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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Executive Summary</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Study</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Findings</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion and Recommendations</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In Uganda, every region has experienced some form of violent conflict over the last 60 years. Ongoing conflicts include armed rebellions, radicalization and violent extremism due to the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), inter-ethnic rivalries and monarchical challenges in the Rwenzori region. Contention over resources, especially land, between refugees and host communities in refugee-hosting districts is another source of conflict. Elsewhere, there are conflicts over land fueled by greed, marginalizing inheritance practices and unclear land boundaries.

The impact of conflict on women is devastating and disproportionate. The Government of Uganda (GoU) has demonstrated its commitment to promoting the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda by ratifying international legal and policy frameworks and enacting local laws. Civil society organizations (CSOs) have also played a significant role in designing and implementing initiatives that promote human peace and security. However, little documentation is available on the existing peacebuilding initiatives in Uganda. Against this background, Coalition for Action 1325 in partnership with the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (GNWP) commissioned a study, “Conducting Mapping of Peacebuilding Initiatives and Actors in Uganda.” The study's overall objective was to understand better the context and the existing peacebuilding initiatives in Uganda. In particular, the study sought to recognize peace and security issues and concerns in Uganda, examine barriers and opportunities for women’s participation in politics and peacebuilding processes, and women’s economic empowerment. In addition, it sought to explore and identify peacebuilding initiatives and key local actors in Uganda.

The study was conducted at the national, regional, district and sub-county levels. The mapping was mainly qualitative. It used a desk review of relevant literature, existing policies and legislation on issues related to WPS in Uganda, as well as Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant Interviews (KIs) to collect information. Respondents included women, youth and community leaders, CSOs, local and national authorities, security forces, civil society leaders, women politicians and political candidates. Field research was conducted in eight districts and six regions: Isingiro and Kabale districts for the South Western region, Kaberamaido district for the Teso region, Kamuli district for the Eastern region, Kasese for Rwenzori, Yumbe for West Nile, Kitgum for Acholi and Luwero for the Central region.

The findings from the study indicate that in all regions, there are several peacebuilding initiatives, though they cannot adequately address WPS issues in Uganda. The initiatives remain extremely limited and uncoordinated. The study also found that while the GoU has put in place laws for effective implementation of the WPS agenda, implementation remains a challenge. Local governments and civil society organizations responsible for implementing aspects of the policies and action plans remain unaware of their existence. Moreover, deeply ingrained cultural and religious belief systems continue to uphold values and practices that reinforce male privilege and dominance at the expense of the rights, safety, security and well-being of women and girls. Other peace and security-related issues include poverty, the effects of climate change, cross-border tensions, election-related violence, land conflicts and unemployment, especially among the youth.
The study recommends that actors in the peacebuilding field synergize for wider impact. The actors should innovate initiatives that increase women’s meaningful participation in decision-making and peacebuilding processes by addressing psychosocial, cultural, institutional and structural barriers. There is also a need for the GoU to expedite the process of resolving cross-border tensions (especially on the Rwanda-Uganda Katuna Border) and increase funding for peacebuilding work at national and district levels.
INTRODUCTION

While there are several peacebuilding initiatives across Uganda, these are not enough to address all WPS issues. Women across the country continue to mobilize to end existing conflicts and prevent the onset of future conflict, particularly in the Northern and Eastern parts of the country, due to the decades-long fighting with the insurgent Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA).

In terms of women’s participation in politics, Uganda’s 10th Parliament (2016-2021) is composed of 35 per cent women. At the local government level, female representation stands at 33 per cent, of which 3 per cent are directly elected, while men constitute the remaining 67 per cent.

The country’s economic growth is undermined by corruption. Measures to combat corruption include enhancing the coordination of anti-corruption agencies and the stronger involvement of civil society. Despite these efforts, corruption continues and undermines society’s trust in State institutions, including the justice system. This lack of trust is aggravated by general frustration with court delays, the associated costs and the bureaucratic process of pursuing formal justice. There is a noticeable increase in the number and complexity of land-related cases and other disputes, with an increasing number of Ugandans choosing violence to resolve conflicts. Economically, Northern Uganda remains the poorest part of the country, with 60 per cent of its population designated as low-income. Unemployment is higher among urban residents (14 per cent) compared to rural residents (6 per cent) for the same period.¹

Uganda has incorporated global gender norms and standards into its domestic laws. It is committed to implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including Goal 5 on Gender Equality and Goal 16 on Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions. The National Gender Policy (2007) and several other national laws and policies contain provisions that protect women.² The recently passed Transitional Justice Policy ³ and the National Peacebuilding and Conflict Resolution Policy (still in draft form) should enhance women’s participation in conflict prevention and resolution. The implementation of the Peace, Recovery and Development Plan (PRDP) for Northern Uganda, the Northern Uganda Social Action Fund (NUSA), and the Luwero-Rwenzori Development Program (LRDP) has to a certain extent, ensured women’s participation in the design of relief and recovery efforts.

LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORKS SUPPORTING WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY IN UGANDA


³ https://drive.google.com/file/d/1zbqYZgPpLpDrQfTJmsc_GcrMn/0B2/view

(2) more women occupying leadership (and management) positions and exercising meaningful influence over decision-making in all levels of governance including the security sector; (3) increasing meaningful participation of women in the prevention and mitigation of conflicts related to mitigation of human-made and natural disasters; and (4) effective systems and structures that create an enabling environment across government and civil society for successful implementation. Additionally, the recently passed Transitional Justice Policy (2019) and the draft National Peacebuilding and Conflict Resolution Policy provide for participation of women in peacebuilding, conflict prevention and mediation. Other laws and policies addressing gender issues include the Gender Policy (2007), Local Government Act (1997), Land Act (1998), Prevention in Trafficking of Persons Act (2010), Domestic Violence Act (2010) and Female Genital Mutilation Act (2010). These laws and policies are enhanced by Uganda’s commitment to implementing international commitments such as the SDGs, especially Goals 5 and 16, as well as the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

1.2 THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN PEACEBUILDING IN UGANDA

The women of Uganda play a key role in conflict resolution and prevention. One notable example of women’s leadership is Betty Bigombe, who in 1988 was appointed Minister of State for Northern Uganda. She spearheaded the task force, which successfully convinced LRA guerrilla rebels to lay down their arms. Betty supported the peace journey in leading the first peace talks and negotiations between the government of Uganda and LRA rebels (1986-2005). She also led the delegation of women from the peace movement into the peace talks between the Ugandan government and LRA rebels in Sudan.

Another example of Ugandan women’s leadership for peace is the Women’s Situation Room that launched on 15 February 2016 in Kampala. The Situation Room is an early warning and rapid response mechanism against violence arising before, during and after elections in Uganda. The Forum for Women in Democracy was the initiator and the co-owner of the Situation Room. Five hundred women were trained as electoral observers and deployed in fifteen districts considered to be hotspots during the election. The reasons for establishing the situation room was to assure women to participate in all electoral practices. In 2016, the Women’s Situation Room mobilized young, creative and innovative women to follow up, monitor, report and respond to any election-related violent conflicts or incidents in the hotspots of Uganda. The women monitors shared the information with the electoral commission and the police for follow-up action.
THE STUDY

OVERALL AND SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

The overall objectives of the mapping exercise were to better understand the context and the existing peacebuilding initiatives, and to forge broader partnerships with other partners working on the WPS agenda. Specifically, the mapping exercise sought to achieve the following:

1. To understand peace and security issues and concerns in Uganda;
2. To examine barriers and opportunities for women’s participation in politics and peacebuilding processes, and women’s economic empowerment in Uganda; and
3. To identify peacebuilding initiatives and key actors that exist in Uganda.

METHODOLOGY

The mapping was qualitative and used the following methods of data and information collection:

1. FGDs with local populations including women, youth and community leaders, CSOs, local and national authorities, and security forces;
2. KIIIs with civil society leaders, representatives of national and local authorities, women politicians and political candidates, and other relevant stakeholders in target districts; and
3. Review of relevant documentation and existing policies and legislation on issues related to WPS in Uganda.

Field research was conducted in six districts within four regions, including refugee-hosting communities. The districts included in the mapping are: Kabale for South Western region, Kasese for Rwenzori region, Kaberamaido for Teso region, and Kamuli district for Near Eastern (Busoga region). The refugee-hosting districts include Yumbe and Isingiro. In total, 358 respondents were reached through FGDs and KIIIs, as demonstrated in the table below.

A total of 40 respondents were reached through 5 key informants per district in each of the eight districts. At the district level, the respondents included: district community development officers, Chief Administrative
Officers, district speakers, District Police Commanders, district planners, women leaders and community-based organizations. At the national level, the informants included: officials from the Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development (MGLSD), other relevant ministries, OPM, and civil society and development partners, such as UN Women, and other international agencies. Additionally, a total of 32 community-level FGDs were held across the eight districts.

In each district, four FGDs (1 for women, 1 for men, 1 for boys, and 1 for girls) were conducted. The FGDs were separated by gender and age to ensure all participants felt safe and comfortable speaking. Approximately 10 people attended each FGD. These included women and men political leaders, women in business, civil society representatives, women from Ugandan police, religious and cultural leaders, women refugee students and youth leaders.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOCAL AND NATIONAL AUTHORITIES</th>
<th>LOCAL WOMEN, YOUNG WOMEN AND CIVIL SOCIETY</th>
<th>REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS</th>
<th>OTHER*</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>% OF THE TOTAL</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WOMEN</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEN</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WOMEN</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEN</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>16%</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>358</td>
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PEACEBUILDING INITIATIVES IN UGANDA
STUDY FINDINGS

UNDERSTANDING THE PEACE AND SECURITY CONTEXT AND ISSUES IN UGANDA

The overall objectives of the mapping exercise were to better understand the context and the existing peacebuilding initiatives, and to forge broader partnerships with other partners working on the WPS agenda. Specifically, the Mapping exercise sought to achieve the following:

Meaning of “Peace” to Women
Finding 1: Peace to women means more than an absence of war — it encompasses rights to education, healthcare and freedom from violence.

