

Uganda Country Gender Profile

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PREFACE

Swedish development cooperation has focussed on the promotion of equality between women and men since the 1960s. Considerable efforts have been put into the development strategies, methodologies and capacity over the years. Increased momentum was achieved in March 1996 with the proposal by the Swedish Government that gender equality should be one of the overall goals for Swedish development cooperation. Equality between women and men is recognized not only as an issue of social justice and rights but also as an important issue for effective development. There is increased recognition that gender equality is a precondition for development. It cannot be seen simply as a "women's issue" but must be treated as an important societal issue with implications for all areas of development and relevance for both women and men.

The Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in September 1995 resulted in a Beijing Declaration and a Platform for Action, agreed upon in consensus by the governments of the world. These documents provide an important international strategy on gender equality with concrete recommendations. The overall responsibility of governments at the highest level is clearly established as well as the need for a gender perspective to be mainstreamed into all areas of development. Gender equality has to be taken into account in the development of analyses, policies and goals, strategies and actions for development.

The role of international agencies, including bilateral development cooperation agencies such as Sida, is to support the efforts of national governments. Sida's efforts to support promotion of gender equality will be based on the goals and priorities established by the national governments as well as the commitments made by the governments in the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action. Policy dialogue with governments on ways to promote gender equality as an important societal issue, as well as in concrete Sida-supported programmes and projects, will become increasingly important.

To carry out this role more effectively Sida needs improved information on the situation of women and men in its partner countries, as well as on the policies and strategies established by governments; the commitments made to implement international agreements and conventions such as those from Beijing as well as CEDAW and the Convention on the Rights of the Child; the initiatives and priorities of NGOs and women's movement; and the efforts of other external support agencies. Country Gender Profiles will therefore be developed for all Sida's partner countries to assist Sida personnel and consultants improve awareness, commitment and capacity to support efforts achieving equality between women and men.

An important objective of these profiles is to provide the type of information and statistics needed for mainstreaming a gender perspective into overall analyses carried out, such as economic analyses and poverty analyses, and thus to ensure that attention to equality between women and men is also mainstreamed into the development of overall country strategies.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome
CA	Constituent Assembly
CAD	Constituent Assembly Delegate
CBO	Community-based organisation
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
CM	Council Member
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
ERP	Economic Recovery Programme
GDP	Gross domestic product
GoU	Government of Uganda
LC	Local Council
MoFEP	Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning
MoGCD	Ministry of Gender and Community Development
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NRC	National Resistance Council
NRM	National Resistance Movement
NRA	National Resistance Army
PTA	Parents and Teachers Association
RoU	Republic of Uganda
SSI	Small-scale industry
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WID	Women in Development

1. Introduction

Ugandan women have much in common with women throughout the sub-continent. They work longer hours than men, have much more limited access to resources and lesser, sometimes no, control over what they produce. Some letters written by Ugandan men to the editors of local newspapers give views which are widespread in Africa: that women should not be tempted to overturn the "natural" order of things by challenging men's authority in their homes or by aspiring to high positions in politics or the labour market. Indeed, throughout rural Uganda one will see familiar, typically African scenarios: women up before the sun fetching water from a distant water source, hard at work later in the day on small agricultural holdings and noticeable by their absence or silence at a community meeting in late afternoon.

And yet Uganda is different from other countries in the sub-region. Government's stated policy is to emancipate women, a progressive goal as compared to policy statements of other African countries such as "integrating women into the development process." Uganda's Vice President is an articulate and charismatic woman. Affirmative action by government has improved the gender balance in parliament and elsewhere. Gender concepts (1) are quite widely understood, though not necessarily applied, by many educated Ugandans.

This paper summarises some important aspects of gender relations in Uganda. In each section, an attempt is made to contextualise the gender analysis against more general background information. The final section examines the inputs which government and other institutions are making to eliminate inequalities based on gender.

2. Background

British colonial Uganda was known as the "pearl of Africa" because of its favourable climate, lush vegetation and abundant agricultural production in most parts of the country; the beginnings of a small but promising industrial sector; physical and social infrastructure which did not reach all citizens but which was of high quality, and a resourceful citizenry, both peasant producers of cash crops and an educated elite. By the 1950s a few girls' boarding schools had produced a handful of well-educated women, some of whom later became the "first" headmistress, the "first" parliamentarian, etc. (Musisi 1992).

Under colonialism the vast majority of women, however, were poorly or non-educated and were considered as minors or dependents throughout their lives, subordinate to a father, a husband or - when elderly - a son. Ugandan cultures included large Bantu-speaking kingdoms such as Buganda and Bunyoro in the south, central and western parts of the country and non-Bantu groups such as pastoral Karamojong and agricultural Acholi and Langi in the more arid north. These and other ethnic groups structured gender relations in diverse ways. However, all were patrilineal; thus, women joined the kinship groups of their husbands, for which they produced children and which structured many aspects of their lives - where they lived, which work was expected of them, and so on. All Uganda's ethnic groups were highly patriarchal as well, in that gender relationships were inherently unequal in terms of control and ownership and justified by an ideology of male superiority and female inferiority (World Bank and MoGCD 1995: 25).

During the first decade after independence in 1962, the economy grew and Uganda had its golden age, as remembered by middle-aged people today. Most small holder families could feed themselves and earn some cash income through sale of coffee, cotton or tobacco. Educated and/or Christian families aspired to send their children, including daughters, to well-equipped, often missionary-run primary and secondary boarding schools which laid the foundation for a good marriage or, more rarely, a career suitable for women.

In 1971 General Idi Amin Dada took power in a coup d'état. For the next fifteen years, Ugandans suffered civil war and political instability; economic decline which destroyed their livelihoods; disintegration of the social and physical infrastructure; state-sponsored terrorism, death and disappearance of citizens and voluntary exile of others. By 1986, when the National Resistance Army (NRA) achieved military victory and Yoweri Museveni was installed as president, the country and the lives of many of its people were in ruins.

For everyone, these terrible years have left many emotional scars. Some parts of the country suffered more than others; hence war widows and orphans, for example, are found today in greater numbers in areas such as the Luweero Triangle north of Kampala which sheltered the NRA and suffered the wrath of the second Obote regime as a consequence. In many areas, as cash crop production for export declined, women's food crop production kept their own and many other families, such as in Kampala, alive. Women also joined, or contributed to the support of, the NRA during the years before military victory (Kyokutamba 1994: 12-3)

The UN Decade for Women 1976-1985 largely passed the women of Uganda by. Although Amin created a state-sponsored "women's machinery" in the 1970s (2), this was legitimate only in the eyes of his political followers. NGOs and other expressions of civil society were suppressed by

the state as subversive, and women's voluntary associations had to resist surreptitiously (Tadria 1987). There were few donor-assisted development programmes and projects in Uganda to integrate women into the development process, to reduce their inequality with men, to increase their productivity through small income-generating projects, to meet their basic needs and so on -- all of which were common approaches during these years elsewhere in Africa.

Today, Uganda is characterised by the World Bank as one of the world's poorest countries (World Bank 1995), with per capita income of US \$220. Uganda has very low educational and especially health indicators, a continuing legacy of the destruction of social infrastructure during the years of political turmoil. Poverty is defined in different ways by different categories of Ugandans, who include other variables than cash income per se: economic independence versus having no option except to work for others, for example. Those who experience the most severe poverty include residents in the north and east (the most economically disadvantaged regions); orphans, widows and female household heads; illiterate persons; the handicapped and elderly; the urban un- and under-employed and civil servants who have been retrenched (IDS 1994). Women are found in all these categories, and it is necessary to remember, in the discussion which follows, that aggregated figures or generalised remarks gloss the great disparities and differences in gender relations and gender gaps (3) arising from regional, ethnic, religious and class factors.

A map, summarised facts and figures about Uganda and tables disaggregated where relevant by gender are in Annex 1.

3. Access to Power: Politics, Public Institutions and the Law

Uganda has received international attention for its affirmative actions to improve women's political participation. However, women do not yet participate equally with men in politics. They are still few in number in important decision making positions, the Vice President notwithstanding. There are laws, in particular customary laws, which discriminate against women; and gender bias often influences the way in which law is administered. However, these are recognised as serious national development issues and are debated widely.

3.1 *The National Resistance Movement*

Since 1986, women's political participation has largely taken place within, and has been fostered by, the National Resistance Movement (NRM). The "no party" Movement form of government is unique to Uganda. It is regarded by the NRM as an appropriate alternative to party politics based on region, ethnicity and religion which destroyed the country's political stability in the post-independence period. The Movement form of government is defined in the new Constitution as broad-based, inclusive, non-partisan and conforming to principles of participatory democracy (RoU 1995a: 45). Adherents of political parties can participate in politics under the umbrella of the Movement system. Parties are still legal in Uganda, but they cannot be active.

The Movement form of government consists of a hierarchy of Local Councils from village to national level. The village Local Council (LCI) consists of nine members elected through universal franchise of all citizens over 18 years of age. All LCIs in a parish elect the LCII at parish level. All LCIIs elect the LCIII at sub-county level, and so on through the County Council (LCIV) and the District Local Council (LCV). The apex of the hierarchy is the National Assembly, until recently called the National Resistance Council (NRC). Council Members (CMs) are elected at either LCIV or LCV levels, though some seats have been filled through presidential appointment (GoU 1987).

3.2 *Affirmative Action and Political Participation*

Because unequal relations existed in political representation, the NRM took affirmative action in 1987 to increase the numbers of women in the LC system (which was then called the Resistance Council system). Of the

Most Ugandans, in particular women, attribute Uganda's favourable environment for rectifying gender gaps to the progressive vision of President Museveni in particular and to the NRM generally. In 1988, when announcing the creation of the Ministry of Women in Development, President Museveni stated that, "(t)he challenges of development enjoin us to pay more than just lip service to the core issue of unequal relations between men and women in our society" (Museveni 1988).

1 A Gender-Sensitive President

nine elected positions at LCI (village level), one must be a woman, and so on through LCV level. The first NRC dates from 1989 and includes a woman representative from each district. These are not popularly elected but are rather elected by the District Councillors (CEDAW 1992), the majority of whom are men. The present NRC has 39 women CMs from 39 districts, two women CMs who were elected in their own right, and one woman appointed by the President. Thus, there are 42 women and 196 men in the NRC (Kasente 1994: 7), one of the highest proportions of women in any African legislative assembly.

Affirmative action is a necessary but not sufficient condition for rectifying unequal gender relations. Many rural Ugandans, nearly 90 percent of the population, hold discriminatory attitudes deriving from both traditional and colonial patriarchy. Thus, issues of gender equality have not widely entered electoral debates, especially at grassroots level. Women vote in equal numbers to men, but their votes are sometimes manipulated by their husbands. Candidates are not questioned, by voters of either sex, about their position on issues of gender equality. Women who have stood for election have been verbally abused, especially if they were unmarried.

