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The Gender Dimension of Rural Producer Organisations in Uganda

Working
Paper
2004:134

Title: **The Gender Dimension of Rural Producer Organisations in Uganda**

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NIBR Working Paper: 2004:134

ISSN: 0801-1702
ISBN: 82-7071-513-1

Project number: O-2163
Project name:: Business Experience Exchange Programme (www.beepafrica.com)

Financial supporter Norges Vel/NORAD

Head of project: Odd Eirik Arnesen

Abstract: This report is one of four reports in the series of policy reports from the Business Experience Exchange Programme. It analyses the gender dimension of producer organisations in national policy development and the influence of RPO gender policy on the development of the rural institutions in Uganda.

Date: November 2004

Request permission to publish from publisher: Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research
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E-mail: nibr@nibr.no
www.nibr.no
Printed: Nordberg A.S.
Org. nr. NO 970205284 MVA
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Preface

The Business Experience Exchange Programme - BEEP – is a collaborative effort of African rural producers' organisations and research institutions to develop small scale commercial agriculture within the national and international economic framework.

The overall objective of BEEP is to enable the participating rural producers' organisations (RPOs) in Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia to exchange business experiences between them, enhance their business performance and thereby contribute to increase income and reduce poverty at farmer level.

A key component of BEEP is to document success stories and failures of the RPOs through applied research and thereby enhance the exchange of information qualitatively and quantitatively. Another objective of BEEP is to strengthen the national research and training capacity in the fields related to commercial agriculture. This can result in improved supply of relevant candidates for the agricultural sector in general and agro-business in particular.

The regional research programme for the period 2003-2006 was designed in collaboration with national RPOs during the first workshops held in 2003. The 2003 research programme focus on gender and policy issues facing the RPOs.

The programme is financed by Norges Vel and NORAD. NIBR is the co-ordinating research institution. More information about BEEP, the involved institutions and research reports can be found and downloaded from the programme web site www.beepafrica.com.

Arvid Strand

Research Director
The Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research

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List of acronyms

ACU	Agricultural Council of Uganda
BEEP	Business Experiences Exchange Project
CCA	Canadian Cooperative Association
CECFIS	Community Empowerment through Co-operative Financial Services
CMDP	Co-operative Management and Development Project
CRDP	Co-operative Reform and Development Project
FETAS	Farmer Empowerment through Agricultural Services
ICA	International Co-operative Alliance
MAAIF	Ministry of Agriculture Animal Industry and Fisheries
MGLSD	Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development
PEAP	Poverty Eradication Action Plan
PMA	Plan for Modernization of Agriculture
RPOs	Rural Producers' Organizations
SACCOS	Savings and Credit Cooperative Society
SCC	Swedish Cooperative Centre
UCA	Uganda Co-operative Alliance
YEECO	Youth Economic Empowerment through Co-operatives

Acknowledgement

This study was accomplished with the support and co-operation of a number of stakeholders. The authors wish to express their sincere acknowledgement to UCA staff at the national secretariat and in Mukono District for their contribution in the fieldwork phase of this study. In particular, our heartfelt thanks go to Mr Leonard Msemakweli, the General Secretary of UCA for all the support, valuable feedback and leadership provided to the project. We are also grateful to the Executive Committee and members of primary societies that participated in the study for taking the time to provide valuable information presented in this report. Special thanks go to the chairpersons of the societies, namely, Mr Salongo Ntulume of Kisoga Savings and Credit Society, Mr. Wasswa Patrick of BUYODA and Mr. Kabonge of Bwetyaba Co-operative society. Similar thanks go to the entire Board and management of UCA who provided an enabling environment for execution of this study.

Even though this report benefits from the support and effort of the various institutions and individuals acknowledged above, the authors take full responsibility for any shortcomings that may exist therein.

Summary

Rural Producers' Organizations (RPOs) have a vital role to play in most efforts to improve the peoples' standards of living. The current policy environment in Uganda actively encourages rural producers to organize in groups so as to access agricultural services. These RPOs are organized under many umbrella organizations one of them being Uganda Co-operative Alliance (UCA), which was selected for this study. This study was based on the premise that despite existing evidence that UCA has made some efforts to address gender concerns in its activities, there was insufficient knowledge of the extent of gender mainstreaming in the organization; gender issues that exist in policy, management and project implementation; as well as the challenges faced during attempts to address gender in the field. The study objectives were to (i) explore how UCA mainstreams gender in economic and agricultural policy formulation and implementation and (ii) recommend a strategy to improve gender mainstreaming in the management, governance and activities of UCA. A formative research process methodology, an on-going evaluative research methodology which emphasises collaborative research design by researchers and organizations being researched and instant feedback for organizational learning, was used.

Results indicated that UCA has a long history of recognising gender issues in its programs dating back to around the late 1970s when it was initiated by the International Co-operative Alliance. Continuity along this line has been attributed to various donors who emphasize gender in projects supported and the gender sensitive national policy framework.

With regard to the current status of gender mainstreaming, despite the gender sensitive national policy and legal framework, a key gap is that UCA has not yet completed the process of formulation of a written gender policy and there is only limited mention of gender in the byelaws and other policy instruments of the organization. This could explain the variations in the level and approach to gender mainstreaming adopted by various projects, and could limit the sustainability of whatever exists. Despite this however, staff at both national and district level appreciate the principle of gender mainstreaming in UCA activities and case studies of three projects being implemented by primary societies, namely, FETAS, CECFIS and YEECO, revealed that although women continue to trail behind men, there is a positive trend in participation of both men and women in the Co-operative societies' activities. Key challenges experienced during gender mainstreaming include absence of a coordination mechanism at the national level and insufficient capacity among staff in some of the projects.

Based on these findings, the main recommendations include review of existing policies and laws with the objective of mainstreaming gender at this level, development of a comprehensive gender policy, development of a clear strategy and action plan to mainstream gender in all of UCA's project activities, capacity building for all UCA staff in gender and putting in place a central mechanism to coordinate and monitor gender mainstreaming efforts in UCA projects and all other activities.

1 Introduction

Rural producers also referred to as smallholder farmers, may organize to voice their collective views on issues of mutual concern in several types of organizations, such as political parties, traditional organizations or producers' organizations (RPOs). This study focuses on the latter and such organizations can take the form of cooperatives, farmers' clubs and associations primarily formed for the purpose of collective bargaining, advocacy and representation as well as achieving economies of scale in accessing production enhancing services such as improved inputs, extension, credit and marketing.

The current policy environment in Uganda actively encourages rural producers to organize in groups so as to access agricultural services (MAAIF, 2000). Indeed there is a proliferation of RPOs operating at various levels in the country. At the time of the study, there were nineteen (19) apex organizations registered with the Agricultural Council of Uganda (ACU). Uganda Co-operative Alliance (UCA) was selected for this study because of its involvement with Business Experiences Exchange Project (BEEP) Project.

1.1 A Profile of Uganda Cooperative Alliance

Uganda Co-operative Alliance Ltd (UCA) is an autonomous non-government organization established in 1961 as an apex body of the Uganda Cooperative Movement. Its history though with some registered successes is marked with several key negatives including state interference and control, domination/hijacking by a few powerful elite especially men, corruption and mismanagement. However, following the structural adjustment programmes of the 1980s when government pulled out of direct involvement in Co-operatives, UCA started a process of transforming itself in many areas the emphasis being on correcting old mistakes so as to create a new vibrant organization which is member owned and is accountable to its members rather than the state. A key aspect of the transformation was to change from being an apex of Unions into an umbrella organization that not only works with Cooperative Unions but also allows direct affiliation by primary societies at all levels. In addition, member societies are free to affiliate with each other. Its current membership consists of primary societies, Area co-operative enterprises, national and district unions spread all over the country. By 2003, there were over 6000 registered societies directly affiliated to UCA. Since 1996, UCA has also embraced many more responsibilities in response to the changing times and needs of its members. These include among others providing services to women and youth who in the past had largely not benefited from its services. UCA's vision is "the development of cooperatives of all types (producers, workers' and service cooperatives) as activities of importance both to the individual members and the national economy" (UCA Bye-laws, 1998). Its mission is "the attainment of a co-operative movement that is economically viable, efficient, sustainable, and member sensitive" (UCA Bye-laws, 1998). Its major objectives are:

- a) Encourage the application of cooperative principles and methods to economic and social needs by the formation and development of cooperative organizations and associations;
- b) Protect and defend the interests of cooperatives in Uganda;
- c) Print, publish and circulate any material or any other publication in the interest of cooperatives;
- d) Study members' needs and develop programmes to meet those needs; and
- e) Mobilize resources for cooperative development.

In terms of sponsorship, UCA currently works with three major development partners, namely; the Swedish Cooperative Centre (SCC), the Canadian Cooperative Association (CCA), and the Royal Norwegian Society for Development (Norges Vel). These partners fund at least seven projects that include activities like: i) agricultural development through technology transfer to raise productivity and income by small-scale producers; ii) capacity building in primary societies and Area Co-operative Enterprises by training of leaders and managers in required skills; iii) rural finance through the development of strong Co-operative financial institutions called Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies (SACCOS), based on members' own savings; iv) women empowerment in development using the Cooperatives Model; v) creation of self employment for the youth through locally available resources; vi) promotion of new types of Cooperatives like housing, workers', and health cooperatives in addition to the traditional agricultural ones; and vii) environment protection and improvement.

