



BMAU BRIEFING PAPER (36/22) DECEMBER 2022

Access and Use of Agricultural Inputs in Agriculture: What are the gender-related limiting factors?

Overview

Article XIV and 32(1) of the 1995 Constitution states that all Ugandans, irrespective of sex, gender, age, status and location enjoy rights, opportunities and access to basic services including agriculture. The state is required to take affirmative action in favor of groups marginalized on the basis of gender, age and disability to address imbalances (GoU, 1995). The constitutional provisions are operationalized through the Vision 2040, National Development Plans (NDPs), Uganda Gender Policy 2007, and Public Finance Management Act 2015.

The attainment of gender equality in access to and control over resources is a prerequisite for accelerated national development. Gender refers to socially and culturally shaped roles, attributes and expectations assigned to women, men, girls and boys. Gender equality is the provision of equal opportunities for men and women, boys and girls. For the agriculture sector, where most people are employed, gender equality is key.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF) and the semi-autonomous institutions in partnership with local governments have adopted an intensive approach as part of its strategy aimed at increasing production, and export promotion. The strategy aims at providing support to farmers, through a decentralized system, of agricultural inputs. The inputs include: seeds and seedlings, fertilizers, agro-chemicals agricultural equipment and fuel, tractors, agricultural tools (cultivators, levelers, irrigation, pump sets, motors, sheds).

Introduction

The government has adopted a commodity-based approach focusing on 11 selected commodities for

Key Issues

- Limited access to credit among the women which limits their participation in cases where direct payments are required.
- Most agricultural programmes and services are predominantly accessed by male farmers.
- The mechanisms to address the gender inequalities are ineffective.

increased food security, production and exports. These include maize, beans, coffee, market fruits, vegetables, rice, bananas, dairy and beef cattle, and fish. The approach is to ensure equitable availability of improved seed varieties and animal breeds by research organizations to all farmers. The Government distributes inputs through various ways, that include: Public Private Partnership (PPP) arrangements; community procurement under the National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS), Uganda Coffee Development Authority (UCDA), Cotton Development Organization (CDO), MAAIF, the private sector and cooperatives.

The Government's objective in the agriculture sector is to transform subsistence farming to commercial since agriculture is the main source of economic livelihood for the majority of Uganda's population. In FY2020/21, the sector contributed to 23.8% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).



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The key gender and equity commitments in the agriculture sector focus on increasing access to inputs, technologies, trainings, mechanization, value addition equipment and tractor hire services by women and youth groups, as well as persons with disability (PWDs). The assessment focused on three programs; Operation Wealth Creation (OWC), Cotton Development Organization, and Uganda Coffee Development Authority (UCDA).

Status of access to agricultural inputs

The OWC focuses on providing strategic interventions equitably, timely and conveniently to farmers and farming communities. The key gender and equity responsive intervention under the NAADS/OWC, as detailed in the Standing Orders of Procedure (SOP) for the OWC 2015, is the provision of strategic inputs and commodities to farmers including planting and stocking materials.

In FY 2019/20, the OWC programme lacked appropriate mechanisms for dealing with gender inequalities. This contributed a lot to limiting access to advisory services. For example, of the 78 farmers who benefitted from maize seeds in Nakalama Sub-county, Iganga District, 56 (72%) were male and 22 (28%) were female; of the 180 farmers in Butagaya Sub-county, Jinja District that benefitted from cocoa seedlings, 146 (81%) were male and 34 (19%) female.

FY2021/22 under the CDO, there was inequitable access by female farmers to the demonstration planting materials. For instance, of the 81 farmers who accessed agronomy demonstration inputs in different parts of the country, 64 (79%) were male and 17 (21%) female. Similarly, out of 73 farmers who benefitted from fertilizer demonstration inputs, 63 (86.3%) were male and 10 (13.69%) female.

Gender inequality persisted even among affirmative action programmes, for instance in FY2018/19 UCDA through an affirmative action to promote coffee production in Northern Uganda, distributed 10MT of seed to 142 nurseries (114 owned by males and 28 by

females) for the propagation of seedlings for planting by smallholder farmers. A total of 61,500 banana suckers were distributed for intercropping with coffee to address climate change effects (15,000 banana suckers to Vinayak Agro Farm and 46,500 suckers to 123 farmers (91 males and 32 females) in Nwoya, Lira, Omoro, Oyam Amuru and Gulu districts.

Hindering factors

Despite the Government of Uganda's (GoU) efforts to engender the programs, access remains lop-sided partly due to the following factors;

1. Limited land rights for women

Under OWC, most women and persons with disability (PWDs) lack access to or ownership of substantial pieces of land. For example, in FY2019/20, farmers in Ibanda District received seasonal crops like maize, beans and cassava for purposes of ensuring household food security using their small pieces of land. The perennial crops, including coffee, mango and orange seedlings, banana suckers and heifers and value addition equipment, were mostly taken by men who have land and resources to manage and sustain the enterprises over several years.

