverishment.

Women, like men in the informal sector, tend to secure meagre returns for their work and are forced to cope with precarious business conditions and variable incomes. They lack the security that typically comes with formal employment such as protection from arbitrary dismissal, support for time off and family leave, contributions to social insurance and health and safety protections on the job. The Ugandan government, recognizing both the vulnerability of workers in the informal sector and the loss of tax revenue, has recently embarked on efforts to formalize these activities. Despite its precarious nature, informal work represents an important lifeline for many of those who participate. According to a study commissioned by the Institute for Social Transformation, many market women noted that they had been able to build a house, educate their child(ren) and expand their businesses as a result of working in these markets.

Many women are attracted to work in the informal sector because of the minimal start-up capital that it requires. In a context of poverty, this is absolutely critical for women. However, the women and men working in this sector are still facing a number of challenges which greatly affect women more than men and these include the lack of social protection, limited number of items to trade in the sector which creates very steep competition, evictions, relocations, arrests and confiscation of property, and sexual harassment especially for women vendors.

A number of strategies have been put in place to support women and men in the formal sector to combat some of these challenges:

a. **Self-help groups**

As there are no protections offered through their work, women street vendors seek out alternative forms of support. For most women, this support came from informal networks, while others have made efforts to formalize associations like saving schemes.

b. **Civil Society support for women in the informal sector**

Although limited, a number of CSOs have come in to provide support which is geared towards supporting the poor and marginalized women in the informal sector. The limited support is still attributed to the marginalization of this group, the existence of other pressing social concerns which compete for attention and lack of donor interest and also driven by negative social perceptions of the sector. Many of these CSOs have tried to support the creation and functioning of self-help groups. Others provide legal aid, capacity building services, livelihood enhancement and advocacy related to laws and policy. Some of these CSOs include Gals Forum International, UWONET and Platform for Vendors Uganda (PLAVU)

c. **Government Support**

The Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development and civil society actors reflect that the existing support for women in the informal sector is either in the form of provision

of financial support or in the rendering of services such as infrastructure (market buildings) or skills building.

The Uganda Women's Entrepreneurship Programme (UWEP) operating under the aegis of the Ministry of Gender provides loans to vulnerable women to support start-up small enterprises. These loans specifically target women and have been accessed by them.<sup>21</sup>

Currently, the informal sector is still marked by pervasive gender inequality. Despite women's increasing labour force participation rates in the country, women are still disadvantaged in the informal sector in terms of their share in employment, remuneration and working conditions. A significant proportion of the female country workforce still earn their livelihood in the informal economy, e.g. as "dependent" wage earners in informal and formal enterprises, and as self-employed or own-account entrepreneurs in a wide range of workplaces (i.e. at home, in shops, on streets). They include, inter alia, domestic workers, construction workers, street vendors, waste pickers, home-based workers and day labourers. While work in the informal economy takes various forms, women still tend to be employed in or occupy the most vulnerable and the lowest-paid jobs in this sector.

### **11.3 How the informal sector fostered an empowered community of women**

Although women working in the informal economy still face a number of structural constraints which prevent them from accessing decent paid work as they often bear the brunt of unpaid childcare and domestic work, they may have little choice but to take on low-quality jobs that allow them to attend to these care responsibilities. A range of discriminatory social norms limit their access to: property, assets and financial services; opportunities for education and skills development; and social protection. Strong cultural norms still constrain women's mobility outside the home in some regions, restricting them to low-paid home-based jobs. The strategies above have to some extent empowered women in the informal sector to address these established norms, structures and imbalances in power and provide women with agency and although to a small extent, they have improved women's access to decent incomes and their own properties and also facilitated some women to transition from the informal sector to the formal sector.

Through CSOs offering support in the informal sector, a number of women have been assisted in gaining recognition of their existing property as well as being provided the means to formalize property rights access to land, which has ensured that they have the necessary collateral to qualify for regular financial services. The ability to leverage these financial services has helped women improve their bargaining power especially in self-employment (Agriculture, street vending, home-based work etc.)<sup>22</sup>

### **11.4 Impact of COVID-19 on the Informal Sector**

The Covid-19 pandemic is a major economic and labour market shock, presenting significant impacts in terms of unemployment and underemployment for informal workers. In both rural and urban areas of Uganda, the livelihoods of especially the self-employed and wage workers are at risk, because agri-food supply chains and markets have been disrupted due to lockdowns and restrictions of movement. Families have resorted to negative coping strategies such as distress sale of assets, taking out loans from informal moneylenders, or child labour. Specific groups of workers, especially women, youth, children, indigenous people, and migrant workers, who are overrepresented in the informal economy, have experienced further exacerbation of their vulnerability.

