



WHY WOMEN AND YOUTH (IN UGANDA)?

DE NAZARIN
COMMUNITY RELIEF
INSPIRING COLLECTIVE ACTION

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INTRODUCTION

Our work is currently mainly based in the Wakiso District of the Kampala Metropolitan area in Uganda.

In order to do our work effectively, we need to have an understanding of the context (people and culture) we are working in. Since we are working within our own community, we feel that we already have quite a good understanding of the challenges we face. However, we wanted to share our knowledge with you so you can understand where we are coming from.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

Regarding the current social, economic and political situation for youth and women in Uganda we base our projects and programs around the following recommendations:

- Strengthening Self-Reliance and Resilience for women and youth
- Create opportunities for youth and women to develop and strengthen vocational skills and education
- Increased financial literacy and savings opportunities
- Ensure financials inclusion for women and youth
- Promotion of gender equality within community mindsets

These recommendations are based on the information found in this report.

UGANDA

Uganda is located in East Africa and lies astride the equator. It takes its name from the Buganda kingdom, which encompasses a large portion of the south of the country including the capital Kampala. The current estimated population of Uganda is 35 million. It has a very young population, with a median age of 15 years. Uganda is home to many different ethnic groups, none of whom forms a majority of the population. That means Uganda's culture is mixed with various languages, customs, and histories.

KAMPALA AND WAKISO DISTRICT

Kampala district is Uganda's capital and, as a central business district, also serves as the place with the central government's head premises. Kampala is reported to be among the fastest growing cities in Africa with an annual population growth rate of 4.03 percent. Kampala is a city with a diverse setting of different cultures and tribes of people living and working together. Luganda is the commonly native spoken language belonging to the Baganda tribe of Buganda kingdom, which is one of the largest tribes in Uganda.

Wakiso District is a district in the Central Region of Uganda that partly encircles Kampala, Uganda's capital city. The town of Wakiso is the site of the district headquarters. Wakiso District provides a vital lifeline to Uganda's Capital City of Kampala as it surrounds the city.

Formerly part of Mpigi District, it came into existence in 2000, when the 3 counties of Mpigi District-Busiro, Kyadondo and Entebbe Municipality became Wakiso District. The people are Baganda and the main language is Luganda.

SOCIAL ECONOMIC STATISTICS

OF THE WAKISO DISTRICT

DISTRICT POPULATION: **1,997,418**

FEMALE
47%

MALE
53%

LITERACY RATE 89.7%

OWNS A RADIO 65.3%

OWNS A PHONE 69.3%

ACCESS TO ELECTRICITY 62.8%

INTERNET ACCESS 24.6%

ACCESS TO CLEAN WATER 42%

CURRENT POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL BACKGROUND

In the years leading up to the pandemic, Uganda was on a path toward economic recovery with financial stability. However, employment fell after the second lockdown, and half of the population was moderately food insecure. Households, in particular the poorest ones, felt a negative impact from increased prices, either by being unable to access food products or to buy them in desired amounts.

Although the pandemic hit Uganda hard, the recovery is expected to continue, albeit slowly. Since the pandemic, there has been some political turmoil, with the period being characterized by the continuation of a worrying trend of democratic backsliding in Uganda. The political instability joined by inconsistent policy implementation weakens Uganda's otherwise favorable economic growth prospects.

While there were no major internal violent conflicts in the past years, growing tension and discontent are increasingly seen as a risk to the country's economic, social and political stability.

Keeping in mind Uganda's young population, it creates a large group of people that feels politically marginalized, and economically disillusioned and sees no channels for constructive engagement is seen by many observers as a ticking time bomb.

CURRENT POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL BACKGROUND

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Uganda had recently recovered from a protracted economic slowdown first sparked by the 2011 general elections. Government programs for social assistance were inadequate and reached only a small portion of the vulnerable population. The ambitious goals of the national development plan, including attaining middle-income status by 2020, had to be postponed to the future in light of the pandemic. However, a number of other factors beyond the pandemic contributed to Uganda's slow recovery.

Additionally, the effects of climate change pose a major threat to the country and its people. Uganda is undergoing more extreme weather events such as flooding, as well as prolonged dry and warmer spells. Climate change impacts are felt mainly in agriculture, water, health, and human settlements.

The slowdown of global growth heightened tightening of global financial conditions, and climate insecurities pose major risks to Uganda's economic and social growth. Accelerated growth may reduce poverty slightly by 2024, but this will depend on how COVID-19 evolves, how long Russia's invasion of Ukraine and related sanctions continue the pace of food inflation and any environmental shocks that adversely affect households due to their limited adaptive capacity.

OTHER CHALLENGES

POVERTY

According to Uganda's government, the fraction of people living in absolute poverty has declined in Uganda. However, the major issue here is that Uganda's poverty estimate data is based on \$0.88–\$1.04 per person per day as the national poverty line. Meanwhile, the World Bank's international poverty line is \$1.90 per day. In other words, a person living on \$0.89 a day may be classified "OK" by Uganda's estimate. Meanwhile, any person living on less than \$1.90 a day is considered "absolutely poor" by the international poverty line. Just about 29% of Uganda's total population has access to electricity (or is covered by the national grid). Although Kampala and other major cities and towns are somehow covered, just about 17% of rural and suburban communities are covered by the national power grid.

