



UGANDA COMMUNITY BASED ASSOCIATION FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN'S WELFARE

Grassroots Women in Agricultural Trade and Value Chains

Analysing the effectiveness of Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme (UWEP) and Parish Development Model (PDM) in strengthening grassroots women's participation and benefit in agri-business value chains

2023



FAIR for ALL - Power of Voices Partnership (PVP)

The Programme



This Gender Analysis is an intervention under the 'Fair for All' Power of Voices partnership programme whose strategic objective is to strengthen civil society which is capable of creating space and mobilizing people across various parts of the country geographies to demand and contribute to more inclusive and sustainable trade and value chains that respect human rights, protect the environment and promote women's economic empowerment. This implies rebalancing developing countries' reliance on dominant primary commodity value chains, reforming tax and trade regimes and increasing investment in local and national value chains that benefit small-scale farmers, workers and artisanal miners, particularly grassroots women and communities where they live. Four reinforcing pathways have been envisioned to contribute to the strategic objective of a strengthened civil society:

- (i) **Pathway 1** focuses on strengthening civil society to co-create alternative business practices which equally share value and empower women.
- (ii) **Pathway 2** focuses on civil society to advocate for a more responsible private and financial sector that upholds land rights, decent work, living wages, women's and environmental rights and space for civil society to act.
- (iii) **Pathway 3** focuses on strengthening civil society to advocate for more accountable governments, multilateral institutions and regulatory frameworks – that is, for governments to effectively regulate the private sector.
- (iv) **Pathway 4** focuses on strengthening civil society to mobilize citizens for fiscal and trade reforms

According to the vision of the programme, value chains are truly FAIR for ALL when all stakeholders are able to share profits and benefits; when they equally distribute power and wealth, when they do not externalize costs, when they are resilient and environmentally sustainable, and when they produce decent jobs and incomes for local communities. Trade is FAIR for ALL when it ensures equal distribution of benefits and wealth, within and between countries and when it enables governments to use this wealth for investment in public services and safety nets – which benefit all citizens. FAIR trade also leaves space for countries to decrease their dependency on primary export commodities, and rebuild inclusive, national economies where value is added locally.

Addressing inequality and achieving FAIR trade and value chains requires a connected and empowered civil society that is able to challenge power imbalances between companies, workers and citizens; addressing unfair trade rules; highlighting rights abuses; demanding financial transparency; and ensuring zero tolerance for discrimination against women while promoting and negotiating for alternatives that leave no one behind. The primary focus of the programme, therefore, is to support and strengthen CSOs to play their diverse roles - educators, mobilizers, creators and watchdogs - to make trade and value chains FAIR for ALL.

The "Fair for All" Power of Voices partnership programme partners include Oxfam Novib, Huairou Commission, Third World Network (TWN)- Africa, SOMO.

The Partners

In Uganda, member organisations of Huairou commission, a global network of grassroots women led organizations, are implementing the project with an aim of strengthening grassroots women smallholder farmers' participation, voice and agency in trade and value chains process specifically under pathway 1 and

The Partners in Uganda include;



HUIROU COMMISSION

Huairou Commission is a women-led social movement of grassroots women's groups from poor urban, rural, and indigenous communities, working in over 45 countries. Huairou Commission envisions a world with balanced power relations and sustainable resilient communities with grassroots women leaders and their groups at the centre of decision-making in which people lead lives free from poverty, inequality, violence, insecurity, and all forms of injustice.



Uganda Community Based Association for Women and Children Welfare (UCOBAC)

Uganda Community Based Association for Women and Children Welfare is a non-Government organisation formed in 1990. It's a consortium of grassroots and community-based organisations whose mission is to promote human rights and improve welfare of vulnerable women and children in Uganda using community-based initiatives. UCOBAC is a lead organisation for the *Fair for All* project in Uganda.



Action for Women and Awakening in Rural Environment (AWARE Uganda)

Action for Women and Awakening in Rural Environment (AWARE Uganda) is a grassroots women led organisation formed in 1989 by a group of rural women of Kaabong District in Karamoja sub-region, a pastoralist community in Uganda. Its goal is to build rural women's skills, educate them on their rights, fight human rights abuses, eliminate poverty, fight gender-based violence, and provide HIV/AIDs care. AWARE

Uganda envisions all indigenous community women to live in dignity and respect to enjoy their human rights and build their livelihood. Its mission is to empower Karamojong women to build their confidence and status through their participation in groups in which they can determine programs to secure their social status, livelihood.



Slum Women's Initiative for Development (SWID)

Slum Women's Initiative for Development (SWID) is a community based Non-Governmental Organization that was established in 2003 in Walukuba-Masese Division of Jinja District and operates in 11 Districts in Busoga sub-region. SWID promotes the development of community structures in slum and rural areas to help poor people obtain land, shelter, and basic services in order to improve their overall well-being. SWID's mission is to strengthen and mobilize the voice, visibility and collectively organize power of women in Busoga Region through changing norms, institutions, policies, and practices that perpetuate inequality and violence in both public and private spaces. It envisions a world where there is adequate shelter for every woman.

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Executive Summary



It has been generally observed that to realise fast and sustainable economic progress in Uganda, gender equality is a central pillar. As such, addressing issues of gender inequality through economic empowerment initiatives and outcomes remains vitally important. Through programmes like the Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme (UWEP) which primarily focuses on women's economic empowerment as well as the Parish Development Model (PDM) which conceptually has clear gender considerations, the government has made deliberate efforts to ensure gender equality in its economic development agenda. At the core of attaining economic empowerment is the participation of grassroots women smallholder farmers/producers in agri-business value chains: a model that deals with the transformation of agricultural products from the farm to the consumers.

Using the Gender Evaluation Criteria (GEC), this report presents findings on a study on the responsiveness of the UWEP and PDM to both women and men's empowerment needs and how the two government projects facilitate grassroots women smallholder farmers/producers to engage in agri-business value chains in the country. While it draws on information obtained from only 3 districts, namely: Bugiri, Jinja and Kaabong, its lessons and recommendations are representative of the entire country since the two programmes are national.

Through focus group discussions (FGDs) with grassroots women and men as well as and key

informant interviews (KIIs) with duty bearers in the 3 districts, the report highlights complex requirements, corruption, poor coordination, male domination, weak monitoring mechanisms, and political patronage as some of the obstacles hindering women and men from equally participating in and benefiting from these programmes which ironically are meant to uplift them from poverty.

The report proposes a raft of recommendations to address these issues including:

1. Streamlining communication around the programmes so that all stakeholders have clear messages upon which can be implemented to avoid exploiting beneficiaries.
2. Meaningful inclusion of people in the design and selection of enterprises.
3. Ease requirements for registration to ensure that they are practical to the ordinary women and men at the grassroots
4. Strengthen transparency and accountability mechanisms to prevent, detect and severely punish corruption in the programmes
5. Ensure regular audits of the funds
6. De-politicisation of the projects to ensure all people regardless of their political affiliation benefit from the programmes
7. Need to use lower-level technical people e.g. parish chief who are closer to the people
8. Inclusion of CSOs in the design and roll-out of programmes

Primarily, this report targets the Government of Uganda especially Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) involved in the programmes. These include: Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MFPED), Ministry of Gender Labour & Social Development (MGLSD), Ministry of Agriculture Animal industries and Fisheries (MAAIF), Parliament, Office of the President, Office of the Prime Minister, Inspectorate of Government (IGG)

and Police, among others. These MDAs are encouraged to read this report to inform the design of appropriate strategies for implementing and monitoring UWEP and PDM. However, the report can also support civil society actors to strategically position themselves as watchdogs of government and provide the needed oversight and complementary support from an informed position.

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Introduction



Introduction



1.1 / Background

UCOBAC is currently implementing a project under the OXFAM NOVIB *Power of Voices Partnership* (PVP) entitled the 'Fair for All' Project, which aims at strengthening grassroots women's participation, voice, and benefit from agribusiness value chains. UCOBAC is implementing the project in Uganda on behalf of Huairou Commission and is in partnership with grassroots' women led organization's including Slum Women Initiative for development and AWARE- Uganda. The project is being implemented in Bugiri, Kaabong and Jinja districts. Under this project, UCOBAC, SWID and AWARE undertook a gender audit to assess the extent to which Government of Uganda development initiatives like Parish Development Model and Uganda Women Entrepreneurship program, have institutionalized gender equality in their policies, programs, projects, provision of services, structures and budgets to among others strengthen grassroots women participation and benefit in agri-bussiness value chains.

A gender audit is an assessment to check the institutionalization of gender equality into organizations including their policies, programs, projects and provision of services, structures, proceedings and budgets. Gender audits allow organizations to set themselves in order and change aspects of the organizational culture which discriminate against women. It examines the activities of the organization from a gender perspective and identifies strengths and weaknesses in promoting gender equality issues. It also assesses the extent to which gender is effectively mainstreamed effectively in an organizations or program's structures, processes, procedures, policies, projects and in the services provided. It further

promotes learning on how to mainstream and institutionalize gender practically.

Gender equality and women empowerment are considered to be pertinent for the attainment of socio-economic transformation by the Government of Uganda. Over the past decades, several laws and policies have been enacted to advance gender equality in Uganda and significant progress in the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women has been made. The Constitution of Uganda (1995) provides for "equality of men and women before the law in all spheres of political, economic, social and cultural life." As the supreme law of the land, this sets a strong normative footing for gender equality in the country. The Uganda National Gender Policy (2007) gives a clear mandate to the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development and other Line Ministries to mainstream gender in all sectors. It sets priority areas of action at the national, sectoral, district and community levels with all levels of planning, resource allocation and implementation of development programs redressing gender imbalances and acting with a gender perspective. The ultimate objective of the policy is to "evolve a society that is both informed and conscious of gender and development issues and concerns." Other related policies include: The National Equal Opportunities Policy (2006); the National Priority Gender Equality Indicators (2016); the National Policy on the Elimination of Gender-based Violence in Uganda (2016); and the Gender Equity Budgeting Policy.

These policy aspirations are deeply entrenched in Uganda's planning frameworks and programmes. The third National Development

Plan (NDP III) 2020/21- 2024/25 whose goal is increased household incomes and improved quality of life of Ugandans, provides a framework for gender mainstreaming, equity and human rights.

The Uganda Vision 2040 also recognizes promotion of gender equality and women empowerment for socio-economic transformation. It goes ahead to state that it will be paramount in the next 30 years to reduce gender inequalities as a prerequisite for accelerating and sustaining socio-economic transformation. As such, women and men of Uganda will be treated as equal partners in development right from the grassroots to the national level.

Over the last three decades, the Government of Uganda has implemented various development programs including *Entandikwa*, *Bona Bagagawale*, the Youth Livelihood Programme, *Emyooga*, Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Program, Parish Development Model among others to fight poverty, and cause socio-economic transformation to ensure sustainable development in the country. Both men and women have been encouraged to participate and benefit from these programs. However, it has been observed that women participation in these development programs remains lower than expected and this has implications on the realization of gender equality and women empowerment for socio-economic transformation in Uganda.

The two programmes are aligned to the strategic objectives of the country's Third National development Plan (NDP III) including; enhance value addition in Key Growth Opportunities; strengthen private sector capacity to drive growth and create jobs; consolidate & increase stock and quality of Productive Infrastructure; enhance productivity and well-being of Population; and strengthen the role of the State in guiding and facilitating development.

