



# Findings

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## Uganda: Integrating Gender into Policy Actions

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The findings of both macro- and microeconomic analysis of the links between growth and gender inequality have shown that large gender disparities in basic human rights, resources, economic opportunity, and in political voice is directly and indirectly limiting growth in sub-Saharan Africa, and that women and girls are bearing the largest and most direct costs of these inequalities (see e.g., *Engendering Development*, World Bank 2001). In addition to being a major constraint to growth, gender inequality reduces the effectiveness of poverty reduction efforts. Therefore, understanding the nature of gender disparities and taking the necessary actions to redress them will not only promote higher growth rates but will also make a substantial contribution to the reduction of poverty.

Because women - particularly poor women - have little or no voice in decision-making, their different needs and constraints do not inform public policy choices and priorities. Thus, governments must take pro-active measures to ensure inclusive participation and formulate policies and programs that promote gender equality and foster more efficient development process. The Government of

Uganda (GOU) has taken the initiative to examine gender issues and is taking significant steps towards redressing gender inequality by integrating gender in its reform policies and programs. This note aims to show how GOU is working to move beyond policy dialogue to taking concrete actions to promote gender equality through the use of its policy instruments, namely the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper ( PRSP ), the budget and the Poverty Reduction Strategy Credit ( PRSC ).

### Integrating Gender into the PRSP

**Background:** The Government of Uganda formulated its development strategy known as the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) in 1997. Three years later, after a more extensive consultation process and incorporating new data generated since 1997, the PEAP was revised in 2000. The summary of PEAP 2000 was presented as Uganda's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper PRSP.

A Demographic Health Survey conducted in 2000/01 showed increasing infant and maternal mortality rates at a time when income poverty was falling in Uganda. Further examination of the underlying causes revealed that unequal

gender relations were affecting household-level decisions, which had an important impact on the welfare of household members. The government then acted decisively and took measures to deepen the understanding of gender issues in Uganda and to give it greater prominence in the following PEAP revision, in 2003/04.

**Process:** Between 2002 and 2004, a substantial amount of work was done to understand the extent and impacts of gender inequality in Uganda. The government established a PEAP Gender Team in 2002 under the leadership of Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MFPED) to take the lead in coordinating and managing the integration of gender as one of the key cross-cutting issues in the PEAP. Also in 2002, the GOU commissioned and carried out the Uganda Participatory Poverty Assessment Process/Second Participatory Poverty Assessment (UPPAP/PPA2), which highlighted three critical messages for Uganda: (i) there is a marked gender gap in control over resources and decision-making power, to the detriment of women; (ii) the labor burdens of men and women differ significantly, again to the detriment of women who are “overburdened,” especially given the disproportionate responsibility they bear for “meeting family needs”; and (iii) the implications of these gender-based disparities are far-reaching and intertwined in ways that are complex and multi-dimensional, and they affect virtually every aspect of life. In the same year, the Ministry of Justice carried out an extensive gender analysis of the Justice, Law and Order Sector.

In 2003 and 2004, the government commissioned three research papers; one on gender analysis of poverty by David Lawson, which found that households headed by women - particularly those headed by female widows and married women - are poorer than others; the second was on gender and growth linkages by Stephan Klasen, who argued that Uganda’s high fertility rate - which is closely linked to gender gaps in education, employment, bargaining power at the household level, and unequal access to credit - is a major burden for women and reduces their ability to participate in the economy.

In addition, a desk review on gender and poverty was prepared as well as a Poverty and Social Impact Assessment (PSIA) of Uganda’s Strategic Exports Initiative, which revealed that the supply response sought under the strategy was limited by the prevailing gender inequality because the strategy did not take into account the fact that the household shift from subsistence to market-oriented production affects women and men differently. Generally, reorientation of household production toward the market is not a priority for women because they reap unequal benefit from it.

In July 2003, MFPED issued the PEAP Revision Guide to provide specific steps to be followed in the revision process of the PEAP, putting particular emphasis on key emerging challenges that need to be addressed, of which gender inequality is one. In a clear and concise manner, the guide presents the gender issues under each pillar of the PEAP, strategies to address the issues, and indicators to

monitor outputs and outcomes.

Furthermore, in 2004, the Bank prepared the Strategic Country Gender Assessment (SCGA), to support the revision of the PEAP and its implementation through the PRSC4<sup>1</sup> program, and also to support other Bank operational tasks, including the Poverty Assessment and the Uganda Joint Assistance Strategy. The SCGA examines the gender dimensions of poverty in Uganda and their implications for the economy as well as society, and outlines an action agenda to address the challenges. In a Priority Policy and Operational Interventions matrix, the SCGA presents key gender issues, the sectors or tasks through which they need to be addressed, the principal actions to be taken, and the responsible party/parties for the task.