“A society is peaceful when it is free from economic exploitation, social and religious discrimination and there is freedom of expression, freedom of religion, freedom of movement, gender equity and justice.”
- Programmes Coordinator, Uganda Women’s Network (UWONET)

“Peace for me is [to] come out of the house not accompanied by anyone. If people do not care what I’m wearing, what I look like. If I can visit a village where I am working and feel safe. If my mother doesn’t call me four times a day when I am out for a meeting to check to see if I have returned to the office safely.”
- Young women from Busoga subregion

“Peace means going to [a] health center and it is stocked with adequate drugs and the health staff are present. Peace is when there is plenty to eat at home for the children, when I am paid well and I can afford to shop clothes for the children and when the weather is friendly and we get a bumper harvest.”
- Women crushing stones along Kabale road

The findings reveal that women are more likely than men to adopt a broad definition of peace, which includes security at the household level, and focuses on the attainment of individual rights and freedoms. For women, peace encompasses the right to education, healthcare and freedom from violence. In contrast, men have a greater tendency to associate peace with the absence of armed conflict and the stability of formal structures such as governance and infrastructure. Women’s comprehensive understanding of peace can be linked to their role as primary caregivers in society. This role makes them more attuned to the negative impacts of lacking the above-mentioned freedoms and services. As a result, women’s understanding of peace is more holistic, bringing together the private and the public sphere, and adopting a strong human security lens.
Sources of insecurity for women and their communities

Finding 2: Gender-based violence (GBV) and early and child marriage are prevalent in Uganda and affect the security of women, young women and girls. Moreover, women are often not able to access fair healthcare or justice when faced with GBV.

Twice as many women than men experienced spousal violence in their lifetime; one in two Ugandan women has been a victim at least once during their lifetime and one in three in the last 12 months. Participants of this study confirmed the prevalence of GBV in their communities. They stressed that the official numbers are likely an underestimate, since women face difficulties in accessing justice, and are suppressed and silenced all the time. One participant noted that these “issues are always resolved at the negotiation level by the leaders after being given some money,” and are not brought to the formal justice system. Participants highlighted corrupt practices in hospitals, which contribute to undercounting of GBV cases. One participant shared: “Kaberamaido Hospital is a government hospital, but when the girls are raped [or] defiled, the doctors demand money to carry out medical tests whereas the parents cannot afford, the girls are not tested and therefore the cases die out.”

GBV also includes teenage pregnancies, and early and child marriages in Uganda. According to the World Bank, three out of ten Ugandan girls have their first child before their eighteenth birthday. As a result, parents also have a negative attitude towards their children and do not wish them to engage them in educational and development activities.

“She is just going to be pregnant after investing my money in her.”
- FGD participant from Eastern Uganda

Early and child marriage remains a common practice. More than one third of young girls in Uganda marry before the age of eighteen. Child marriage and early childbearing eventually lead girls to drop out of school prematurely. In the Eastern region, some parents prefer to take boys to school, while girls are forced to find a job, so that they can support their families. Additionally, girls are expected to get married for the family to get some financial gains, defined as “Kasukali” (meaning sugar, a general term that means money). Early marriage is particularly common in refugee communities, where it is a coping and protection mechanism. In refugee-hosting communities, girls are married off early for protection since parents often cannot afford to feed families.

Early marriage may also affect young women’s access to economic resources and opportunities later in life.
The literature review identified that girls who got married at a younger age were generally married to men with no formal or little formal education, and no formal employment to sustain the family.  

"When a parent finds he/she cannot feed the children, he/she turns to girls and force them to get married. The assumption is that they will get food in the new home. Parents here cannot afford to see their children starving."  
- FGD respondent in Yumbe districts

"When the girls reach primary five, they are told to drop out of school because their education is not valued."
- FGD participant

Unequal power relations and a patriarchal legal regime have resulted in the denial of basic rights for millions of women across the regions, especially when they seek justice for GBV. Several laws and policies are themselves rooted in patriarchal norms. As a result, they are grossly inadequate in protecting the human rights of women and preventing gender-based abuses and violations. Women are not always aware of their rights and the law. Even when they are aware, many women are unable to access the formal justice system. They resort to informal justice systems of clan leaders, religious leaders or local village council officials to resolve their issues. Informal conflict resolution is often faster, with fewer steps and actors than in the formal system. However, these systems often entrench gender discrimination. In most cases, the goal of dispute resolution is to preserve family harmony and custom instead of enforcing the written law.  

Finding 3: Women face limited access to education, resources and economic opportunities — this further increases their vulnerability and aggravates their insecurity, both at home and in the community.

Due to the high rates of school dropouts, many women, especially in those rural areas, are uneducated and lack the knowledge and information to demand their rights. This can lead to intergenerational poverty since no one can motivate young people to pursue professional careers for better standards of living.

Existing gender imbalances are buttressed by household power relations that underscore men's fears that women's ownership of productive resources will shift the balance of power relations at the household level in favor of the women, reducing men's authority. Only 39 per cent of women in the 20 districts of Uganda own land compared to 73 per cent of men. This concurs with the 2017 Uganda Bureau of Statistics 2017, which established that only 31 per cent of women aged 15-49 years own land as compared to 48 per cent of men in the same age bracket.

9 Teenage Marriage in Post Conflict Northern Uganda, A Case of Amuru district, Article in Science Journal of Public Health, Vol. 6, by Munanura Turyasima, Omara Acca, Adong Caroline and Awor Silvia

10 Equal by Right: The Uganda Women’s Agenda 2010-2016, Page 16.
There is widespread support for this inequality: 27 per cent of the population supports unequal land rights, reaching as high as 54 per cent in the Mid-Northern sub-region. As a result, women do not enjoy complete and equal ownership of land that is usually accessed through male relatives. The access they possess is highly dependent on the good relationship that a woman has with male relatives.

Women are the main producers in agricultural and informal sectors, however, their ability to make a substantial income from these sectors is hindered by the production-marketing chain that is largely controlled by male middlemen. In addition, as producers, they lack timely information on markets and economic trends and this affects their ability to negotiate business transactions effectively. There are also gender-based structural barriers such as sexual harassment and security of women traversing borders.