Currently UCA is involved in seven projects, namely:

1. Farmer Empowerment Through Agricultural Services (FETAS) in the districts of Mukono, Jinja, Kamuli, Mbale, Sironko, Masaka, Mbarara and Bushenyi.
2. Community Empowerment Through Cooperative Finance Services (CECFIS) in the districts of Mukono, Iganga, Kamuli, Mbale, Masaka, Mbarara and Bushenyi.
3. Credit Union Development in Western Uganda (CUDIWU) in the districts of Mbarara, Kabale and Rukungiri.
4. Youth Economic Empowerment Through Cooperatives (YEECO) in the districts of Mukono, Jinja, Kamuli and Iganga.
5. Elgon Cooperative Reform Project (ECRP) in Kapchorwa district.
6. Livelihood Improvement Through Farmer Empowerment (LIFE) in Masaka district.
7. Food Security Project (FSP) in the districts of Lira, Apac, Kaberamaido, Masindi and Nakasongola.

2 Gender and its role in agricultural development

The study focuses on gender mainstreaming in the policies and programs of UCA and specifically on the nature and extent of participation of women and men members. Gender refers to the socially constructed roles, responsibilities, rights, power, needs and constraints of men and women within a given society in social, political and economic activities. The facets of gender are dynamic varying from one society to another, and over time. They affect levels of access to and control over resources, and decision-making authority. Gender roles differ from biological roles which are fixed and are ascribed by nature to males and females (Fong and Bhushan, 1996). Gender mainstreaming on the other hand is conceptualized as the process of deliberately integrating strategies and actions that address gender inequalities into policies, plans, programs/projects, legislation at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the policies and programmes so that women and men benefit equally the ultimate goal being gender equality (The Economic and Social Council of the UN (ECOSOC, 1997 cited in UNDP, 2000).

Gender is increasingly becoming an important consideration in the current discourse on development worldwide due to recognition of the complementary roles of men and women in the development process and unequal gender relations which often have negative implications on development. In Uganda, gender dimensions in the agricultural sector which is the mainstay of the economy, are now widely documented. It is clear that men, women, and children (boys and girls) participate in agriculture with all groups making a significant contribution to agricultural development. It is estimated that women contribute about 70-80% of total agricultural labour force and 80% of subsistence food production (MGLSD, 1997) with certain agricultural activities exclusively managed by women. Additionally, in some areas as men get more and more involved in off-farm income generating activities, women's involvement in activities previously dominated by men has increased. However, a key concern is the disadvantaged position of women despite their significant contribution to agricultural production. Although the majority of farmers (men and women) still lack access to basic agricultural services such as inputs, improved technologies, information, capital and markets; women farmers' family commitments, workload, and lower literacy levels further reduce their access to these services. At the heart of the issue is the disempowered position of women reinforced by socio-cultural processes and institutions. Although the basis or extent of inequality varies across societies, women in most rural areas of Uganda are at a disadvantage compared to men. An outstanding concern is that they have less control over land which is a key resource in agricultural production as well as less access and control over benefits from family enterprises all of which act as dis-incentives to investment in agriculture.

3 The research problem

The government of Uganda through its current agricultural policy has made some attempts to respond to these gender issues. The country has a National gender policy (MGLSD, 1997) whose aim is “to guide and direct at all levels the planning, resource allocation and implementation of development programs with a gender perspective”. The policy gives a clear mandate to the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social development to mainstream gender in all sectors and defines structures and key target areas for ensuring that gender concerns are routinely addressed in all development interventions in all sectors. Some favorable policy responses targeting various sectors that are relevant to this study include the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) and the Plan for Modernization of Agriculture (PMA). The PEAP, which is the government’s main medium term development planning framework guiding formulation of all government development policies aimed at poverty eradication, has as one of its objectives “to increase sensitivity to gender issues and attend to the needs of disadvantaged groups”. The PMA on the other hand, which is a holistic strategic framework for multi-sectoral interventions in agriculture, has as one of its broad strategies “ensuring that all intervention programmes are gender-focused and gender responsive” (MAAIF, 2000).

However, despite this gender sensitive policy environment, there is evidence of gaps with regard to gender mainstreaming in practice in a number of institutions and programs (Mangheni and Karuhanga, 2003). There is evidence that UCA has made some efforts to address gender concerns in its activities. Notable among these is the mention of women empowerment in development as one of the key areas of program focus and an attempt to put in place a gender policy which is still in draft form. This therefore gives rise to the following questions. To what extent has UCA been able to mainstream gender into its governance, structure and other activities? What challenges does it face during the gender mainstreaming process?

The three overall issues arising from this situation that will be addressed in this study are:

1. How is gender conceptualised
2. How is it recognised within UCA, both in programmes and in relationship to governance issues?
3. What gender issues exist in policy, management, governance and activities of UCA and how effectively have they been addressed?

4 Objectives

The purpose of this exploratory phase of the study was to gain an understanding of general issues, structures and operations of the UCA and its member organizations as well as the current level/status of gender awareness and mainstreaming efforts. The specific objectives were:

1. To explore how UCA mainstreams gender in economic and agricultural policy formulation and implementation:
 - How do the various UCA policies reflect consideration of the position of women and men in the agricultural sector in general?
 - How does UCA operationalise its gender policy at the apex and lower levels?
 - To what extent and how do women and men participate in member institutions and programmes (at all levels)?
 - Is statistics and monitoring gender disaggregated and is the management able to act on the information?
 - To what extent are women represented in the leadership (at various levels)
 - What factors influence the level of gender awareness and mainstreaming in the organization's policies and programmes?
2. To recommend a strategy to improve gender mainstreaming in the management, governance and activities of UCA.

5 Methodology

The study used a formative research process methodology. This is an on-going evaluative research methodology with emphasis on data collection, data analysis and instant feedback for organizational learning. The goal is to use research results to bring about change in the organization's operations, approaches and procedures. Researchers and organizations gain more understanding of complex and intricate processes of internal organization behaviour and establish knowledge and insights needed to strengthen it while in operation. The process is as follows:

- Researchers and the organization being researched on (in this case UCA) work together. The organization identifies issues for research; researchers formulate and share research proposals.
- Researchers carry out the study
- Data is analysed and feedback given to the organization in a workshop using a participatory process to facilitate reflection and learning
- An action plan for improvement is drawn based on decisions for change made by the organization.

This first (exploratory) phase of the study utilised rapid appraisal data collection techniques primarily individual and focus group discussions with policy makers, leaders and ordinary members of the UCA and member organizations. The guiding principle was that people at the same level and therefore less likely to intimidate each other were interviewed together in a group to allow for freedom of expression. Therefore, the General secretary of UCA who is the chief executive officer was interviewed individually while the project leaders and their deputies at national level (7), Field officers at district level (5) were interviewed as a group.

Field visits were made to 3 primary societies in Mukono district selected in such a way as to get representation of the various projects being implemented by the UCA in the district. Mukono was selected based on proximity given the very limited time available for this first phase of the study. The primary societies selected with the assistance of district field staff included Kisoga savings and credit co-operative society (KSACCOS) which is participating in CECFIS project, Bwetyaba Co-operative society (BCS) participating in FETAS project and Buyobe Youth Development Association (BUYODA) participating in YEECO project. The executive of these co-operatives were interviewed in a group. In addition, discussions were held with groups of between 6 to 15 members, men and women separately. Data was collected in January 2004.

Primary data from the interviews was supplemented by review and analysis of relevant policy and other UCA documents including the UCA draft gender policy, other policies, relevant national development and agricultural policies (e.g. the national gender policy, the Poverty Eradication Action Plan, the Plan for modernization of agriculture).

6 Findings

The findings are organized into three major sections. The first section covers the history of the gender initiative in UCA and the motivation behind it. The next section covers the current status of the initiative followed by the conclusion and recommendations.

6.1 History of Gender mainstreaming in UCA/Motivation

Attention to gender issues in the Co-operative movement seems to have started around the late 1970s in response to the worldwide trend to recognize and emphasize women in development issues. According to staff present at the time, the trigger was the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) to which UCA is affiliated. Around this time possibly due to the awareness created by the international decade of women 1975-85, a key issue articulated and pursued by ICA was that although women were putting in a lot of work in agricultural production, they were not participating in co-operatives and certainly not getting the benefits. For UCA, three significant interventions resulted from this awareness, namely, initiation of capacity building within the organization for enhancing women's participation in Co-operatives, commissioning of a nation-wide survey by Muzaale in 1989 to understand women's participation in the Co-operative movement in Uganda, and implementation of 2 landmark projects with a strong component of affirmative action for women. Under capacity building, a woman who was to play a key role in initiating and implementing gender interventions in the UCA was sent for a 3 months gender training course funded by the ICA. According to her, "this is when she started being responsible for encouraging women's participation in UCA". In 1990-91 she went for a course on co-operative management specializing in Education and development. Her paper was on women in development. The 2 landmark projects were the 4 year Co-operative Reform and Development Project (CRDP) in the early 1990s and its follow up the Co-operative Management and Development Project (CMDP) another 4 year project which ended in 1999.