Whereas these government programmes are well intentioned, it should be noted that they affect both men and women differently. It is thus prudent to evaluate their gender-responsiveness. The study adopted the Gender Evaluation Criteria (GEC) as a tool to guide in the assignment. The GEC contains 22 questions examining various factors that reflect the gender responsiveness of a given policy, law, or programme. The development of GEC by the Global Land Tool Network (GLTN) was consultative and while it was primarily conceptualised for the land sector, the criteria can be tailored to different activities and contexts. For example, GEC can be used to evaluate certain laws or policies; institutions; guide in the development of checklists for development programmes; and design of gender monitoring tools.

GEC is buttressed by 6 core areas which are:

- 1. Equal participation by women and men and gender-responsive governance.**
2. Capacity development, organization and empowerment of women and men to use, access and benefit from the tool.
- 3. Legal and institutional considerations in regard to women and men's access to land.**
4. Social and cultural considerations in regard to women and men's access to land.
- 5. Economic considerations in regard to women and men's access to land.**
6. Scale, coordination, and sustainability to reach more women and men.

Given its land background and based on these areas, guiding questions were tailor-made for undertaking this study on UWEP and PDM.



1.2 / Research Objectives

This study was therefore intended to obtain a more accurate view of gender mainstreaming in government development programmes in particular UWEP and PDM.

The objectives of the study were:

1. To assess the extent to which UWEP and PDM have institutionalised gender equality to support grassroots women's small holder farmers/producers participation and benefit in agribusiness value chains.
2. To identify gaps in PDM and UWEP and how these constrain women from participating in sustainable social and economic development processes.
3. To propose recommendation for increasing grassroots women's participation, voice and benefit from PDM and UWEP

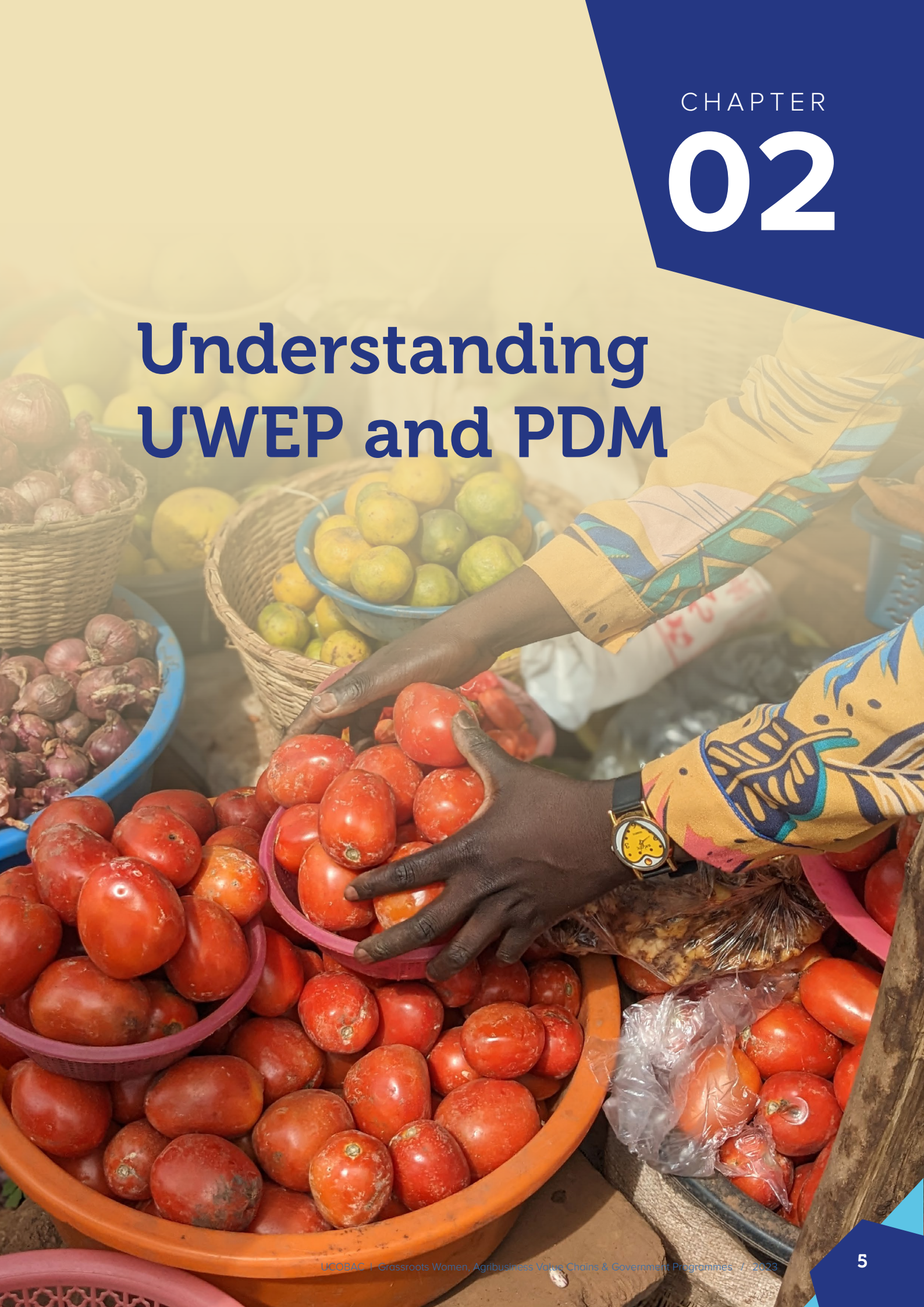
1.3 / Research Methodology

The research methodology centred around the Gender Evaluation Criteria based on data collected through qualitative interviews and review of existing literature on the government's economic empowerment programmes. Once information gathering was done, questionnaires were designed and distributed across districts. A total of 181 respondents were interviewed in FGDs and KIs. The sampling of the interviews was based on their mandate and location but overall, for the KIs, there was a mix of parish, sub-county and district-level actors. The FGDs were principally a mix of grassroots women and men. Because of the likely sensitivity of the findings, all interviewees were guaranteed anonymity.

In summary, the study used the following qualitative methodologies to collect data:

1. Desk reviews focused on identifying information that has already been acquired and documented about UWEP and PDM as well as government policy documents and reports
2. Focus group discussions: gathering people together with similar characteristics to discuss a specific topic.
3. Key informant interviews which involve interviewing people who are well versed with the two programmes mainly as implementers at the grassroots level

Understanding UWEP and PDM



Understanding UWEP and PDM

It is essential to first understand the scope of UWEP and PDM programmes by examining their objectives and theories of change before delving into the gender audit.

2.1 / Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme (UWEP)

Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme (UWEP) is an initiative of the Government of Uganda that is aimed at improving access to financial services for women and equipping them with skills for enterprise growth, value addition and marketing of their products and services. Housed in the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD), UWEP is intended to empower Ugandan women for economic development. The Programme is designed to address the challenges women face in undertaking economically viable enterprises including limited access to affordable credit, technical knowledge and skills for business development, limited access to markets as well as information regarding business opportunities. The programme seeks to increase participation of women in business development, increase their incomes, livelihood security and overall quality of life.

The overall goal of UWEP is to empower Ugandan women to improve their income levels and contribution to economic development.

Its central objectives are;

- 1. To strengthen the capacity of women for entrepreneurship development**
- 2. To provide affordable credit and support access to other financial services to enable women establish and grow their business enterprises.**
- 3. To facilitate women's access to markets for their products and services**
- 4. To promote access to appropriate technologies for production and value addition**
- 5. To strengthen Programme management and coordination**

3 core components of UWEP

- 1** Capacity and Skills Development
- 2** Women Enterprise Fund (WEF)
- 3** Institutional Support (IS).



UWEP was piloted in 19 District including; Moroto, Katakwi, Kaliro, Mayuge, Kamuli, Kalangala, Kayunga, Wakiso, Kibaale, Bundibugyo, Kiruhura, Koboko, Nebbi, Kitgum, Ntungamo, Otuke, Kole, Nakasongola Kisoro and the Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA).

It has however since been rolled out in the entire country with budgets allocated to each district and municipality. The target beneficiaries of the programme are women aged between 18-65 years. This excludes some women from benefiting much as there are other programmes that cater for older ones like the Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment of Elderly Persons (SAGE) and Youth Livelihood

Programme (YLP) for the younger women who are below the specified age bracket. UWEP strongly emphasizes the integration of the following categories of women into beneficiary groups: unemployed women, Vulnerable Groups e.g. Single young mothers, Widows

and gender based Violence (GBV) survivors; Women with Disabilities; Women living with HIV/AIDS; Women heading households; Women slum dwellers; Women living in hard to reach areas, and; Ethnic minorities, among others.

PROCEDURE

1 Identifying

Beneficiary women groups are identified and **selected through a community participatory process** that involves LC 1 and Women Council leaders as trusted members of the community.

2 Selection

The selection of the women to benefit under the UWEP is undertaken by the **Beneficiary Selection Committee chaired by the Sub-County Chief** with members including the Chairperson of the Sub-County Women Council and the Community Development Officer.

3 Confirmation

The respective LC 1 Chairpersons **confirm that the selected women group members are bona fide Ugandans** who reside within their respective communities (the catchment area for the group membership may be a village, parish and must not go beyond a Sub County/ Town Council/ City Division).

4 Co-option

Sub-County Women Council Chairperson and the District Women Council Chairperson are **co-opted onto the Sub County Technical Planning Committee (STPC) and the District Technical Planning Committee (DTPC)** during the approval of the Enterprise Proposals.

5 STPC Subission

The STPC **submits the verified Women Proposals to the Sub County Executive Committee for endorsement** and thereafter to the DTPC for approval with relevant documentation.

6 DTPC Subission

The DTPC also **submits the approved Women Proposals to the District Executive Committee for endorsement** to ensure that equity issues are taken care of.

7 Approval

Districts can **approve proposals** to the tune of **Shs 12.5 million** while proposals exceeding **Shs 12.5 million** to a maximum of **Shs25 million** are approved at the Ministry.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

- Zero interest for repayments made within the first twelve months (one year) and a service fee of 5% per annum for the repayments made after 12 months. The service fee is meant to cater for inflation.
- Each repayment schedule is based on the nature and maturity period of the enterprise;
- No physical assets/collateral required;
- Accessible for both existing and new groups,
- Repayment period of 1-3 years, depending on the nature of the enterprise;
- Formal registration of groups not a precondition for access (but encouraged after access of funds as part of enterprise sustainability)(Aren't we supposed to cite the ministry of Gender as the source of this information to avoid being accused of plagiarism)

2.2 / Parish Development Model (PDM)

The Parish Development Model is a Government development strategy or approach that seeks to improve incomes and the quality of life of over 16 million Ugandans who are stuck in subsistence economy. The Model positions the Parish as the epicentre of multi-sectoral community development, planning, implementation, supervision and accountability. It also conceptualises the Parish as the lowest reference unit for planning, budgeting and delivery of interventions to drive socio-economic transformation. Government has since set up structures and frameworks for planning, budgeting, and delivery of public services under this programme. People at the parish level are expected to map out development priorities under the policies formulated at the national level.

7 Pillars of PDM

- 1 Production, storage, processing and marketing;
- 2 Infrastructure and Economic Services;
- 3 Financial Inclusion;
- 4 Social Services;
- 5 Mindset change;
- 6 Parish Based Management Information System
- 7 Governance and Administration.