"Sometimes we go to Soroti (50 kms ‘nearby’ town) to sell our products but the distance is far and the transport costs incurred are very high. Even when the buyers come, they offer a very low price for our products and sometimes we end up making losses."
- FGD participant, Teso Region

Women have limited access to resources and thus cannot independently support their families and children’s education, especially if the man has left.

"We do not have money for fertilizers, or tractors to open large pieces of land. Even the land itself — we are given less land to cultivate for the family food only."
- FGD participant, Western Uganda

"The men prefer selling all the produce after harvesting. After selling, they use the money to buy and drink alcohol or even marry other women, but when the women complain, they are beaten or tortured in some way."
- Participant from Eastern Uganda

Finding 4: Corruption is a major factor that aggravates women’s vulnerability, limits their access to basic services and resources, and undermines their security and the peacefulness of their communities.

Prevalent corruption: Corruption is so prevalent, it has become normalized. Examples of corruption include “big” powerful people planting trees in swamps, grabbing poor widows’ land, or making complaint files disappear from police stations and courts of law. This has led to poor service delivery, especially in the health, education, justice and infrastructure sectors. Corruption has serious implications for human security, as citizens, in particular poor women are compelled to pay for services that should be free. It also contributes to the deterioration of the social fabric, as it affects public trust and citizens’ willingness to participate in communities and governments affairs.
Finding 5: Climate change undermines women and girls’ security.

Global warming, climate change and their interrelated impacts take a heavy toll on communities through the devastation of crops and animals caused by changing rainfall patterns, floods, landslides and drought. As primary caretakers, women are often the first to become aware of environmental changes, as resources become scarce, affecting their means of livelihood and the basis for the sustenance of their families. Due to their greater likelihood of living in poverty and their gendered social roles, women are more likely than men to die in climate change-related disasters and to suffer from increased workload, the burden of collecting fuel and water, violence, health problems and loss of income in the aftermath of such events.16

Finding 6: At the community level, land disputes and electoral violence are the main sources of insecurity and fighting.

Land disputes: Land conflicts are a serious concern, especially in the Acholi, West Nile, Elgon and Bunyoro sub regions. This is especially the case for women, who primarily rely on an agricultural livelihood. During conflict and encampment, the land became overgrown and elders forgot where one clan’s land stopped and another’s began. In the post-conflict period, many are taking advantage of the breakdown of customary law, which ordinarily provided safeguards against land wrangles.

As a result, “fertile land is often the subject of tenure disputes, especially between indigenous and incoming ethnic groups” from within and outside Uganda.17

Election-related conflicts and violence are fueled by sustained intolerance, commercialization of politics and exclusion of women from electoral processes. Even after an election, the opposing parties do not create an opportunity for reconciliation. Communities continue to be divided along political party lines. By-elections tend to be more violent than general elections. The violence around elections in Arua, Rukungiri and Kasese in 2018 and 2020-2021 causes concern.

“In this region, the supporters of the [Forum for Democratic Change] and [National Resistance Movement] never see eye to eye. They are always in conflict. It gets worse during campaigns and election days, but it really never ends. They even abuse each other at unrelated events. It is like every month is election month.”

- Participant from Rwenzori Sub Region

Both women and men, in accordance with the laws of Uganda, can file complaints at any police station during an election. However, the number of men filing complaints with the police is more than women. Commonly reported cases include: assault, threatening violence, tearing posters, and preventing women from attending opponents’ rallies, among others. The number of cases reported to the police is minimal for various reasons, including limited confidence that cases will be handled fast and justice served.18


17 El-Bushra & Sahl, 2005, p. 33

At the national level, the country analysis found that the civic space for engagement is shrinking. This is due to constitutional amendments to remove the presidential age limit (‘The Togikwatako Campaign’) as well as the military raising of the legislature. There is a strong state but with weak institutional capacity to deliver, allowing police brutality, raids as well as the closure of CSO offices, arbitrary arrests, enactment of regressive laws and policies, crack-down on political dissent, opposition and alternative voices and a restrictive legal and policy climate. The same issue appears at the district level:

Finding 7: Shrinking civic space, weak institutions and patriarchal norms limit women’s ability to enter politics.

At the national level, the country analysis found that the civic space for engagement is shrinking. This is due to constitutional amendments to remove the presidential age limit (‘The Togikwatako Campaign’) as well as the military raising of the legislature. There is a strong state but with weak institutional capacity to deliver, allowing police brutality, raids as well as the closure of CSO offices, arbitrary arrests, enactment of regressive laws and policies, crack-down on political dissent, opposition and alternative voices and a restrictive legal and policy climate. The same issue appears at the district level:

“We have big offices, we have the cars, and we have the followers, but we do not have the power or the authority, especially political authority. This power belongs to the Resident District commissioner and District Security Officer perhaps even the Regional Police Commander.”
- KII with District Political leader, Isingiro District

Inadequate capacities of public institutions to deliver on their mandates affect public policy and women’s effective participation in these processes.

“Although the Women Entrepreneurship Fund and Youth Livelihood Fund programs could do better than how they are currently performing, we cannot do anything, these programs are controlled in Kampala. We do not have funds to monitor them, we do not have the authority to penalize the underperforming ones, thus the Youth Livelihood program is extremely underperforming, yet we could have done better if it was under the management of the district.”
- District Community Development Officer for Kabale

Women in elective positions face gendered challenges, including the negative portrayal and trivialization of women leaders in the media, which undermines their leadership. They also face enormous levels of political patronage that abuse the principle of affirmative action. This abusive system has led to the co-option of women in state structures, leaving them without a voice and lending credibility to a system that is responsible for the marginalization and exploitation of women as a social group. Patronage also normalizes women’s insubordination through the “Deputizing Syndrome,” where women are appointed
into leadership positions in a tokenistic manner, without real power to influence political outcomes.