PEOPLE BELOW NATIONAL POVERTY LINE (15+)

FEMALE
38.5%

MALE
33.5%

OTHER CHALLENGES

HEALTH

According to UNAIDS, more than 1.5 million people were living with HIV/AIDS in Uganda with about 21,000 officially recorded HIV/AIDS-related deaths in 2019. Unfortunately, most people living with the virus in Uganda today don't even have access to antiretroviral treatment. Apart from the deadly HIV/AIDS, diseases such as Malaria, hepatitis A and E, typhoid fever, dengue fever, trypanosomiasis-gambiense (African sleeping sickness), schistosomiasis and rabies continue to destroy several lives in Uganda today.

ENVIRONMENT

Water pollution (mostly from agricultural and industrial runoffs), deforestation (the rampant cutting down of trees mostly for timber), overgrazing of farm animals (which leads to land degradation), widespread poaching (which is severely affecting wildlife population in Uganda today. NB. Mountain gorillas are critically endangered), etc. are some of the major environmental issues facing Uganda today.

MAIN CHALLENGES

SUMMARIZED

1. A growing number of the unemployment rates especially affect the youth and women
2. The rapid growth of youth with declining opportunities for education, skills, and employment
3. Increased environmental degradation on existing bodies of water, wetlands, swamps, and other related ecosystems
4. High levels of food insecurity in the suburbs and rural areas
5. Poor access to sanitation within human settlements. This worsens during the rainy seasons and causes health insecurity among children and pregnant women.



LIVELIHOOD CHALLENGES FACED BY YOUTH

Uganda has one of the youngest and most rapidly growing populations in the world with 78% of Uganda's population being under the age of 30. Unemployment is one of the major challenges faced by Uganda with statistics putting the unemployment rate at 64% of the youth population (15 to 30). The youth bulge and high levels of unemployment call for urgent action and innovative solutions.

Research has shown that young people suffer from a lack of access to formal jobs, the gap between degrees and the job market, and the prohibitive costs of finding employment. The lack of soft skills and networking opportunities is also a key constraint. There is limited access to internship opportunities, which makes it harder for youth in the job market to acquire the relevant experience required by employers. Youth who are about to join the job market is concerned about the lack of networks, information, and money required to enable them to acquire their first job.

By providing capital and hands-on skills, youth can be promoted. Networking, skill-building, and opportunities are key to creating a future that youth can look forward to. The majority of the youthful population is still employed in subsistence farming whereas graduates lack skills that are employable due to the theoretical nature of Uganda's education system. With more than one million young people entering the job market each year, it is vital to face issues head-on by equipping youth with vocational skills, increasing the competitiveness of youth within the labor market, building capacities of national institutions to mainstream youth employment, and supporting youth-led enterprises to pilot innovative ideas.

LIVELIHOOD CHALLENGES FACED BY YOUTH

Other challenges faced by the youth in Uganda include climate change and its effects on agricultural output and food security; high population growth rate which greatly affects living standards and creates urban slums; land ownership; and accessibility to loans for livelihood development.

SOME FIGURES

80% of Uganda's youth live in rural areas.

38.5% of young people aged 10-19 live in the two poorest wealth quintiles

64% of the young persons aged 15-29 years in Uganda are in some form of employment.

15% of youth in school are also engaged in employment.

10% of the 6-12 year olds have never been to school.

22% of adolescents aged 13-18 have left school.

Source: [Worldbank](#)

LIVELIHOOD CHALLENGES FACED BY WOMEN

Globally, some progress on women's rights has been achieved. In Uganda, as of February 2021, 34.9% of seats in parliament were held by women, for example. However, work still needs to be done to achieve gender equality. Only 75% of the legal frameworks that promote, enforce, and monitor gender equality under the Sustainable Development Goals indicators with a focus on women are in place.

A major factor strengthening the gender gap is unpaid domestic work. Women and girls aged 15 and older spend almost double the amount of time than men on unpaid care and domestic work. A study by the Economic Policy Research Centre notes that "in Uganda, women and girls spend around twenty hours per week on unpaid care work, twice as much time as men and boys". This disproportion entrenches social gender norms that continue to economically disempower women and impede them from gaining quality employment. Women are more inclined to accept lower-income and insecure jobs, often in the informal sector. That places women in an economically disempowered position compared to men.

Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic pushed women further out of the labor market as the unpaid care work burden was aggravated. Many women in Uganda spend much of their time doing unpaid care work, which intensified when the lockdown forced children and other members of the (extended) family to stay at home, particularly as women were expected to take care of relatives who fell ill.

LIVELIHOOD CHALLENGES FACED BY WOMEN

Additionally, figures for domestic violence soared. The Annual Crime and Traffic/Road Safety Report for 2020-2021 note that domestic violence continues to top the list of crimes in Uganda. 26.1% of women reported that they had been subject to physical and/or sexualized violence by a current or former intimate partner. These are only the recorded figures, there are many cases that go unreported.

A large amount of research has demonstrated that key factors to gender-based violence (GBV) are poverty and gender inequality. Access to and control over resources, prevention, and the promotion of gender equality are key elements to strengthen the resilience of women and youth at risk of GBV. A qualitative assessment shed further light on the underlying causes of challenges related to livelihood, safety and security, and wellbeing. Closing the gender data gaps is essential for achieving gender-related commitments in Uganda.

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