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<sup>21</sup> The Invisible labourers of Kampala – SIHA Network

<sup>22</sup> Empowering women in the informal sector - ILO

There are already growing reports on the economic losses faced by workers engaging in certain occupations due to reduced demand, lack to access to markets, and the loss of mobility of people and goods. The informal sector has been impacted in a number of ways as discussed below:

- The issue of feasibility/effectiveness of lockdown measures in large urban setting where a large part of the population makes its livelihoods and consume through the informal economy, in particular markets in public spaces. It includes the feasibility of social distancing measures in areas/slums where people live/work close to each other.
- The cost of lockdown in terms of income source deprivation for the low income and vulnerable groups. At the same time, an increase of basic goods prices and reductions and/or shifts in demands and consumption patterns has been experienced. Coupled with the challenge for women to reconcile their family and professional roles, this has put them at increased risk and increased the costs of the pandemic
- The cost of the lockdown for poor urban consumers because of no or difficult access to informal economy markets and the associated increase of basic consumption goods' prices
- The cost in terms of income loss with no alternatives has led to urban-rural migration, which has increased the spread of Covid-19 in rural areas. This has affected small-scale farmers, street vendors, small food retailers, transport workers and domestic workers and many others (like for instance workers from Beauty and Hair Salon, handicraft and mechanics MSEs) and small food processing units as they have lost access to urban markets.
- The decrease of basic consumption goods prices to producers in rural areas because of lack of access to urban markets while the price of those goods in urban setting has increased because of scarcity has acted as an incentive for informal trading and flows of those goods between rural and urban areas, which has also contributed to the spread of the virus.
- The lack of basic sanitary infrastructure in big urban markets, especially for clients and workers to wash regularly their hands, has acted as a factor for virus spreading.
- Since the majority of those working in the informal economy are women and girls, the disparities between men and women based on social norms and gender stereotypes have worsened. This has been related to increased risk of violence and harassment at work and of stigmatization of certain categories of workers.
- There has been a challenge in scaling up awareness raising about the risk of Covid-19 in poor, crowded and unsafe living conditions where many of the most vulnerable in the informal economy settle. This includes conditions in which large families share a common space and other factors that make confinement and social distancing impossible.

# THEMATIC AREA 12: Gender and Women in Crises / Emergency Situation

## 12.1 Introduction

This section highlights the extent to which there have been improvements in gender and women aspects in crises management and emergency situation by 2020.

## 12.3 Response of Government to the unique needs of women during the Covid-19 pandemic of 2020

In the face of disaster, women are often worse hit. Covid-19 is no exception. The lockdown put in place did not do any justice to the underlying gender inequalities that people face every day. A number of women were reported to have died of child birth related complications that could not be addressed on time, thanks to the fact that they could not easily access public transport to take them to the health centre.

A number of people complained that RDCs, who were supposed to give permission to sick people to travel, were not answering their phones, and motor cycles and taxis carrying pregnant women risked being seized by security personnel. In essence, Covid-19 has worsened the already appalling situation of women dying when giving birth. Women in rural areas, which also have higher levels of poverty than urban areas, have been disproportionately affected. These women are, even without Covid-19, more likely to use traditional birth attendants or unskilled relatives during their pregnancy. For these women, the opportunity cost of accessing a health centre is often too high with issues on how the bills will get paid, who will look after the children left at home and who will look after their spouse among other things. The Covid-19 response paid no attention to the realities of women, and the ways at which patriarchy inherently leaves them vulnerable. And, even as IMF predicts that Uganda's economy will emerge as one of the most resilient in the face of Covid-19, many women will no doubt be left battered.

*"We know lockdowns and quarantines are essential for suppressing Covid-19. But they can trap women with abusive partners."*

**A Review of Covid-19 and the Health Equality Dilemma in Uganda April 2020**

The UN reports that cases of domestic violence have doubled during the Covid-19 pandemic.