The findings suggest that in the political sphere, women lack the necessary requirements, such as formal education, experience and specific skills, to assume political positions. This may be because girls are not supported to progress in education, or cannot attend skills training and mentorship programs. On the other hand, boys are groomed into leadership positions.

“Even the community level dialogues [exclude] women as they are required to remain in the house with the older women and children, helping with domestic work and taking care of the younger children. This leaves them unprepared for leadership. And because they lack education, they lack the kind of language to speak on the council floor.”

- FGD with women, Kaberamaido District

According to the 2018 Equal Opportunities Commission Report on the Status of Women Employment in the Public Sector in Uganda, women represent 39.8 per cent of the staff in the 21 Ministries. The report noted that “the majority of the women employed in the public sector hold lower ranking positions e.g. officer entry level and support staff.”

Women are generally employed in the public sector but occupy lower positions like secretaries, office attendants, data clerks, cleaners and assistants. As such, they do not have access to decision-making spaces. These positions are not only feminized but also attract a lower salary, and are characterized by high stagnation, limited career growth and transition, sexual harassment and harsh working conditions. In addition, the report noted an emerging trend of men also dominating the support and administrative staff category. It stated that there is a reduction in the overall number of women in public sector employment, from 39 per cent in 2014 to 37 per cent in 2018. Only 3 of the 23 sectors had 50 per cent or more women in leadership in policy making processes. As men are increasingly occupy roles traditionally occupied by women, women are pushed into civil society, the private sector or the informal sector.

The Ministry of Local Government Fact Sheet 2016 has data across the 115 districts of Uganda. It shows that out of the 108 Chief Administrative Officers, 95 are men (88 per cent) as compared to 13 women (12 per cent); out of the 60 Deputy Chief Administrative Officers, 52 are men (87 per cent) as compared to 8 women (13 per cent); and out of the 22 Town Clerks all of them are men (100 per cent). In total out of the 115 districts, 113 District Chairpersons are men, with only 2 women.

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20 Ibid


22 Ibid
Sexual harassment is a manifestation of power relations and a reflection of the roles attributed to men and women in society. Women are much more likely to be victims of sexual harassment because more often than men they are in situations with large imbalances of power, in more vulnerable and insecure positions, lack self-confidence or have been socialized to suffer in silence.

"The local government act gives powers to the district chairperson to appoint secretaries of committees. In most cases, the chairperson asks for sex from women councillors in order to be appointed secretaries ‘Ministers’. If you don’t, he will not only refuse to appoint you but also make your life hard throughout the council tenure.”
- District Councillor in Isingiro District

Finding 8: Even when women are able to enter politics, patriarchal norms, negative perceptions and representations of their abilities, and lack of coordination impede them from effectively influencing policies.

The technique of “add women and stir,” where women are nominally included but unable to meaningfully participate, does not challenge the notion of male-dominated patriarchal spaces where women are pushed and expected to survive and deliver on gender equality outcomes. Experts note that there are flaws that come with the politics of the inclusion of women in male-dominated structures and their continued scrutiny in terms of how they transform these patriarchal structures and systems. In Uganda, for instance, through the 30 per cent Affirmative Action policies, inclusive approaches tend to focus on women as “special interest groups” along with the youth, elderly and persons with disability (PWDs). In her book on gender and parliamentary processes, academic and activist Sylvia Tamale observed that “women spent a great deal of campaign time convincing the electorate of their moral aptness to stand for political office rather than in the articulation of political issues … women … encountered slurs regarding their marital status, sexuality and (in)fidelity. A married woman was penalised for neglecting her husband and family. A woman who was unattached was put to task to prove that she was not a Malaya [prostitute].”

"Once women enter decision-making spaces, their struggles are far from over as their capability to effectively influence decisions and articulate women’s concerns is affected by several hurdles at local and national levels. Hindrances to women leaders making a difference in public policy-making and implementation processes can be personal, procedural or structural.”
- FGD with Women Leaders, Katuna Town Council, Kabale District

The women-led CSOs have done a great deal to highlight the issues that affect women, but their approach has not been very sustainable. In 2001, all candidates and their manifestos pledged total more on this.

24 See Ahikire (2009), Ahikire (2017), and Cornwall (2000) for
Women who organize together around shared interests develop their capacities for advocacy and influence. The experience of group cohesion and solidarity can contribute to self-affirmation at the individual and collective level, give support and legitimacy to gender equality agendas and enable women to exert the collective power needed to influence for women’s rights.

Women leaders at all levels complained of how they were defined in terms of their bodies, dress style and social interactions to intimidate, confuse or divert their attention during policy-making processes and debates. The use of negative and sexualized language undermines and deters even the most resilient women from actively participating, thereby obstructing their ability to influence and push for women’s rights during public policy decision-making. Women who succeed in getting into places of leadership face stiff competition from their male peers and are often forced to leave through blackmail, coercion, intimidation and sex scandals. A youth female leader in Isingiro district shared with the research team how one of the councilors responded to her appeal for help against sexual abuse from male councilors: “Stop yelling sexual abuse!! Sex does not stop you from doing your job as a councilor, why do you always attract sexual perverts anyway?… And the lady speaker could only afford to smile.”

