



**A REPORT ON WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN PLANNING
AND DECISION MAKING FOR ASSOCIATIONS AND
COOPERATIVES IN SIX DISTRICTS OF CENTRAL
UGANDA.**



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ACRONYMS:

CAPCA	- Central Archdiocesan Province Caritas Association
CBT	- Community Based Trainer
CIDI	- Community Integrated Development Initiative
CK	- Caritas Kampala
CKL	- Caritas Kasana Luweero
CKM	- Caritas Kiyinda Mityana
CL	- Caritas Lugazi
EADEN	- Eastern Archdiocesan Development Network
FGD	- Focus Group Discussion
MADDO	- Masaka Diocesan Development Organisation
MUMPIFA	- Mutubagumu Mpigi Farmers' Association
PMC	- Programme Management Committee
TWDA	- Tusubira Women Development Agency

Introduction:

This study report presents findings and recommendations on the low participation of women in planning and decision making for associations and cooperatives. The study was carried out in 9 cooperatives and associations from nine sub counties spread within six districts namely; Luweero, Wakiso, Bukomansimbi, Mpigi, Mukono and Mubende of Central Uganda where CAPCA operates.

Background:

On 23rd & 24th March 2017, the Uganda Governance and Poverty Alleviation Program (UGOPAP) under the theme; “*Drawing lessons from the UGOPAP interventions and strategizing for the future*” held its 4th Annual review meeting. One of the presentations in the meeting was on progress against programme logframe indicators and among these was the declining participation of women in decision making. Findings revealed that proportion of women in decision making bodies was found to be lower at 31% compared to 34% of 2015. Yet the proportion of women actively involved in planning at the management committee level was 83.2% down from 88.52% in 2015. This indicated an overall downward trend on this indicator. For example, CAPCA’s figures indicated a steady decline from 93.1% in 2014 to 80.3% in 2016¹. The report recommended a need to investigate reasons behind decline of women participation in decision making especially at association/cooperative level.

Based on above, in its meeting that sat on 28th April 2017 the UGOPAP Programme Management Committee (PMC) resolved that UGOPAP partners namely; CAPCA, CIDI and EADEN should carry out case studies² to find out factors affecting women participation in planning and decision making at association/cooperative level.

Purpose:

To investigate women participation in planning & decision making processes of CAPCA supported farmer organisations.

Study objectives:

1. To find out factors responsible for the low participation of women in planning for the cooperatives & associations.
2. To find out factors responsible for low participation of women in decision making of cooperatives & associations.

¹ UGOPAP annual review report 2017

² Case studies is interchangeably used with mini survey.

Coverage and composition of respondents:

The study covered 9 farmers' cooperatives & associations, one per CAPCA agency across 6 districts. All respondents were farmers, majority females 60 and Male 28 representing 68% and 32% respectively.

Table 1: Coverage of respondents

Agency	District	Cooperative & Association	Male	Female	Total
CKL	Luweero	Twezimbe Kasaala Farmers' Cooperative	1	8	9
TWDA	Wakiso	KASE Farmers' Cooperative Society	1	9	10
		Wakiso Farmers' Cooperative Society	3	2	5
MADDO	Bukomansimbi	Kitanda Tukolerewamu Farmers' Cooperative	5	6	11
		Butenga CAPCA Farmers' Cooperative Society	4	4	8
CK	Mpigi	MUMPIFA Farmers' Cooperative Society	6	6	12
CL	Mukono	Kyampisi Farmers' Association	2	10	12
CKM	Mubende	Kassanda Farmers' Association	0	12	12
		Bugagga Kulima Myanzi Farmers' Association	6	3	9
			28	60	88

Methodology:

The study used purposive sampling targeting three cohorts; Farmer executive leaders, CBTs and ordinary members of the farmers' organisations (refer to table 1). Focus Group Discussions (8-12 people) for farmer leaders and women were conducted to collect data from farmer executive leaders and women.

Study findings:

Findings revealed that, generally, there are more males than females on each governance committee/board/executive. Notably across the 9 farmers' organisations investigated, only 3 have women chairpersons. These are KASE, Butenga and Myanzi. It was also observed that on average women dominate positions of treasurer and secretary positions. Much as females are few, these key positions have a strong bearing on planning and decision making of the farmer organisation. Generally married women tend to be less active in leadership compared to widows and singles.