Women who came into the LC system through affirmative action have often not had an easy time of it. At lower levels, the Secretary for Women, as she is called, is popularly understood to represent only "women's affairs," rather than to have a voice on all subjects. This perception is still widely held at all levels of the LC hierarchy. The Secretary for Women is often the sole woman amongst nine councillors and often finds it difficult to participate fully, much less push forward issues of gender equality. Women CMs are better informed about their roles, but their male colleagues often expect them to speak for women in the NRC, and nothing more. And when they do speak forcefully for women, they may be ridiculed by their colleagues and by the press.

Few women have stood for election in the LC system generally. They have internalised traditional attitudes that public life is men's domain and in any case are often illiterate and burdened with heavy responsibilities which militate against their political participation. For example, in the 1994 Constituent Assembly elections, only 25 women stood as candidates for open (non-reserved) seats, compared to 1,021 men. Of the 208 winners, nine were women. Together with the women who won the reserved seat in each district, one woman representing the trade unions, and two presidential nominees, nineteen per cent of Constituent Assembly Delegates were women (Kasente 1994: Table 2; Kyokutamba 1994: 15; RoU 1994: 10).

There will be presidential and parliamentary elections in approximately mid-1996, that is within nine months after promulgation of the new constitution. The movement system will continue, including affirmative action to increase women's representation. Before the end of the next five-year parliamentary term, a referendum will be held to determine the type of political system which Uganda will have in future (*Ibid.*: chap. 19, section 271).

In addition to the LC hierarchy, a structure of Women's Councils was instituted by the NRM in 1993. These councils are separate from and parallel to the LCs and have the function, *inter alia*, of providing a unified system through which women may communicate and coordinate their activities (GoU 1993). It remains to be seen what contribution Women's Councils will make to promoting gender equality. It has so far proven difficult in practice to mobilise resources for the Councils or to differentiate their role from that of LCs generally.

3.3 The Gender Directorate, State and Civil Society

The NRM created the Ministry of Women in Development (WID) in 1988, as a Ministry of State in the Office of the President. It replaced the previous "national machinery" to promote women's advancement, the National Council for Women created by the Amin regime. Since 1995, the former WID has become a directorate in the Ministry of Gender and Community Development. The Gender Directorate includes two departments, Legal Affairs and Gender. The Directorate of Community Development includes a new Department of Women's Programmes, the function of which is to plan concrete projects for women. In other words, Uganda has adopted the dual approach of targeting women specifically but also locating the analysis of women's position within the context of relationships between women and men, that is - gender.

The main function of the Gender Directorate is to spearhead and coordinate "gender responsive development with particular emphasis on ensuring the improvement of women's status". . . by coordinating and monitoring the formulation and implementation of gender responsive policies (MoGCD 1995b: 6).

The Gender Directorate is, in particular, a catalyst and facilitator, lobbying other sectors of government to mainstream gender (4) in their policies and programmes. This catalytic function is seen as a long-term process and is being carried out in partnership with sectoral ministries (agriculture, natural resources and others) and in connection with the decentralisation process. The Decentralization Policy, for example, makes a commitment to integrate gender into development plans at all levels; to ensure that programmes address women's multiple roles and reduce their work burden; and to promote gender awareness among local politicians and bureaucrats (Decentralization Secretariat 1994: 24).

Thus, in Uganda considerable thought has been given to ways of avoiding the marginalisation in government of the WID/gender Ministry and of promoting dialogue about and actions to reduce gender inequalities, in particular through government policy. This planning has not been matched with budgetary allocations however, as the Ministry of WID/Gender was, and remains, understaffed and under-resourced. Although the conceptual framework is in place and some planning and programming actions are being taken to implement gender responsive policies, this has as yet made little difference to the lives of most Ugandan women.

Although women are present in political decision making bodies, there is still a sizeable gender gap to be reduced. The same applies to high level political appointments and to civil service positions. In 1994 there were five women (17%) among approximately 29 Ministers, Deputy Ministers and Ministers of State in 1994; 16 percent of District Administrators, 20 percent of Permanent Secretaries and 35 percent of Under Secretaries were women (RoU 1994: 10). There is, however, considerable variation from one institution to another, with a few visible women in high positions in some and conspicuous by their absence in others. In general, because of the concentration of women in the lowest ranks of the civil service, and past discriminatory practices with regard to training and promotion, there is a much smaller pool of women eligible for high-level management positions, by comparison with men.

There are alternative avenues to positions of influence in civil society at community level, and women are increasingly beginning to contest these avenues. Uganda had a tradition of voluntary associations which was suppressed during the years of civil strife. This tradition re-emerged after

1986 and, for women, is expressed in participation in many community-based organisations (CBOs), local NGOs, women's groups and associations. It is common, in Uganda and elsewhere in Africa, that women feel the need to come together in an association in order to give each other confidence to improve their situation within the existing order and occasionally to challenge the gender-biased status quo. In addition, there are mixed-sex CBOs and NGOs which have promoted gender sensitisation for their members and have undertaken such activities as gender sensitive legal education.

3.4 The 1995 Constitution

State support for gender equality is entrenched in Uganda's new Constitution (RoU 1995). This replaces the 1967 Constitution and incorporates views which were collected by a Constitutional Commission (12 members, of whom 2 were women) between 1989 and 1993. Because few women participated in the seminars organised by the Commission, the then Ministry of WID organised special seminars throughout the country. Women's recommendations were summarised and presented to the Commission (Ministry of WID 1991). Women recommended, inter alia, that the Constitution prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender and that their economic rights as independent persons, including the right to a fair inheritance at husband's death, be protected. Many of

their recommendations were included in the final draft which was debated and adopted by the C.A.

To ensure that the Constituent Assembly passed the provisions on gender equality in the draft Constitution, efforts were made to sensitise both women and men before they elected CA delegates. The delegates were lobbied throughout the debate on the draft Constitution; and women CADs in particular were given training on gender and other constitutional issues, as well as the skills for articulating them.

The result is a gender-sensitive Constitution, probably the first of its kind in Africa. The gender-relevant provisions and implications of the Constitution were summarised in booklet form within two months after the Constitution was promulgated (MoGCD 1995c).

The chapter on Human Rights and Freedoms in the 1995 Constitution contains a section on the rights of women, as follows:

- 1) "Women shall be accorded full and equal dignity of person with men.
- 2) The State shall provide the facilities and opportunities necessary to enhance the welfare of women to enable them to realise their full potential and advancement.
- 3) The State shall protect women and their rights, taking into account their unique status and natural maternal functions in society.
- 4) Women shall have the right to equal treatment with men and that right shall include equal opportunities in political, economic and social activities.
- 5) . . . (W)omen shall have the right to affirmative action for the purpose of redressing the imbalances created by history, tradition or custom.
- 6) Laws, cultures, customs or traditions which are against the dignity, welfare or interest of women or which undermine their status, are prohibited by this Constitution." (RoU 1995a: Chap. 4, Section 33).

2 The Rights of Women, 1995 Constitution

The Constitution prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender and recognises the significant role which women play in society; specifies that there must be gender balance on all constitutional and other state bodies (e.g. Electoral, Human Rights, Equal Opportunities and other Commissions); continues affirmative action in the composition of the legislature with one woman representative from each district (to be reviewed after ten years), and extends affirmative action to local government, where one-third of the local council is reserved for women (MoGCD 1995c: *passim*). The Constitution is written in gender-sensitive

language, referring where appropriate to both men and women and using terms such as "chairperson."

3.5 The Law

Since the Constitution is the highest law of the land, provisions in other bodies of law which violate the principle of gender equality must be changed or repealed. These include the written law administered by the formal court system and customary law administered by clan elders and the LC court system at LCI-III levels. LC courts have unlimited power in such customary legal matters as elopement with a girl under 18 years, determining who the father of a child is, and deciding on who is the customary heir after a death (GoU 1994: 4).

There are a few written laws which, until amended, will be in breach of constitutional principles. For example, adultery is a criminal offense which is committed by a man only with a married woman, but is committed by a woman with any man. The defilement law states that unlawful

sexual intercourse with a female under the age of 18 constitutes defilement; however customary law accepts that girls may be married at age 16 and that this is not defilement but lawful sexual intercourse.

There is no structure in place to review, amend, repeal or forbid laws or customary practices which violate gender equality. The Law Reform Commission is tackling specific issues, such as domestic law. It is likely that the process of bringing law and custom into conformity with the Constitution will be a long process, carried out in an ad hoc manner.

One of the most controversial gender issues in Uganda is inheritance. Under customary law, it is assumed that the welfare of the widow and children will be taken care of by the deceased's kin. In practice, this is usually not the case as widows and their children are dispossessed of the family's assets and usually forced to move back to the widow's parents' home, where she becomes dependent on her male relatives. The law of intestate inheritance (when there is no will) provides that a widow (or widows if there are more than one) is entitled to only 15 percent of the value of the deceased's estate, and that all children, of both sexes and legitimate or otherwise, are entitled to 75 percent (CEDAW 1992: 79). The question arises as to whether this distribution is equitable in view of the Constitutional provision that men and women have equal rights in marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution (Art. 31 (1)).

A study of men's wills indicated that only 10 percent left their property to their wives in trust for their children, whereas 90 percent left the property to children, stipulating that the mother should be taken care of. Of the latter, only 40 percent divided property equally among female and male children while 60 percent left property only to male children (World Bank and MoGCD 1995: 93). Nonetheless, widows whose husbands have left written

wills tend to be better protected than the vast majority of women (MoGCD 1995e: 8).

The bitter discussion on inheritance is familiar elsewhere in eastern and southern Africa. The experiences of countries such as Tanzania and Zambia, where legislation exists but is usually ignored in favour of (mis)interpretation of customary law, shows that legislation is no substitute for changing the gender-biased attitudes which underpin customary law. These attitudes are justified through appeal to customary law, as interpreted by an LCI court. Although these courts are easily assessable to people, they are dominated by male traditionalists. Some LC courts not only allow widows and children to be stripped of their assets but also allow fathers to "marry" off under-age girls, even of 8 or 10 years of age, and refuse to intervene in serious incidents of domestic violence on grounds that it is a husband's right to chastise his wife.

Because customary law is premised on attitudes that gender relations are "naturally" unequal, it is clear that changing gender-biased attitudes and practices will require prolonged and intensive efforts. These attitudes are expressed in the way in which the law is administered, for example by the police and by the formal court structure. As will be shown in the sections which follow, many of the constraints which cause gender gaps in economic, educational and other aspects of national life are, in the final analysis, caused by or related to gender-biased traditional attitudes. However, since the 1995 Constitution forbids discrimination on the basis of gender, it provides a clear reference point for specific actions and advocacy.