PDM Package of Services;

1. **Building infrastructure and systems that support processing and marketing of Uganda's agricultural products.**
2. Generating data on house-holds country-wide to inform Government interventions.
3. **Coordinating farmers through area-based commodity clusters in order to increase production and productivity that will create sustainable agricultural production.**
4. Access to agricultural extension services, finance business Management training.
5. **Building infrastructure and systems that support processing and marketing of Uganda's agricultural products.**
6. Strengthening participatory planning by local communities to collectively identify and address systemic bottlenecks that affect local economic development.
7. **Addressing vulnerability among youth, women, PWDs at the grassroots by developing and Implementing Action Plans for inclusion of disadvantaged interest groups**



PDM is focussing on priority commodities that include; coffee, cotton, cocoa, cassava, tea, vegetable oils (inc. oil palm), maize, rice, sugar cane, fish, dairy, beef, bananas, beans, avocado, shea nut, cashew nuts, macadamia.

Findings



Findings



Introduction

As previously mentioned the Gender Evaluation Criteria is a framework used to determine whether laws, policies and programmes are sufficiently gender-responsive, identifies where more work needs to be done, and possible entry-points to make an initiative equally beneficial to women and men. This is premised on the notion that government programmes should be inclusive to allow both men and women to be actively involved in design, implementation, and evaluation. The study findings are explained based on the interviews conducted. Questions were developed for each of the 6 areas covered by GEC after which, an analysis was done on how each area links to women's voice, participation and benefit in agribusiness value chains.

3.1 / Equal participation by men and women and gender responsive governance

Participation is a very critical aspect of the GEC. Under this criterion, focus is put on how inclusive and transparent the decision-making processes are in developing and executing a given intervention. Participation is grounded on the fact that local community members are better placed to identify their own needs and priorities and offer guidance on how government initiatives like UWEP and PDM affect their livelihoods. As such, building consensus on how to conceptualise, design and execute these programmes naturally requires the input of both men and women in the community. This will enable the beneficiaries to weigh all available options and articulate their interests in an informed manner. As such, the core function of the government at this point is to facilitate community engagements for meaningful participation in the two programmes.

To ascertain the participation of women and men in PDM and UWEP, the respondents were asked if they were aware of the two programmes; how they got to know about them; if they had participated in any processes; limitations to participation; and suggested ways of involvement in decision making in the two programmes.

3.1.1 / Knowledge of UWEP and PDM

In Bugiri District, 34 out of 103 respondents indicated they knew about UWEP while 69 were ignorant about the programme. Meanwhile all respondents in the district indicated that they were fully aware of PDM. In Jinja, out of the 54 respondents, 18 knew about UWEP while 36 did not. Majority (48) knew about PDM as opposed to the 6 who did not. In Kaabong district, only 5 people out of the 24 respondents knew UWEP while a whopping 19 reported having no knowledge about the programme. On the contrary, 13 respondents in Jinja were aware of PDM and 11 did not. 3 respondents knew about PDM while 11 did not.

It is intriguing to learn that whereas UWEP has existed longer than PDM, it has low visibility compared to the latter.

3.1.2 / Source of Information

When asked about the source of knowledge about the two programmes, the predominant source of information identified by the correspondents was radio talk shows and news and also government announcements. Others said they obtained the information through

community and social gatherings including funerals, marriage and religious functions.

The role of Local Councils (LCs) as sources of information was also highlighted. Several respondents also alluded to the different local government offices like Sub-County Chief, Community Development Officers, Parish Chiefs, and agricultural extension workers. In some districts, respondents said they learnt about these programmes from local civic and economic empowerment outfits like Voluntary Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs), Savings and Credit Cooperatives (SACCOs) and other women groups were the source of information.

"I was attending one of the VSLA meetings and we were informed by one of our members that there's a new government programme called PDM which we should be able to join as members of the group," said a respondent in Kakamar in Kaabong district.

Others reported to have learned about the programmes through word of mouth and a few referred to television as their source of information. The use of Information, Education and Communications (IEC) materials including paraphilia like T-shirts was equally pointed out.

"I saw my neighbour wearing a T-shirt which had a message about UWEP and that's how I picked interest and inquired more about it," a respondent from Lwemba sub county in Bugiri district reminisced.

Civil society organisations were also pointed out as another key source of information about the two programmes.

"I learnt about PDM from the child rights advocates of UCOBAC during a community sensitization meeting they had organised in my community," said a respondent from Bulesa in Jinja district.

From the responses above, it is evident that radio remains the most popular and effective means of disseminating information in communities followed by government offices at the grassroots like LCs, Parish Chiefs and sub-county leadership.

3.1.3 / Participation in Processes

For participation in the processes involving the two programmes, the responses gave mixed reactions. Under UWEP, some of the respondents especially from Bugiri stated that they were involved in training and enterprise selection among others. However, all of the respondents from Jinja and majority from Kaabong reported not having participated in any UWEP process. Under PDM, Bugiri topped the list with high participation in PDM processes like sensitisation meetings, group formation, trainings, etc. Similarly, respondents from Jinja highlighted their participation in electing leaders of relevant Committees for PDM as well as mobilising other women to embrace the programme.

"I am a member at the Finance Committee at the district that allocates funds to the parish," stated a respondent from Kaliro Town Council in Jinja District.

A respondent from Lolelia in Kaabong said“... We participated in group meetings, choosing business, electing leaders and opening accounts at the bank.”

Another respondent from Gadumile in Jinja said she was not fully aware of what was going on during meetings, “they only took our IDs but we did not know what was going on,” said a respondent.

Much as individuals participated differently in these programmes, it is evident the government gave people an opportunity to influence the direction of the programmes in the communities.

3.1.4 / Equal participation

We also inquired about the equal participation of men and Women in the two programmes and many of the respondents observed that UWEP exclusively targets women and as such leaving out the men.

Respondents from Jinja and Bugiri however observed that there is equal participation for both men and women when it comes to PDM However, for PDM, the responses vary. In Bugiri and Jinja, generally, there is equal participation. A respondent from Buleesa said “Yes, both men and women have been engaged in meetings, training, and leadership. Both men and women are equally represented at the executive committee.”

This response is corroborated by another from Buluguyi who remarked that:

“There is equal participation for all men and women. The sensitization drives target the entire community”.

Other respondents however think the programme only favours the men.

A resident from Buleesa said

“No, women have been given higher opportunities, for example they have been given 30% and men have been given 20%.”

To others, men have been equally considered in this programme.

“The top management is dominated by the men so mostly men are considered.”

Gender inequality was more pronounced in Kaabong as respondents decried discrimination against the women.

“There is no equal participation, women are overruled so they are encouraged to form their own groups,” a respondent from Lolelia sb county observed.

Many of the key informants observed that UWEP generally benefits women and as such men’s participation is limited and yet they can be beneficiaries.

“UWEP is a women-centred program but it benefits both the men and women,” mentioned a key informant from Buluguyi.

Another key informant in Bugiri further explained that:

“UWEP is majorly designed to benefit women but the end use of the funds they receive are men and husbands. The men are the ones who are in control of assets and liabilities in a home. Traditionally men head families and thus have power to apportion funds in a home.”

The remark was substantiated by another key informant from Bigir who said,

“Both men and women are benefiting from these programs. All enterprises being funded by UWEP and PDM are household based, meaning they are benefiting all household members but being led by a woman or wife”.

Another key informant from Kakamar in Kaabong District attested to this

“The opportunity to participate under UWEP is not equal because the program only caters for women. The men are not eligible for the fund.”

Pursuant to the PDM guidelines, there are percentages allocated to the various segments of the society in order to ensure equal participation. For example, in Buluguyi, it was noted by a key informant that PDM has:

“... equal opportunities for men and women. Women have 30%, men 20%, youth 30%, elderly 10% and people with disability have 10%.”

For PDM, just like in the FGDs, key informants generally recognised that there are efforts at ensuring equal participation for both men and women. It was observed by a key informant from Muterere that:

“PDM is transparent and inclusive of both men and women. Without discrimination all residents were mobilised, encouraged to form groups, many attended meetings at all stages like, enterprise selection for example fish rearing, dairy cattle, goat rearing, vegetable and fruit growing.”

While the percentages are part of the PDM guidelines, a key informant, from a civil society entity noted that:

"Yes, men and women have equal opportunities to participate in PDM, but these opportunities are not embraced. You find that for most of the government programs, it is mostly men that are engaging in them, but women are being left behind. This is not because they want to be left behind but rather because women are not confident enough to participate in development programs."

The notion that women lack confidence compared to men warrants further scrutiny in order to ensure there is meaningful participation of women too in PDM. A key informant from Kakamar, Kaabong district, gave a possible explanation when he argued that:

"Opportunity favors men more since they are vigorous compared to women, the men thus use the opportunity to acquire loans and make businesses. Men are the ones who control women hence the opportunity is theirs. Also, most men went to school compared to women."

It is worth noting that whereas UWEP is largely focused on Women, its benefits spill over to the men since they are decision makers at the household level. On the other hand, responses from respondents indicate that there is a deliberate effort at policy level to ensure equal participation under PDM. The designation of specific percentages to both men and women attests to this. However, it is also undeniable that even with the affirmative action in favour of women, there is still a need to instill confidence in women to embrace such programmes.

3.1.5 / Limiting Factors

The study also sought to establish factors limiting some members of society from participating in the two government programmes. The responses given were equally varied. According to one respondent from Buluguyi the fear of imprisonment in case she defaulted on payment made her not to join UWEP.

"I have never held one million shillings in my life. What will happen just in case I fail to pay back?"

This reasoning speaks volume to the limited financial literacy which is restraining people from taking on enterprises for fear of making losses and defaulting on their loans which could have dire consequences.

Obviously, there was a strong gender undertone in the limited participation. One respondent was very bold when she asserted:

"My husband could not allow me to join".

While no specific reason was given for the husband's decision to restrict the wife from joining the programmes, there is need to ensure sufficient sensitisation so that women and men can decide on their own whether to participate in such programmes.

Across the three districts, the common hindrance from participation, especially for UWEP, was the limited awareness of the people on the existence and criteria of these programmes. The programmes also require beneficiaries to have National IDs yet some people do not have them in one of the FGDs in Muterere, it was noted that:

"... the women lacked national identification cards to prove to PDM officials that they are residents of the area."

Whereas proper identification is critical, it is also important to note that some people have genuinely struggled to get or rectify issues with their national IDs. As such, they are getting nearly victimised for issues beyond their control. It is therefore critical to ensure efficiency at NIRA so that women do not miss out on these programmes.

Relatedly, PDM money is paid through registered mobile phone numbers. This is very crucial since it authenticates transactions and makes tracking of disbursed funds to the intended beneficiaries easier. However, on the ground, it is problematic for some women for several reasons. A respondent from Bugiri said

"The women lacked telephone contacts as it is a requirement to be enrolled into the PDM program. Officials promised to use mobile money for program alerts and payments of PDM money."

In a country where mobile phone penetration is still relatively low, this requirement could pose challenges especially for women. In many parts of Uganda, women do not own phones and simcards. In some cases, they resort to using their husbands' phone number which raises concerns. In the absence of personal phone numbers, many women were easily locked out of the programmes because communicating and paying them became challenging. For UWEP and PDM, this implies that such women get excluded from the programmes.

Another hindrance was related to corruption. In one of the FGDs, a respondent from Muterere noted that:

"Some PDM officials demand money whenever they call for a meeting. The cash demanded ranges from 3000 to 10,000 from every member in the group to do paperwork for the group."

Corruption tendencies were also highlighted in other districts like Kaabong. A respondent mentioned that

"...leaders want mostly their relatives to benefit from these programmes".

It was alleged in other places that the money for the programme was swindled by local bureaucrats.

"The Community Development Officer swindled some money from some groups which were formed".