The CRDP came to put right what was not going well in the co-operative movement in general but with a strong emphasis on enhancement of women's participation in Co-operatives hence the various provisions for affirmative action for women. For example, it was stipulated that 30% of the participants in project activities would be women. Thirty out of the 150 primary societies from the six zones (Kasese, Mbarara, Mukono, Busoga, Mbale and Lira) that benefited from the programme were women groups, five selected from each region. The other 120 groups also had to increase female membership as a condition for receiving the training. Two field officers were recruited per zone; one for gender and the other for project coordination with funding support from the Swedish Cooperative centre. A senior gender officer was hired by UCA at the national level to oversee gender mainstreaming efforts in the project. She fulfilled this responsibility together with the gender contact person earlier trained by ICA. While the senior gender officer has since left UCA, the original gender contact person was still working with

UCA at the time of the study and had been transferred to the FETAS project (which started in 2000) as a Training Coordinator. However, since the completion of CRDP, UCA has not had an officer specifically assigned the responsibility of overseeing gender mainstreaming in the organization.

In a nutshell, the feeling among staff was that gender efforts in the UCA have been motivated by various factors, namely, the Muzaale (1989) study on Women participation in Cooperatives in Uganda which portrayed Cooperatives as a male dominated movement and greatly influenced the CRDP, donors who insist on gender mainstreaming in projects, and the current national trends whereby gender is a topical issue. To quote a project leader at national level “If you write a project and don’t mention gender, you don’t get funding”.

6.2 The Current Status of Gender mainstreaming in UCA

The current status of gender mainstreaming in UCA was assessed by conducting a gender analysis of the organization policies to identify strengths and gaps; a gender analysis of selected on-going projects to determine the extent of gender integration in project design documents; and assessment of the level of gender awareness and capacity of staff to determine the likelihood of field level operationalization of gender integration. Additionally, case studies of farmers’ organizations implementing the projects were conducted to understand what is actually happening at field level with regard to strategies used and innovations that may not be in the project design documents.

6.2.1 Gender Analysis of UCA Policies

The Uganda Cooperative Alliance operates within a policy and legal framework defined by a number of national and organizational laws. At the national level, UCA’s activities and operations are guided by the provisions of the Cooperative Societies Statute, 1991 and the Cooperative Societies Regulations, 1992 made there under. In addition to these there are a number of other gender specific government policies, namely the National Gender Policy (1997), the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (1997), and the Plan for Modernization of Agriculture (2000). The national policy on Cooperative Societies is in the process of being drafted. It is noteworthy that UCA is a member of the International Cooperative Alliance and is therefore guided by some International Cooperative laws. At the organizational level, key policies include the UCA Bye-Laws (1961) amended in September 1998, the financial and human resources policies.

While all the above national instruments and structures (with the exception of the Cooperative Societies Statute (1991) and regulation (1992)), have provided a supportive legal and policy environment for the integration of gender into agricultural development activities and UCA has made some efforts to address gender concerns in its activities, a number of areas in the existing organizational legal and institutional framework need to be reviewed and strengthened if gender issues in Cooperatives are to be effectively handled. Some of the gaps identified are hereby presented. Apart from section 33a (UCA’s Bye-laws) which requires that there be at least one woman on UCA’s Board of Directors, all the other policy documents are presented in gender blind terms despite the recognition that women’s participation in cooperative activities is still limited. According to Naila Kabeer (1992), a gender blind policy is one that recognizes no distinction between the sexes with the inherent assumption that men and women are the same. This leads to bias in favor of existing gender relations in many cases tending to exclude

women. As a result with the exception of a more recent publication by Msemakweli (2003) ‘The new approach to cooperative development’, other key documents like the ‘Strategy for the transformation of the cooperative movement in Uganda (2000)’ and ‘Restoring the value of cooperatives in Uganda (1998)’ make no mention of gender specific issues requiring UCA’s interventions. It can be further noted that UCA’s five-year strategic business plan for the cooperative movement in Uganda (UCA, 1997) has no gender specific objective.

One can say that UCA does not have a written gender policy in place yet. What exists by way of a written gender policy is in a draft form on file. It was drafted around 1997/98 by the gender officer then but it hit a snag during the process of its formulation and has never been completed or operationalized. An analysis of the draft gender policy also revealed that it is limited with regard to a clear definition of the necessary strategies and resources to address the identified problems or the necessary institutional structures that need to be developed so as to effectively facilitate the process of gender integration. Furthermore, it lacks guidelines on how the process of gender mainstreaming is to be operationalized by the different departments or projects.

There is however evidence of current efforts to revive the process of producing a gender policy. The UCA has for the last couple of years been receiving gender officer interns from Canada funded by the Canadian Development Agency in co-operation with the Canadian Co-operative Agency. The intern who came in 2003 conducted a study on women’s participation in the co-operative movement in Uganda (Skrappek, (2003) and the current intern’s responsibility is to produce a gender policy for UCA although not much progress had been achieved in this direction at the time of the study. Another evidence of renewed focus on gender in the organization is a recent publication by the General secretary Msemakweli (2003) titled ‘The new approach to cooperative development’ which highlights integration of women and youth among the key issues to be addressed in creating a new climate for successful co-operative development in Uganda as the quote below illustrates.

“We must make sure that the co-operatives of tomorrow have enough room for the women and youth of this country who cherish the spirit of working together. Moreover, that is what the first principle of co-operatives says—open membership. In the past, they were excluded but this did not only act against these groups but also the co-operatives themselves. By excluding women and youth, they remained too small and when they are small they are vulnerable” (p.9).

6.2.2 Gender Integration in On-going Projects of UCA

This study looked at three of the seven projects implemented by the UCA at the time of the study. A brief profile and gender analysis of the projects follows below.

Project Profile

A. Farmer Empowerment through Agricultural Services (FETAS) project

This project was initially run as a pilot for two years (June 2000 –June 2002) in the districts of Masaka, Mbale, Mukono, Bushenyi and Kamuli. The objective of the project is to contribute to “informed and aware farmers enjoying higher sustainable productivity”. The design of the project based on lessons from the pilot phase has four main interventions areas;

1. Agricultural extension and training;
2. Sensitization/ capacity building of the farmers/ elected leaders and staff;
3. Emphasis on agricultural marketing; and
4. Agricultural in-put supply.

However, the components of these interventions vary depending on the local circumstances and the problem analysis carried out with the farmers in each locality.

After the pilot phase, the project was expanded to target 13,075 farmers who are members of 260 primary societies, farmers' organizations or cooperative-like organizations. It now covers ten districts of Mbale, Sironko, Kamuli, Iganga, Mukono, Kayunga, Masaka, Rakai, Bushenyi and Mbarara.

The project methodology involves such methods as; participatory approaches especially in problem identification and analysis; study circles; mass communication; village meetings, on-farm visits, study tours; on-farm demonstrations; record keeping; participatory monitoring and evaluation.

The project also pays special attention to cross-cutting development issues like environment, HIV/AIDS and gender, particularly women and youth. Women and youth are regarded under this project as the under-represented in membership and committees of the cooperatives. The UCA, has as a pre-requisite for participation in the project, demanded that a group must have at least 30% women and 20% youth. It also provides that in cases where women and youth want to have separate groups, or have separate subjects covered, they shall be supported accordingly through FETAS and YEECO project collaborations.

B. Community Empowerment through Cooperative Financial Services (CECFIS) project

CECFIS was designed as a sister/complementary project to FETAS in the five districts of Mbale, Kamuli, Mukono, Masaka and Bushenyi. The main objective of CECFIS is to "increase rural communities' power to create, participate in and manage their own financial markets". Although the project was designed to complement FETAS, it would not need to target the same farmers, but rather, the whole community in the districts concerned.

Through the project, UCA has insisted that operating and financial sustainability is crucial for the success of rural banking. The primary focus in CECFIS is the user-friendly savings account, without which people would not join or use the credit and savings society. According to the project document, UCA's conservative prudential and liquidity guidelines mean that up to 80% of the CECFIS deposits are not available for lending. By ensuring that the institution is able to meet the demands for withdrawals, the project promotes confidence in the institution, attracting additional deposits in a vicious upward cycle.