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“In our office (District Community Development Office), male senior staff often warned young women not to interact with us older seasoned women technocrats who were termed the ‘gender people’ because they claimed we were confused and frustrated.”

- KII with women from the Southwestern Region

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As a result, in 2010, the reading of the Bill was canceled for lack of quorum despite the numbers of women in parliament.

**The barriers to women’s meaningful participation in peacebuilding processes in Uganda**

**Finding 9:** Women face similar barriers in peacebuilding work as in political participation. These include patriarchal norms and attitudes – including women’s own attitudes and dismissal of their roles – pervasive violence, poverty and lack of access to education.

Patriarchal norms reinforce restrictive traditional gender roles, making it difficult for women to meaningfully and safely participate in peacebuilding processes. The Desk Document Review has demonstrated that the issues of patriarchy and sexuality are sometimes used to deter women from public participation. For instance, in a study conducted by Accord, “one key woman activist who contributed a lot to the Juba peace process and was an observer at the peace talks was intimidated on local radio stations after it was suggested she was having sexual relationships with negotiators.”

“Women’s role has been confined to their households while men’s scope of influence expands from community to district level. Women’s problem is the customary restrictions they have been made subject to.”

Contrarily, men are not hindered by social and customary restrictions to organize themselves for taking collective action.”

- KII with DCDO-Gender, Western Uganda

“It is very difficult because women are first of all not very open in this society (among Bakonzo tribe), they do not speak about what is happening with them, and so a lot of women even come to a situation where they commit suicide rather than talk about their problems with others.”

- KII with Secretary for Community Based Services, Western Uganda

“The cultural beliefs and social norms have also greatly affected women’s participation in leadership. For instance, here in Isingiro district, the directly elective political position is known to be for ‘men.’ If a woman dares to stand for one of these positions, even fellow women won’t support her. [Fellow women and community members] perceive this as disturbing the peace of men. That is why we don’t have any directly elected lady councilor.”

- District Speaker, Isingiro District

Women often devalue their role as peacebuilders, and despite their achievements, women do not necessarily recognize the important role they play in building peace. Instead, they tend to focus on the importance of state institutions and local leaders as the key actors in peacebuilding.

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28 Women’s Entrepreneurship Development in Uganda: Insights and Recommendations by Enock Mugabi, 2014
Violence, fueled by conflict and militarization, affects women's freedom to participate in peacebuilding activities. Women face intimidation and threats to their safety when they try to take active roles in their communities. Access to justice also remains a significant challenge for survivors of violence.  

As illustrated by various testimonies collected by Isis-Women’s International Cross-Cultural Exchange, sexual violence was prevalent during the armed conflict in Northern Uganda, as a woman recounted:

“... later all the girls that were abducted and defiled or raped were married off to rebel leaders or used for general sexual services to rebels. Some commanders were reported to have four or five wives while Joseph Kony himself had over thirty wives at one time.”

In the Teso region, which suffered for decades under the Karamajong cattle rustling, women described sexual violence as follows:

“They never left a breastfeeding woman to go without having been raped. They believed that breastfeeding mothers were free from HIV. They have the belief that a woman with children is not infected with gonorrhea.”

As mentioned above, pervasive poverty also inhibits women’s involvement in peacebuilding activities. Women report that they are unable to engage in peacebuilding activities because of the double burden of their domestic roles, lack of income-generation activities and control over household income. This is reiterated in Harriet Nabukeera-Musoke’s book on transitional justice and gender where “given the meager resources available to women individuals and groups, it became difficult for women to sustain their presence at these deliberations.”

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10 Equal by Right. The Uganda Women's Agenda 2010-2016.
“When the man does not have enough money to support the family the woman does not respect him. This makes men insecure and hence uses violence to assert themselves which rises insecurity.”
- FGD in Eastern region

“In many community programmes women cannot participate; for example trainings brought by NGOs provide an opportunity for women to learn and build their capacities. However, due to the gender roles, some women are unable to attend because they have to work to feed their families.”
- KII in western region

Women’s lack of access to education and low levels of literacy were identified in many discussions as barriers to women’s active participation in peacebuilding. Limited education, which disproportionately affects older women, was also noted as a reason for women to feel they could not contribute. However, it was also noted that women have many skills in conflict resolution and peacebuilding that do not necessarily require high levels of education.

“…that cheap talk that we don’t have women who are suitably educated to take part in peacebuilding. Yet we see men taking part who are neither educated nor care about peace. Women don’t need to be educated to know how a conflict affects them, and to know what they want from peace. We know men are always preoccupied with per diem, power and perhaps a post in government or army not necessarily peace and stability.”
- Isingiro District Speaker

Organizations working to support women in peacebuilding activities also face barriers that impact the sustainability of their work with the communities because they are entirely dependent on external funding. The funding they receive tends to be short-term in nature and restricted to specific project areas, such as livelihood training or counseling. Local organizations struggle to set their own agendas and are often influenced by the funding preferences of donors.
The barriers to women’s economic participation in Uganda

Finding 10: Some of the same barriers faced by women on the political arena also affect their economic participation.