**Outcome:** PEAP 2004 deals with gender as one of the main cross-cutting issues of development. Among the specific actions planned to redress gender inequalities are strengthening women’s access to land, addressing gender-based violence through the judicial system, and increasing by 2010 the percentage of safe water and sanitation coverage to 90 percent in both rural and urban areas from 65 percent in urban areas and 55 percent in rural areas. PEAP 2004 calls for the implementation of the National Gender Policy and for the preparation of a Gender Mainstreaming Strategy for Local Governments.

As the main implementation instrument of the PEAP, the PRSC process has picked up the expanded coverage of gender issues and PRSC4 addresses some of these key challenges. Among

other things, PRSC4 supports the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD) in revising the National Gender Policy to take account of new information and analysis on gender and poverty linkages as well as new insights on the linkages between gender inequality and economic growth. PRSC4 also supports MFPE in the development and implementation of gender and equity budgeting guidelines for the 2005/06 budget cycle.

PRSC4 aims to provide women greater access to the justice system by tabling a Domestic Relations Bill in Parliament and presenting the Sexual Offences Bill to Cabinet. These Bills are expected to provide an important foundation for addressing issues of improving women's security, especially in relation to access to and control of resources. They will also provide a critical basis for tackling issues related to gender-based violence, including sexual violence, which have emerged not only as a major issue for Uganda, but also as one directly linked with the spread of HIV/AIDS, and the ways in which risk and vulnerability to HIV/AIDS differ for men and women. PRSC4 also aims to strengthen the efforts launched under PRSC3 to improve women's access to land.

These actions provide a solid platform for the more systematic integration of gender issues into policies, while at the same time focusing on key reforms with respect to legal protections and land rights. The gender agenda will be continued under PRSC 5 and 6.

### **Budgeting for Gender Equity**

**Background:** The GOU established the Poverty Action Fund

(PAF) in 1997 to provide a mechanism for strengthening the pro-poor orientation of the budget. The PAF consists of the components of the budget that are considered to contribute directly to poverty reduction. These are expenditures on primary education, primary health care, water and sanitation, agriculture extension and rural roads. As a percentage of the national budget, the PAF increased from 17 percent in 1997/98 to 35 percent in 2003/04. While this trend demonstrates that the national budget is increasingly becoming pro-poor, it is less clear whether or not these resources are actually reaching the poor and whether or not benefits are distributed equitably throughout various groups of society.

**Process:** In an effort to understand who uses government provided services, MFPE commissioned a study in 2002 that covered three districts – namely, Mukono, Kayunga and Kampala. The study, entitled “Who Benefits from the Budget?” showed that men benefit more than women from public spending.

Realizing that the budget is not gender-neutral, in April 2003, MFPE along with the MGLSD launched a dialogue with central and local government officers responsible for finance, planning and budgeting through a two-day workshop on gender-responsive budgeting. Following the workshop, MFPE issued a directive to be used in the preparation of the guidelines for the Sector Budget Framework Papers (SBFPs). While the new equity guidelines are expected to be adopted in the budget process in all sectors, the changes

will be implemented in four priority sectors during the first year, i.e., 2005/06. The priority sectors are health care, education, agricultural extension, and water and sanitation.

However, in the absence of a detailed analysis of the impacts of the budget on different socio-economic groups, the SBFPs prepared still lacked gender orientation. Using a disaggregated data by income and gender, Mpuga and Canagarajah<sup>2</sup> conducted a benefit incidence analysis in the four priority sectors. The results of the study highlighted the fact that the poor, and particularly women, benefit the least from public spending *unless* specific programs are incorporated to benefit them, such as the abolition of user fees in public health centers and the introduction of Universal Primary Education.

**Outcome:** In light of the findings of the above two studies, the Government of Uganda prepared gender and equity budgeting guidelines that have been integrated into the Budget Circular to guide the preparation of the Sectoral Budget Framework Papers in the 2005/06 budget cycle. The guidelines provide a step-by-step mechanism for integrating gender into the budget process. The effectiveness of the guidelines on the preparation of the 2005/06 budget will be discussed in a workshop on the budget in 2005.

### **Conclusion**

Uganda has been exceptionally pro-active in addressing many important gender issues, through affirmative action in the political sphere, through the abolition of user fees in health care and the

introduction of UPE, through impressive work to reduce HIV prevalence rates, and through its determination to focus on gender issues in the economic policy arena and in legal reform. In the budget as well as in the PEAP revision and the PRSC process, the Ugandan authorities have used the existing administrative framework rather than creating additional structures to integrate gender issues into development.

Nonetheless, there is an important unfinished agenda which will require a greater willingness to tackle some of the more difficult and systemic issues which remain, notably the attitudes and beliefs which continue to prevent many women in many spheres of life from having any effective control over productive resources, including their sexuality and fertility, and that continue to prevent many men from contributing more fully and more effectively to the wellbeing of their households and families.

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1 The fourth sequential annual Poverty Reduction Support Credit/Operation, 2004.

2 "Are Government Budgets Becoming pro-Poor: An Analysis of Social Services Delivery Trends in Uganda" by Paul Mpuga and Sudharshan Canagarajah, April 2004, unpublished.