4. Gender in Human Resource Development

4.1 Education

Uganda's schooling system was of high quality in the late colonial and early post-independence period. At the apex of the educational hierarchy, Makerere University was a premier institution, attracting students from eastern and southern Africa. Although the quality of schooling was severely affected by the subsequent period of civil strife, the decline in numbers of pupils would have been greater had it not been for parental and community initiatives to keep schools going.

The 1995 Constitution commits the state to promoting free and compulsory basic education (RoU 1995a: 6) by extending the length of primary school from seven to eight years and removing all government charges (tuition fees) by 1999-2000 (MoES 1992). At present, however, 30 percent of Uganda's 6 to 12 year olds have never attended school. A smaller proportion of pupils completes primary school today than 20 years ago (GoU & NCC 1994: 81). Most primary schools are in a poor state of repair, with inadequate teaching materials, high proportions of untrained teachers (49% nation-wide; *Ibid.*: 79) and inadequate curricula. Three-fourths of the costs of primary education and slightly more than half of secondary school costs are met by parents. In particular, the Parent Teacher Association fees supplement teachers' salaries from government and provide facilities which government cannot. Government's expenditure on education as a proportion of GDP has risen from 3.1 to 4.8 percent in the 1990s (World Bank 1995: 105) but this is still inadequate to meet the great need.

Just over half (54%) of Ugandans over the age of 10 are able to read and write and adult illiteracy is, therefore, a serious problem. In a recent situation analysis of women, adolescents and children, district personnel identified inadequate education for adolescents and illiteracy for women as the highest ranking problems in almost all districts (GoU & NCC 1994: 74-5). Although these are nation-wide problems, there are large imbalances in access to education: regional, urban-rural, class and gender.

Gender gaps in access to and progression through the formal education system are reasonably well documented (e.g. MoES 1995; GoU & NCC 1994). Girls comprise 45 percent of primary, 30 percent of lower secondary and 20 percent of upper secondary pupils. Girls and boys enter grade one in nearly equal numbers, but seven years later there are two boys for every girl still in school.

The high drop-out rate of female as compared to male pupils is reflected in enrolment figures in tertiary institutions. Women comprise less than one-third of students in university and in non-university (polytechnic, teacher training, commerce and other vocational) institutions (MoES 1995: 44). In the non-university tertiary institutions, women are concentrated in stenography, catering and other gender-stereotyped courses. In general, the Ugandan patterns of high female illiteracy, high incidence of female drop-outs from the schooling system and gender-stereotyped course/career choices for those who remain are familiar throughout Africa.

Makerere University has taken affirmative action to rectify the gender imbalance which was previously greater than at present. The university receives many more applications than it can accommodate, and the University Entrance Weighing System results in approximately one-quarter

of admissions for females. In 1990, a 1.5 "bonus" was added to the scores of female candidates for admission to increase their numbers. The result has been the increase in proportion of women to over 30 percent in recent first-year intakes (Mwaka *et al.* 1994: 28-9; Population Secretariat 1994: 29). The "1.5 bonus" is a controversial topic. Many people, not all of them men, believe that women should compete for university entrance on a merit basis and that the degrees earned by women are stigmatised as a result of affirmative action. The President, however, rarely fails to inquire what proportion of females are graduating when he officiates at graduations, at Makerere and elsewhere.

The Education White Paper of 1992 also makes commitments to gender equality: providing more and adequate facilities for girls in coeducational post-primary institutions; ensuring that either the Head or Deputy Head of all educational institutions is a woman; and accelerated training of female teachers.

Although Ugandans still value education highly, many do not value it for girls as much as they do for boys (Fleuret 1992). Conservatives hold the traditional view that educating a girl will only benefit her future husband's kinship group, not her own. Although girls are enrolled in primary school in numbers roughly equal to boys, they are not facilitated to remain in school. The unequal gender division of labour gives girls heavy domestic and agricultural responsibilities which interfere with their school attendance and academic progress. Fifty-three percent of Ugandan women have given birth by the time they are seventeen (GoU & NCC 1994: 22). Therefore, adolescent pregnancy is common, girls are unable to register at the same school after delivery and their schooling, economic prospects and their subsequent ability to provide adequately for their own children are compromised. Early marriage which is sanctioned under customary law and Islamic

The core reasons for gender inequalities in education are cultural and attitudinal:

"Many of the schools in Uganda can be understood as institutions concerned with socialising girls into their subordinate roles in society. In this, the schools provide a faithful reflection of women's subordination within the home. The school curriculum... provides the constant message that men naturally occupy positions of authority and decision making, whereas women are in the support roles" (MoGCD 1995a: 95).

3 Schooling for Subordination

practice is a wide-spread national problem which keeps girls out of school. Finally, there are frequent reports in the press of male teachers defiling female pupils.

"Poverty" is often given as the main reason why families are unable to put or to keep children in school. Ugandans have large families and schooling costs, especially PTA fees, mean that hard choices have to be made. The patriarchal attitudes summarised in the quotation above can result in priority for a son's education rather than a daughter's when a choice has to be made. Although payment of school costs was traditionally a father's responsibility, there is evidence that mothers, who have much more limited access to cash incomes, are increasingly trying to meet their children's school costs. When parents are not able to put or to keep their daughters in school, the risks of early sexuality, HIV transmission, early marriage and deprivation for the next generation

increase.

4.2 Health

Uganda's health indicators are very poor (GoU & NCC 1994: 86). One-fifth of the country's children die before they are five. Although there are no nation-wide statistics available, it is estimated that 600-1,000 rural mothers die for every 100,000 births (*Ibid.*: 105). Such statistics give Uganda the unfortunate distinction of being among the worst in Africa. They can be taken as indirect evidence of the poor social and economic position of women generally, which is reflected in their nutritional and general health status.

The health services are inadequate, both in quantity and quality, to meet the serious health problems which Ugandans face. Although the health care budget has increased in recent years, health sector spending constituted only 1.4 percent of GDP in 1993/4 (World Bank 1995: 105). External assistance financed 61 percent of total expenditure in the health sector in 1993 (GoU & NCC 1994: 102). Improving the nation's health care system is now a national priority.

Government has policies promoting primary health care, maternal and child health and a multi-sectoral National Programme of Action for Children (RoU 1992). However, the bulk of spending is on curative rather than preventive services and has a heavy urban bias. Although 50 percent of the largely rural population lived within five kilometres of a health unit in 1992, there is great regional variation. Even those who live in close proximity to a health unit may prefer or may use other types of service, including traditional healers and self-medication. Government health units are poorly supplied, or a patient must pay "informal" (below the table) costs for treatment. Many Ugandans therefore use the easily available drugs which are sold by unqualified traders in markets and small, private drug stores (Whyte 1991).

Uganda is among the African countries most seriously affected by AIDS, with twenty percent of its sexually active population estimated to be HIV+. However, Uganda was one of the first countries in the world to acknowledge and to begin to respond to the AIDS pandemic (UNFPA 1995: 18). AIDS dominates much of donor sponsored medical research in Uganda, and other diseases, such as malaria which is the biggest killer of children, receive much less attention.

The emphasis on women's child-bearing reflects the high value Ugandans attach to children. The average number of births in each woman's life time is 7.1, which is one of the highest in the world and obscures both the high incidence of infertility and the fact that many women give birth more than seven times in their lifetimes. At the same time, the rate of

Understanding of gender concepts is far behind in the health sector, as compared to education:

"Current health policies perceive women primarily as facilitators of other family members lives, and don't target their personal health but rather target them as health agents. This promotes the perception that the value of women is tied to motherhood and their health needs are only addressed during childbirth" (UNFPA 1995: 5).

4 Gender-blind Health Policies

contraceptive use is very low, at 5 percent. Fifty-five percent of births are attended by untrained relatives (*Ibid.*: 13). One in six new-borns is underweight which is believed to be related to a high incidence of maternal malnutrition (GoU & NCC 1994: 112).

Ugandan women have much less control than do men over their sexuality and their general health status. The unequal division of labour means heavy work loads, long days and little leisure for many women. This, combined with repeated and too frequent child bearing, breast feeding and poor nutrition is reflected in poor health. Men, rather than women, often determine when another child will be produced; and one of the main obstacles to contraceptive use, besides poor distribution, is negative male attitudes (*Ibid.*: 107). The government lags far behind many other African countries in promoting family planning (World Bank 1993: 113), and a population policy was adopted only in 1995.

For many women, an important risk factor in contracting HIV infection is being married. Polygyny, official and otherwise, is common (Olowo-Freers and Barton 1992: 6ff), and women can neither refuse sex to their husbands nor easily suggest safe sexual practices. "The phrase till death do us part has killed many women," as one prominent woman activist put it (*New Vision* 12 Dec. 1995). Although overall incidence of HIV by gender in Uganda is nearly equal, adolescent girls aged 15-19 are six times more likely to be sero-positive than are boys of the same age (GoU & NCC 1994: 125). As reported elsewhere Africa, in Uganda

men hope to escape HIV transmission by preying on younger females, in many cases very young girls.

Women are less able than men to use health services, even when these are available. Although the actual (cost sharing fees and drugs) and hidden (transport and under the table charges) costs affect everyone, women have less access to money than men. Lack of money for transport is often the reason why women do not seek health services or do not return for further treatment. In addition, women face the opportunity costs of lost time in their small businesses or in agricultural work, both when they are sick or seeking health services. The productive value of women's time is overlooked and is increasingly being eroded because of their gender role of care giver. Persons with AIDS are usually taken to their villages during the final stages of illness, and it is women and adolescent girls who bear the greater part of this burden, as well as that of caring for orphans.

There are negative cultural practices in Uganda which violate women's rights and which impair their physical and mental health. Female genital mutilation is practiced among one ethnic group on the slopes of Mt. Elgon in the east. Domestic violence is a nation-wide problem, as are cases of rape and defilement, the increasing incidence of which appears to be real, as well as a reflection of more widespread reporting.

In general, women's gender-based health problems and needs are not widely understood, apart from the traditional maternal and child health approach. The concept of reproductive health (5) is new and is seen as a women's issue, rather than a gender issue. The health problems of girl children and adolescents (MoGCD 1995a) are inadequately addressed, as are those of post-menopausal and elderly women.

Uganda has no social security net, other than the overstretched extended family. In spite of some NGO assistance for vulnerable groups such as AIDS orphans, the increasing incidence of "child headed households" is a measure of the inability of families and communities to cope with the demands made on them. It must be emphasised that men, as well as women, are trying as best they can to cope with serious illness in their families, to the point of selling off land, food crops, etc. in order to pay for treatment. Because of women's care taking role, however, they bear the day-to-day burden.

5. Environment and Natural Resources Management

The gender issues outlined in previous sections are inter-related and cross-cutting. Thus, for example, women who are illiterate or poorly educated, who are in poor health but are care takers of others, are at the same time important but deprived stake-holders in Uganda's natural resources management. The gender division of labour in food crop production, for example, relies on the unpaid labour time of adult females, the substitution of girl's labour for that of mothers in domestic work, with implications for girls' schooling and so on (Evans 1994: 46).