There are also issues related to bureaucracy, logistics and costs to get registered on the programmes which limited the participation of some respondents. For example, in Bulesa, it was noted that there were:

"...long processes in group registration, formation and account opening as well as high financial costs (transport cost, photocopying, account opening)"

In other districts, there were issues of poor communication by the authorities about the programmes. For example, in Gadumile Sub-county, Jinja District, some of the respondents claimed that;

"...we are not sensitised about the program."

In Kaabong, concerns related to nepotism were raised and respondents were quoted as saying that

"Leaders want mostly their relatives to benefit from the programmes. There were also security concerns which made it hard to regularly access the sub-county headquarters."

Other factors mentioned in the interviews included:

- Most farmers had selected enterprises they have skills in but at the end, the program changed enterprises e.g zero grazing, piggery etc. where people have limited skills.
- Some of the women were dropped because they lacked pieces of land as they rented small pieces to grow food crops for the family.

Respondents also made the following suggestions on how more people can be involved in UWEP and PDM;

- Women should be consulted to give their own views
- There should be no limit on the enterprises that people wish to engage in.
- Simplify the application system
- The women should be involved in deciding when, who and why should benefit/ not benefit from the PDM.
- The group members need to be involved in the enterprise implementation design as most of the enterprises are seasonal, for example vegetables, groundnuts growing and rearing of chicks.
- Involve farmers in the planning process
- UCOBAC should develop a follow-up system on the implementation plans to make sure that all those involved benefit.
- Sensitize Community at lower level
- Invite people to PDM meetings.
- Need to have local representatives at the Sub-County level

SCORE

Assessment	<input type="checkbox"/> Very Poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Very Good
Justification	<p>Criteria 1 focuses on equal participation by men and women and gender responsive governance. Consulting, giving voice and decision making/leadership spaces to those who are likely to be affected by a given programme is a pillar of participation.</p> <p>It is evident from the responses from both the FGDs and KIs that the two programmes are designed with a strong participation requirement. Both men and women are required to participate in aspects like enterprise selection, election of leaders, allocation and utilisation of funds, etc. Indeed, traces of participation can be discerned from the respondents. Because of this, there is an opportunity for grassroots women to select enterprises that can enable them participate in agribusiness value chains as well as make decisions on what works for them or influence decision making to be responsive to their priority needs.</p> <p>However, the findings also suggest that there exist several concerns ranging from logistics, corruption, limited information, underlying restrictive social and gender norms etc which have restricted men and women from meaningfully participating in these programmes. without full information for example on the relevant procedures, terms and conditions, etc., it is hard for grassroots women to participate. This implies that they will be unable to advance priorities that would otherwise enable them to participate in and benefit from agribusiness value chains. Social and gender norms also restrict women from participating in such programs as they are confined in their care roles and are likely not empowered to get involved in ongoing public programs. in many cases the power relations between men and women in society require women to seek permission from men before they can participate in such processes and subject women to violations/abuse from their male counterparts thus restricting their full engagement and benefit from participating in such programs that would otherwise enhance their participation and benefit in agribusiness value chains</p>				

3.2 / Capacity building, organization, empowerment of men and women

The 2nd criteria under GEC deals with capacity building, organisation and empowerment of men and women. This criterion seeks to ascertain the clarity of information; the empowering effect of the information to both men and women; and how the information can be used to know and enjoy their rights. It also looks at information and skills needed to strengthen the capacity of men and women to participate in and benefit from any interventions. This can be through sensitisation/ awareness raising, training, civic organising, among others. This criterion is rooted in the view that without adequate skills, men and women's participation in government programmes gets crippled.

This segment focuses on the initiatives that have been put in place to ensure that men and women have the needed awareness and ability to engage in the programmes. This, it is expected, will translate into the people having the relevant skills and know-how to engage in agribusiness value chains. The questions asked were in the following areas: whether they had been sensitised about UWEP and PDM and if so, by whom; methods of sensitization used; empowerment aspect of the information obtained; challenges experienced when getting information; effects of lack of information; and proposals for creating awareness for both men and women.

3.2.1 / Sensitization

On whether there was sensitisation on UWEP and PDM in their areas, majority of the respondents noted that they had been sensitised by the local government authorities including the CDO, Sub-County Chief, Agricultural Officers, District Production Officers, GISOs, LCs, Parish Chiefs and Agricultural extension workers. A respondent from Kakamar in Kaabong noted that:

Similarly, in Bulesa, a respondent stated:

"I got information about PDM through the DISO, he used to tell us about the government program to help the vulnerable people."

In Kaabong, on top of the local authorities, the respondents also referred to CSOs like AWARE Uganda and Mercy Corps which mobilised them to form groups.

The key informant interviews corroborate the above assertions. According to the Town Clerks, Sub-County Chiefs, LCs, etc. that were interviewed, they had undertaken various awareness raising initiatives in their communities. According to one key informant from Buluguyi:

"... when we get to know about any government program, we induct councillors at the District and Sub-County levels, the CDOs and the LCs. We call meetings, we do sensitization, and we call the Parish chiefs, Sub-Counties and villages. We try to go down to the structures, Sub-county, parish and village levels and we tell them about the programs. We also go for radio talk shows and make announcements".

"... the CDO held a meeting about PDM at the sub county headquarters although a few women attended".

Similar views were explained in Iwemba, Jinja District where a key informant expounded on their mandate:

"We undertake community mobilization and sensitization as well as orientation of the stakeholders on government programs to spread the gospel."

Even with little or no funding for mobilisation, sub-counties have created avenues in their budget. In Mutere, a key informant revealed that:

"...for PDM there are no government funds for mobilisation, trainings, sensitization and monitoring but the sub county authority has initiated a budget to be managed by the community development officer to conduct a radio program to create awareness about PDM using the available sub county sources; meet all groups in the sub county; conduct trainings of all groups focusing on enterprise selected; follow up groups and provide support supervision to individual members. And for UWEF the central government has allocated resource to carry out the above activities"

However, in Jinja, all the respondents claimed they were not sensitised about UWEF. This was also reechoed by the respondents in Iwemba, Bugiri District.

It is therefore important to note that generally, the district, sub-county and parish administrative and political structures have been deeply involved in raising awareness as well as enhancing the capacity of both men and women to engage in the two government programmes.

3.2.2 / Methods of Sensitization

Regarding the methods of sensitization, some respondents attended trainings at the district and sub-county headquarters convened by the local government entities and for the majority it was through word of mouth by the local leadership. A respondent from Mutere explained:

"The women got information from LC2 Chairperson, District and Sub-county councillors, TVs stations, and the Community Development Officer and the team of technical staff including District Production Officer, District Commercial Officer, Parish Chief, Government Extension Service Providers and radio announcements about PDM. The political leaders were and are still mobilisers of the beneficiaries and all government employees are responsible for promotion of PDM as a government program."

For those in Kaabong, it was a mix of methods as explained by a respondent below:

"...we learnt briefly about group formation using brochures. We also learnt during class training in choosing business enterprise and through one-on-one dialogues, we learnt how to form groups."

Other people got information from friends who contacted them to join the groups they had established. A respondent from Buleesa shared their experience:

"I got phone calls from friends asking me to be part of their group."

Many respondents expressed optimism with two programmes.

"I have hope because so far, the training and meetings have equipped me with investment plans. I am just waiting for the money to implement," said a respondent from Buleesa.

3.2.3 / Empowerment through Information

Having gotten the information about UWEP and PDM, the study sought to establish how the information they obtained empowered them to engage in the two programmes. Respondents also gave mixed reactions.

"The sensitization empowered some few women who were able to access funds and carry out the piggery project," said a resident from Buluguti

However, it is not all rosy. Some respondents have negative feedback regarding the empowerment aspects of the training. In Buleesa for example, it was noted that:

"No, I don't think we have been empowered because we did whatever we were told to do but I don't know why we were not given the money. I wish they had communicated but everything just ended like that."

Regarding UWEP, it was noted by a respondent in Muterere that:

"Women are now using the knowledge gained from trainings to plant crops and get better yields than before irrespective of the many challenges in agriculture production and marketing. The women try to add value to the produce for example maintaining proper hygiene during sun dry coffee to attract better prices."

In Lolelia, respondents stated that they "got limited information" and so could not meaningfully engage in UWEP but for PDM, they learnt how to:

"... elect leaders, form business enterprises, borrow from SACCOs, open a bank account and how to use mobile money in their phones".

Similarly, respondents from Jinja had no information to provide regarding UWEP while for PDM, they had not yet received the money.

Generally, it is demonstrable that there has been some effort to reach out to the local men and women with information and empower them to embrace and benefit from PDM. It is also evident that several approaches have worked in getting people together and be part of these programmes. However, the delays in disbursing the funds is raising anxiety among some of the intended beneficiaries. The limited scope of UWEP to only women keeps it unpopular since few people including women hardly know much about it.

3.2.4 / Challenges in Accessing Information

The next question focused on the challenges the respondents experienced while getting information/awareness on UWEP and PDM. For UWEP, many respondents argued that there is no awareness undertaken about the programme for several reasons. In Buluguyi for example, respondents noted that:

"There is no sensitization and awareness creation about this project. Few women knew of it from a meeting that was held by UCOBAC and the District officials."

For others, they decried lack of logistical support

"The training took place at the district headquarters. you have to cater for your transport and meals."

"The main issue is selfishness from leaders at the local government. They don't want to openly provide information about it. These leaders are corrupt. They don't sensitise the community about the programs".

In some places like Muterere, the challenges in accessing information and participating in UWEP were hampered by their spouses

"Men sometimes not being directly active in UWEP tend to sabotage the projects at home because they want women to remain dependent on them. They believe the power and authority are in their hands when they are the most innovative, productive in terms of household development."

Other women attributed their inability to access information about UWEP to their inability to read and write. A respondent from Muterere clearly stated:

"Most women are illiterate, they cannot read and write and in most cases the literate ones in the community take advantage of them claiming to help them. They demand contributions during meetings like money for developing the constitution, and group work plans."

In Jinja district where no information about UWEP was reportedly availed, the respondents explained their reasons:

In Kaabong, it was observed that:

"... most stakeholders and leaders do not know anything about UWEP so they can't tell us anything."

Selection of enterprises is also another significant challenge which was pointed out;

"The trainers keep changing the enterprises that we are told to engage in, from crop husbandry to animal husbandry and specific animals to be grazed."

For PDM, similar issues were identified .
From a logistical lens, a respondent from Buluguyi remarked:

"There is poor communication about the training venues. These keep changing at the last moment, people move from venue to venue before they can settle down for the training. Mobilization is done at the last hour."

3.2.5 / Impact of Lack of Awareness

Another question related to how lack of information/awareness about UWEP and PDM affected citizen's participation and benefit from these programs. Like in the previous questions, the answers here were equally varied. The most significant concern raised was that the ability to participate and benefit from these programmes is closely tied to the level of knowledge and information citizens have about the two programmes.

A similar comment was made Kamuli, Kagumba

"The process is long and yet there is no action at the end of the day"

"I am left with no option apart from missing everything in the program," said a respondent from Bulesa.

Some respondents pointed out uncoordinated information about the programme which causes confusion in the community.

"There is contradicting information from the trainers. Some say everyone will be allocated one million shillings, others say it is only one person to receive the money in a household and others say both husband and wife are eligible," observed a respondent.

Another respondent from Buluguyi observed that,

"Lack of information leads to non-participation. For instance, one cannot benefit from UWEP if you do not know about the eligibility criteria and who to contact for help. It is the politicians and other staff at the local government who benefit."

Similar sentiments were echoed by respondents in Kaliro Town Council:

"Without awareness we cannot know the process of registration; this can limit us from participating in government programs."

Another respondent from Kamuli Kagumba in Jinja District alluded to death,

"We shall die of poverty."