*"UN has recommended that domestic violence plans be made part and parcel of the coronavirus response."*

**UN Secretary General**

Further, in closed up domestic situations such as that of Covid-19, the already unfair domestic workload on women has grown even heavier. They have to look after children who are out of school, older people and those who are ailing from corona virus or other diseases. Women whose behaviour does not conform or who do not perform their role to expectation are beaten back into line within the confines of a lockdown. Security organs for whom domestic violence has never been a priority are overwhelmed and are not likely to pay domestic violence victims' attention, a fact the president himself admitted. The by-products of this violence and abusive situation will be more unwanted pregnancies for both adults and teenagers. Uganda already has an unmet need for family planning of 24 percent. Less women are likely to access family planning during lockdowns and quarantines. Teenagers from poor families are especially at risk. They live in closer quarters with relatives, and they and their parents might lack appropriate knowledge to address sexual abuse. Besides, the reporting sexual abuse in a lockdown situation is likely to cause family acrimony. The easier thing is therefore to stay silent, a continuation of the culture of silence on violence against women that existed even before COVID-19. Teenage pregnancies in turn mean that girls drop out of school. This is compounded by the economic situation families

are in post COVID-19. Already, in the absence of resources, families prefer to educate boys rather than girls. 2020. No interventions have been noticed yet that put women and girls at the centre of COVID19 recovery.<sup>23</sup>

The above realities of women in the face of COVID-19 are not just sad facts. They are but an intricate part of a system designed to undermine the health and wellbeing of women while benefiting from their labour. And, without the right interventions, COVID-19 will leave Ugandans worse off. And women will be at the bottom of the pyramid. The Government should therefore immediately follow UN recommendations and map the needs of women and other vulnerable groups and draw up a plan on how COVID-19 response and recovery will address their specific gender needs especially in terms of maternal health, protection from violence, teenage pregnancies and ensuring all girls return to school after COVID-19. This plan should be well funded and implemented. Failure to do this will lead to a regress on the few achievements that have been made in terms of empowering women and other vulnerable groups.

#### **12.4 Government response to the unique needs of women in refugee settlements**

Uganda currently hosts over 1.2 million refugees and asylum seekers, mostly from South Sudan and DRC. Every day between 1000 and 2000 refugees arrive in the country, straining the humanitarian response and host community resources. Official UNHCR figures indicate that women and children constitute 86% of the refugee population. Although women-headed households represent 64 percent of all households, there is no meaningful participation of women in refugee leadership structures and service committees. There is a high degree of sexual and gender-based violence and significant child protection concerns. Although there is no systematic disaggregation of data by sex and age to provide meaningful gender analysis, young girls and women are usually the most vulnerable.

In a bid to support unique needs of women in this time of COVID-19 pandemic, and with support from many NGOs, over 54,000 refugees in Kampala received mobile money to pay rent and buy needed commodities. In the refugee settlements, more than 1,500 refugee tailors were hired and paid to produce face masks for distribution to fellow refugees, providing an income to thousands of families. Home learning materials were printed and distributed to over 477,000 children to facilitate distance learning, in addition to 2,500 radios to enable pupils to attend radio learning programmes.

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<sup>23</sup>A review of the COVID19 AND Health Equality Dilemma in Uganda April 2020

# THEMATIC AREA 13: Gender and Women in Formal Sector

## 13.1 Introduction

The section details the progress so far made in ensuring gender and women issues and aspects are taken care of within the formal sector.

## 13.2 Extent to which there is gender equality in the formal economy

The percentage of people employed in the formal sector is miniscule compared to those who are self-employed in the informal sector. Although the private sector has emerged as the major conduit for generating wage employment, its job absorption rate is still very low and the high demand for jobs surpasses the available employment opportunities. Of the employed labour force, only 47.4% were in paid employment. The share of employed females in paid employment is 39.1% compared to 54.4% of the employed men. Own account workers (self-employed) and contributing family workers account for 44.6% and 8% respectively. The disadvantaged position of women in the labour market is further highlighted by the fact that 10% of the employed women are in contributing family work compared to 6% of the employed men. A large share of own account workers and contributing family workers confirms the growing informalisation of the labour market.<sup>24</sup>

Unlike in the public sector where the principle of equal remuneration for men and women for work of equal value is upheld, there are wage differentials in the private sector. The UNHS 2012/13 shows that women are paid slightly lower than men. For instance, although the median monthly nominal wages for paid employees was estimated at about Uganda Shillings 110,000, the monthly median wage for males in paid employment was 132,000 compared to 66,000 for women. Apart from low wages, working conditions are to a great extent characterised by absence of formal contracts, unfair dismissals, low wages, long working hours without overtime pay and increasing casualisation of labour.

The UNHS 2012/13 shows that the country's unemployment rate stands at 9%. There are 392,000 labour market entrants annually compared to 130,000 jobs (one third of the labour market entrants) created by the formal sector both public and private, leaving 260,000 unemployed, which is a great challenge. Unemployment rates are higher among women and youth.