On the loan side, CECFIS promotes the idea of short term lending (3 months or less to groups or individuals) thus increasing the turnover of funds and operating margins. This is a departure from the traditional 12 months crop – input loan approach. The emphasis has been on financial sustainability and wider participation in the institution by focusing on family or household needs, rather than those of the single export crop (CECFIS project document pg. 7). The project design document makes a special mention of the strategy to address cross-cutting issues so as to ensure that it does not exclude rural people on the basis of age, gender or wealth. However, it is worth noting that the view adopted was that based on lessons from other financial NGOs, "it is not necessary to set quotas and targets

for say women. Far more effective is the choice of a range of product/services which attract a particular class of member, who might otherwise have been excluded. These include short-term loans for petty trading and family events as well as group facilities for poorer people who might find the cost of a share an insurmountable barrier” (CECFIS project document , p.20)

C. Youth Economic Empowerment through Cooperatives (YEECO) Project

The YEECO project aims to contribute to the generation of employment opportunities for the youth in both the agricultural and informal sectors by facilitating them to improve their performance and income. Problems affecting youth to be addressed by the project were identified through an in-depth situation analysis using a series of workshops, field visits to obtain a synoptic view of the existing youth initiated activities and review of secondary data/information generated by the office of the Vice President. Major problems identified included inadequate technical, business and entrepreneurial skills, limited markets for products and services of enterprises youth are engaged in (namely, agricultural produce and products; and artisanal products and services), inability to accumulate and access investment capital, and high prevalence of HIV/AIDs. Project interventions targeting each of the problem areas are as follows. In order to improve farming practices, the project facilitates youth to access improved technologies, knowledge and skills through linkage to research centres; establishing farm demonstration plots through youth groups; sponsoring leading young farmers for agricultural shows and skills courses; linking groups to other UCA projects to enable them access farm inputs, credit, marketing and other information and facilitating sharing/learning by small interest groups of 5-10 on topics of common interest, a concept referred to as study circles. Support to the informal sector operators/artisans focuses on enhancing skills and operational resources through facilitating linkages with more experienced/established practitioners and institutions as well as providing opportunities for training. Interventions to improve agricultural marketing include promotion of high value low volume crops so as to maximise farm income, sensitization of youth on advantages of co-operatives as a means to access collective and individual services on a sustainable basis, provision of technical advice in establishment of agro-processing plants for value addition, and provision of business and management training. Similarly, there are interventions to improve marketing of artisanal products and services, enhance access to investment capital, and combat HIV/AIDs spread.

Generally, the strategy is to mobilise and organise them through co-operatives and co-operative-like structures, and encourage them to apply higher quality standards and a business-like approach in production and marketing of their produce, products and services. The main project objectives include establishment of gender balanced employment and income generating capacity for youth in the target districts and transformation/development of youth groups into well managed and democratically governed organizations able to provide quality services to their members in a professional and businesslike manner on a sustainable basis.

The main indicator for attainment of the overall project objective will be growth in volume of business undertaken by youth groups (farmers and artisans) while the main indicators for attainment of intermediate objectives include number of workers employed by youth in agriculture and in informal sectors who will be beneficiaries of the project interventions, increase in membership of the participating groups, increase in the incomes of the youth arising from their undertakings.

Gender Analysis of the Projects

Gender analysis of the project documents was done using the following questions:

1. Does the project design document specify the issues affecting men/women that UCA wants to address? i.e. the problem to be addressed.
2. Is there a strategy to address the problem?
3. Is there a plan to address the problem? (targets, resources, implementation work plan, etc4. Is there a systematic procedure for monitoring and review using gender disaggregated data?
4. Formulation process—who participated/was consulted—equity issues.

The following table summarizes the gender analysis results.

Gender analysis question	Project		
	YEECO	FETAS	CECFIS
Project formulation process (who participated and how?)	A participatory assessment through a series of workshops involving various stakeholders was done to identify the problem. However, the kind of stakeholders involved were not mentioned in the design document.	A participatory assessment involving various stakeholders was done to identify the problem. However, the kind of stakeholders involved were not mentioned in the design document.	The project was designed by Consultants in consultation with UCA staff and the donor's representative
Are issues affecting men/women; female/male youth well articulated in the project design document?	Generally, gender issues are not systematically articulated. A systematic coverage would require that each of the problem areas addressed by the project would include a thorough description of the relevant gender issues. Only a few gender issues are mentioned (directly quoted below) but they also seem to be drawn from literature rather than from primary interaction /consultation with the stakeholders particularly the female and male youth who are the target beneficiaries. "Unemployment is more rampant among women and youth who drop out of school or graduate from intermediate, secondary and tertiary institutions" "the school dropout rate especially for females is still high" "Generally, female youth have higher cases of HIV infection and are more vulnerable than the male youth...the root case being poverty and unemployment"	The design document mentions one gender issue, namely, low level of participation of women and youth in ordinary membership and leadership. It is silent on other key gender issues that are pertinent to the areas of project intervention, viz, agricultural marketing, agricultural extension/advisory services, and input supply.	No attempt was made to articulate the issues faced by women and men in accessing financial services. The problem analysis focused mainly on technical issues such as interest rates, product design, loan period and socially related problem to do with the need to improve the image of cooperative financial services given their negative history.
Is there a strategy to address the identified gender issues?	Strategies are gender blind	There are two strategies to address the issue of participation: -A conditionality that for any group to be eligible for project support, it must have at least 30% women and 20% youth members. It should also be willing to amend its byelaws and constitution to include representation of women on the executive committee. -Gender sensitization for members of participating groups	Strategies are gender blind
Is there a plan to address the problem?	Plans have no gender specific targets, indicators, means of verification and resource budget	The plan for project objective one , viz, "strengthened capacity of members, elected leaders and staff of the farmers' organizations" has gender specific targets, indicators, means of verification and a resource budget. However, this is not the case for other objectives and project components viz input supply and marketing.	Plans have no gender specific targets, indicators, means of verification and resource budget
Is there a systematic procedure for monitoring and evaluation using gender disaggregated data?	Although a systematic procedure for monitoring and evaluation of the project is well described, the need to collect gender disaggregated data is not mentioned.	Although a systematic procedure for monitoring and evaluation of the project is well described, the need to collect gender disaggregated data is only emphasized for objective one— 30% and 20% of farmers participating in capacity building activities should be women and youth respectively. There is no such emphasis for other objectives and outputs.	Indicators mainly focus on monitoring financial performance of the project and are not sex disaggregated. However, participation in terms of membership, share capital ownership and cumulative net savings deposits and number of savers are sex disaggregated

A general conclusion from this gender analysis is that there is absence of a systematic approach to integrating gender in UCA projects. While FETAS project made a reasonably good attempt to address gender in most of its design elements, YEECO and CECFIS did not. For YEECO, while considerable effort seems to have been devoted to situation analysis so as to understand the problems of youth prior to development of the project, it is evident that most likely gender analysis tools were not used. As a result, problems of youth and activities they are engaged in are not disaggregated by sex which may explain why the project design similarly lacks gender specific interventions, strategies and monitoring procedures despite the gender specific project objective "establishment of gender balanced employment and income generating capacity for youth in the target districts". For CECFIS, all project design elements are gender blind except for the monitoring and evaluation where it is stipulated that participation in terms of membership, share capital ownership and cumulative net savings deposits and number of savers are sex disaggregated. However, even FETAS despite its relatively better performance in addressing gender has some gaps the major one being insufficient gender analysis during situation analysis so as to identify all the key gender issues in the areas of project intervention. Secondly, the project gave insufficient emphasis to the need to use gender disaggregated data (GDD) during monitoring and evaluation of some of the project outputs resulting in inconsistent use of GDD in the monitoring process—it is used in some cases and not in others. Absence of GDD makes it difficult to monitor progress of accomplishments in addressing gender issues. Indeed with the exception of the CECFIS project, the sex disaggregated data plotted below for the case study farmers' organizations did not exist in an organized form. It had to be assembled for purposes of this study. The overall conclusion from the gender analysis of these three UCA projects is that while there is integration of gender in some aspects of the project design, there is no gender mainstreaming per se if we use the definition of gender mainstreaming adopted in this study, namely, a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the policies and programmes so that women and men benefit equally the ultimate goal being gender equality (ECOSOC, 1997 cited in UNDP, 2000).

A critical analysis of the history of gender initiatives in the UCA offers some pointers to explain the current status of gender mainstreaming efforts in the organization. While to some extent the attention to gender has filtered through from the landmark historical "gendered projects" CRDP and CMDP to FETAS which inherited the key staff, there is a tendency to compartmentalize gender and limit it largely to these projects. It is evident that there is a variation across projects in the commitment, capacity and emphasis on gender. Evidence from the field and discussions with staff at national and district level revealed that FETAS scores highest with regard to gender followed by YEECO which is its offshoot project. Compartmentalization of gender to certain projects could partly be explained by lack of an overall gender policy. As one member of staff put it,

“ without a policy a new person to the organization would have nothing to guide them. Because there is no policy, gender is looked at as being in one project FETAS, other projects do not emphasize it.”