Karamoja was no exception, the respondents were pessimistic

"We lack knowledge on who to contact for support. Most of us we never went to school, yet the forms are in English which is hard for us to understand"

It is clear from the responses that lack of adequate and timely information cripples women's participation in government programmes.

The challenges associated with UWEP for example attest to this.

3.2.6 / Proposals for Awareness Creation

Having highlighted the challenges associated with information about the projects, the next question tasked the respondents to propose the best ways of creating awareness to both men and women effectively so that they can all equally benefit from these programs. While various responses were given, the use of radio announcements cut across the three districts. A respondent from Mutereze justified this proposal:

"... the radio has no bias; all members in the community will be encouraged to be attentive on radio programs."

Radio is considered neutral and generally accessible to most community members. To supplement radio, it was suggested that public meetings should be organised and mobilisation be done through megaphones to eliminate any potential bias as every member of the community will be reached out.

"The responsible staff managing a program should organise community meetings and more so the invitation to the meeting should be through megaphones ("Mukalakasa") still to avoid biases which most leaders use to punish community members who were against them during the time of elections"

The respondents also suggested the use of community and social functions like funeral ceremonies, after-church meetings, VSLA group meetings etc. to publicly sensitise people because such gatherings attract many people. Others suggested the use LCs and parish chiefs for mobilisation since they are nearer to people while to some, it is non-state actors like UCOBAC who are well-placed to mobilise communities. Among the areas of awareness highlighted by a respondent from Namugongo in Jinja was instructive:

"We need sensitization at grassroots level in order for the men to allow women to participate".

This is very critical as it underscores the centrality of inclusion of both men and women in the implementation of government programmes.

It is note-worthy that while initially the community members blamed the local leaders for not conducting sufficient awareness, some of them suggested the same people as focal points for information delivery. This speaks to the faith that people have in their leaders even when it occasionally gets abused. Strengthening monitoring mechanisms for delivery by the local authorities is an area worth investing in future given their proximity to the people.

3.2.7 / Resources for Awareness

Tasked to explain whether there are resources explicitly allocated to awareness raising and capacity building for both men and women to benefit from these government programs the feedback from the key informants was confusing and contradictory. An LC III from one of the sub-counties was blunt in their response:

In the same sub-county, a Gender Officer seemed to suggest otherwise:

"It depends on how we programmed because usually we use the sector conditional grant. So we use a percentage on those grants to do the awareness"

The Sub-County Chief of the same area gave a different version to the question asked

"There is some little resource at the sub-county but it is inefficient and insufficient"

According to the CDO of the same place,

"With UWEP, there were no resources given to people to mobilize and sensitize communities but in PDM the resources are there."

"There are no resources for sensitization and awareness creation. There is a lot of effort to train but we just borrowed money to support the trainers."

Meanwhile, a Parish Chief from the same location had this to say

“There are no resources because as parish chiefs, we are not given any funds to run the program especially in UWEP. There are resources in PDM and that is why there has been sensitization”.

The case of this sub-county was similar to the rest of the areas where KIs were undertaken. While the political leaders at the sub-county level generally insinuated the unavailability of funds for awareness creation, the technical staff seemed to suggest that there was some money, although inadequate. But at the lowest level like at the parish, the responses suggest that the mobilisation budget does not trickle down to them. This could point to the direction where significant publicity investments should be made.

Another Sub-County Chief gave an alternative version regarding funds for mobilisation:

“The money is there for PDM. We use 10 percent of the Discretionary Development Equalization Grant (DDEG) for mobilization and training of the community. The district also has a fund that it gives to parish chiefs for mobilization and trainings. The district is not giving us any funds at the moment for UWEP. So, to follow up on UWEP, we are using the resources allocated (general fund) for mobilization of other activities.”

However, there also seems to be a policy issue. According to a PDM Focal Person who was interviewed:

“PDM has challenges with resources, and I cannot shy away from that. We have just received guidance that we use some of the money from extension agriculture but this money is not under the Focal Persons vote. This money is under the different heads who are the vote controllers. So, accessing the money for PDM activities presently is still a challenge though there was some money in the beginning and that money is not there and by then I was not the Focal person. Currently it is difficult to get the money for the PDM and I do not shy to say that I do not have money for that. Our activities are more of daily routine activities; we have some money which is doing some training on enterprise selection because we are using the money for extension, and I said it is not directly a vote for but there is need to re-allocate. I think the government should give guidance; the Ministry of Finance should give guidance, if money is for PDM activities we need that guidance because that guidance is a bit silent.”

SCORE

Assessment	<input type="checkbox"/> Very Poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Very Good
Justification	<p>Criteria 2 focuses on Capacity Building and Empowerment of men and women to effectively participate and benefit from a program. Men and women require adequate knowledge and skills to effectively engage, participate and benefit in any development processes/programs</p> <p>From the responses, it can be discerned that generally, the district, sub-county and parish administrative and political structures have been deeply involved in raising awareness as well as enhancing the capacity of both men and women to engage in the two government programmes. It is also demonstrable that there has been a commendable effort to reach out to the local men and women with information and empower them to embrace and benefit from PDM especially. It is also evident that several community friendly approaches have been employed to mobilise and reach people with information on programmes. to this extent, it can be deduced that these initiatives boost the chances of grassroots women Small Holder Farmers/Producers to participate in these programs that provide opportunity for their full participation and Benefit In The agribusiness value chains.</p> <p>On the other hand, Despite the good efforts by both projects to empower both men and women with capacity to participate and benefit from the programs, there are no clear mechanisms being implemented to finance awareness and community mobilisation efforts for the two programmes. What exists appears to be discretionary and cannot be strictly enforced so as to ensure the equal participation of both women and men in Uganda. There also seems to be insufficient financial allocation to community mobilisation and organising, information dissemination and capacity building in both programmes. This limits community's access to information regarding the opportunities available and empowerment to fully participate and engage in the programs. Additionally, underlying restrictive and discriminatory social and gender norms play a significant role in limiting women's access to information and capacity building opportunities. , some women reported for instance that they need "permission" from their husbands to attend sensitisation or capacity building events or the programs themselves. Women are also tied up in care work and do not have time to effectively participate in these ongoing development programs. Therefore, the lack of adequate information and skills especially among women excludes them from the opportunities provided by the programs to fully participate and benefit in through agribusiness value chains. These issues would be addressed if there were well-resourced and inclusive mechanisms for community mobilisation and sensitization in UWEP and PDM</p>				

3.3 / Legal and institutional considerations of men and women

The third criteria under GEC deals with the legal and institutional arrangements to ensure that the rights of men and women are respected in the two programmes. This deals with aspects that find basis in the law for example human rights.

The respondents were asked to share views on whether the programmes promote human rights and interests of women and men; whether UWEP ensures that all categories of women irrespective of status participate and benefit from it; whether both men and women enjoy the same benefits from PDM; the political and technical support for gender equality; and the women-friendliness of products, services, processes of UWEP and PDM.

Similar sentiments were expressed in Mutere where a respondent argued that:

"Yes, UWEP is designed to cater for women's interests. Traditionally, women have been left behind hence the program is addressing gender-based violence, women dependency on men, reduced adultery and prostitution. The program empowers the local women to be self-reliant and have access to most of her basic needs of life."

3.3.1 / Human Rights Promotion

On whether UWEP and PDM programs promote human rights and interests of women, the respondents on UWEP agreed that inherently, human rights and women's rights are at the centre of the programme. A respondent in Bulesa noted that:

"Yes, because UWEP programmes focus on uplifting and supporting women only. I know those who got the money benefited."

In Kakamar, Kaabong District, another respondent provided a detailed response:

"Yes, they promote our rights as women to be economically independent; rights to fight poverty; education of our children; rights to food through income generation as well as provision of good health."

For PDM which caters for both men and women, the responses were but majority agreed that the programme supports the human rights of both men and women.

In Buluguyi for example, it was observed during the FGD that:

"PDM has promoted human rights by allowing all categories of women to participate in the program. The interests of women are catered through the different percentages allocated to them. Also, capacity building sessions have catered for everyone."

In Muterere, a respondent explained that

"PDM caters for the interests of both men and women. It pays special attention to women because 70% of the group members are women and 30% are for men with discrimination like youth and people with disabilities."

Interestingly, even in Jinja where none of the respondents had tangibly benefited from PDM, they expressed optimism that PDM would promote human rights. In the FGD of Gadumile sub-county, it was noted that:

"It can promote human rights if they provide what they promise."

Similar views were expressed in Kamuli Kagumba sub-county in Jinja:

"Yes, if put into action it will help to promote human rights and interests of women."

In Kaabong, participants who attended the FGD were agreeable to the human rights focus of PDM:

"PDM promotes our rights as women to be economically independent and save us from hunger which is common here".

However, both programmes are not without blemish. It was noted, for example in Buluguyi that:

"... to a great extent UWEP has not catered for the needs of all women because only a few lucky ones benefit from it."

This brings the question: who are the "lucky ones"? What makes them "lucky" as opposed to others? In places like Jinja where the respondents intimated that they had not benefited from UWEP, they expressly observed that they had been "left behind". While there might be plausible explanations for the inability to include all women, it is important to interrogate these factors to reduce such negative perceptions about the programme.

For PDM, the issue of enterprise selection seemed to have strong gender undertones which is unfavourable to women. For example, in Kaliro Town Council in Kaliro District, it was observed in the FGD that:

"... they say PDM is 30% women but that is not what is happening. Also, some enterprises chosen do not favour grassroots women."

It is critical to re-evaluate the composition of the beneficiaries as well as undertake a gender analysis of the enterprises that the government has selected for the beneficiaries to ensure that they resonate with the context and aspirations of the people.

The KII seems to provide answers to some of the issues raised in the FGDs. On the issue of promoting human rights and gender equality, some instructive feedback came from the local authorities. Commenting on UWEP, the following was noted:

"Yes, UWEP arrangement is intended and has empowered the women putting them at the forefront in enterprise management and the men are at back supporting the women in enterprise selection, encouraging children to understand the enterprise in the home and all the necessary support to successful enterprise, through the shadow intervention by men."

In Bulesa, a key informant articulated the gender and inclusion dynamics of UWEP:

"Yes, they focus on the principles of gender equality because when you look in the past, the women were left behind and that is why you see men are a step ahead of the women. That is why when these government programs like UWEP came, there was a big gap between the men and women and that is why they focused mainly on women to make sure that they can also uplift the women to the level of men."

This explanation clearly stipulates the conceptual underpinnings of UWEP as an affirmative action initiative aimed at uplifting women and flattening the inequality curve in the country. This in essence signifies that UWEP employs positive discrimination with the aim of boosting women who have historically been marginalised. Similar explanations were raised in the KII in Kaabong and Jinja.

For PDM, equality and inclusion aspects were equally explained by the key informants. One of them was clear on the legalities involved:

"We get statutory instruments from the Ministry of Gender, so we ensure we are in line with the guidelines and ensure equal share of resources with no tribalism or discrimination based on gender and age to avoid contradiction with the Guidelines."

This explanation is critical because it derives its legitimacy from the laws of Uganda which provide for equality and non-discrimination. It is therefore gratifying that within the conceptualisation of these projects, the government is cognisant of its obligations under international human rights law. A sub-county chief added that:

"The PDM is without discrimination and is basically for both men and women. It is premised on the notion that the Parish Development Committee together with the common citizens in the village are better placed to identify and respond to their own needs."

To offer guidance on equality, PDM uses percentages as explained below by a key informant from Kamuli, Jinja District:

"Oh yes! Gender equality has been planned for hence there are shares per category. 30% for women; 30% for youth; 10% for the elderly; 10% for PWD and 20% for men."

