

GENDER ANALYSIS SURVEY SUMMARY

Local Empowerment And Development for Refugees and Host Communities (LEAD) Programme

Introduction

Uganda is the third-largest host nation for refugees globally, accommodating approximately 1.67 million refugees as of 2024. With one of the world's most progressive refugee policies, Uganda allows refugees to work, operate businesses, and access essential services. Despite this, deep-seated gender inequalities persist within both refugee and host communities, affecting access to resources, decision-making, and participation in livelihood opportunities. Women and girls face disproportionate challenges, including limited access to land, restrictive cultural norms, and overburdening domestic responsibilities, which hinder their ability to achieve economic independence and equality.

This Gender Analysis, conducted under the LEAD (Local Empowerment and Development for Refugees and Host Communities) programme, provides an in-depth exploration of these dynamics. Through qualitative and quantitative methods, it examines access to resources, gender roles, social norms, and institutional policies, while identifying key challenges and opportunities for fostering gender equity. The analysis aims to inform and strengthen the LEAD programme's approach to creating inclusive and transformative interventions for refugees and host communities in Uganda.

OBJECTIVES

The study aimed to:

1. Understand gender constructs influencing participation in project interventions.
2. Provide actionable recommendations for gender-sensitive programming.
3. Develop insights to foster equitable resource access and systemic changes.



METHODOLOGY

The Gender Analysis utilized a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative techniques to ensure a comprehensive understanding of gender dynamics in refugee and host communities. The study was conducted across four refugee settlements in Uganda: Nakivale, Kyaka II, Kiryandongo, and Rhino. These settlements were purposively selected to capture diverse socio-cultural and demographic characteristics of refugees and host communities.

The methodology was guided by the **Jhpiego Gender Analysis Framework** and the **USAID Automated Directive Systems (ADS) 205**, which provided a structured lens for assessing six gender domains: access to resources, roles and responsibilities, social norms, institutions, decision-making, and power relations.

DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES

1. **Key Informant Interviews (KIs):**

A total of 18 in-depth interviews were conducted with settlement commandants, gender desk officers, local council leaders, civil society organizations, and community representatives. These interviews provided individual insights into gender-related challenges and systemic barriers in the targeted settlements.

2. **Focus Group Discussions (FGDs):**

A total of 24 FGDs were held with men, women, and youth in both refugee and host communities. Each FGD consisted of 10 participants, ensuring gender-segregated sessions for candid discussions. Topics explored included gender roles, access to resources, education, mobility, and decision-making processes.

3. **Quantitative surveys:**

Brief quantitative tools were administered to collect demographic and baseline data on household structures, education, and access to assets. This data was disaggregated by gender to identify disparities and inform the study's findings.

Analytical Framework

The **Jhpiego Gender Analysis Framework** emphasized understanding how access to and control over assets, roles, social norms, and institutional policies influence gender inequalities. The analysis also incorporated deductive thematic analysis for qualitative data and descriptive statistics for quantitative findings, ensuring a nuanced interpretation of the results.

Ethical considerations

The study adhered to rigorous ethical standards, including:

- **Informed consent:** Participants were briefed on the study's purpose and voluntarily agreed to participate.
- **Confidentiality:** All data was anonymized to protect respondents' identities.
- **Cultural sensitivity:** Data collection was conducted in local languages to ensure accessibility and foster trust.
- **Do no harm principles:** Enumerators were trained to avoid questions or interactions that could exacerbate vulnerabilities, particularly for women and girls.

Despite **logistical challenges such as geographic inaccessibility and recall bias**, the integration of qualitative and quantitative methods ensured a robust and credible dataset. This mixed-methods approach allowed for a holistic understanding of the socio-economic and gendered realities within refugee and host communities.





KEY FINDINGS

1. Access to resources

Refugee women and girls face systemic barriers in accessing land, productive assets, and income-generating opportunities.

- **Land ownership:** Patriarchal norms severely limit women's access to and control over land in host communities. Even when women inherit land, it is often taken over by their husbands or male relatives. In refugee settlements, most refugees do not own the land they live on, with plots allocated by the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) being too small (50x50 meters) to sustain meaningful agricultural livelihoods.
- **Income disparities:** Refugee women earn significantly less than their male counterparts and face restricted economic agency. Only 21% of refugee women have access to mobile phones compared to 35% of men, further limiting access to digital financial services.
- **Financial inclusion:** While mobile money adoption is high (89.7%), less than 40% of households own a bank account. Refugee women remain underrepresented in financial decision-making processes.

2. Gender Roles and Responsibilities

Women bear the majority of domestic and agricultural responsibilities, leaving little time for income-generating activities or education.