The unemployment rate of youth is twice the national average and stands at 18%. The female youth unemployment rate is almost double as compared to their male counterparts. The unemployment rate is slightly higher in rural areas (10%) than urban areas (8%). It is estimated that at least 83% of young people have no formal employment. Seventy percent (70%) of the employed youth in rural areas are engaged in agriculture. It is estimated that a million young people enter the labour market every two years. Fifty-seven percent (57%) of youth have primary or no education at all (UNHS 2012/13), implying that they have low skill levels. Employable skills are more limited among youth and women with disabilities.

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<sup>24</sup>Social Development Sector Plan

# THEMATIC AREA 14: Gender and Women in Technology

## 14.1 Introduction

Information has been observed as a pre-requisite for empowerment (World Bank 2002). Informed citizens are better equipped to take advantage of opportunities, access services, exercise their rights and hold those responsible accountable. If gender issues are not articulated in ICT policies and strategies, it is unlikely that girls and women will reap the benefits of the information age. The majority of women live in rural areas and are disadvantaged as far as education opportunities are concerned. They are mostly affected by poverty and therefore least likely to benefit from ICTs in the absence of specific intervention tailored to their needs. This is particularly so because ICT infrastructure is concentrated in the urban areas. Where it exists in the rural areas, it is located in places that culturally disadvantage access by women, such as entertainment centres. In addition, the ICT platforms like smart phones and modems are expensive and not readily afforded by majority of women especially in rural areas. Many women are further disadvantaged by their relative low levels of education; hence they cannot cope up with some media of communication which use foreign languages such as English and French. Girls are also generally discouraged from taking science subjects. The result is that there are fewer women in ICT related professions like Computer Science and Engineering.

The strategies in the Information and Communications Technologies Sector Strategic and Investments Plan (ICT-SIP) are still mainstreaming gender in all its programmes and projects to ensure equity and equality, in collaboration with MoGLSD. Such programmes include appropriate infrastructure and network deployment, technology choice and affordability, regulatory frameworks, universal access, research and development and training opportunities for learning. Where necessary affirmative action will be applied to encourage and promote the participation of women. Collection of gender disaggregated statistics have not been promoted in the sector to keep track of progress on gender mainstreaming.<sup>25</sup>

## 14.2 Women equal participation in technology innovations

Women account for one half of the potential talent base throughout the world.<sup>26</sup> As a significantly productive work force, it is very important that women have access to and use ICTs to enhance and support their businesses and other aspects of their lives and women are also increasingly adopting ICT in their businesses hence providing them opportunities to engage in online trade to purchase goods and services, and also advertise their products online and gain access to regional and International markets.

The National Information Technology Authority (NITA) Uganda has continuously supported ICT hubs and female targeted organizations, to nurture and mentor young girls in ICT fields and careers and empowering them to reach their maximum potential.<sup>27</sup>

The National IT survey 2018 sought to establish the gender proportions of the ICT workforce in MDAs. Overall, male employees accounted for 75% of total employees across all MDAs, compared to female employees at 25%. Employees in ICT functions/roles make up only 1.9% of the total permanent work force across all MDAs. The proportion of female ICT employees (2.3%) among all female employees is higher than that of male ICT employees (1.7%) among all male employees. There are no marked differences in the proportion of female ICT employees in Ministries as opposed to those in Departments and Agencies.

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<sup>25</sup>ICT Sector Strategic and Investment Plan (2015/16 – 2019/20)

<sup>26</sup>A bright future in ICT opportunities for a new generation of women Report - ITU

<sup>27</sup>Women in ICT – NITA 2016

# THEMATIC AREA 15: Gender and Women in Sports

## 15.1 Introduction

Uganda has made progress in diversity and inclusion of women in sports but at a very slow pace. With 51 National associations affiliated to the National Council of sports (NCS), only six (6) out of the 51 presidents or general secretaries in key decision-making positions are women. This also still shows that there is a huge disparity in the number of technical officials and coaches in all the sports disciplines due to inadequate and competent women.<sup>28</sup> It is only the golf club where the women wing is led by a female and run several programmes to support fellow women. However, some Government Ministries have had female heads and structures mainstreamed; for example, the Ministry of Health, Education, Energy, Security, Economic planning.

In Uganda, the women in sports may face a lot of difficulties in their respective disciplines either through participation or in pursuit of careers, however, some tough women, who are not easily offended by criticism will always stand up, rise up, and will always end up as role models and influential figures to the younger generations.