Table 2: Composition of Governance committee/Board/Executive:

Agency	Cooperative & Association	Male	Female	Total
CKL	Twezimbe Kasaala Farmers' Cooperative	7	4	11
TWDA	KASE Farmers' Cooperative Society	4	5	9
	Wakiso Farmers' Cooperative Society	3	2	5
MADDO	Kitanda Tukolerewamu Farmers' Cooperative	3	4	7
	Butenga CAPCA Farmers' Cooperative society	5	4	9
CK	MUMPIFA Farmers' Cooperative society	5	4	9
CL	Kyampisi Farmers' Association	5	4	9
CKM	Kassanda Farmers' Association	3	6	9
	Bugagga Kulima Myanzi Farmers' Association	6	3	9

Reasons/factors for smaller number of women on key positions of the executive committee:

Low self-esteem and confidence among women. This is partly attributed to poverty, upbringing and partly due to low illiteracy levels.

Gender roles: Home chores which prevent women from taking up leadership roles. Yet latterly some women are faced with overwhelming responsibilities like fees, home supplies and clothing among others that traditionally were shouldered by men. Women in such circumstance cannot take up leadership positions.

Long distances: Once you are elected, you have to attend every meeting as a leader. The long distances coupled with inability to afford transport due to poor financial stand. They thus shy away in favour of men with money. For example it costs a person from Sentema to Kakiri between 6000/= to 10,000/=. Since there monthly meetings for executive committee, a KASE Cooperative leader from Sentema spends annually between 72,000 to 120,000/=: a cost few women in Wakiso can afford.

Most women are low income earners, yet leadership inevitably requires some personal resources (financial, time and technical).

Limited access to and control over resources, most women don't have control over resources like land and produces of which this determines their economic wellbeing in terms of growing food and commercial crops. Whenever proposals are made for example: Collective marketing, their contribution may be less because it's mainly the men who endorse their contributions to be done because control and own most resources including land.

Inferiority complex: Some women fear leadership responsibilities. Women pity themselves so much. They assume leadership is for men, thus prefer to stay just members. Such women even when their names are proposed, they step down.

Traditional/cultural and religious factors: In the African context females are brought up not to lead but rather be led, play a reproductive role, be submissive to their husbands considered superior. Similarly in religious rites, women cannot assume leadership unless their husbands allow. This inhibits women from taking up leadership roles.

Associating leadership with Money: Some men do not want their wives to hold leadership positions for they associate it with getting money. They believe rich women are itchy and will challenge their superiority status quo. This was more pronounced by rural based respondents than those in Peri-urban areas.

Education and training: It was noted that women who are not educated or trained in some aspects lack the capacity to perform some roles better especially those which require some reading and writing. This keeps them backward because they cannot be considered due to their low literacy levels.

Lack of openness/poor relations at home: Inadequate communication between some wives and their husbands & vice versa hinders them to stand for leadership. In such homes men may allow wives to be members but cannot easily grant their requests to be elected as leaders.

Additionally some husbands tend to be over possessive of their wives, to the extent of allocating specific hours towards their participation in farmer organisation activities. Yet leadership many times requires more time, commitment beyond the allocated hours. Such men have mistrust and fear other men intrusions. As such wives opt out of leadership to stay in peace at home.

Men fear feminine dominance. This was a key factor raised by respondents (men & women) especially of 50+ years. Men tend to fear wives dominance due to change in Social status. In fact one respondent noted that some of their wives once they accumulate some finances out of saving, they begin to disrespect their husbands. This can be worsened if such are elected as farmer leaders. On this basis husbands cannot dire allow them to stand for fear of anticipated dominance/bully.

Some women are not settled: This is partly attributed to rumor-mongering. They are ever thinking of leaving husbands' home which hinders their uptake of leadership to plan & make decisions.

Effect of small number of women on the executive committee to the association/cooperative:

- 1) Unfavorable decisions to females are taken. For example setting minimum amounts for membership dues, shares etc. If women don't take part in group leadership affairs, their issues will not be considered or will be left out.

- 2) Some women have constructive ideas and if they do not take part in group leadership, their good views are missed.
- 3) Men are less persistent compared to women. Women persist for long-term survival of organisations. Women feel ashamed being identified as failed leaders, they keep the organisations up & running.
- 4) Women are trusted by some development partners: Farmer organisations with few women leaders risk not getting financial support. Some development partners are more comfortable with women leaders especially treasurers.
- 5) Women have a big influence over their children (youth) to persuade them join groups. But if they are not in leadership, might be reluctant to attract their children into farmer organisation membership.
- 6) Women participation induces men to come on board and certainly increases membership. When they do not actively participate in planning and decision making, vibrancy and development of farmer organisations remains low.
- 7) Low volumes of produce. Since most men (Spouses of female members) do the marketing of produce, they always do not allow wives to bulk household produce with fellow members for collective marketing. Hence famine decisions are undermined at household level. In return women opt for side selling in absentia of husbands.