Similarly, *"the PWDs rarely collect the inputs due to lack of land and the labour intensiveness of enterprises like heifers that require growing of pasture and fetching water for the animals,"* key informant interview with the District Production Officers, Mbale District.

Under UCDA, most female farmers who wanted to participate in commercial agriculture of cash crops lacked land to undertake the said enterprises, given that these enterprises take a very long period in the gardens. For instance, women, youth and PWDs in the districts of Arua, Gulu, Bududa, Mbale, Manafa, Bugwere, and Iganga among others were largely affected since most of the land is communally owned and the rest belongs to men.



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In FY 2020/21, despite the UCDA inviting both genders to participate actively in coffee production, processing and marketing, men dominated in setting up coffee nurseries as a source of income and accessing trainings and inputs. For example, the majority of coffee nursery operators in the Bushenyi sub-region were male (77%). Most training sessions were attended by men (80%) with the rest being women, youth and persons with disabilities (20%). The key constraint to female participation was mainly limited ownership of land to produce perennial crops like coffee.

The UCDA distributed coffee wilt disease-resistant (CWD-r) plantlets to nursery operators, CWD-r plantlets for both mother gardens and planting were allocated to various beneficiaries countrywide. However, males received more plantlets compared to females because of the land problem as shown in table 1.

Table 1: Distribution of CWDR plantlets by gender by 30th June 2020

Mother garden beneficiaries						
Region	No. of CWD-R plantlets	M	F	Youth	PWD	Total Beneficiaries
Central	839,910	262	122	181	1	384
Eastern	137,750	43	18	26	1	61
Northern	7,700	-	2	-	-	2
South	131,850	47	18	34	-	65
Western	325,288	93	35	53	1	128
Grand Total	1,442,498	445	195	294	3	640

Source: Field Findings

2. Long distances to input collection centres

Under OWC, lower access to inputs by females, youth and PWDs was mostly attributed to a lack of transport means whereby they had to move long distances to sub-counties to collect the agricultural inputs. For

example, *the PWDs rarely collect the inputs due to the long distances to collection centres,*” Key Informant Interview with the District Production Officers, Ibanda District.

The same problem was noted in FY2018/19, where monitoring in 20 sample districts indicated that the agricultural input beneficiaries had received the inputs, but women had less access than men. There was evidence of youth accessing the inputs although in insignificant numbers (Table 2).

Table 2: Gendered access to NAADS/OWC inputs in selected districts by 30th June 2019 (number of beneficiaries)

Districts	Male	Female	Total	o/w Youth	o/w PWD
20	17,144	9,781	26,925	1,885	375
Percentage of total (%)	63.67	36.33		7.00	1.39

Source: Field Findings

3. High input costs that were unaffordable

The males continued to dominate access to inputs that required co-funding or direct purchase as they were less poor. According to the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS 2022), the findings for the multidimensional headcount ratio by different background characteristics indicate that female-headed households have higher rates of multidimensional poverty (49%) compared to 39% for male-headed households.

Under CDO, farmers who bought the inputs from the sales agents noted that the prices were high and unaffordable, especially for women, youth and the elderly. There was also fear that collecting the inputs could be a source of domestic violence due to the failure to agree on the splitting of income by husbands and wives.

For example, in the Acholi region (Gulu District) farmers pay Ug shs 60,000 per acre for tractor

services. It is mainly men who hire tractors because they can afford them. Most women cannot afford to hire tractors due to a lack of income sources. As a coping measure, women and youths organize themselves and work as groups to cultivate one garden after another using hand hoes. This is labour-intensive and time-wasting. By the time they finish digging, the season is over, planting is late and yields are low.



4. Gender roles

In most communities in Uganda, household chores are a preserve for women. The women, therefore, experienced time poverty due to their reproductive roles, yet growing cash crops like cotton and coffee is both labour-intensive and time-consuming. They also lacked time to attend trainings on agronomic practices of these interventions due to the reproductive roles including childbearing and caring.



There were also issues of decision-making based on power relations. For instance, the limited incentive to grow coffee commercially was because most decisions about marketing, sales and use of proceeds are made by men. However, there were no appropriate

measures within the UCDA interventions to deal with some of these concerns.

Conclusion

Gender inequality in access to and use of agriculture inputs persists. The sector commitments of increasing access by women and youth groups to inputs and tractor hire services were partially met as the implementing entities largely lacked appropriate mechanisms for ensuring equitable distribution of services. Deliberate measures need to be put in place to attain gender parity in access and use of agricultural services.

Recommendation

The MAAIF and agencies should integrate affirmative actions in all the sector interventions to address constraints that limit access to services by women, youth, the elderly, PWDs and other disadvantaged people.

References

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