5.1 *The Ecological Setting*

Located on the equator and with two agricultural growing seasons in the southern half of the country, Uganda is ecologically favoured by comparison with the harsh conditions in other countries in the sub-continent. Many Ugandans survived the years of civil turmoil because they were able to feed themselves with no assistance, such as marketing, from the state. What strikes the first-time visitor to Kampala and environs is the lushness of the vegetation and the abundance and diversity of locally produced foods. Ugandans have many staple foods: plantains, cassava, maize, rice, millet, sorghum and sweet potatoes.

This first impression obscures the fact that there are large areas, in the north and east especially, which have harsher climatic regimes and are periodically drought stricken. Besides agriculture, artisanal fishing and animal husbandry including nomadic pastoralism are important in specific regions. None of these diverse farming systems is able to guarantee household food security, and nearly half of Uganda's children are stunted, indicating chronic malnutrition (GoU & NCC 1994: 57). A high population growth rate (2.5% p.a.), previous years of economic mismanagement and current widespread poverty have created serious environmental problems. Land resources are threatened, *inter alia*, by overgrazing, deforestation and fragmentation of holdings. Sixteen percent of households are landless. Deforestation is widespread, and there are woodfuel shortages in many parts of the country. Uganda is rich in wetlands, but these continue to be drained for dairying and unsustainable crop production. In addition to water hyacinth which is devastating Uganda's water bodies, overfishing is also common (RoU 1995b).

5.2 *Agriculture*

Agriculture, livestock and fisheries are Uganda's most important economic sectors, accounting for more than two-thirds of GDP and nearly all export revenues. Uganda is one of the least urbanised countries in Africa with 88.7 percent of the population in rural areas. Eighty percent of the economically active population is engaged in agriculture, and three-quarters of the agricultural labour force are women (*Ibid.*: 173).

There are marked and persistent gender inequalities in agriculture. In Uganda as elsewhere in eastern and southern Africa, women and girls provide almost all of the labour for food crop production, much of which is retained for household consumption. However, during and since the years of civil strife, food crops have also been marketed from one part of Uganda to another. Women also provide an estimated 60 percent of the labour in cash crops such as coffee, cotton and sesame. In spite of their high labour contribution, women do not control income from agricultural production, including that from food crops where their labour input is highest. Nor

do they usually have a say in how income, which is controlled by men, is used.

Because on-farm food storage facilities are absent or inadequate and because of sickness or school costs which require cash, food crops needed for consumption are marketed. This undermines household food security and in particular the nutrition and health status of women and small children who, by custom, eat after men and adolescent boys have completed their meal.

Women have access to agriculture land through their husbands. When widowed or divorced, they lose this access and must return to their father's home area where they become dependent on a male relative for use rights to land. The most frequent form of land acquisition is through inheritance, from father to son. Women rarely inherit land, and only a small percentage are believed to own land. Fragmentation of land holdings, especially in the densely populated districts in the far southwest and in the east, create particular problems for women. They not only work the land largely by themselves or with their children, but must also spend time walking from one family holding to another. Uganda's National Environmental Action Plan gives security of land and resource tenure as a key environmental principle (RoU 1995b: 49); but almost all rural women have no security.

Most rural Ugandans, and almost all women, have no experience with credit. Because women do not own land, they have no collateral with which to guarantee a loan. Besides lack of collateral, the few lending programmes to specifically target women have shown that such factors as unfamiliarity with banks or the distance from home to bank makes agricultural credit less attractive to women than had originally been presumed (Musoke & Amajo 1989).

In addition, most women have never been advised by an extension worker, are not members of cooperatives and have never used a labour or energy saving device, whether in farm or domestic work. In 1991/2, about 12 percent of the agriculture extension staff were female (MAAIF 1993: Annex III). The gender imbalance was greater in forestries, animal husbandry and fisheries staff. In any case, women don't own cattle but only small livestock such as goats and pigs which are not on the agenda of extension workers. Artisanal fishing is almost completely male dominated, and although women participate to some degree in fish processing and marketing, these small-scale activities are not addressed by extension services either. Women are also more isolated from access to other sources of technical information than are men. For example, although women may have radios in their homes, they do not listen to programmes as frequently as men because they have less time, or because they cannot afford batteries and are not allowed to use their husbands' (Nalwanga & Natukunda 1988).

Because of Uganda's dependence for export revenues on traditional cash crops such as coffee, one objective of its economic reform programme is to promote non-traditional, high value cash crops such as spices, fruits, exotic vegetables and flowers (Agricultural Policy Committee 1995: 6). In promoting these crops, agricultural economists assume that the rural household is a monolithic unit and that everyone will benefit equally. This is, of course, not the case, as the vanilla example shows.

Vanilla is well-suited to the small land holdings of Ugandan farmers as it can be inter-cropped. However, the vanilla flowers must be pollinated by hand, on specific days and at specific times of the day. When this is women's work, as it usually is, it can interfere with their other responsibilities and can result in girls being kept out of school. When the vanilla is marketed, women and adolescents have no claim to the income, which belongs to the male head of household.

5.3 Fuelwood and Water

5 Vanilla Production

Unequal gender relations also characterise use and control of other natural resource sectors. Women use forests for fuelwood, herbs, medicines and fruits for example, but they have no say in forest management. When forests are mismanaged, they are the first to suffer since they have to walk longer distances for fuelwood. Uganda's rural areas depend entirely on fuelwood, and the vast majority of urban dwellers use charcoal. Reforestation efforts based on the assumption that women will plant trees because they have a vested interest in fuelwood fail to consider that women may not be interested in making a long-term investment in land over which they have no real control.

Two-thirds of Uganda's urban areas but only one-quarter of rural areas have access to safe water (GoU & NCC 1994: 52). As everywhere in Africa, women and children are responsible for water collection, water handling and general household sanitation. "Men say that by marrying a woman they extend water pipes to the house," said one woman in western Uganda (*Ibid.*: 158). Water collection is time consuming for women, and therefore the average amount of water used per person in Uganda is only one-half what is recommended as a minimum for household use and hygiene (GoU & UNICEF 1995: 7).

The obvious gender issues in water provision have been recognised in Uganda for some time and hence efforts are made to include women on village water and sanitation committees. There is less understanding, however, that making women's access to water easier does not challenge the traditional gender division of labour. Nor that women's time for community service on water committees is limited and may not really give them access to decision making positions. In addition, other gender issues with regard to water are often not known at all; for example that girls and women who have to compete with water vendors and must therefore go to water sources early in the morning while it is still dark are vulnerable to sexual attacks. And, even then, that husbands may be suspicious as to why wives are absent from home (Tadria 1994: 74-6).

6. Economic Participation

6.1 *Rural Areas*

Agriculture offers the most employment in Uganda for both women and men; more than three times as many persons work in agriculture as in the next most frequent category, services (GoU & NCC 1994: 58). More than two-thirds of male agricultural workers were counted in the 1991 national census as "self-employed." Nearly three-quarters of female agricultural workers were counted as "unpaid family workers" (Kelles-Viitanen c1994: 11). These categories do not reflect differences in the type of labour input which men and women make to agricultural production. As we have already seen, women's labour predominates. Rather, they show that women's labour is not valued nor counted in the same way as men's labour, whether under custom or in a national census.

Rural women have fewer options than men for off-farm income earning activities or employment. Full-time employed agricultural labourers, as on coffee or tea estates, comprise only a very small percentage of the rural working age population. Women agricultural workers are mostly divorced or widowed female household heads and are older than male agricultural workers. They are likely to be extremely poor, with no access to land and no other options than ill-paid farm work. Poor rural women also engage in "distress selling" of their labour, undertaking piece work or casual labour for less than the local going rate, because of urgent need for food or cash (Evans 1992). Other rural women engage in brewing and selling of traditional alcohol; processing and selling cooked food and fruit juice; and making handicrafts, in particular baskets and mats (Mwaka *et al.* c1994: 63). Such activities are carried out with almost no capital investment, without improved technology and with inadequate market outlets (as in the case of baskets) and therefore bring only the most minimal and erratic earnings.

6.2 *Urban Informal Sector*

In urban areas, the informal sector is estimated to account for two-thirds of employment and to be the second largest employer generally, after agriculture. This is an area where statistics are hard to come by, in general or gender disaggregated (Kelles-Viitanen c1994: 9, 21; Tulip & Bitekerezozo 1993: 1). The informal sector is clearly segregated by gender however, with women concentrated in small businesses requiring the least capital, skills and training.

In a survey of 166 small-scale industries, women alone owned 13 percent and jointly with men owned 16 percent of SSIs sampled. Of 26 small businesses owned by women, most were in textiles, handicrafts, food processing (all gender stereotyped occupations in other words) and woodworking in the case of a few businesswomen who had ventured into a male-dominated field (Tulip & Bitekerezozo 1993).

6 Women's Businesses

The vast majority of women who struggle for their survival in the informal sector are engaged in

the smallest of trades. They are to be seen on the sidewalks selling cigarettes, groundnuts and newspapers; along the roadsides reselling milk from the national parastatal and in the night markets for example. Markets which open only at night, with vendors operating with dust or mud underfoot and by the light of small paraffin lamps (made by men in the informal sector), are a Ugandan phenomenon not seen elsewhere in east Africa. The extent of night markets, and the ubiquity of food preparation and selling in open spaces behind office buildings and hawking of used clothes and other wares in offices are all indications of the importance of informal sector incomes to urban dwellers. For women, these incomes do not come easily as many are clustered in the same type of vending trade and must compete with each other for customers: a line of ten women, all with crates of milk on one street corner, for example. They also work long hours, up to 10 or 11 pm for those who vend at night. They have their small children with them, in dangerous or unhygienic surroundings, or leave them at home in the care of a young relative or daughter, probably of school age but not in school.

There is no clear dividing line in Uganda between informal and formal sector employment. Salaried people have not been able to live on their monthly incomes for years and have therefore developed many survival strategies for making ends meet. For example, the women who display cosmetics or shoes in the corridors or alleys of the Kampala city centre are likely to be employees of middle-class people who are in waged employment. Even the wives of university professors may own small businesses (Obbo 1991: 104).

6.3 Formal Sector

According to national surveys and censuses of manpower carried out in the late 1980s, women comprised only 20 percent of formal sector workers. At that time three-quarters of them worked for government, but this proportion has decreased as the civil service has been reduced by one-third in recent years. Whether in government employ or elsewhere however, women are concentrated in only a few of the least skilled, less well paid occupational categories. In non-government establishments in 1989 for example, women comprised nearly one-half of those employed as clerks, but less than 10 percent of those in administrative and managerial positions (GoU & NCC 1994: 59). Although in theory there is equality of opportunity and equal pay for equal work, in reality women have lower educational levels or have been trained for gender-stereotyped careers such as typing and are therefore clustered in the low end of salary scale hierarchies.