Conclusion:

Gender gaps have been observed in a number of farmers' organisations at the decision making levels. This is mainly attributed to cultural, social, economic/ political reasons. Gender issues are pertinent for leadership and overall development of farmer organisations. However gender issues should never be focused entirely on women empowerment but on harnessing harmonized actions for both men and women to realise desired change.

Recommendations:

- 1) Entice more men/ husbands to join activities of farmers' organisations/ groups and get to know their benefits. This will inform them about the need to allow wives/women take part in activities of farmers' organisations/ groups, including leadership.
- 2) Organise mind-set change trainings for both men and women. The trainings will help to influence men's perception towards women participation in activities of farmers' of farmers' organisations.

- 3) Support farmers' organisations to introduce policies/bi-laws to promote gender equality at the cooperative level, Train cooperatives in gender mainstreaming and also revise gender discriminatory laws. For example support cooperatives to establish bi-laws to have at least 40% of women on the executive.
- 4) Introduce GALs methodology in CAPCA supported farmers' organisations and communities. This will help gender mainstreaming in social, economic and governance aspects of the farmers' organisations but also in homes of members. GALs will enhance gender relations and help to inform and influence male mind-set change so as to permit their wives actively participate in activities of farmers' organisations, including taking up leadership roles.
- 5) Support cooperatives/associations to come up with measures like bi-laws /guidelines on gender issues including rumours to stimulate active participation of women in leadership.
- 6) Youth that have been attracted to join farmers' organisations should be educated and trained (the girls and boys are the future leaders). This will partly address inferiority complex and inculcate leadership requisites in both men and women.
- 7) Couples should be encouraged to join the cooperatives and associations. This will reduce on family conflicts and help husbands to support their wives even to take up leadership roles, contribute their produce for collective marketing.
- 8) Husbands whose wives are members should always be invited for trainings to help couples to be on the same understanding about farmer organisations' activities.
- 9) Improve time management for cooperative & association meetings. This can assist wives to manage their roles both at home and at farmers' organisations. Preferably train farmer leaders in time management together with bi-laws on late coming.
- 10) Give relevant trainings to improve gender relations right from the lowest level, targeting both men and women (wife and husband). For instance financial literacy, Mind-set change trainings for all women and men, refresher trainings in governance, leadership, Communication, trustworthiness and transparency. These will entice women's active participation in leadership that plans and takes decisions for the farmer organisations.
- 11) Continue mentoring women in leadership to be exemplary. This will encourage those outside to also join leadership. Besides, all women members in farmers' organisations should put in practice at home what they learn to attract men to the activities of farmers' organisations.

- 12) Need to sensitize both men and women (members and their spouses) before elections to reduce on the fears and build courage among women. Empowerment should be for all not for women alone.
- 13) Organize exposure visits to model families/ couples and groups with gender balanced leadership for sharing, learning and possible adoption.

Limitations of study:

The major limitation was time management. This was majorly due to unpredictable weather changes especially unexpected rains. This led to low turn-up in some areas yet in others some FGD participants left before the study team arrived in bid to attend to home chores.

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs). Contrary to earlier plans Staff and some directors were not interviewed as Key Informants (KIs). This was because of Directors' busy schedules and secondly staff were part of the study thus to avoid conflict of interest could not be interviewed.

Annex 1:

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

WOMEN PARTICIPATION (Executive Committee)

(These should focus on members of Executive committees for associations and cooperatives (male participants separated from females).

Introduction:

Good morning/afternoon. I am ----- from CAPCA/CIDI Soroti/EADEN, we are here to understand the factors affecting women participation in decision making at association/cooperative level. You have been selected to take part in this exercise because we think you have experience and knowledge with the situation in the executive committee. Your views will be kept confidential and used only for the purposes of improving coordination of the program. Are you willing to participate?

1. How are executive committee meetings organised in your association/cooperative?
2. What are the reasons/factors for smaller number of women on executive committee for your association/cooperative?
3. How has this small number of women on the executive committee impacted on your association/cooperative?
4. What do you think can be done to have more women on the executive committee of your association/cooperative?
5. What factors hinder the active participation of women in planning and decision making for their farmer organisations (Associations & Cooperatives)?
6. What can be done to increase activeness of those women already on the executive committee?
7. In your opinion, what do you think needs to be done in order to improve women participation in planning and decision making for their farmer organisations (Associations and Cooperatives)?