Some of the women considered as influential in Uganda sports include:

**1. Jean Namayega Sseninde – former Footballer**

A Ugandan professional footballer who played football as a ‘defender at Queen’s Park Rangers Women Football club’, a club she joined from London Phoenix. She has inspired a lot of young girls through the Jean Sseninde Foundation which she started to empower women and the girl child in skills training, sports, and healthy living. The foundation also aims at helping the girls acquire study bursaries through playing football.

**2. Suzan Muwonge ‘Super lady’ – Rally driver**

Nicknamed “Super lady” for her exquisite driving skills, Muwonge has gone on to prove her worth behind the wheel becoming the first lady to win the National Rally Championship (NRC) title in 2011. She went on to win her second NRC title in 2018 in her Subaru N12B alongside her long-serving co-driver Edmond Kyeyune. She also doubles as the Director and teacher at St Francis Junior School Buddo.

**3. Dorcus Inzikuru – Athlete**

She is the Ugandan track and field athlete who broke Uganda’s 33-year jinx without winning a medal at the world championships. She also won gold in the inaugural steeplechase 3000m run at the 2005 Olympics in Helsinki, Finland. She further went on to win the 3000m steeplechase gold medal at the 2006 Commonwealth games in Melbourne, Australia. Although she has moved off the spotlight, her legacy inspired a lot of young girls from across the country.

**4. Peace Proscovia – Netballer**

Also known as the “Warid Tower” because of her height, standing at 6.4ft, is the captain of the Uganda Netball team, The She cranes. She captained the national team to two back-to-back World Cup competitions in 2015 and 2019. She plays professional netball for Sunshine Coast Lightning in the Australian super netball league. She also played for Loughborough lightning in England when she was pursuing a Master’s of Science, majoring in marketing at Loughborough University in 2017.

**5. Hasifah Nassuna – Footballer**

She stands to be the most decorated player in the Women Super league winning five trophies with two sides. Nassuna won four consecutive trophies with Kawempe Muslim SSS football team before joining UCU lady Cardinals where she won the 2018/2019 league title her fifth trophy. She was awarded the FUFA women Most valuable player

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<sup>28</sup> <https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/sports/other-sport/women-demand-safe-sports-environment>

(MVP) award in 2016 for her brilliant displays both on club and country. She is a role model for most of the young girls playing in the women's super league.<sup>29</sup>

The women above represent some of the few most influential women in sports in Uganda and act as role models in Uganda.

The Uganda Olympic Committee (UOC) has continued to take giant strides towards empowering women in sports administration. With the big gap in terms of gender equality in Sports, UOC organised a three-day Women Sport Administrator Course (SAC) that climaxed on International Women's day to further empowered women to join sports and have a 50-50 representation of both genders.

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<sup>29</sup> <https://thetouchlinesports.com/ranked-the-top-five-influentia-women-in-the-uganda-sports/>

# Conclusions and Recommendations

## Conclusions

This report has provided rich information and data regarding the progress so far in terms of gender equality in Uganda. The report provides insight into various sector performances around gender transformation and what has been and not been done to empower the women in Uganda. Being a study updating the 2018 Gender Study, the 2020 Study embarked and traced backwards to important information which had not been explored in the latter. This current study however, found little or no considerable changes which had happened by 2020 in most of the sectors assessed implying that there was little achieved to respond the issues presented in the 2018 study. Nonetheless, there is much information for reflection and for advocacy to be undertaken to mainstream gender issues at all levels from planning, to budgeting and to implementation.

## Recommendations

### Recommendations on Access to Justice

- Digitalization in the judiciary is an innovation that needs to be paired with other legal services in order to expand access to justice beyond those with technology and access to the internet. Fortunately, a number of organizations provide legal aid to people either living in remote areas or with little access to technology. For example, the Uganda Network on Law Ethics and HIV/AIDS (UGANET) runs legal aid clinics in ten districts across the country and mobilizes 100 community paralegals to travel to remote areas and inform people of their rights. Organizations like these create new ways to improve access to justice on a regular basis.
- Another recommendation for improving women's access to justice is that interim judicial orders should be made to address the legal challenges that fall outside the "urgent" cases category. The orders may serve as temporary solutions until full trials can take place when the pandemic ends. An example of this is the **District of Columbia's Superior Court** extended protection orders that were due to expire over the next few months in order to ensure women's security. Similar orders can be made about child custody or preventing evictions of widows and children from matrimonial homes during the pandemic.