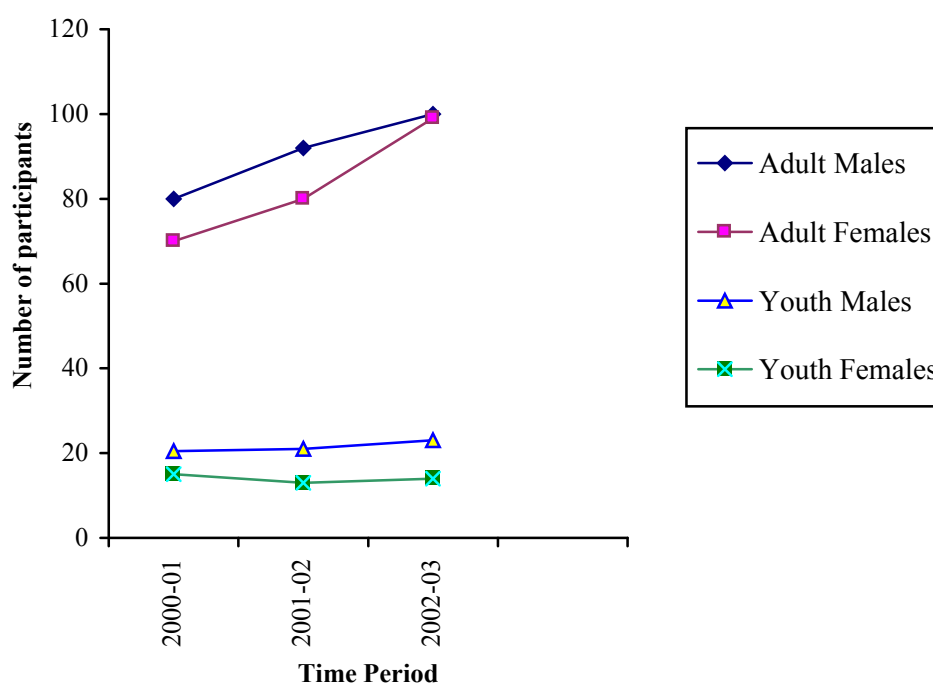
Case Studies of Primary Societies Implementing the Projects

As already mentioned three primary societies participating in the implementation of each of the projects were studied, namely, Bwetyaba Co-operative Society participating in FETAS, Buyobe Youth Development Association (BUYODA) participating in YEECO and Kisoga Savings and Credit Co-operative Society (KSACCOS) participating in CECFIS. Trends in participation of men and women in selected activities of the societies for which gender disaggregated data was available are presented below.

A. Bwetyaba Co-operative Society participating in FETAS

Bwetyaba Co-operative Society has a total membership of 342 of whom 180 are adult males, 120 adult females, 27 male youth and 15 female youth. For the period 2000-2003, the level of attendance of Annual general meetings in the society has been increasing for both male and female adult members but more for the latter (Figure 6.1). However, for youth of both sexes, there has been no significant increase in membership levels. If one uses attendance of annual general meetings as a proxy for participation in other society activities, this trend shows remarkable success of the FETAS project in increasing participation of women. The performance with regard to attracting youth in general and female youth in particular is however still poor.

Figure 6.1 *Bwetyaba Co-operative Society Limited. Trends in Attendance of Annual General Meetings (2000-2003)*



B. Buyobe Youth Development Association (BUYODA) participating in YEECO

Figure 6.2 shows trends in attendance of meetings by members of BUYODA during the year 2003. It can be observed that there are fluctuations in attendance levels for both male and female members with lowest attendance in the months of May and October. On the other hand, attendance level for the months of January, June and December was high. This trend could possibly be explained by the nature of the activity of the majority of the members, namely, primarily and secondary education which are characterized by examinations in May and October whereas in December and January, there isn't much pressure. Another observation is the lower level of participation of female youth compared to the male youth. For executive meetings (Figure 6.3), participation of the male youth was more or less constant throughout the year except for the sudden dip in August, while that of female youth fluctuated a bit more. Secondly, girls are fewer on the executive compared to boys.

Figure 6.2 *Buyobe Youth Development Association. Trends in Attendance of Monthly General Meetings by Gender, 2003*

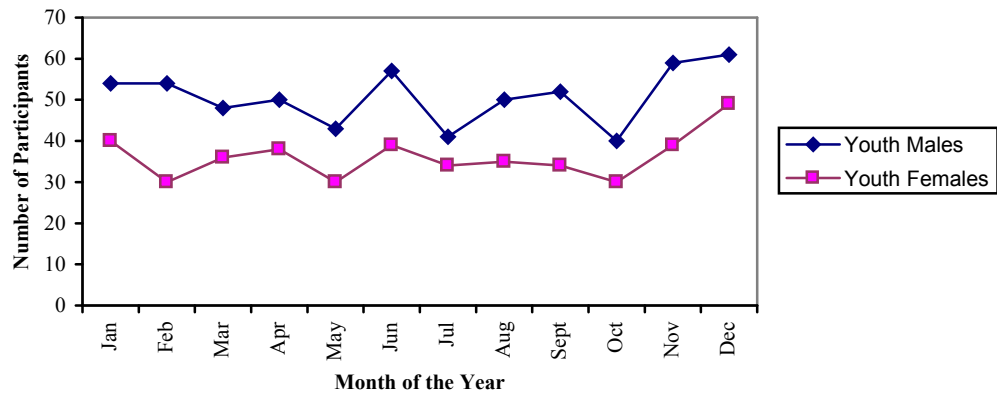
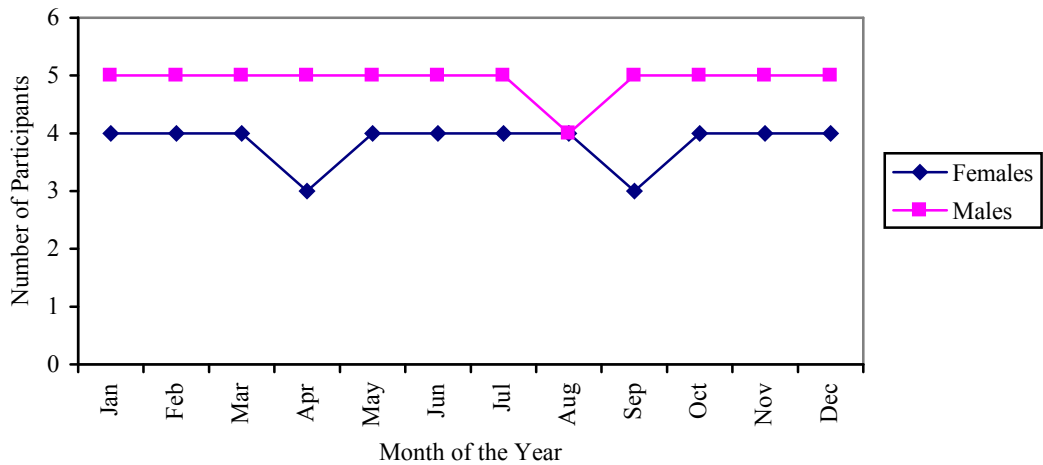


Figure 6.3 *Buyobe Youth Development Association. Trends in Attendance of Executive Meetings by Gender, 2003*



C. Kisoga Savings and Credit Co-operative Society (KSACCOS) participating in CECFIS.

Although there is a larger number of men compared to women members in KSACCOS, for the period October 2002- 03, there has been a steady increase in both female and male membership levels (Figure 6.4). This is linked to increased confidence in the bank by community members (men and women). As would naturally be expected, trends in share capital ownership for members also shot up during this period as a result of increases in membership levels (Figure 6.5). The cumulative net savings deposits have been fluctuating for the men who are taking the lead. For women, the net deposits are low but with a gradual increase (Figure 6.6).

The cumulative number of savers has also increased for both men and women although women are still trailing behind men (Figure 6.7). For groups and institutions, the trends

have been largely constant probably due to non-expansion of these establishments joining the SACCOS.

With regard to accessibility to loans, male members take the lead (Figure 6.8). However, the number of females has also taken an increasing trend. The increase for both categories of membership can possibly be explained by the SACCOS's less insistence on collateral in form of physical assets like land. This is an advantage particularly for female members because they are generally disadvantaged with regard to access to such forms of collateral. Other positive aspects of the Savings and Credit Society cited by women included absence of lengthy formal intimidating procedures such as long queues, filling lengthy forms; proximity; easy access to small loans whenever they have need for some money to solve urgent family or business problems; and the opportunity to save and accumulate money without interference from spouses. The following quotes from focus group discussions with women illustrate these positive attributes.

‘Because of its proximity, we have learned to work harder. If one makes a profit however little it may be, it is brought here for banking and over time it accumulates’

“Women can now save money, we were not able to do so before—the husband would take it away. If he knows you have sold something, he makes sure you meet all the household expenses until the money is finished. Now, when he knows you have taken the money to the bank, he can't do this”

Figure 6.4 *Kisoga Savings and Credit Co-operative Society Trends in Society Membership by Gender, October 2002- November 2003.*

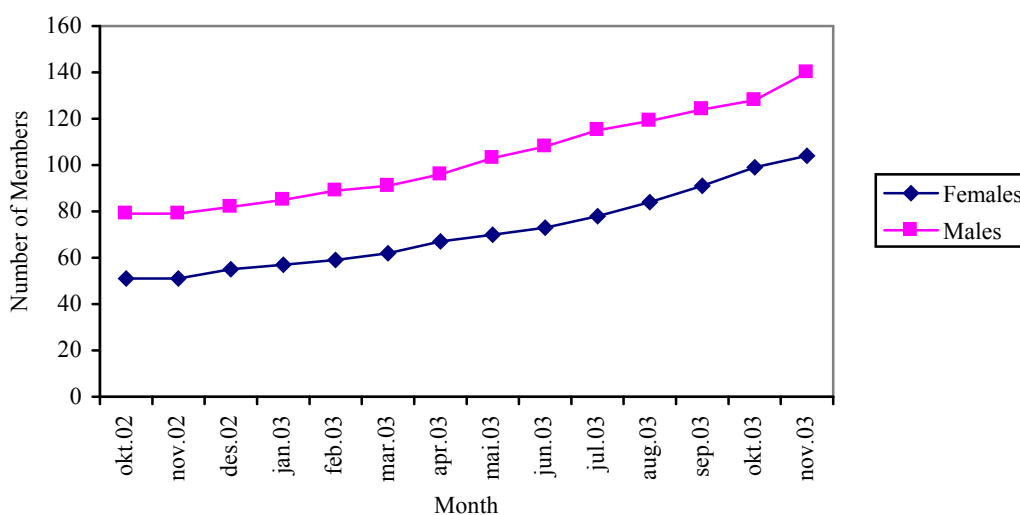


Figure 6.5 *Kisoga Savings and Credit Co-operative Society Trends in Share Capital Ownership ('000) by Gender, Groups and institutions, October 2002- November 2003.*