- **Domestic burden:** Women perform over 90% of tasks such as cooking, fetching water and firewood, and caring for children. This leaves them with an average of 18 hours of unpaid labor daily, compared to 7 hours for men.
- **Agricultural work:** In refugee and host communities, women are primarily responsible for weeding (98.7%), harvesting (98.3%), and food crop cultivation. Men dominate livestock grazing (59.7%) and cash crop farming, which are more lucrative.
- **Educational gaps:** Low levels of education among women and girls exacerbate their vulnerability. Cultural biases prioritize boys' education, with early marriage and teenage pregnancy further limiting educational attainment for girls.

3. Social Norms and Cultural Expectations

Entrenched patriarchal attitudes perpetuate gender inequalities, constraining women's mobility, decision-making, and leadership opportunities.

- **Mobility restrictions:** In settlements like Nakivale and Rhino, women must often seek permission from male family members to leave the household or engage with service providers. In some cases, cultural norms prohibit women from riding bicycles or interacting with male extension workers.
- **Expectations of behaviour:** Women are expected to be modest, deferential, and focused on domestic roles. Men are seen as household heads and primary decision-makers. These norms discourage women from participating in economic activities or pursuing leadership roles.

4. Institutions and Policies

Uganda's progressive refugee policies, such as the Refugee Act of 2006, provide a framework for inclusivity but fall short in implementation.

- **Policy gaps:** While refugees are granted the right to work and access services, systemic challenges such as underfunded programs, bureaucratic delays, and limited vocational training infrastructure hinder effective implementation.
- **Gender inequalities in rights:** In host communities, customary laws and patriarchal traditions often deny women the right to inherit or own land. Refugee women also face exclusion from decision-making processes related to resource allocation and household income.
- **Barriers to financial services:** Refugees, particularly women, face challenges in accessing financial services due to lack of documentation and discriminatory practices by financial institutions.

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5. Additional Statistics and Insights

A deeper look into the socio-economic realities of refugee and host communities reveals stark disparities in household structures, income sources, and access to technology, further highlighting the gendered inequalities prevalent in these settings.

- **Household structures:** Female-headed households dominate in settlements like Rhino (55%) and Kiryandongo (54%), yet these households face heightened economic vulnerabilities.
- **Income sources:** Refugee women often engage in low-paying activities like tailoring, small-scale trading, and domestic work. Only 5% of refugees in Omugo extension (Rhino camp) engage in irrigation farming despite proximity to water resources.
- **Technology access:** In host communities, 35% of women own mobile phones compared to 54% of men. Among refugees, 21% of women have access to mobile phones, highlighting a gendered digital divide.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Implement gender-transformative strategies

To address systemic gender inequalities, implement gender-transformative approaches that promote equitable access to resources and decision-making for women and men.

- Ensure land ownership and usage policies are inclusive, enabling women to own or access land independently.
- Integrate women into livelihood programs through targeted support, such as access to microfinance and market linkages.
- Advocate for the adoption of gender-inclusive policies in refugee and host communities, prioritizing women's economic empowerment.

2. Strengthen education and skills training

Education and skills development are critical to promoting economic independence and reducing gender disparities.

- Increase access to vocational training tailored to local market demands, especially for women and girls.
- Introduce mentorship programs that support women's leadership in businesses and communities.
- Address barriers to girls' education by providing scholarships, tackling child marriage, and raising awareness about the importance of educating girls.

3. Foster community dialogues to challenge patriarchal norms

Address deeply rooted cultural norms through community engagement and awareness-raising initiatives.

- Facilitate discussions with men and boys to promote equitable gender roles and responsibilities.
- Partner with local leaders, faith-based organizations, and women's rights groups to create campaigns that challenge harmful stereotypes and encourage gender equality.
- Promote role models of successful women leaders and entrepreneurs to inspire shifts in societal attitudes.

4. Support women's access to technology and financial inclusion

Bridging the digital and financial gaps can significantly enhance women's opportunities for economic participation.

- Provide training on digital tools and financial literacy to empower women in both refugee and host communities.
- Facilitate access to mobile phones, internet connectivity, and digital banking services for women.
- Partner with financial institutions to develop products tailored for women, such as small business loans and savings schemes.



5. Address mobility and safety challenges

Increase women's mobility and safety to enable their full participation in economic and social activities.

- Improve access to affordable and reliable transportation for women in remote refugee settlements.
- Strengthen protection mechanisms to ensure women and girls can travel safely to schools, markets, and training centers.
- Collaborate with local authorities to create policies that address barriers to women's mobility, such as spousal consent requirements.

6. Enhance monitoring and evaluation frameworks

Develop robust gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation systems to ensure accountability and progress.

- Include gender-disaggregated indicators in all project reporting and evaluation frameworks.
- Regularly assess the impact of interventions on women's empowerment, livelihoods, and decision-making capacities.
- Train staff and local partners in gender-responsive data collection and analysis to improve program adaptation.