Working women widely report having been subjected to sexual harassment. They also

Although women's incomes are vital for family survival, there is prejudice against working women, emanating from traditional attitudes that women have no business outside the home. In a recent situation analysis, district staff reported "a common belief that women's work often can aggravate marital instability. . . (W)orking women are stigmatized as 'too independent,' leading to conflict with husbands over income, domestic responsibilities, and jealousy about how and with whom they spend their time outside the home" (GoU & NCC 1994: 171).

7 Prejudice against Working Women

feel that there is gender-based discrimination in access to training and promotion. Married women are not considered good candidates for training or promotion because their family obligations might interfere. Single women may have children or it is assumed that they will eventually marry. It is true, of course, that married working women are almost single-handedly responsible for child care and domestic work; Uganda is no different in this respect from other African countries. Child care facilities are non-existent in work places or are private establishments which most working parents cannot afford (MoGCD 1995a: 73). Paid maternity leave is usually only 45 days, but many women do not take even that, fearing they may lose their jobs if they do not return to work quickly (Mwaka *et al.* c1994: 65).

Uganda's trade union movement is not well developed. Although some unions under the National Organization of Trade Unions have women's wings or desks, these are said to be weak and unable to solve the main problems of women workers: casualisation of employment, lack of nurseries and breaks for breast feeding mothers, inadequate maternity leave, poor promotion prospects and sexual harassment (Kelles-Viitanen c1994: 7, 16). A recent case study of women workers in the National Union of Clerical, Commercial, Professional and Technical Employees also reported that sexual harassment was extremely common and that married female union members either had no time to participate in union activities or were prevented by their husbands (Asowa-Okwe 1994).

6.4 Economic Reform and Adjustment

Economic activities of Ugandans take place in an economy which was shattered by a decade and a half of war and mismanagement. The NRM began implementation of an Economic Recovery Programme (ERP) in 1987 to rehabilitate the economy. As with structural adjustment programmes elsewhere in the continent, the ERP is implemented with strong collaboration with the International Monetary Fund and The World Bank and with large financial inputs from donors.

Government's priorities in the ERP initially focused on such issues as stabilising the currency and reducing spiralling inflation which was 260 percent a year at the time the NRM assumed power. More recently, the ERP has focused on improving rural roads; increasing government revenues through better tax collection; reducing military spending and increasing social sector spending; promoting cost sharing in health and education; rationalising government through restructuring ministries and retrenching public employees; and promoting non-traditional agricultural exports. Throughout the period since the ERP has been implemented, there has been concern to reduce the huge debt burden which equalled 108 percent of 1993 GDP (GoU & UNICEF 1995: 9) and to promote liberalization of the economy.

The differing impacts which components of the ERP have had on women as compared to men have not yet been thoroughly analysed. For example, the 1993 World Bank Country Economic Memorandum presented strategies for transforming the agricultural sector which were completely unrelated to points raised in the chapter on "The Gender Dimension" (World Bank 1993). It should be of serious concern, for example, that promotion of non-traditional agricultural crops may distort the mix of crops which a household grows and therefore threaten household food security; may interfere with the allocation of women's labour time; may put more money into men's but not women's hands, etc.

Analysis of available macro-statistics has indicated that poverty is not correlated with gender (Bigsten 1995: 35). This is surprising in view of the fact that female household heads are more poorly educated than male, have smaller households and less access to labour. Clearly more gender focused research is needed here.

Economic reform guidelines on cost-sharing in health and education allow district authorities to recover partial costs from users of social services if they so decide. We have already seen the burden which health and education costs put on poor families generally and on women specifically. Although better, more accessible health care services and school facilities will be welcome, it will be important to monitor whether women and girl children are able to benefit from these. There has been discussion of giving incentives to families which put or keep girls in school. Whereas gender imbalances in education are widely known, those in health are not; and there has been no discussion about exempting categories of the poor from paying for their health care.

The impact, by gender, on retrenchment in the civil service has also not been documented. However, women are concentrated in the lowest ranks of the occupational hierarchy as cleaners, messengers, clerks and typists. Since it is these ranks which have been disproportionately retrenched, it is likely that the position of women in the public sector has worsened (Kelles-Viitanen 1994: 15). Where married men have been retrenched, it is also likely that even more burden has fallen on their wives to earn income through informal sector activities.

The demobilisation of the military is a particular case which is documented (Birungi 1995; Otto 1993; Tadia 1995). Since late 1992, Uganda has demobilised about 37,000 soldiers, of which women constituted only a tiny minority. Some female veterans reported that they found it difficult to reintegrate into their home villages. They were perceived as having followed an untraditional life style as military personnel, were no longer considered marriageable and did not have access to land in their own right.

For each male veteran who was demobilised, there were nearly four dependents, wives and children. In addition to their wives who were left behind in the villages, they brought additional wives into the barracks with them. After demobilisation, the latter had to move to unfamiliar areas of the country to live with in-laws who did not accept them as legitimate wives. They were socially isolated, had no rights, were economically dependent on their partners and were even more vulnerable than women generally in the event of separation, divorce or death of the husband.

The example of demobilisation shows the need to make specific gender analyses for particular situations and to ensure that the diversity of women's circumstances are documented. Although the gender gaps in economic activities and the generally negative impact of economic reform have been summarised briefly here, this discussion has glossed many differences in gender relations by region, by education level, by class and so on.

7. Gender in the Media

Uganda is known for its relatively free and unfettered media which engages in lively debate. Even the government owned newspaper, The New Vision, criticises government policies. Besides the Vision, a daily with a circulation of 50,000 which will eventually be privatised, there are numerous other independent newspapers, some of which are regional, affiliated with political parties and/or published in local languages. There is a government-owned radio station which serves the whole country in English and local languages, and two privately owned FM radio stations serving greater Kampala. Besides Uganda Television, there are two private channels.

Gender issues have regular exposure in the media, especially the print media. Both New Vision and The Monitor, an independent paper published three times a week, have a Women's page and a Gender page respectively. The two labels - women or gender - say nothing about the content of these pages which can be progressive and informative or traditionalist and stereotyped, or both in the same issue.

In general, the Ugandan press does a good job covering and educating the readership on important national development issues. In this context, gender issues may be seriously and well covered. On the other hand, however, the entertainment function of the press too often results in coverage which is degrading to women or which perpetuates gender stereotypes.

An important Ugandan art form is theatre, which can also be considered as a form of media. In Kampala on any weekend there may be twenty different locally scripted plays being performed, and drama is also common in small local trading centres or at periodic rural markets throughout the country. Local drama groups, often comprised of unemployed youth who use their plays to generate income, commonly use gender issues to get laughs: the drunken husband beating his wife for example. On the other hand, local drama can be a good vehicle for educating women and men about gender inequalities. Men tend to skip the "gender page" of the newspaper, or to turn off the radio when a "women's programme" is aired. But live performances of a play showing a gender-based problem to a mixed audience can make the point that gender is about relationships between women and men and that where these relationships are unequal, they can be changed.

8. Inputs towards Gender Equality in Uganda

The NRM government has provided a supportive environment for promoting gender equality and has set the example of taking affirmative action where necessary. This supportive environment, together with donor interest, has contributed to making gender a "growth industry" in Uganda; it is nearly impossible to keep track of the many governmental and other initiatives to rectify gender imbalances or to stop discriminatory practices.

At the same time, however, there are contradictions: within government policies and between policy and practice or theory and reality. One can attend a seminar in Kampala and be impressed by the numbers of women and men who "speak the language" of gender equality. However, the reality also includes deeply held discriminatory attitudes and practices. For many, if not most, Ugandan women gender rhetoric has not (yet) given them an opportunity to acquire information and skills, to control their reproductive lives, to alleviate their work burden, to be free of sexual violence and to enjoy the fruits of their labour.

8.1 Gender Oriented Policy Development

Policies are important, of course, and Uganda has been making steady progress on gender oriented policy development. The draft National Gender Policy will be submitted to Cabinet by the Minister for Gender and Community Development/Vice President in 1996. This policy has been a long time in the making, because of the participatory and consultative process which was followed. MoGCD played a facilitating role in working with Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MoFEP). MoFEP was targeted because it is the umbrella ministry for the sectors and local government and because of its important functions of setting national development priorities, planning, monitoring and budgeting. For economists, the process of thinking through and drafting a national gender policy was, at the same time, a process of learning about the inter-relationship of gender and development planning.

The overall goal of the draft National Gender Policy is to mainstream gender concerns in the national development process. The policy outlines the strategies to be followed and the institutional framework including the roles and responsibilities of the MoGCD, MoFEP, sectoral ministries, district authorities, NGOs and so on (MoGCD 1995d).

MoGCD began the process of gender-oriented policy development in 1991 when the Minister presented a White Paper to Cabinet explaining the need for national and sector-specific policies. Since then, five sectors have completed the long process of learning about gender, reviewing their own policies and programmes to determine whether they are gender responsive, reformulating policies where necessary and making commitments to take actions. With MoGCD officers serving as facilitators, the policy development process has been carried out by high level civil servants from Ministries of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (1993); Education and Sports (1993); Trade and Industry (1993); Natural Resources (1994) and Local Government (1995).

The policy development process, although consultative, has been conducted at the centre (headquarters of ministries), has not involved many non-governmental agencies and the results are still mainly on paper. The process of gender responsive policy and planning is just beginning in Uganda's 39 districts.

The first sectors to undertake policy development work were identified as priority areas. One high priority sector was health. Here, however, the policy dialogue has stalled as health personnel believe that maternal and child health programmes cater sufficiently for gender issues. Health is only one example of sectors in which there is resistance to dialogue on gender policy development. Those working with gender policy have found, however, that it is easier to make an argument for the relevance of gender to national development than it was with the WID approaches.

8.2 Policy, Training and Statistics

One outcome of gender oriented policy development has been identification of the need for gender skills training for staff at different levels in government hierarchies. With decentralisation, which puts revenues into the hands of local authorities at sub-county (LCIII) level, and with elections in 1996 which will bring new faces into the political arena, there are many policy makers, planners and leaders to whom gender training could be directed.

The number of skilled gender trainers is small, however. MoGCD officers have undertaken a training of trainers course based on the Women's Empowerment Framework (Longwe Clarke 1994). A month long course in Gender Training for Development Practice in East and Southern Africa was offered to 25 participants in 1995 at Makerere University. Some NGOs offer gender training services as well. However, there are insufficient gender trainers to meet the increasing demand. In addition, to be effective gender training must be relevant to the specific work and institutional context of clients and must be followed up. Many Ugandans strongly believe that gender training will be a panacea for changing conservative gender-biased attitudes and practices.