As discussed above, many families do not see any value in their children’s education, especially their daughters. High levels of child marriage and school dropout levels among young women and girls indicate that they tend to have a lower level of education. Moreover, girls are still underrepresented in technical and science subjects. Limited education has important implications for women’s economic empowerment. To run a successful business, there is a need to access finance and credit, while also ensuring accountability, bookkeeping at enterprise level, and continuous training in financial literacy and communication. All these tasks require a certain level of education. In this sense, having a higher education is one of the significant characteristics that many successful female entrepreneurs have in common - a trait lacking in the majority of Uganda’s women entrepreneurs. The government has provided some support to empower Ugandan women and youth in this area. Economic empowerment programs such as the Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Program and Youth Livelihood Program give credit in the form of loans to groups of female entrepreneurs. It should be noted that financial education and financial literacy are of utmost importance for the success of all of these projects.

Women in Uganda earn their income primarily from agriculture or agricultural-related enterprises. Yet over 70 per cent do not own any land. This lack of ownership constrains women from making long-term investments, such as tree planting, building commercial houses, or even planting annual crops like coffee or cocoa, which are more profitable compared to beans or cassava.

Despite Uganda’s religious diversity, religious practices tend to determine what women can and cannot do. In some interpretations of Islam, women cannot inherit agricultural land and are often excluded from men’s discussions on the sale of family land. This lack of engagement in decisions around the domestic economy is also reflected across other religions. However, participants noted that religious leaders have the opportunity to create change.

“Our religion teaches us that a man is the head of the house. When I get money, I have to report to him or even give it to him. If I want to buy a plot of land for resale, I have to tell him and, if he doesn’t agree I have to do it stealthily. If he finds out, then God help me.”
- FGD with women from Eastern region

Extreme poverty strongly correlates with unemployment or under-employment. In Uganda, unemployment or underemployment is higher among women, particularly youth. According to Uganda National Housing Survey in 2012/13, the unemployment rate among the female working-age population (aged 18-65) was


10.7 per cent (11.1 per cent in rural vs. 10.1 per cent in urban areas), while female youth unemployment was 13.7 per cent (13 per cent in rural vs. 14 per cent in urban areas). In the KIIIs and FGDs, some respondents remarked that unemployment is so high that some men leave their families for about 2-3 days to work and still return with nothing.

Finding 11: The patriarchal norms in Ugandan society create further barriers to women’s economic empowerment. The burden of unpaid care work and inability to access credit leaves women vulnerable to abuse and exploitation.

Women spend almost twice as much time as men on domestic work. When interviewing a group of women crushing stones along the Kabale-Lake Bunyonyi road, one of them claimed: “If there is no one sick or something that needs me at home, I can work the whole day and I can crush stones to fill a tip lorry a day. But it is malaria season, thus I spend a lot of time looking after the sick at home.”

Women do not own many permanent assets, so obtaining a loan is quite difficult. As a result, women are unable to access the capital to boost or expand their businesses. The land and cows belong to the family, so a woman needs to involve her husband to get a loan.

"Even starting and running a business here is very difficult because of the operational costs involved. You find that I have to shop all the products in Kampala. Firstly, the population here will not accept the prices because of what is incurred in. But if my business was in Soroti, it would be very easy for me because the operation cost would be lower. Due to lack of what to do, youth resort to stealing and committing other crimes that hinder peace and security of women and girls like rape, defilement, drug abuse and this poses a threat to the community where we live.”
- Youth participant in interview

"It is a duty of a woman to see that the home is in order, that children are fine, the house is clean and the food cooked to the satisfaction of her man.”
- FGD with an elderly woman from western Uganda

39 Roles and the Care Economy in Ugandan Households: the Case of Kaabong, Kabale and Kampala districts by WE-Care women’s Economic empowerment and care, August 2018.
Some men take advantage of women’s incomes. In some cases, men take advantage of women who are lucky enough to acquire adequate education, to earn a decent living, and to contribute to the wellbeing of the family:

“He earns more than I do, he drives a company car, free fuel but he no longer even contributes his share to our joint account. He last deposited like 5 years ago. I have to pay school fees, dress the children and feed them on my own. Thank God, he has medical insurance and the family is covered, otherwise I would be footing the bill as well.”
- KII with Government Institution Staff

The mapping identifies the following opportunities for women’s meaningful participation across politics, economics and peace processes.

Avenues for increasing women’s meaningful participation in politics

1. Supportive Legislative Frameworks: Uganda is a signatory to several international instruments that promote women’s rights as well as national, legal and policy frameworks that promote and protect the rights of women. The existing legal and policy frameworks provide a basis on which women (including women leaders and women’s CSOs) may advocate, negotiate and influence for their enforcement to ensure that the purpose for which they were enacted is achieved.

2. Ongoing programming by women’s rights organizations: Women’s rights organizations working in Uganda undertake a cross-range of programs that promote women’s rights. This work can be strengthened, scaled-up, and re-designed to address the current context in which women leaders operate to advance women’s rights in public policy-making.

3. Women’s Manifesto: These manifestos express women’s demands during general elections and present an opportunity for agenda development and collective organizing by the women’s movement.
4. National Dialogue: The National Dialogue is a platform organized to seek consensus on contentious issues, foster healing of divisions created by radicalized politics and a perceived sense of failure by previous and the current government. This space presents opportunities for the women of Uganda to ensure that women’s concerns and issues are reflected on the agenda towards building consensus.

5. Legal and Policy Reform: Another key opportunity is the fact that in the next three to five years, plans are underway to draft, enact, amend and implement various laws and policies. If these planned policies are well-implemented, they will give women and youth leverage in terms of resources and power needed to achieve their goals, including those related to WPS and Youth, Peace and Security (YPS). These proposed bills must be gender-responsive and created with the meaningful participation of women.