While the percentages are imbalanced, it is an attempt at ensuring equal representation of all the various segments of the society across gender and age lenses. It is therefore accurate to conclude that from the angle of design, both UWEF and PDM recognise and try to put in place mechanisms to ensure equality across the community.

3.3.2 / Benefit to all Categories of Women

The next question focused on whether the two programmes benefit women of all categories. For UWEF, there is general consensus that the project in theory targets all women including youth, elderly, disabled, married, unmarried, single, widows, etc.

In the FGD in Bulesa, it was agreed that:

"Yes, UWEF trains and considers all women above 18 years, it does not discriminate".

This position can be corroborated by the response from Muterere as stated below:

"Yes, UWEF benefited all types of women that included: youth, older, disabled, married, unmarried, single. These categories benefited from sensitization meetings and training. However, the enterprises selected were not funded to date".

The non-payment aspect was also highlighted;

"Yes, their program benefits all categories of women but unfortunately we were not given the money, it was on paperwork only."

A key informant from Bulesa expressed similar views, with an addition that the programmes went beyond the guidelines to target other vulnerable women:

"Yes, UWEF went beyond, and priority was given to single mothers, those who are HIV positive, those who stay in slums. So the focus is majorly on the vulnerable women."

A social worker from Bugiri who was part of the key informants shared another version:

"UWEF has tried to cater for all the categories. They formed groups that were mixed up. It is only the youth that formed groups for only the youth, but other groups included the old, disabled and other categories."

While there was no explanation as to why the youth formed their own groups, one can speculate that it could be to enable them establish appropriate enterprises that suit their energy and zeal.

It is also note-worthy that some cases showed limited inclusion of all women. For example in Kaabong, the issue had a lot to do with domestic care work and security as pointed out by a key informant.

"Most women are busy with other work to survive like gardening which keeps them away. Insecurity also prevents women from villages to keep coming to follow up registration and other ways of benefit. This can frustrate the attempts to include all women."

In Kakamar, Kaabong District, while the FGDs recognised the non-discriminatory nature of UWEP, they pointed out some categories that were left out:

"No, some women do not benefit at all, especially the disabled women. They instead go for other programs for disabled people, and most do not want to keep moving for the long process of getting the funds."

Similar sentiments but in relation to a different category were pointed out in Iwemba, Bugiri district;

"No, the elderly are not considered and only a few are given money"

Whereas business considerations have to be made, especially ability to repay the money, special arrangements for PWDs and the elderly need to be made to ensure inclusion in the programme.

Similar concerns were raised with PDM regarding its inclusion aspect. It emerged during FGDs that the PDM by design targets more women compared to men which gives women an upper hand. It was noted in Mutere that:

"Yes, both men and women enjoy the same benefits from PDM. They have benefited from the sensitization meetings and training that has widened their understanding about PDM and government intervention to fight poverty. The chances for both men and women are the same to be elected in various positions of leadership in the groups. When it comes to group members to take up positions, the women are the determinant of who should lead the group forward as they are the majority with 70% membership."

1 The 70% could be arising from women being the majority of PWDs, youth and elderly

In Namugongo, Jinja District, it was observed that by design, the programme favours women numerically:

"All are given a chance to participate but women have a higher percentage compared to men."

However, while women have majority membership, male dominance was still flagged off as an issue in Kaabong district:

"...women are usually overruled in meetings, and they do not contribute much in financial discussions".

Nonetheless, some actors are rooting for the equal treatment of both men and women by PDM. A key informant from Bulesa reasoned, thus:

"...because the 30 million which is meant for the youth is for both the male and female, the 10 million which is meant for elderly is for both men and women, the 10 million meant for the disabled is for both men and women so you can see that both men and women are to benefit."

It is thus undeniable that there is a deliberate attempt to ensure that PDM benefits women of all categories. Nonetheless, women, for affirmative action purposes are allocated more slots.

3.3.3 / Political and Technical Support

The next question sought views on the ways in which political and technical leaders support gender equality within these program's governance and implementation processes. The responses to this question were several but what came out strongly was the mobilisation and capacity building role of political and technical leaders:

"Political and technical leaders support gender equality through mobilisation. Both men and women are mobilised and trained to form groups and elect their group leaders," a respondent from Muterere remarked.

Their remark was reechoed by another respondent from Jinja who said that

"For PDM, they have sensitised both men and women and have given all a chance to participate in leadership."

In Kaabong, the role of leaders in pushing for equal participation was illustrated by the comment from one of the respondents:

"... women are encouraged to speak during meetings and discussions without segregation."

But within Jinja, two respondents from the FGDs had different views. In Namugongo, it was observed that:

"We don't see them (political leaders) guiding processes; all is left to Chairpersons and Parish Chiefs."

While in Gadumile, still in Jinja, it was noted that:

"The political leaders don't come to support at the community level we are on our own."

One can discern that primarily, political and technical leaders mobilise and capacitate communities to ensure that both men and women participate in these projects. While their role seems cut out, some people are dissatisfied as noted in the feedback.

3.3.4 / Women Friendliness

The final question in this segment focused on the women-friendliness of the various products, services, and processes of the above programmes in terms of requirements, registration etc. Many key informants believed that the programmes are generally friendly. For example, from Bulesa, a key informant stated:

The key informant added that:

"The other thing is that this money does not require security both in PDM and UWEP, the only thing we look at are the group members and that is fair enough. Members guarantee themselves because groups were formed depending on how people know each other. When we look at the requirements, we need a national identification card, one passport photo, have a phone number registered in your name and also 3,000 to help in opening a bank account. Depending on my understanding, these requirements are easy to get. A line will show that you have received the money on your account."

"They are women friendly. If we are to look at PDM, each person or beneficiary will be given 1 million and this money will have an interest of just 6% which is 60,000 per annum. A person is supposed to use this money for a maximum of three years, so there is nowhere in Uganda where you can borrow money and bring it back at such a lower rate. When it comes to UWEP, money was supposed to be used for a year without any interest and failure to pay they would put an interest of 5%, this is also very low."

This view simplifies the issue and clearly shows its friendliness especially to women in terms of low interest and no requirement for collateral.

While many key informants across the districts stated similar arguments, one from civil society had a varied view:

"As long as something has an interest, it is never friendly because when you look at PDM, the interest comes after a year but depending on the business one is doing for example, farming, if the season is not friendly, these will fail to yield products. Even the capital they have injected will not come out."

This is a very critical aspect because most activities undertaken by both programmes are largely agro-based which in the era of climate change, are risky and could attract losses.

The requirements, while appearing simple, were flagged off as challenging during the FGD interviews. From the responses, many people were not happy with the processes involved for being bureaucratic and unfriendly especially for women.

A respondent from Buluguyi shared their experience with UWEP:

"It is not easy to benefit from UWEP. The procedure is too hectic. You first have to register the group and have a constitution. Most women are illiterate, so they need to pay someone to make for them a constitution. The trainings take place at the District Head Quarters which is quite a distance from the villages; then there's filling of forms, taking pictures, opening up a bank account. One has to facilitate herself financially. The process requires one to be literate. If one cannot read and write, then she cannot benefit. It is expensive and it includes several charges that are not explained to the beneficiaries."

In Muterere, a similar experience was shared during the FGD:

"The UWEP and PDM are not women friendly in terms of requirements and registration. Many of the women can't read and write because those who can read and write exploit the group members by asking them for money to help them fill the templates / forms as part of the process required for the group to be registered at the Sub County. The registration has challenges since it requires regular transport to and from the sub county and district. The whole process is a burden to all members of the group."

Indistinguishable feedback was given in Kaliro Town Council

"No, they are not friendly like UWEF. We know nothing. We are requested to pay money sometimes which we don't have. We spend time going through the processes after we are not considered. Additionally, the enterprises selected don't favour grassroots women who are starting."

The feedback from Lolelia, Kaabong is not positive either:

"There is not enough information about the program. Government officials are too rude to support us in filling forms and they are rarely ever in office to support us women. Most women also stay far from government offices and cannot keep coming back. Hence, we give up along the way. These services should be brought closer to the parish level. It also does not help that women are shy to write English, and most don't know how to read and write."

SCORE

Assessment	<input type="checkbox"/> Very Poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Very Good
Justification	<p>Criteria 3 focuses on determining if the programs promote human rights and interests of women and men;</p> <p>Overall, it can be noted that both UWEP and PDM have very strong human rights roots and speak to the divergent human rights of both men and women in the communities. This speaks to the legality of the two interventions. Equally, the allocation of percentages tries to cater for the various sections of the society including youth, PWDs, among others. This explanation clearly stipulates the conceptual underpinnings of UWEP and PDM as affirmative action initiatives aim at uplifting women and flattening the inequality curve in the country as well as ensuring social inclusion of marginalised groups by ensuring representation of all the various segments of the society across gender, ability, and age, disability etc lenses. It is therefore accurate to conclude that from the angle of design, both UWEP and PDM recognise and put in place mechanisms to ensure gender equality and social inclusion which is at the heart human rights guaranteed by various legal instruments. This also implies that grassroots women small holder farmer and producers , regardless of their social and economic status, have the opportunity to engage in agribusiness value chains through PDM and UWEP.</p> <p>However, the feedback from the study also shows a slightly different picture. The delivery of these programmes is not compatible with the lived realities of women who require more technical and financial support due to their unique situations. Majority of women are poor, illiterate, stay in remote villages etc. This implies that any programmes designed for empowerment of women should be cognisant of these realities of women and as such should be designed to incentivize their participation and benefit from the processes/programs. For instance, these programs should be brought as close as possible to their communities to ease the costs of accessing the needed services. Also, the costs and processes involved to access services like registration, need to be made less cumbersome and less complicated for women. Necessary accommodations should be made to ensure that illiterate, young and disabled women can be supported to be onboarded into these programmes with comparative ease. This will go a long way to ensure that all categories of women be able to leverage agribusiness value chains opportunities provided by these economic empowerment programs like UWEP and PDM</p>				

3.4 / Social and cultural considerations in regard to women and men's access to Government of Uganda funding programs

This part of GEC examines the social and cultural factors and how they influence access to government programmes by both men and women. GEC recognises that there are various social and customary considerations that should be factored-in when executing programmes like UWEP and PDM. To this end, the question asked related to whether there are cultural beliefs, norms and practices that hinder women from participating in these government programs.

The same response was reechoed in Kakamar, Kaabong District:

"There are no cultural norms that prevent women from participating in government programs, both women and men can form groups and register."

3.4.1 / Social and Cultural Hindrances

Like in the other questions, the responses were varied with a section agreeing while the others felt there were no cultural hindrances. The following are some of the summarised responses made during the FGDs.

However, on the flipside, a number of social-cultural issues that hinder women's participation in these programmes were raised. Among them was the religious factor. In Bulesa, a respondent observed that:

"There are no cultural norms that prevent women from participating in the programs. PDM registered both husband and wife in a household," said a respondent from Buluguyi.

"Some Muslims say that they do not believe in taking money which has interest because in their religion, it is not allowed and that is why some do not engage in these programs."

Another respondent from, in Kaliro Town Council, observed that:

"No cultural beliefs hinder us from participating."

A key informant from Bugiri District corroborated this assertion:

"As I told you, for the Muslim women, it is very hard for them to collect themselves in groups and get money. They always say that the money is "Haram" which means not accepted according to their religion. There are also some religions like 'Njiri Nkalu', 'Nabijingo'; they do not allow any government program. We just try to engage their leaders and do more sensitization for these people to participate in government programs."