### Recommendation on peace building

- Given that women's roles in conflict are complex, there is a need for relevant systematic policy research and analysis, including on issues related to dispute-resolution, access to justice and economic empowerment.
- A lot of research is needed on conflict analysis and how peacebuilding can in a way that is more inclusive of women. How the interests and needs of women can be incorporated must also be researched.
- Inclusion does not only mean promoting women's participation in formal settings, but also recognising where they have impact. Many instances of gender inclusivity have come through informal structures, such as the influence women have within their families, which often goes unrecognised.

### Recommendations on Informal Sector

#### To the Central Government

- There is still need to develop progressive welfare programmes aimed at supporting the burgeoning urban poor population through subsidies for basic services, adult literacy and skills development schemes primarily geared towards this social stratum.
- Encourage the local authorities to simplify registration with a view to encourage formalized vendors to remit taxes. This could be accompanied by schemes to sensitize informal workers in terms of their rights and responsibilities and to make it easier for workers to

remit taxes, bearing in mind that some informal actors especially women may have little tax liability in view of their low incomes.

#### To Civil Societies

- Consider supporting women in the informal sector to either expand their businesses or assist them to gain alternative employment. Such support could include facilitating access to credit and finance or training. This training could include skills that would enable them to grow their existing businesses, such as small business management, bookkeeping and understanding markets or which would help them to access more formal employment, such as baking, tailoring or other skills.
- Support women to organize themselves into formal or semi-formal organizations that can both provide practical support, such as savings schemes and to engage directly with the authorities and advocate on their own behalf. This support could cover training and capacity building.
- Support data collection relating to the number and conditions of women involved in the informal sector, with a view to ensure that programming interventions can rest on a strong knowledge base.

#### Covid-19 Context

- Identify the vulnerable groups in the informal economy who will be badly impacted by COVID-19 (and in particular all those operating or using market places) and by gender-sensitive and non-discrimination measures, introduce cash grants and food distribution for the most vulnerable groups (women and children), and also provide temporary employment schemes for informal workers (Cash for Work activities)
- Build on social dialogue mechanisms with public authorities and the involvement of workers and employers' organizations involved in the informal economy. It will be necessary to include women and vulnerable groups (women and children, people with disabilities and living with HIV), which is not often the case, to facilitate the design of gender-sensitive and non-discrimination measures to mitigate the impact of the outbreak on workers and economic units in the informal economy, ranging from preventive measures like sanitary infrastructure in market places to allow workers and consumers to wash their hands regularly and provide health kit to fight COVID-19 outbreak

# Annexes

## A: Desk Review Documents

| No. |                                                                                                               |
|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1   | Annual JLOS Report 2019 - 2020                                                                                |
| 2   | Annual-Health-Sector-Performance-Report-2019-2020-FY-1                                                        |
| 3   | The Education and Sports Sector – Annual Performance Report (FY 2019/20)                                      |
| 4   | MAAIF-Annual-Performance-Report-FY-2019-2020                                                                  |
| 5   | Third National Development Plan 2020/21 – 2024/25                                                             |
| 6   | Gender Issues in Uganda 2019 – UBOS                                                                           |
| 7   | Gender Eye First Issue 1 Ministry of Education and Sports - 2020                                              |
| 8   | Human Resource Statistical Abstract 2019/2020 – Ministry of Public Service                                    |
| 9   | COVID-19 Rapid Gender Analysis – Care Uganda                                                                  |
| 10  | UNHS 2016/2017 Report - UBOS                                                                                  |
| 11  | Women's Land rights and Agricultural productivity in Uganda Report                                            |
| 12  | The Uganda National Adolescent Health Landscape And Recommendations For Improved Service Delivery Report 2019 |
| 13  | National agrifood systems and COVID-19 in Uganda – FAO 2020                                                   |
| 14  | COVID 19 Rapid Gender Analysis 2020 – Care Uganda                                                             |
| 15  | Effect of COVID-19 on the Educational Sector in Uganda – Deana Fanelli                                        |
| 16  | Covid-19 Education disruption and Response: Rethinking e-learning in Uganda – Josephine Tumwesigye            |
| 17  | Annual Crimes Report 2020 – Uganda Police Force                                                               |
| 18  | The mobile gender gap Report 2020 - GSMA                                                                      |
| 19  | Gender and Access to Justice Under COVID-19 in Uganda                                                         |
| 20  | FinScope Uganda 2018 Study                                                                                    |
| 21  | Reviving the Women Peace and Security Agenda - Annual Report 2019                                             |