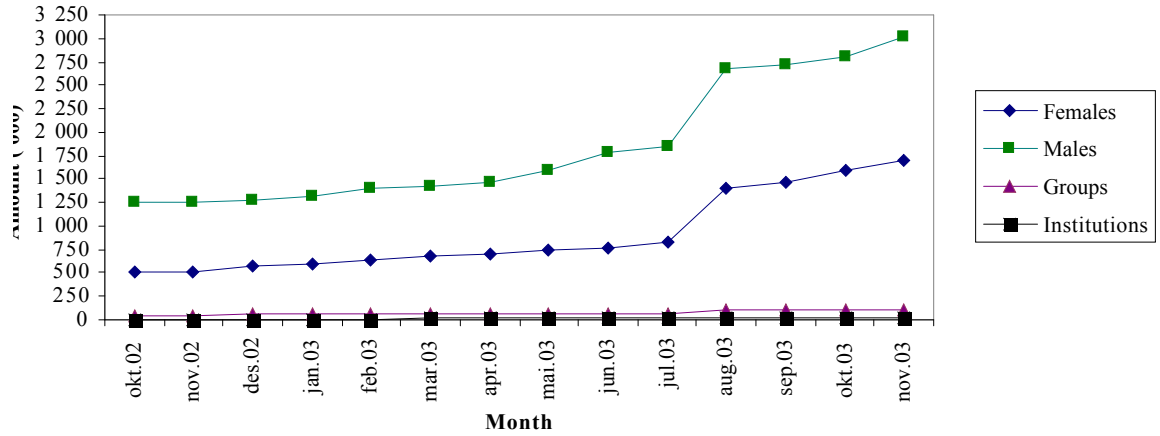


Figure 6.6 *Kisoga Savings and Credit Co-operative Society Trends in Cumulative Net Savings Deposits by Groups, institutions and Gender, October 2002- November 2003.*

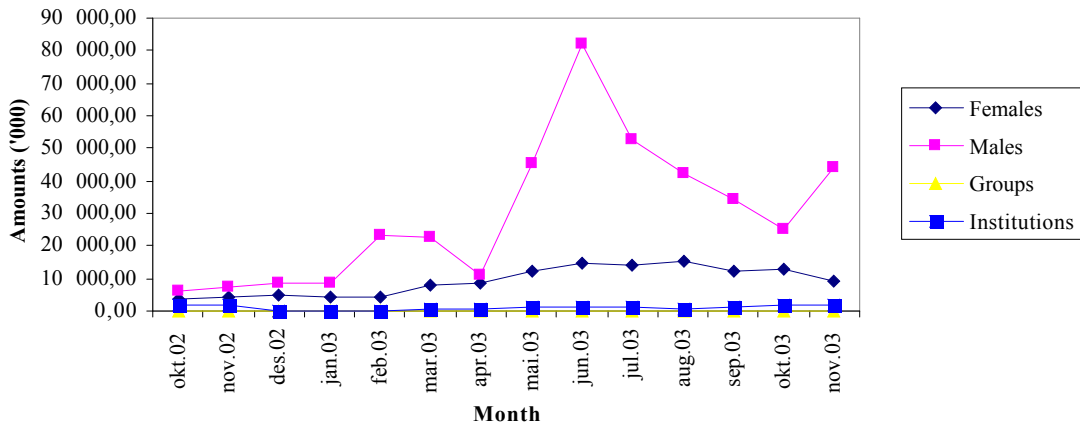


Figure 6.7 *Kisoga Savings and Credit Co-operative Society Trends in Cumulative Total Number of Savers in Groups, Institutions and by Gender, October 2002- November 2003.*

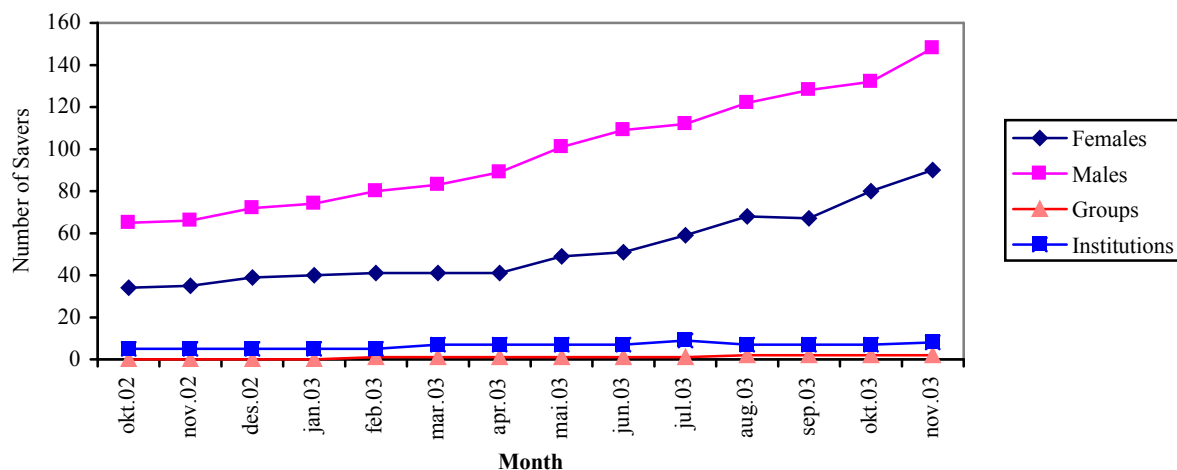
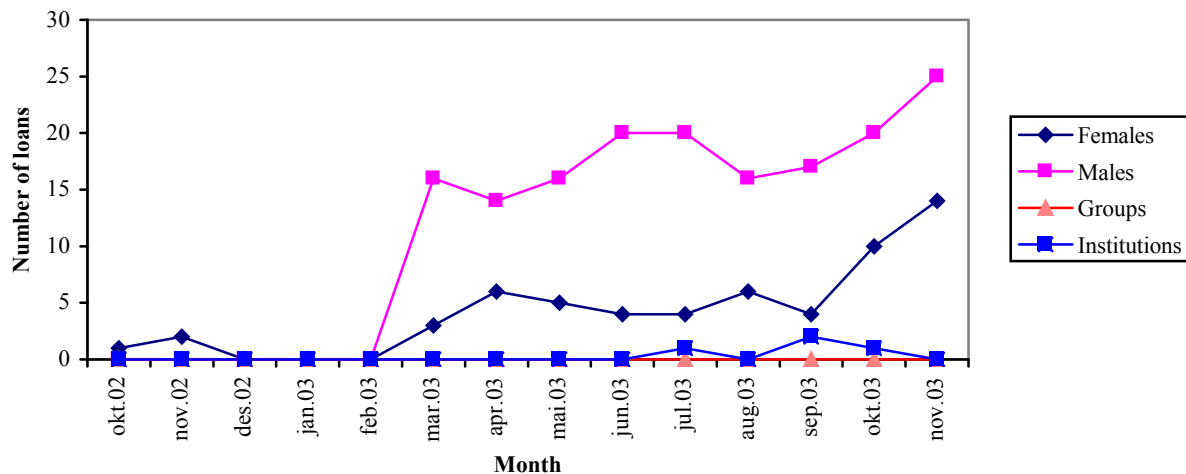


Figure 6.8 *Kisoga Savings and Credit Co-operative Society Trends in Number of Outstanding Loans in Groups, institutions and by Gender, October 2002- November 2003.*



A general observation from the three case studies is that although women participation is still below that of men, there is an upward trend for both women and men.

6.2.3 The Current Level of Gender Awareness and Capacity Within UCA

The level of gender awareness and capacity was assessed by requesting staff at the various levels as well as the executive and members of the affiliate co-operative organizations for their understanding/definition of the concept gender, what gender issues affect the co-operatives, whether or not they had received gender sensitization and training and what has changed on a personal level as a result of their participation in gender initiatives of UCA. In addition, they also indicated their self-evaluation of the level of awareness in UCA.

It was found that generally, the level of gender awareness and capacity depended on the type of project and the time the staff member or primary society has spent with UCA. Staff working on the FETAS project and those who have been with the organization for at least 5 years tended to have higher capacity because they are the ones who had received training. For the affiliated co-operatives, the leaders of Bwetyaba co-operative society which is participating in FETAS had a higher level of awareness compared to BUYODA (participating in YEECO) and Kisoga Cooperative Savings and Credit society (participating in CECFIS). It is however noteworthy that for BUYODA, the low levels of gender awareness could be explained by the fact that the organization had only recently started participating in YEECO. The executive committee mentioned that gender training was part of the UCA training plan and they hoped to get it in future. There was no such provision for Kisoga Cooperative Savings and Credit Society under CECFIS.