On a related note, even those with Christian roots encountered similar challenges as it was reported during a FGD still in Bulesa where it was stated that:

"It is only some religions like the born again. They don't believe in forming groups to support each other. There are those who even refused to get National Identification Cards and this limits their opportunities."

A similar observation was made by a key informant from lwemba:

"The religion called 'Yesu Peke' does not allow women and men to join government programs."

As such, women who are Muslims or subscribe to certain religious groupings get excluded because Sharia Law forbids interests on loans.

Apart from religion, patriarchy was highlighted severally by the respondents. In Kakamar, the respondents stated that:

"Sometimes, women are hindered from participating by their husbands. They feel insecure that their wives will be taken by other men."

In the neighbouring Lolelia, similar observations were made:

"Most men don't want women to have money; it's a way of controlling them and making them submissive".

The responses given are not any different from views shared in Karamoja. For example, in Kamuli Kanganda in Jinja, it was highlighted in the FGDs that:

"Men have the belief that women should stay taking care of house chores, digging, and producing children. Husbands that fear their wives will find other men in these programs hinder women from participating."

The same observations were made in Muterere:

"The men believe that they are married because they have the money that gives them the respect in the home. Therefore, letting the women go for government funded programs is opening a road to divorce, separation, promotion of gender-based violence and the women will become disloyal to their husbands."

Elsewhere in Buluguyi, the views associating empowered women with infidelity surfaced:

"Sometimes women are hindered from participating in business by their husbands. They feel insecure that their wives will fall in love with other men at the market places."

These observations were also made by some of the key informants interviewed for this assignment. In Bulesa, an official noted that:

"Yes, for us, we do our work and if money is meant for the women it is given to women but sometimes men say that they are the ones who are supposed to receive the money since they are the head of their homes. They sometimes say that it's only men who are supposed to have the money. That is why sometimes when we give some women money, it is then taken from them by the men."

There is a strong case for supporting women's participation in these programmes. The words of a key informant from Bugiri sums it up:

"It is believed that women are easier to follow up when you give them a revolving fund than the men. Women fear to leave their families and go into hiding or be taken to prison in case of failure to pay back the money. So they work hard and make sure that they pay back unlike the men. Men and youths have disappeared with revolving funds and they do not mind about the consequences of leaving their families behind to either go into hiding or prison. When you go to villages, you will find that most of the saving groups are made up of only female members. Men rarely participate in such things because they have a tendency of disappearing with people's money."

Patriarchy also manifests itself through men restricting women from engaging in critical processes of these programmes. A key informant argued that:

"Some people have to get permission to go for training. You find that in a home, you have to tell your husband where you are going. If he says no, then you don't go. Sometimes, you find she has missed a training on enterprise selection, and this is because a woman was stopped from going there."

SCORE

Assessment	<input type="checkbox"/> Very Poor	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Very Good
Justification	<p>Criteria 4 focuses on examining the social and cultural factors and how they influence men and women’s access to government programmes. Cultural beliefs, norms and practices play a critical role in determining the ability of men and women to participate and benefit from development programs.</p> <p>In general, it is clear that while a few voices undermined the role of social factors like culture and associated beliefs in hindering women’s participation in government development programmes, the findings demonstrate that a cocktail of religious beliefs, patriarchy and regressive social norms conspire to side-line women from effectively participating and benefitting from UWEP and PDM.</p> <p>Whereas UWEP specifically targets women as a way to address the historical and existing injustices that have for long disempowered and excluded women and as much as PDM intentionally includes participation quotas to guarantee opportunities for women’s participation and benefit from the programs, there still exist underlying systemic inequalities stemming from patriarchy and its associated discriminatory social and gender norms that exclude and disadvantage women and girls to effectively participate and benefit from these ongoing development programs. there is therefore need for the programs to integrate gender transformative interventions. This will help to address the underlying root causes of women’s exclusion and empower communities to interrogate and transform discriminatory and inequitable norms and practices against women and girls empowerment. by extension, such regressive cultural practice are obstacles grassroots women smallholder farmers/ producers ability to effectively participate in agribusiness value chains, thus tying them in poverty and disempowerment</p>				

3.5 / Economic Considerations

The fifth criteria under GEC focuses on economic considerations. This examines whether the programmes promote economic opportunities for both women and men.

3.5.1 / Economic Opportunities for Women (UWEP)

To establish this, respondents were asked whether UWEP promotes economic opportunities for women; and for PDM, for both men and women. Several responses were received.

In the KIs, the general consensus regarding UWEP was in the affirmative. A key informant from Bugiri explained:

"Yes, we have supported women and they have some business. We have supported many and actually the next phase is pushing them higher so that they are given more funds from the district at least like 25 million".

In asserting this positive response, another key informant added:

"Yes! Because there are some functional businesses owned by women who benefited from the program."

A civil society key informant explained that:

"For UWEP, there is no stipulated data that can be based on to make the comparison. Yes, UWEP promotes economic empowerment; 70% for women and 30% back up support for men to embrace the program. The men will support their wives in the venture."

This is interesting because while the programme is primarily for women, there is a percentage reserved for onboarding men to embrace the programme. This implies that in a remote way, it also benefits men. Besides, resources are enjoyed at the household level which naturally spills over to the men too.

A Sub-County chief from one of the sub-counties from Kaabong elaborated how UWEP has created opportunities for women:

"Yes, women now own and run some businesses like brewing, agricultural trade, weaving, tailoring, art and craft though the program reaches a few"

A governance dimension came in from one of the key informants from Bugiri to explain the opportunities but also the limitations therein:

"I think it has promoted economic opportunities for women to a small extent. The money was always given to a group and according to my analysis, it is only those who were on the executive that received money. There is no way an executive member would give the rest money when she has not yet received hers. So, if the money was given to individuals, it would have been better."

What do people think? Regarding UWEP, those who reported that it provided economic opportunities for women cited the prospects it presents. In Buluguyi, it was observed:

"UWEP promotes economic opportunities for only those who can access the funds. There is no interest charged on the funds and women control the funds. The biggest challenge is corruption."

Similar views were noted in Muterere:

"Yes, UWEP promotes women economic empowerment as women become managers at household level. They are responsible for transferring knowledge and skills acquired from selected enterprises being implemented at home."

Another respondent added that:

"Women become economically empowered and productive; they support the family development. When they have finance, they become true flowers in homes as they are ever happy to access basic essentials of life without necessarily asking their husbands"

In Jinja, the respondents were cautious:

"Those that receive funds, yes it promotes economic development, but they are few if not none because of corruption," said a respondent from Kaliro Town Council.

Similarly, one from Namugongo was equally cautious:

"If the women receive the funds, yes it promotes economic opportunities. The challenge is that we don't receive any funds."

In Kaabong, some optimism was expressed by a respondent from Kakamar:

"Yes; access to business loans, trainings, and equipment for women groups to promote their trade promotes economic opportunities."

What comes out strongly from these responses is that while people see the economic opportunities presented by UWEP, there is some scepticism accompanying it because of allegations of corruption, delayed or no disbursement of funds, etc., which undermine its ability to offer economic opportunities for women.

On the flipside, those who expressly stated that the programme doesn't offer economic opportunities for women cited issues like non-delivery of funds. One of the issues was highlighted by a key informant from Kaabong:

"UWEP has limited awareness. There was little mobilization and sensitization of communities. Many people are not aware of the program."

A Town Clerk also raised a governance issue about UWEP that could have undermined its ability to benefit women:

"To some extent no. Women only shared the money within themselves and they failed to do a collective business. UWEP had political interests, they could say these are my people, give them money."

In Bulesa, a respondent in the FGD explained:

"No because after training us, we were not given the money, we remained the same. The programme just ended on trainings. There was no beneficiary in our group."

The FGDs from Jinja were more blunt in their responses:

Corruption was a recurring issue as to why the UWEP provides no economic opportunities:

"Many times, these Government programs don't succeed due to corruption."

It is worth noting that most of the KIIs were reluctant to discuss the failures of UWEP in enhancing economic opportunities for women.

3.5.2 / Economic Opportunities for Women and Men (PDM)

The second question inquired as to whether PDM provided economic opportunities for both men and women. The responses were both positive and negative as highlighted below. Overall, on principle, the respondents agreed that PDM promotes opportunities for all. According to the KIIs, PDM, by design, inherently presents economic opportunities for both men and women. A respondent from Bugiri stated that:

"Yes, the program is to benefit both men and women since both men and women have certain percentages to be shared".

"They don't do what they promised, they pick out a few beneficiaries. We have not seen anyone benefiting so we are yet to see if it will promote economic opportunities".

Similar sentiments were expressed elsewhere by a key informant in Kaabong:

"... PDM money will be given to individuals in households and if you look at the plan, both the men and women are to benefit economically. Even the training given prepares them for business."

People also gave mixed responses for example in Buluguyi, one respondent said,

"... this is one of the pillars of PDM. There is equal opportunity for all to participate."

Another respondent from Bulesa noted that

"According to the PDM agenda, both men and women are involved so I expect all to benefit."

In Jinja, it was observed:

"That is what they say PDM will promote economic opportunities and improve living standards, but we have not seen beneficiaries yet."

Another respondent added:

"If the funds are given and the beneficiaries use it well for economic development, yes it will promote economic opportunities."

Conversely, those responding otherwise advanced several reasons, mainly arising from the fact that little is on the ground at the moment.

"We have not seen anyone benefiting. We are yet to see if it will promote economic opportunities for men and women."

In Namugongo, Jinja District, it was observed that:

"When hearing it on radio and some communication from political leaders, it seems to promote economic opportunities for men and women but on the ground, it is different. We don't see its impact."

While in Gadumile, the negative response had to do with the implementation:

"No, I think the Government should have permitted men and women to choose the enterprises they manage, not the government limiting it to a few."

SCORE

Assessment	<input type="checkbox"/> Very Poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Very Good
Justification	<p>Criteria 5 focuses on determining whether the programmes promote economic opportunities for both women and men.</p> <p>Generally, it is discernible from the responses that economic considerations for both men and women were made for the two programmes. UWEP is primarily for women and seeks to provide economic opportunities for women. Similarly, PDM, has strong economic prospects for both men and women. The idea itself is meant to boost household income which has strong economic undertones. This ordinarily means that the two programs present good opportunities for inclusive and sustainable trade and agricultural value chains where grassroots women small holder farmers/producers have opportunity to engage in agribusiness value chains for economic prosperity.</p> <p>However, the aspirations seem to be far from reality. Feedback from the study reveals that both UWEP and PDM have serious implementation gaps. Lack of or delayed disbursement of funds for projects was reported. Limited financial literacy sessions also have made it difficult for beneficiaries to implement successful and profitable businesses. Pre-determination of enterprises by the programs is also a limitation as some beneficiaries are reportedly forced to take up enterprises that are not necessarily of their interest or choice. Limited specialised skilling initiatives for instance in value addition, marketing, harvest handling etc also limit the ability of beneficiaries to effectively utilise the acquired resources in ways that maximise profits and economically empower them. These Existing programmatic implementation gaps therefore defeat the overall goal of the programs as they affect the ability of the programs to deliver comprehensive economic empowerment to the intended beneficiaries.</p>				

3.6 / Scale, Coordination and Sustainability of the Tool to Reach More Women and Men

The final criterion of GEC focuses on coordination and sustainability to ensure inclusion of both women and men. This criterion seeks to ascertain if a given programme can be implemented consistently for a given period. It deals with the ability to maintain the impact and benefits of projects over a projected period of time amidst changing social and economic contexts. In UWEP and PDM programmes, sustainability is about how beneficiaries grow their businesses and sustain their income. It also means having robust systems to ensure the programs grow and expand to benefit more men and women and other communities at scale.