Besides gender training, another need identified in policy development work is for better statistics: sex disaggregated statistics to show the differences between women and men in particular sectors and gender disaggregated statistics to highlight areas of serious gender inequality. Uganda has lagged behind other countries in the sub-region which have benefitted from direct collaboration with Statistics Sweden on gender-focused statistical work. Although comparative statistics on women and men have been compiled for the sub-region (Central Bureau of Statistics Kenya 1995), the figures for Uganda are from surveys and a census, all more than five years old. The same statistics are recycled over and over again.

In late 1995 MoGCD and the Central Statistics Office held a workshop on gender statistics, and a long process of advocacy, skills development and production of better disaggregated statistics is anticipated. At this workshop it was noted that only the education sector routinely disaggregates statistics by sex. Although labour force participation data by sex is available, there are huge data gaps with respect to women's participation in agriculture and the informal sector and on incomes and ownership of resources by gender (Kelles-Viitanen 1994: 9-10).

When the state takes a leading role in promoting gender equality, as in Uganda, bureaucratic inertia can slow down the process. In addition, the lack of data which makes it difficult to "prove" that there are gender imbalances in specific areas and the felt need to begin a change process with gender training can result in gender-focused policy commitments not being undertaken or being delayed.

8.3 From Policy to Action

Some ministries have taken actions without waiting for elaborate data or training. Agriculture, for example, knew that there were insufficient numbers of female extension workers and took action as indicated in the adjacent box. In many other cases, however, no actions have been taken as people wait for better data and for training. The process of institutionalising policy decisions regarding gender is still weak therefore.

Although progress has been made in gender oriented policy development, there are other important policy areas which have inadequate or no gender focus. Some opportunities have been lost to mainstream gender into major national policy exercises. For example, both the recent Education White Paper and the National Environment Action Plan have only brief token sections on gender issues. Other important policy areas are still pending. Land

law reform, for example, has been on the agenda for some years, but it remains to be seen whether gender considerations will have an impact on the final result. Unfortunately, it is likely that private ownership will be made easier without taking into account that women traditionally have almost no access to land ownership and therefore will not be able to register titles in their own names.

Uganda is a favourite with donors because it has rigorously followed structural adjustment prescriptions. Donors also like its progressive position on gender issues. However, there is a contradiction between Uganda's draft national gender policy and some of its macro-economic policies. In general, analysis of the impact of economic reforms tends to stop at the level of the household, without considering intra-household imbalances in access to and control of resources. For example, it is assumed that when the international price of coffee is up, as has been the case recently, small-holder coffee producing households (ie, the household as one "unit") will benefit. Economists have analysed the Household Budget Survey of 1992 and have shown that female headed households are not disproportionately poor, by comparison with male headed households (Bigsten 1995: 35). Although these findings may be true (at least for this survey), few people in Uganda question the appropriateness of survey research in answering complex questions about gender imbalances.

8.4 Research

Research in Uganda on gender is patchy and inadequate. During the 1970s and early 1980s when post-colonial research traditions were being established in other African universities, many Ugandan scholars had to flee the country. The years of civil strife did not allow those who

To increase the numbers of female extension workers, the agriculture ministry simply decreed that there should be at least two women from each district admitted to the extension service colleges and then went out to identify those who qualified. Because inadequate hostel space for women was a constraint, male hostels were reassigned to women. Over night, as it were, the numbers of women in agricultural extension courses increased.

8 Female Agriculture Extension Workers

remained to undertake much research. As a result, there has been little social science research on gender and inadequate documentation of the changing relationships of Ugandan women and men over nearly two decades. Now that research is possible, the economy is such that most scholars and research institutions do not have the luxury of following their own research agenda. Most undertake commissioned or collaborative work on topics chosen by non-Ugandans (Whyte 1994: 24).

There are exceptions, of course. There are a few small study groups of feminist-oriented scholars undertaking research projects. The Centre for Basic Research is a non-governmental, non-university research centre. It has its own research agenda which includes gender, within a neo-Marxist ideological perspective.

One important source of gender focused research is the M.A. Programme of the Women Studies Department at Makerere University. Since 1991, approximately 70 students have completed or are in process of undertaking the course. Their original research provides interesting data on diverse topics; however, their theses are not easily accessible. Also, the Social Science faculty at Makerere is strongly oriented towards survey research and quantitative methods. "Facts are out there to be found and presented in standard ways" (*Ibid.*: 16). This positivist pedagogical approach is not suitable for investigating the ideology of power relations between women and men, or women's internalization of attitudes of subordination or patterns of negotiation and conflict resolution between spouses, or gender-based strategies for coping with poverty for example.

8.5 *A Women's Movement?*

The Women Studies Department was created, among other reasons, as a result of pressure on the University and advocacy by a women's NGO in the mid-1980s. Women also lobbied the NRM and the President to create the Ministry of Women in Development. Eight or ten years ago one could have argued that there was an identifiable women's movement in Uganda, composed largely of well-educated activists, organised into urban-based non-governmental organisations. This was the same pattern found in other anglophone countries such as Zambia and Zimbabwe, for example.

Today Uganda does not have a single nationwide women's movement nor a grassroots women's movement. There are many local CBOs, some of which give women scope for taking part in local development activities and decision making. Almost everywhere one finds women's groups, many of which flourish

Rather than a single women's movement, there is a great number and diversity of women's NGOs, reflecting the diversity of Ugandan women themselves: the women lawyers' association, that of women doctors, university women, women belonging to the tree planting movement, war widows, women small-scale entrepreneurs, women concerned about the plight of orphans, Muslim women, Catholic Women, the Anglican Mothers' Union and many others. There is even the Second Wives and Concubines Association of Uganda (*The New Vision* 10 January 1996), to remind us that not all women wish to change unequal patterns of gender relations.

9 Women's NGOs

and then decline as leaders come and go, as income generating ideas are tried and either fail or perhaps succeed, enabling some women to go their own independent ways. The links between rural CBOs and women's groups and Kampala-based women activists are still weak. Some national women's NGOs have undertaken projects in rural areas. In some cases these are participatory; more often however the problem, methodology and anticipated outputs are still defined by those from the centre.

It could be argued that there is a women's political movement aligned to the NRM, which is one result of the NRM's positive discrimination on behalf of women. Women who hold the affirmative action seats in the NRC are obviously Movement supporters. Some women who were elected to the Constituent Assembly in 1994 were affiliated to political parties. However, most of these became Movement supporters during the process of constitutional debate. Some women politicians try to educate their constituencies on gender issues and to advocate for gender needs. Some years ago there was a

well-known instance where a female Minister rescued two women who were threatened with forcible genital mutilation. With

parliamentary elections due in 1996 it will of interest to observe how many women politicians who have gained experience through NRM affirmative action will take up gender issues in a serious way in their campaigns.

8.6 Important Gender Concerns

Although there is no single women's movement in Uganda, diverse interest groups - political, governmental and NGO - have made common cause over serious gender issues. One example concerns actions to combat defilement. Women politicians have lobbied to educate the authorities on the seriousness and extent of this offence. The MoGCD has carried out research on why defilement cases are not being prosecuted. It has also produced a booklet explaining what defilement is and what the responsibilities of guardians, police and others are in defilement cases. The British Council has trained community police to function much like paralegals. Police stations will have a gender desk, with a policewoman trained on rape, defilement and domestic violence. A new NGO of women judges has just been formed.

In addition to defilement, there are other gender issues on which there are numerous initiatives by diverse agencies who cooperate with each other and complement each other's activities. The vulnerability of women and their dependents to complete loss of access to land and property as a result of a man's death is of great concern, and therefore the inheritance issue is the focus of numerous initiatives. Women's knowledge of their human rights generally is another.

Legal literacy activities provide examples of the various approaches and methodologies which are being used. Some years ago, the women lawyers carried out half-day rural seminars which attracted hundreds of people and covered many diverse topics, from land law to marriage to inheritance. It was realised, however, that information on so many complex legal topics could not be adequately imparted in such a short time. More recently, it has been common to convene targeted rural groups, such as local council leaders and clan elders for example, and to cover only one or two subjects in two days. Role plays and discussion groups allow participants to bring their own experiences to bear on the subject matter.

International agencies (Concern, UNICEF) and local NGOs (human rights activists, lawyers' groups), are also initiating paralegal projects. In some, gender issues and women as clients with particular needs are highlighted. In others, the focus is on children's rights, the legal needs of people with AIDS or poor people generally, in addition to women specifically. What is of interest is the way in

which gender issues are more easily integrated with other issues such as human rights, than was the case with WID approaches which tended to remain more isolated. Women's NGOs are becoming linked with other NGOs, not all women-specific, in networks such as the Human Rights Network or the Uganda Community Based Association for Child Welfare. Women's NGOs also have their own umbrella organisation, however: the National Association of Women's Organisations of Uganda.

Besides legal empowerment, another gender issue which has received considerable attention is women's economic empowerment. Although there are many examples of credit projects and

The MoGCD has established a pilot community-based paralegal project in one county. One-third of the paralegals are men. Paralegals carry out community or school educational activities in groups of three, one man and two women, using role plays, drawings and other methods to elicit interest and provoke discussion. They cover only one topic in one session. The paralegals are persons such as teachers or retired civil servants who were chosen by their communities. They have required a great deal of training and follow up because legal subjects such as maintenance, marriage, divorce, etc. are complex and because they need such skills as communication and gender analysis. They have also needed concrete linkages to other community agencies to whom clients with legal problems can be referred: the police, the local councils/courts, the probation officer and so on. These, in turn, have needed training to make sure, for example, that a defiler is arrested and prosecuted rather than being made to give a small compensation to the father of the injured child. This pilot project was established with donor (DANIDA) money. However, strategies for reducing the costs so that they can be met by government and the district authorities are now being explored.

10 A Model Paralegal Project

programmes, there are few success stories. The Uganda Women's Finance and Credit Trust was established in 1984, has branches in six districts and offers savings, training, advisory and credit services to women only. In spite of hard work by clients, personnel and the Trust's donors, its revolving fund scarcely revolves as inflation, drought, death and other family crises, husbands who derail projects and other problems constrain women from repaying their loans. Some have repaid and have gone on with successful businesses of course, but in insufficient numbers compared to others who have defaulted.

The government began funding a nation-wide credit programme called Entandikwa ("beginning") in 1994 which provides seed money for micro-enterprises through local councils and intermediary agencies such as NGOs to the rural and urban poor, women (target: 30% of participants), youth and the disabled (MoFEP 1995). A new Poverty Action Project through African Development Bank and the Prime Minister's Office, has a target of 60 percent female participants to receive loans. Agricultural projects including credit also have targets for women's participation (Agricultural Development Project/Northern Ugandan Reconstruction Programme: 50% women; South West Region Agricultural Rehabilitation Project: 40% women; Cotton Rehabilitation Project: 30% women) (Bank of Uganda 1994, Vol.1: 42). In addition, there are international NGOs such as ACORD and CARE/USA which also sponsor projects including credit and have targets for women's participation. An American NGO, FINCA, sponsors the "Trickle Up" project which lends small amounts to women traders, organised in small groups, to be repaid quickly - rather on the Grameen Bank, Bangladesh model.