Staff's conceptualization of gender

With the exception of those who had not received gender training, most staff at national and district level were able to give an acceptable definition of gender. A majority tended to perceive gender as the need to increase the participation of marginalised groups particularly women and youth in terms of numbers, which is understandable given the organization's focus in this area. A sample of some of the definitions given are quoted below:

“I understand gender to mean how power and resources are shared between women and men. It is about fairness, equity and responsibility. It also means targeting the cultural and traditional role expectations of the people we work with”.

“Gender is what society takes to be the roles of women and men or expectations on different sexes. These role expectations are culturally constructed”.

“It is the cultural and biological/social set up of communities”.

“Gender means equal opportunity to participate in all project activities or making deliberate efforts to ensure equal participation of men and women. When this does not happen naturally, we put in place strategies to bring this about. e.g. during election of the group's executive leaders there is a requirement that at least one quarter of those chosen must be females”.

“Gender refers to both women and men, but unfortunately most people think it is about women. In UCA we recognize that both men and women require equal opportunities to develop. Most times our efforts are geared towards encouraging the disadvantaged groups to come on board and in ensuring gaps between men and women are filled”.

Among the 3 co-operatives studied, only the executive of Bwetyaba participating in FETAS project could attempt simple but clear definition of gender acquired from training received.

“Sharing/working together of men and women”

“Social role differentiation based on sex”

Those of Kisoga (participating in CECFIS) could vaguely remember as though they had had one gender training course but it was clear they could remember little of what was covered. All could not define gender clearly. Additionally, they reported no efforts to address gender issues. There was no evidence of targeting men/women in the activities as this statement from the meeting with the Executive Committee reveals:

“All we want is money to enable our society to function properly and grow—we do not mind about these things of gender relations”.

Members (both men and women) of all 3 societies could not define gender indicating that probably the training had stopped with the leaders even in the organizations where it was held.

Staff's conceptualization of UCA's gender policy

Despite the absence of a written gender policy, interaction with staff both at national and district level revealed that there is a general appreciation of the basic principle that UCA desires to enhance the participation of men, women and youth in its field projects with emphasis on women and youth who have in the past been left out of its activities. The quotation below from the focus group discussion with UCA project leaders when asked their conceptualization of the UCA policy guidelines with respect to gender illustrates this point.

“As a policy UCA tries to mainstream gender in all its activities. Gender is regarded as a cross cutting issue just like environment and HIV/AIDS. Our leadership insists that all project staff should bear gender in mind in all they do e.g. when recruiting membership, staff, when collecting data from the field—disaggregate, when giving loans. All our data should be gender disaggregated e.g. data on loans”

One may call this the unwritten policy which only gets reflected in some project documents, although in a rather unsystematic matter.

Gender issues articulated by staff

Key gender issues relating to Co-operatives as articulated by staff at national and district level were as follows:

1. Low participation of women and youths due to the historical emphasis on cash crops which is the domain of men.
2. Very low representation of women and youth in leadership and management of cooperatives.

3. Quality of women's participation is poor—even those who are members and/or are in leadership positions tend not to contribute their views openly during meetings.
4. Low self-esteem of women—even when they are nominated for leadership posts, they decline because they feel they are incapable due to their low education and lack of experience in such positions.
5. Lack of access and control over resources by women.
6. Because of the low education levels of women, education requirements at the various levels of leadership exclude many.
7. Women are more active in farm production compared to men but the selling of the produce and the decision to spend the incomes earned is by men. “How do you encourage production when they won't enjoy the benefits?”
8. In micro finance, the terms for borrowing funds make the women disadvantaged because of the lack of collaterals.
9. On a positive note, experience in microfinance has shown that female bank managers or cashiers are more trust worthy in managing small Financial Institutions. They probably fear the risk of prison compared to men. Secondly, loans given to women have higher repayment rates than loans given to men.

A general observation is that UCA staff at national and district level have a relatively good appreciation of gender issues affecting Co-operatives in Uganda. However, UCA as an organization has only been able to address issues to do with enhancing participation of women and youth in terms of numbers (issue number 1, 2 and 8 above). The other critical gender issues that would call for challenging existing unequal gender relations and power structures are not addressed yet they are key to ensuring that women not only participate but also benefit from their participation. Examples of issues of this nature include the gender division of labour whereby women are overloaded with productive, reproductive and community work (the triple role of women) leaving little time for participation in co-operative activities; and lack of access and control over productive resources and benefits by women which limits their participation and benefits from economic enterprises promoted by the co-operatives. On participation in leadership, while UCA's affirmative action to ensure representation of women on the executive is laudable, it was noted that there is still a problem that the quality of participation of women leaders is poor as many do not feel comfortable expressing their views in public, particularly in formal unfamiliar settings.

Existing internal capacity for gender mainstreaming

While there is a good number of staff who have received some gender training, many at all levels reported that their capacity is not yet adequate. This heartfelt plea from one of the male project leaders during one of the data collection meetings testifies to this:

“Before we start the discussion, we want to know what gender is—maybe this meeting will help us to be more clear on this. We have written proposals which have been rubbished that this is not gender---after putting in so much effort and thinking we had done a good job! We have had training---but what is it? Tell us so that we know....”

All staff at head office have reportedly not received gender training since it was last conducted about 7 years ago. Staff in the Food Security project have not been trained. Although it is an old project, it has been changing staff and target areas due to insecurity. The LIFE project staff have also not been trained because it is new—started last year. Most of the FETAS staff have been trained. At least 2 gender seminars of 3 days each

were held for the UCA headquarters staff who have been around for the last 5 years. All the UCA field staff in the study area reported that they have received gender training except for the recently recruited ones. They however mentioned that the training was usually insufficient since it was always held as part of courses concentrating on other subject matter whereby gender is allocated a limited time say one morning.

On the self-assessment of the level of gender awareness of the organization, a majority rated themselves highly because of where they had come from. The feeling was that significant achievements had been achieved in increasing women's participation although there was mention of a need to sharpen the approaches, methodologies as circumstances change as well as clear guidelines for project leaders and field officers for implementing gender mainstreaming. The guidelines will be particularly useful for field officers.

However, there are a few who have followed the process for a longer period who were of the opinion that there is actually no gender mainstreaming in UCA. "Only a few projects are trying –FETAS and YEECO. Others don't. The employment policy also doesn't address it". The gender analysis carried out in this study tends to agree with the staff's assessment. While one can't say there is full fledged gender mainstreaming in UCA, there is evidence of positive trends in addressing gender imbalance in the co-operative movement in Uganda.

Personal changes within staff

Staff reported some revealing changes at a personal level as a result of participating in gender activities which could be an indication of their level of gender awareness and sensitivity. Below are some quotes of changes shared by the men.

"Many of us grew up in male dominated homes but after going through this..there is a change in the way I see my children—different from my parents. Assuming I was unable to pay fees for both my daughters and sons, I would give them same treatment. If I was to make a will, I would cater for both girls and boys equally".

"If you came to my home now, you will find the boys making lunch, their sisters may be seated; there is no sexual stereotyping of roles"

"I work more closely with my wife. We started a business together and sat down to agree on who should leave formal employment to run it. She opted to and she is running it now on our behalf. When I retire in a few years I will join her. I have seen the value of husband and wife working closely together"

6.2.4 Challenges and Limitations Faced by Staff

UCA staff gave a range of challenges they face in addressing gender in their projects as listed below.

1. *Absence of a gender officer:* The main challenge is that UCA has no gender Unit/desk at headquarters to oversee gender mainstreaming. There is only one person presumed to shoulder the gender responsibilities probably due to her historical involvement in gender initiatives in UCA. However, she has many other responsibilities and has no time for gender which in any case is not in her job description.
2. *Lack of an overall gender policy:* There is no written overall gender policy to guide and harmonize gender mainstreaming activities in the organization. Additionally,

gender has not been mainstreamed into the various organization policies. Lack of a policy is likely to influence the sustainability of the gender initiatives in the organization as the “unwritten policy” may not be transferred effectively to new staff.

3. *Illiteracy of women* is another factor that affects their participation the leadership of cooperatives as most of them do not meet the set educational criteria for filling certain offices. “*Sometimes we are torn between balancing gender concerns and realization of targeted results. At the end of the day we evaluate success basing on results achieved*”, one member of staff said.
4. *Lack of commitment by some project leaders*: There is variation in the level of commitment of leaders of UCA at various levels and in the various projects to addressing gender issues. Some are committed while others are not. This has implications on the amount of resources allocated to gender activities.
5. *Negative perceptions about gender at community level*: There is a perception by men at community level that gender endangers them/ erodes their status. Men are not yet sensitized to know that they benefit from their wives’ empowerment.
6. *Women in the communities still lack self confidence*—they have not yet understood that this is their time. Even when voted into leadership; they leave decision making to the men. They sit there and say nothing even when they are in the majority. It will take time to change this.
7. Female youth (below 35) who are married do not want to participate in youths’ activities because they consider themselves as women...this is a challenge for YEECO.

7 Conclusion

Attention to gender within UCA was initiated from outside, although over time the need and importance has been appreciated within the organization. However, donors continue to play a key role in sustaining interest and action in this area, as indeed is the case for many other activities.