To establish this, the respondents in KIs were asked: Can these programs be sustained over a long period and expanded in other areas? On the other hand, FGD interviewees were asked: How can these programs be expanded to ensure that many men and women participate and benefit from them in your community and country at large?

3.6.1 / Long-term Sustainability

From the KIs varied feedback was elicited. According to an LC III from one of the sub-counties:

"In case money is given to the right people and follow ups are made, the programs will be sustainable."

A Gender Officer added:

"If people keep on repaying the money, there will be sustainability but sometimes people get the money and then make us turn into enemies, others relocate, switch off their phones yet when they need money they always come in a friendly way."

Similar views were expressed by other KIs who hinged the success and sustainability of UWEP on the recovery of funds. Indeed, a key informant noted issues in this regard:

"The fund recovery is very poor in that 70% of UWEP funds are realised as default hence delaying the next round to start. These programs can be expanded by minimising the default rates."

A PDM Focal Person in one of the districts highlighted a critical governance issue that will ensure sustainability:

"... there is need to strengthen the groups so that they become more coherent and if that one is not done, we shall have challenges or people defaulting."

The official added:

"... also we need to look at the value chain. If the farmers are going for coffee, do we have the market and is that market sustainable? Is the farmer realizing profits? If profits are realized, then the farmer will have the ability to plough back the money he got."

The other critical aspect was around the governance of the SACCOs which keep this money.

"...but again, how about the managers of the SACCOs? They do not earn a salary. Their willingness to support the farmers will be important to ensure sustainability of PDM."

Reiterating the point on repayment as a sustainability measure, a key informant from Kaabong demonstrated how it has worked in their area:

"Women have been so loyal in repayment which has made it possible to help other people and rotate the funds. No security is needed so women who no don't have security have been supported so the program will continue".

There is a need to undertake some research to establish how successful beneficiaries made it and benchmark that for the learning of others. In Bugiri, a civil society actor recommended thus:

"How these programs can be expanded and sustained can best be answered after visiting some of the beneficiaries and seeing how they have benefitted. For those that have returned the funds, how were they able to return the money? For those that have not returned, what are the hindrances? After gathering all that information, we can come up with an excellent solution. That is the best way we can come up with the best strategy."

From the above responses, what is clear is that the sustainability of both UWEP and PDM will depend on repayment of the disbursed funds; good governance within the groups as robust monitoring frameworks.

What do the beneficiaries think? In the FGDs, they shared their impressions of what will make the programmes sustainable. One of the suggestions was around the targeting of beneficiaries. A respondent from Mutereke suggested revisiting it:

"The Ministry Gender, Labour and Social Development should revisit the selection criteria to have groups with active poor NOT the poorest of the poor in the revolving fund programs".

The idea here suggests that the criteria should focus on those who despite being poor, are actively engaged or willing to engage in some economic activities to reduce the risk of the money just being consumed by the “poorest of the poor”. This can raise inclusion issues and as such, a delicate balance needs to be struck.

With issues related to corruption highlighted throughout the interviews, the sustainability of UWEP and PDM, according to some respondents, will depend on how it is transparently run. A respondent from Bulesa stated:

“There is need to promote transparency because those implementing these programs sometimes favour some people.”

While regular sensitisation and monitoring were mentioned, respondents suggested that they should be undertaken by LCs and Parish Chiefs who are closer and easily accessible to the people. This can be illustrated by feedback from one of the respondents:

“There is need to facilitate LCs and parish chiefs to reach and sensitize people regularly and follow-up.”

SCORE

Assessment	<input type="checkbox"/> Very Poor	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Very Good
Justification	<p>Criteria 6 focuses on determining whether these programs are sustainable and scalable. The sustainability of both UWEP and PDM depend on repayment of the disbursed funds; good governance, effective program implementation and robust monitoring, evaluation and learning frameworks.</p> <p>From the KIIs and FGDs, it is evident that there are no clear mechanisms to ensure compliance with the terms of the grants issued through repayment of loans. The systems for managing the funds are not corruption-proof and there are no clear mechanisms for regular follow-ups to ensure both men and women are included and benefit from the programmes in a sustainable manner. Mechanisms to prepare and strengthen capacities of beneficiaries to manage the funds and their enterprises are weak. there are many program implementation gaps, Also many of the enterprises are agricultural based which is reliant on other factors like reliable climatic conditions, secure land rights and effective trade and value chains opportunities which are challenges faced by many programme participants that would affect the sustainability and scalability of the programs.</p>				

Emerging Issues and Recommendations



Emerging Issues and Recommendations



Having scrutinised UWEP and PDM using the GEC model, this chapter delves on the issues that emerged and cut across the two programmes in the districts of implementation. The following issues emerged:

4.1 / Emerging Issues

i. Poor Communication

Ordinarily all projects should have clear communication plans to guide information flow and ensure that all stakeholders have coherent messages on the different aspects of the programmes. From this study, it emerged that information about UWEP and PDM is shared in piece-meal and most times, it is disjointed. Examples include the requirements for registration, the availability of funds, updates on project status, etc. There is a communications gap between district and sub-county and as such, most local government and community members don't know the status of things. Without clear and coherent communication, there is a high risk of distortion of messages which can hinder women and men from meaningfully engaging in the processes of these programmes. By necessary implication, this robs grassroots women off the opportunity to use these programmes to engage in agribusiness value chains.

ii. Physical and Technical Access issues

While UWEP and PDM are meant to benefit poor and vulnerable people mainly in the rural areas, there is a challenge of physical access to all the services required to be able to benefit from the programmes. For example, registration is done at district level which is not accessible for many women at the grassroots. Besides that, knowing who to deal with in terms of personnel is challenging for many women

and men in the villages. Consequently, without readily available physical and technical support, Grassroots women cannot participate UWEP and PDM which all limits their ability to engage in agribusiness value chains

iii. Corruption

Across the research districts, incidents of corruption have been reported as a challenge encountered which is restricting women and men from participating in and benefiting from these projects. Corruption was cited in the way information is disseminated, selection of beneficiaries, management of funds, etc. there are allegations of ghost groups formed by local leaders because on ground, there are no known beneficiaries. Incidents of nepotism, bribery, extortion and delayed disbursements of funds were highlighted. For those grassroots women who cannot pay bribes, they get excluded from UWEP and PDM which then hinders their ability to engage in agribusiness value chains.

iv. Complicated procedures

According to most respondents, the requirements for people to be enrolled on the two programmes are unfriendly, especially to women. For UWEP for example, beneficiaries need like 3 files which is costly in terms of printing and photocopying, moreso in rural areas. Groups are required to develop

Constitutions yet these are formations of mostly illiterate women in the grassroots. illiteracy is an issue for many women which means they can't easily participate. Requirements like national IDs and registered mobile numbers, while legitimate, are not as simple as they appear. Most women reported using their husbands' phone numbers for communication but the same cannot be used for PDM and UWEP. Similarly, some women reported to be having issues with their IDs which have not been rectified in spite of their efforts to engage officials of NIRA. These. Combined, inadvertently lock out some women from participating and benefiting in the programmes. This has a trickle down effect of limiting grassroots women from engaging in and benefiting from agribusiness value chains.

v. Limited meaningful gender balance (quality over quantity; tokenism)

Whereas the two programmes have strong affirmative action undertones in favour of women, the findings suggest that this might have certain limitations. UWEP for example is purely for women while in PDM, women generally have a higher percentage of slots. However, data from this report shows that male dominance in decision making remains high. Even where women have high numbers, it was reported in some groups that issues like enterprise selection were predominantly favouring men. Even for UWEP which is exclusively for women, the fact that financial matters are handled at the household to some extent diluted women's ability to push their interests. It is thus critical to explore avenues of capacitating women to advocate for themselves in a sea of patriarchy which might drown their interests.

vi. Unclear sustainability plans (ensure recovery and ploughing back of funds, etc)

By design, UWEP and PDM operate in the model of revolving funds where recipients of the funding return the principal sum, with zero

or nominal interest to enable other people to benefit from it. For this model to be successful, the recovery rate needs to be high so that at any given time, there is money to give out to other beneficiaries. Findings from this research however show a grim picture. One of the risks identified is the inability of most recipients to reimburse the money advanced to them which could risk sustainability of the programmes. It is important to ensure that money is granted for enterprises that have the potential to raise the money. Equally important is the need to explore avenues of shielding borrowers from risks like climate change or price fluctuations which might reduce the profitability of these enterprises.

vii. Limited staffing at sub-county and district

It also became apparent from the research that most of the duty bearers are hardly available to serve the grassroots women and men. Most of the respondents opined that the officials from the district or sub-county were rarely in office and if they were, did not give adequate time to address their needs as beneficiaries. The requirements for these programmes are quite complex for grassroots women, majority of whom are illiterate. This means that they need dedicated and patient officials to support them throughout the process.

viii. Political interference

In theory, PDM and UWEP are meant to benefit all Ugandans regardless of their sex, religious affiliation, and political inclinations. However, because of the prevalence of the National Resistance Movement (NRM) cadres across the country who dominate leadership positions, it emerged in the study that there was preference for NRM cadres to benefit from the programmes. It doesn't help that some political actors have publicly made statements reinforcing this narrative.

4.2 / Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

To the national government:

- Strengthen transparency and accountability mechanisms to prevent, detect and severely punish corruption in the programmes (toll free lines, rapid anti-corruption desk, etc). This will restore people's confidence that the programmes are meant for them.
- Regular audits of the funds are needed to ensure that the right people are benefitting and that there is value-for-money in the programmes. Reports of some local government officials swindling money or forming ghost groups can be established and punished if true.
- The design of the programmes doesn't seem to be long-term; they start with publicity but vanish suddenly leaving people confused. It is critical to have clear information and timelines on the two programmes so as to keep beneficiaries up to date to avoid allegations of corruption which always pop up if information is scanty.
- Politicisation of the project which excludes non-NRM people needs to be avoided through using technical people like parish chiefs as opposed to NRM party structures at the village level. There is need to use technical people e.g. parish chief
- Inclusion of CSOs in the design and roll-out of programmes so as to enable them complement government initiatives in their projects including supporting with information dissemination

To the District Local Government:

- Harmonising communication of govt programmes (CAO has info which s/county chiefs, LCs and parish chiefs don't) so that there is coherent, consistent and up-to-date information about the programmes with all officials

To the Civil Society

- Take a keen interest in government programmes so as to provide sound oversight as well as align institutional projects with government priorities.
- Organise community dialogues with government to address the issues raised by the grassroots people
- Create awareness on community for government programmes and support with organising communities

4.3 / Conclusion

The analysis sought to ascertain the gender responsiveness of the UWEP and PDM using the Gender Evaluation Criteria. This has been done by examining the extent to which the two programmes have institutionalised gender equality in their policies, programs, projects, provision of services, structures, and budgets. There is evidence that UWEP and PDM are rooted in gender equality since they aspire to offer equal opportunities to both men and women; and UWEP substantially focuses on only women so as to equalise them with men. The report has also highlighted the various obstacles that hinder the equal participation of both women and men in economic initiatives. These include corruption, patriarchy, illiteracy, and poor communication. These emerging issues have been explained and relevant recommendations suggested to address the problems encountered. It is therefore critical for all stakeholders to take the necessary steps to actualise the aspirations of the two programmes related to realising gender equal opportunities for both men and women in Uganda. This will also go a long way in facilitating and enabling grassroots women to participate and benefit from agribusiness value chains using funds availed through government programmes like UWEP and PDM.



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