In short, there are many credit projects in Uganda; but in this area, unlike women's human rights and legal literacy, there is less sharing of experiences and fewer attempts to find out what lessons have been learned so far, in order to better assist women's efforts to empower themselves in future. There seems to be a growing feeling in development circles that women may have greater need for literacy and for technical skills to establish competitive, viable and sustainable businesses, than for credit.

Aid to Uganda constituted 13.6 percent of GDP in 1993-94 (Bigsten 1995: 3), much of it going to development projects and programmes. DANIDA is the biggest donor to the MoGCD, but all the other major bilateral donors, UN agencies and international NGOs have funded women's or gender-focused studies, conferences and workshops, training sessions, projects, etc. Even The World Bank has become involved, having sponsored a study on legal constraints to women's economic empowerment (World Bank and MoGCD 1995). No one has computed the amount of donor money which has gone into such activities. But it is likely to represent only a tiny fraction of aid money to development programmes generally.

Uganda has come a long way since 1985 when the Third World Conference on Women signed the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies. Although Uganda was in a state of civil war at that time, it ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in July 1985 with no reservations and sent officials to the Conference.

Since then, gender equality has become a Ugandan national development priority. Uganda successfully defended its initial and second reports to CEDAW in early 1995 and was commended for its frankness and objectivity, in contrast to some other countries which attempt to gloss over glaring gender inequalities. Uganda participated in the Fourth World Conference on Women in

September 1995, and the Beijing Platform for Action is accepted as the general framework within which national actions with respect to gender equality will be taken in future.

Uganda's experience at Beijing was reassuring, in that it had already begun activities within some of the major areas of concern which were highlighted: mainstreaming gender into national policy and promoting women's human rights for example. The lessons which Uganda has learned from Beijing include the need to focus more attention on the girl child and to find new approaches to alleviating gender-related poverty and accessing women to productive resources. Authorities at national level had started "taking Beijing to the districts" by late 1995 and have formed four Task Forces to give focus to Uganda's efforts in the future: reproductive health, the girl child, women's human rights and economic empowerment.

NOTES

1 Gender refers to the roles, responsibilities, rights and limitations which societies and cultures ascribe to women and men. Gender is cultural since it varies from place to place and through time. Gender relations between women and men are usually asymmetrical. The two genders do not experience the same activity identically and do not always have common interests. A female farmer, for example, has different roles and constraints from a male farmer; a female pupil is often treated differently by the teacher from a male pupil, and so on.

2 A national women's machinery is a government institution, such as a ministry, a department, a commission or a bureau, created in response to the UN Decade for Women as government's focal point for promoting women's advancement.

3 A gender gap is an inequality between women and men in, for example, the amount of work performed, the degree of access to a resource which is available, the degree of control over a benefit, etc. Systematic gender gaps are evidence of discrimination based on gender.

4 Mainstreaming refers to the inclusion of gender issues in ALL planning processes and development programmes and is the opposite of the segregation of gender concerns into small, separate "women's only" projects which were common in the 1980s. Mainstreaming can be conservative: disaggregating statistics by gender, for example, and finding strategies so that women will "participate more." Mainstreaming can also be interpreted much more radically: using redress of gender-based discrimination to transform the development agenda and to facilitate women to empower themselves.

5 "Reproductive health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity, in all matters relating to the reproductive system and to its functions and processes. Reproductive health therefore implies that people are able to have a satisfying and safe sex life and that they have the capability to reproduce and the freedom to decide if, when and how often to do so" (Fourth World Conference 1995: para 96).

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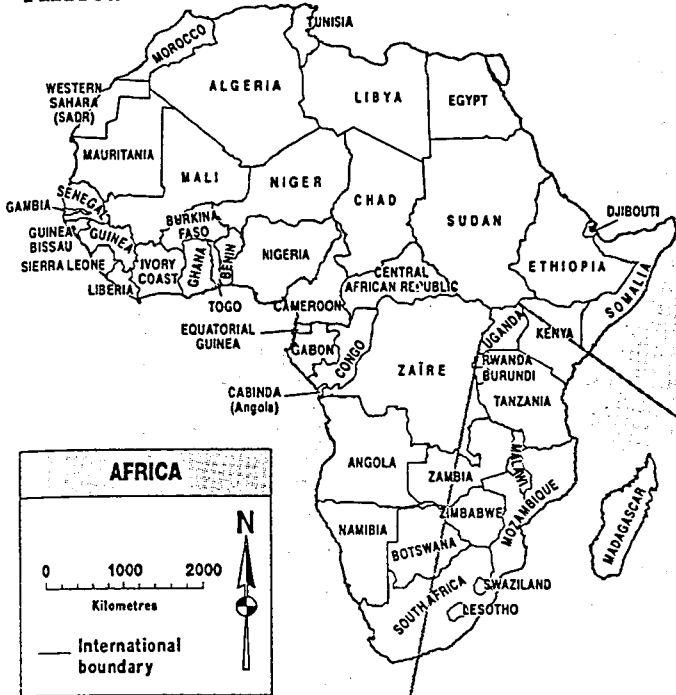
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Annex 1

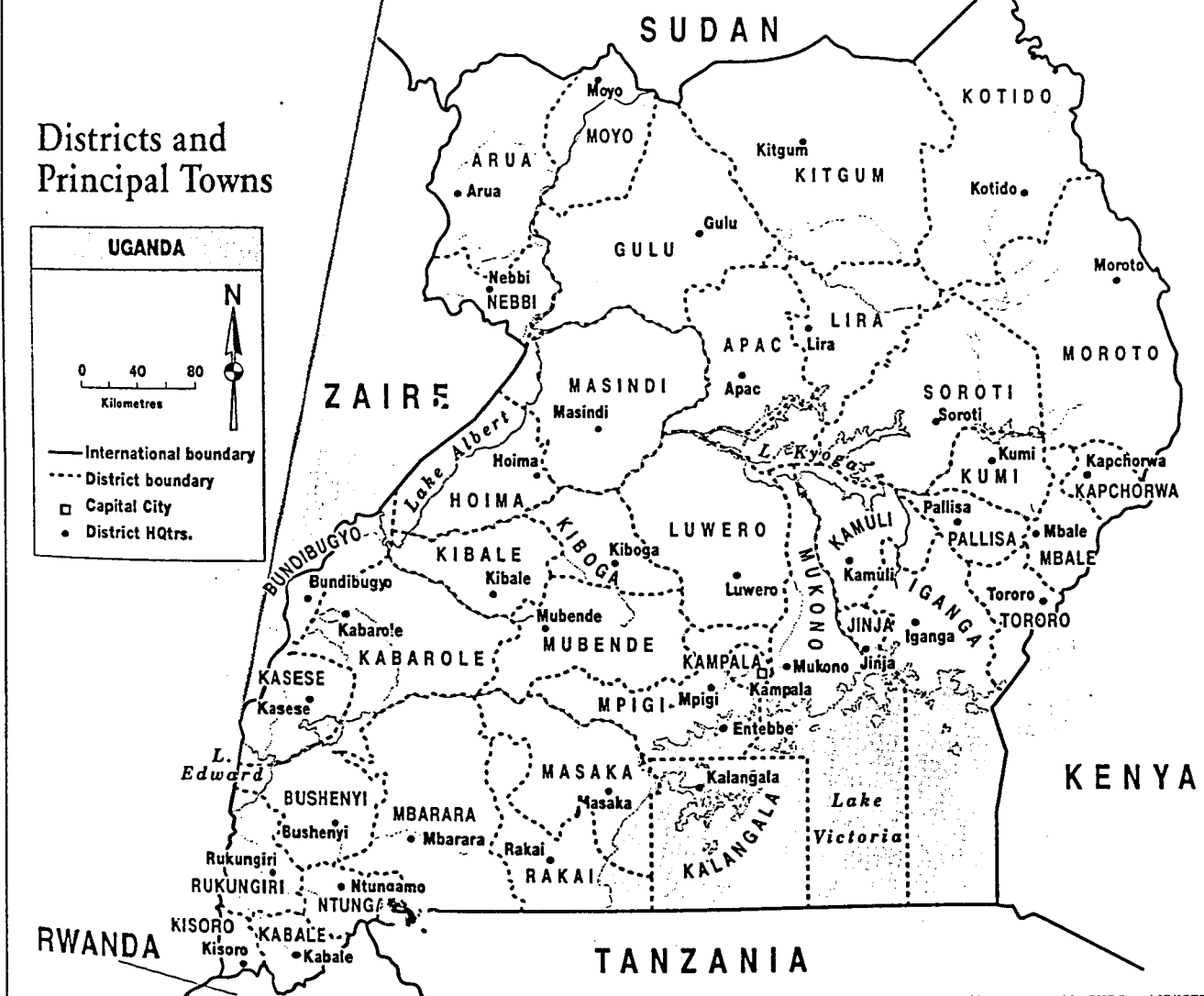
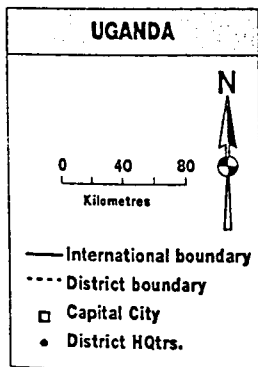
UGANDA

Africa



Uganda is located in East Africa, stretching across the equator between 1° south and 4° north longitude, and 29° and 35° east latitude. Uganda is three hours ahead of GMT. The national territory of Uganda covers 241,038 sq. km; of which five-sixths is land and one-sixth consists of lakes, rivers, and wetland marshes. Average altitude is 1,312 m.

Districts and Principal Towns



Maps prepared by CHDC and UNICEF

FACTS AND FIGURES ABOUT UGANDA

Population (1991)	16,671,705
Urban, as % of population	11.3%
Population density (per sq km)	85
Population growth rate since previous census	2.5%
Population below 15 years	50%
Sex ratio (men:women)	96.5
Female headed households	26%
Total fertility rate	7.1
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births in 1 yr)	203
Population per doctor	27,140
Family planning use	6.1%
Growth stunted children (0-4 yrs)	44.4%
Orphans (0-17 yrs, with 1 or both parents dead, as % of population)	11.6%
Literacy:	
Female	45%
Male	65%
Safe water coverage:	
Rural	26.4%
Urban	64.2%

Note: Data come from Equity and Vulnerability: a Situation Analysis of Women, Adolescents and Children in Uganda, 1994.