The level of gender awareness and sensitivity among staff at national and district level is fairly high and projects have tried various strategies to integrate gender in their activities. Indeed there is evidence of positive trends in addressing gender imbalance in the co-operative movement in Uganda. However, in terms of overall assessment, one can't say there is full fledged gender mainstreaming in UCA. The gender analysis of the three UCA projects studied revealed that while there is integration of gender in some aspects of the project design, there is no gender mainstreaming per se based on the definition of gender mainstreaming adopted in this study, namely, a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the policies and programmes so that women and men benefit equally the ultimate goal being gender equality (ECOSOC, 1997 cited in UNDP, 2000). While there is a wide range of gender integration strategies that have been used, it is noteworthy that except for the affirmative action catering for women's representation on the Board of Directors of UCA and the executive committees of affiliate societies participating in FETAS project, the rest are project specific and there seems to be uncoordinated operationalization of gender activities in UCA projects as well as a lack of a systematic mechanism for gender information collection, sharing and exchange despite the fairly high level of gender awareness among staff. It is evident that there is a variation across projects in the commitment, capacity and emphasis on gender a problem that could partly be explained by lack of an overall gender policy and a national level coordination structure.

8 Recommendations

UCA staff were asked to give some suggestions on what should be done to enhance gender mainstreaming in UCA. There was a call for a more fundamental approach to gender mainstreaming as opposed to mere involvement of women in projects; focus on laws, guidelines and policies; genuine commitment amongst all leaders and projects rather than mere lip service; training/retooling all staff; and a change in the sensitization message conveyed to communities. Targeting men to help them appreciate that women empowerment can be a win-win-win for men, women and the entire household. Some of their rather strong statements are worth quoting here:

“I think there should be more focus on men, laws and institutions. There should be more vigour and a more fundamental way of gender mainstreaming than just involving women in projects. I want to see more commitment to gender mainstreaming at all levels including our development partners. The commitment of staff at National Level to gender issues varies by project but we seem to do quite well in older projects like FETAS and YEECO than say in Food Security”

“Leadership to be fully committed to gender mainstreaming in projects. UCA is aware that this is important—it is only commitment which is required. It is not enough to give lip service to the issues.”

“Yes there is ample capacity in gender, but there is need to sharpen the approaches, methodologies as circumstances change. There is also need for clear guidelines for project leaders and field officers for implementing gender mainstreaming”

Based on the findings of this study and the above recommendations by UCA staff, the following actions are recommended:

- Review of existing policies and laws with the objective of mainstreaming gender at this level
- Development of a comprehensive gender policy. This should be preceded by a gender analysis especially in UCA’s target areas and a review of the existing gender draft policy.
- Development of a clear strategy and action plan to mainstream gender in all of UCA’s project activities. It is important that such gender activities are allocated adequate human and financial resources if the mainstreaming efforts are to be successful.
- Capacity building for all staff in gender.
- Putting in place a central mechanism to coordinate and monitor gender mainstreaming efforts in project activities. Currently each project seems to be operating independently and this is likely to make coordination difficult.

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Appendix 1

Copy of the Data Collection Checklist

Data collection checklist for the national level/apex

Information from document review and individual interview with the General secretary

Brief national profile:

1. Brief history of the organization (year it was formed, by who, why, major changes over the years etc.....)
2. Mission, goals and objectives
3. Membership (types of affiliate organizations, number of organizations, their location.....)
4. Organization structure
5. Projects/programs/activities at national and lower (RPO) levels (**Get copies of project documents and most recent annual report**)
6. Number of staff (men and women at various levels)

Organization policies in general:

6. List of the policies that exist (does a gender policy exist?)
 - List of those policies that have attempted to address/mainstream gender
 - List of those policies that have not attempted to mainstream gender (**Get copies of policy documents**)

-Analysis/assessment of the policies in both categories for effectively addressing gender (with a view to identifying gaps and strengths) ----(by researchers)

7. Policy formulation process (how, participation.....)
8. How is information on policies disseminated to lower levels?

Checklist for focus group interviews with project leaders (the General secretary will provide his views on these questions individually)

Operationalization of gender mainstreaming:

1. What is the project leaders' understanding of the gender policy/mainstreaming?
 2. What gender issues is the policy trying to address?
 3. How did they come up with the issues?
 4. Goals/objectives of the policy
 5. Strategies/actions/plans to operationalise gender mainstreaming at the national secretariat and lower levels (if any) in policies and programs.
- What guides their operations?

Look at M&E reports/data/statistics to see whether it is gender disaggregated and find out management's actions based on the data.

6. Challenges/problems (actual/potential) to gender mainstreaming in policies and programs at national and lower levels
 - Is capacity for gender mainstreaming adequate?
 - What gender sensitization/training have they been provided with?
7. Own assessment of the level of gender awareness in the organization on a scale of 1 to 4 where 1=very low and 5=very high. Reasons for the rating.
8. Factors that influence the level of gender awareness
9. Suggestions on how gender mainstreaming can be improved (strategies/actions etc.....)

Data collection checklist for the RPO level

Information from document review and individual interviews with the executive

Organization profile

1. Name of the organization
2. Area of jurisdiction (sub-county, villages.....)
3. Major economic activities of men and women in the area
4. History of the organization (time when it was formed and why, by who etc.....)
5. Organization structure
6. Programs/projects and activities of the RPO

Organization policies

7. List of policies that exist (own and from the top) --does a gender policy exist?
 - List of those policies that have attempted to address/mainstream gender
 - List of those policies that have not attempted to mainstream gender (**get copies of policies**)

-Analysis/assessment of the policies in both categories for effectively addressing gender (with a view to identifying gaps and strengths) –(done by the researchers)

8. Policy formulation process (how, who participated—men and women, when)
9. How is information on policies disseminated to the RPO leadership from the top levels of the organization?
10. How is information on policies disseminated to the RPO members?

Membership characteristics/ profile

12. Number of members of the RPO by gender and activity
13. Member participation in RPO activities by gender (meetings, contributions, election of leaders, leadership positions etc...). *If possible get the trend over the last 5 years from records.*

Checklist for focus group interviews with RPO executive

1 Operationalization of gender mainstreaming (*if any—but even if there isn't find out their conceptualization and attitude towards integration of gender in their projects/activities*):

1. What is the project leaders' understanding of the gender/mainstreaming?
2. What gender issues affect their organization?
3. How did they come up with the issues?
4. How are the gender issues addressed -----(i) by UCA; (ii) Others?
 - Strategies/actions/plans to operationalise gender mainstreaming (if any) in policies and programs.
 - What guides their operations?

Look at M&E reports/data/statistics to see whether it is gender disaggregated and find out management's actions based on the data.

6. Challenges/problems (actual/potential) to gender mainstreaming in policies and programs.
 - Is capacity for gender mainstreaming adequate?
 - What gender sensitization/training have they been provided with?
7. Own assessment of the level of gender awareness in the organization on a scale of 1 to 4 where 1=very low and 5=very high. Reasons for the rating.
8. Factors that influence the level of gender awareness
9. Suggestions on how gender mainstreaming can be improved (strategies/actions etc.....)
2. Leadership positions held by men and women. If possible trend over the last 5 years from records.
3. Reasons why the positions are held by men, by women.
4. Challenges of women and men leaders (get perceptions of the men and the women and report them separately).
5. Benefits leaders get from their leadership role (men and women).
6. Suggestions on how the challenges can be addressed.

Checklist for focus group interviews with RPO members (men and women separately—2 groups of each per RPO)

1. Members' awareness and knowledge about the organization history, objectives, policies, programs, activities (*ask them to list/explain*).
2. Members' participation in policy formulation by gender
 - Description of the policy formulation process (who participated—men and women, how, when).....*Also probe for variation in level/nature of participation based on economic class, tribe, education....*
 - Constraints/problems experienced
 - Benefits of participation
3. How is information on policies disseminated to the RPO members?(channels used, who accesses them.....)
4. Members' participation in leadership by gender (who participates, nature of participation, constraints, benefits)
5. Members' participation in programs/activities by gender (who participates, nature of participation, constraints, benefits)

Tease out gender issues as perceived by the members (men and women) and their feelings as the extent to which their organization is effectively addressing them.

Checklist for the 'Gender officer'

1. How did the gender mainstreaming initiative start—what motivated it? Who were the key players?
 - Priority gender issues the organization wanted to address
 - Goals/objectives/targets to be achieved
 - Plan/strategy to achieve them
 - Structures/resources set aside to achieve the plans (**look at financial policy, budgets to determine resource allocation to gender activities**)
2. Draft gender policy formulation process—who participated, how
 - Reasons why the policy has remained in draft form
3. Gender officer's responsibilities, activities, plans
4. Challenges
5. Capacity in gender mainstreaming (her own and that of other staff at various levels)

Look at training curriculum—what are they building capacity in? Are women's enterprises addressed? Who has benefited from the training?

Analysis of the policy and legislative framework

1. Does the policy specify the issues affecting men/women that UCA wants to address?
i.e the problem to be addressed.
2. Is there a strategy to address the problem?
3. Is there a plan to address the problem?
4. Is there a systematic procedure for monitoring and review using gender disaggregated data?
5. Formulation process—who participated/was consulted—equity issues.
6. How consistent is the draft organization gender policy with the national gender policy?