Organizations and mechanisms for increasing women’s economic participation:

1. NUSAF
2. SDG 5.5
3. Private Sector Foundation of Uganda
4. Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies and Credit Co-operative (SACCO)
5. Youth Livelihoods Fund
6. Agricultural Business Initiative
7. Uganda National Vision 2040

8. The Peace Recovery Development Plan 3 (PRDP3)
9. Women Entrepreneurship Programme Fund

Women’s meaningful participation in peacebuilding processes

1. PRDP3: This plan provides a strategic framework against which GoU, Development Partners, CSOs and the private sector can prioritize and align initiatives to obtain the maximum potential benefit from Northern Uganda. In this respect, PRDP3 sets out the most important development needs of the North and provides mechanisms for coordinating and monitoring the overall progress.

2. National Development Plan III (NDP3): NDP3 refers to inclusive economic growth, a lens with which CSOs can monitor the implementation of government programs, projects and intervention to ensure that the comprehensive gender needs of men, women, young girls and boys, and vulnerable people are met.

3. NAP on WPS III: Through implementing, Localizing, monitoring, evaluating, and reporting on the NAP, CSOs and development partners can work towards achieving the national objectives of the WPS agenda in Uganda.

4. SDGs 5 and 16, as well as CEDAW general recommendation No. 30: These international tools and mechanisms can be used and monitored by CSOs to hold the government to account when working towards the WPS agenda.
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSIONS

The provision of a woman parliament member for each district, and a 30 per cent women’s representation on local councils brought many women to leadership positions. What was invisible until now has become highly visible, and as a result, society is gradually accepting the inevitable - that women are as capable leaders as men. Although women in top positions have already shown beyond reasonable doubt that they can deliver results, it is evident that the majority of women in public service are in the bottom rung and need to continually work harder to prove themselves.

On peacebuilding, women are working as teams and coalitions to bring peace to communities. They are working to address the causes of insecurity to women, including GBV and domestic violence, and strengthening local CSOs to address different conflicts at the community level, such as wife beating and land disputes. They are also promoting peace by establishing peace clubs, localizing international instruments and promoting education for girls.

Regarding economic empowerment, while women have stood out as good managers, they have continued to face the same challenges when contesting for public office or trying to scale up peacebuilding initiatives in communities. These challenges inhibit women from accessing the necessary capital from commercial banks, SACCOs, family members or friends.

For those who manage to start a small business, the business has become the livelihood of the entire family. It remains operational and pays for school fees, medical, education and food for children. Few women, especially those from rural areas, receive benefits from government programs such as the Youth Livelihoods Program and the Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Program, and wealth creation operations. Nevertheless, they stand up and face whatever nature throws at them — whether flooding, drought, famine or outbreaks of diseases. On the other hand, men run into cities, where they remain at the frontline, watching over, supporting and even strengthening their families until they emerge from calamity. They have also built successful businesses, like quality kindergartens, primary schools and vocational schools for girls.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Political participation

1. To the Government: Increase affirmative action allocation from 30 per cent to 50 per cent for all elected and appointive positions in parties, local government, the executive and other decision-making structures.
2. To CSOs: Continue to identify, train and support women that are interested in standing for elected positions.
3. To the national-level women’s CSOs: Continue strengthening local women CSOs, especially on areas of participation in public decision-making, with a primary focus on public administration.
4. To the Electoral Commission: Carry out intensive civic education on different levels of participation, especially with open and direct seats where there is a gender power imbalance between women and men. Allow women to stand for election in the same geographical areas as men instead of women standing in only two or more electoral areas.

5. To the Ministry of Education and Sports, Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development: Increase funding for polytechnic schools that cater to primary education dropouts, the majority of whom are girls.

Women’s meaningful participation in peacebuilding processes

1. To the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs and Ministry Gender, Labor and Social Development: Effectively implement the Domestic Violence Act, Trafficking in Persons Act and the Female Genital Mutilation Act.

2. To the Ministry Gender, Labor and Social Development: Develop and implement civic education programs, with a particular focus on women, children, people living with HIV and widows.

3. To the Ministry of Justice: Review all the laws of Uganda regarding the affirmative action policy, gender equality and equity for all marginalized groups.

4. To the Ministry of Internal Affairs and ministry of Health: Expand the registration of births and deaths to provide reliable information on the age of girls, thus protecting them from early marriage and pregnancies and enabling the prosecution of offenders.

5. To the development partners: Scale up the funding for peacebuilding initiatives by women CSOs and community-based organizations.

6. To the district, sub-county and local councils: Create local laws, ordinances and by-laws to curb alcohol consumption and drug abuse.

7. To the Police and Resident District Commissioners: Enforce anti-narcotics abuse among the youth, especially in town councils, municipalities and town boards.

Economic participation

1. To National Environment Management Authority: Conduct intensive awareness of the causes and effects of climate change and income-generating activities, and enforce the environmental protection laws equally and consistently.

2. To the government: Strengthen the implementation of land-related laws and policies to reduce land-related violence.

3. To the Ministry of Trade: Find an alternative for the women traders stranded at Katuna border.

4. To Uganda Wildlife Authority: Develop a communal plan on how local communities can access the park for honey, traditional herbs and firewood or water.

5. To the Ministry of Water and Environment and National Environment Management Authority: Set targets for women and women’s groups to benefit from carbon credits and facilitation of their participation through training and allocation of land and resources.

6. To the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development: Allow local government and districts to oversee the implementation of the Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Fund and the Youth Livelihood Programme.
PEACEBUILDING INITIATIVES IN AZERBAIJAN