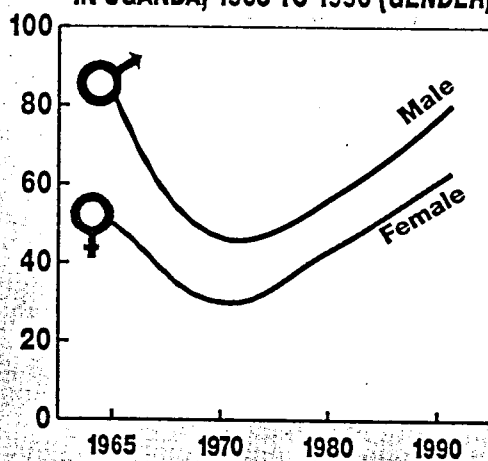
Most figures are taken from the last Population and Housing Census, 1991.

EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF UGANDA'S POPULATION OF
SCHOOL GOING AGE, BY SEX AND PERCENTAGE

CATEGORY	RURAL		URBAN		TOTAL	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
Population aged 6-12 that never attended school	29.9	49.0	11.7	19.8	27.9	45.6
Population aged 6-12 that ever attended primary school	57.0	52.8	73.5	71.4	58.4	54.7
Population aged 15+ yrs that completed primary school	27.3	14.3	63.0	50.7	31.8	18.7
Population aged 20+ yrs that completed secondary school	7.4	2.2	33.6	20.2	10.8	4.3

source: 1991 Population Census, presented in Population Secretariat, Gender, Special Groups, Socio-Cultural and Legal Issues in Uganda, 1994.

EDUCATION TRENDS: PRIMARY SCHOOL GROSS ENROLMENT RATIOS IN UGANDA, 1965 TO 1990 (GENDER)

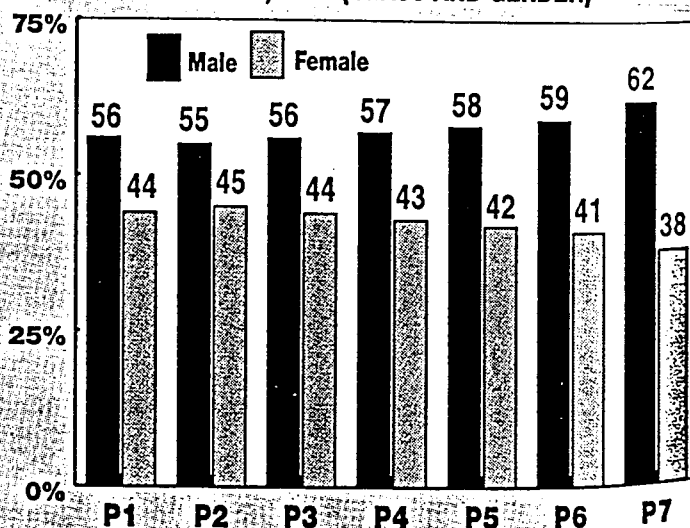


Source: MoES, Planning Unit data, 1994



♂	83	46	56	80
♀	50	30	43	63

ENROLMENT IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN UGANDA, 1992 (CLASS AND GENDER)



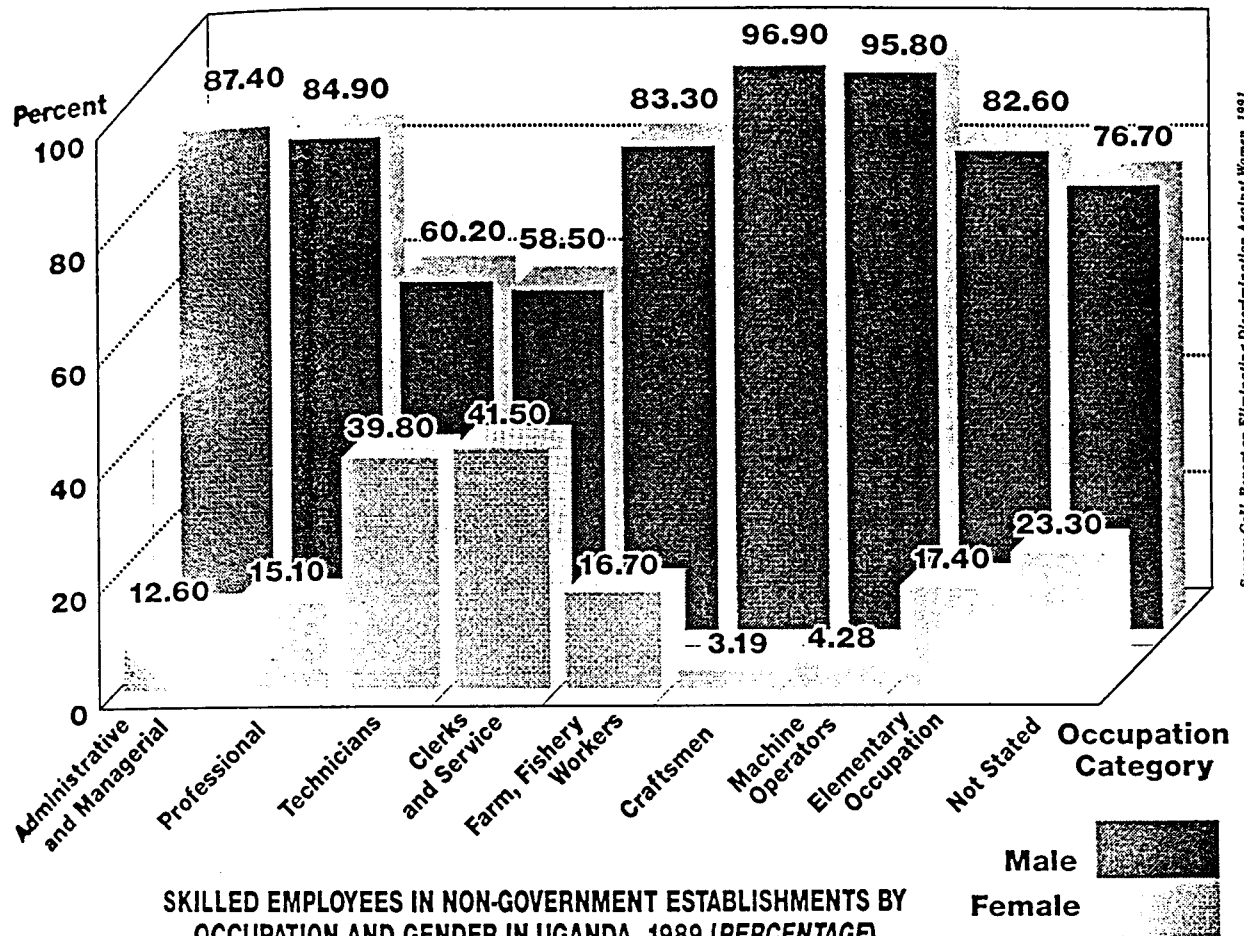
EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF MALE AND FEMALE

AGRICULTURAL WORKERS IN %

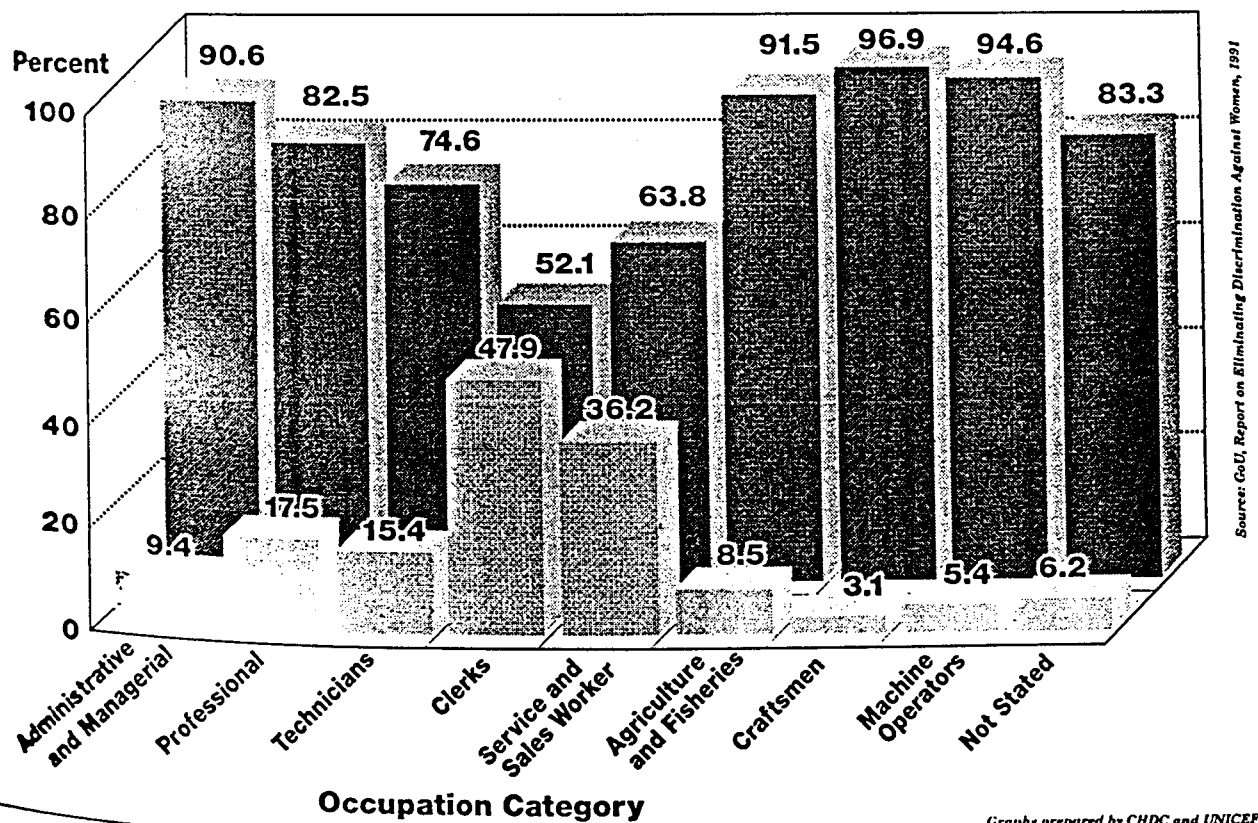
Employment status of agricultural workers	MALE %	FEMALE %
Employee	1.1%	0.2%
Self-employed	69.1%	26.6%
Unpaid family worker	29.8%	73.2%
TOTAL	100 %	100 %

Source: Compiled from 1991 Census by A. Kelles-Viitanen, in Employment Promotion of Women in Uganda, c1994, p.11.

EMPLOYEES IN THE CIVIL SERVICE BY OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORY AND GENDER IN UGANDA, 1987 (PERCENTAGE)



SKILLED EMPLOYEES IN NON-GOVERNMENT ESTABLISHMENTS BY OCCUPATION AND GENDER IN UGANDA, 1989 (PERCENTAGE)



Graphs prepared by CHDC and UNICEF



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