



MINISTRY OF GENDER, LABOUR AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT



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UGANDA WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROGRAMME (UWEP)

Key highlights on the occasion to mark the International Women's Day, 2018

Theme: "Empowerment of Rural Women and Girls: Opportunities and Challenges."

The Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme (UWEP) is an initiative of the Government of Uganda that is aimed at improving access to financial services for women and equipping them with skills for enterprise growth, value addition and marketing of their products and services. UWEP implemented as a Rolling Programme under the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD), is intended to empower Ugandan women for economic development.

The Programme is designed to address the challenges women face in undertaking economically viable enterprises including the limited access to affordable credit, limited technical knowledge and skills for business development, limited access to markets as well as information regarding business opportunities. The programme is envisaged to increase participation of women in business development, increase their incomes, livelihood security and overall quality of life.

Programme Goal

The overall goal of the Programme is to empower Ugandan women to improve their income levels and their contribution to economic development.

Specific Objectives:

- To strengthen the capacity of women for entrepreneurship development
- To provide affordable credit and support access to other financial services to enable women establish and grow their business enterprises
- To facilitate women's access to markets for their products and services
- To promote access to appropriate technologies for production and value addition
- To strengthen Programme management and coordination

Programme Components

- 1. Capacity and Skills Development:** This component takes up 15% of the total funds allocation. It focuses on upgrading needed business skills development for women to enable them initiate and manage enterprises. Women can apply for these funds to get hands-on training in skills needed for effective implementation of their enterprises and purchase of required inputs. Through Local Governments, individuals or institutions are identified to train the women in appropriate skills.
- 2. Women Enterprise Fund (WEF):** This component takes up 70% of the total funds allocation. Women groups are provided interest-free credit for enterprise development on a revolving fund basis. The women are required to be in groups of 10-15 members to ensure successful implementation of their priority enterprise and full repayment of the Revolving Fund.
- 3. Institutional Support (IS):** This component accounts for 15% of the total funds allocation. It ensures effective and efficient Programme management and coordination at all levels. Under this component, beneficiary groups receive basic training in bookkeeping, teambuilding, enterprise planning and implementation, entrepreneurship business skills and group dynamics. In addition, business counseling is provided to the women to enable them realize their potential.

Programme scope

In terms of scope and coverage, the Programme was initiated in 19 District Local Governments and Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA) in the Financial Year 2015/2016. The Districts included; Moroto, Katakwi, Kallio, Mayuge, Kamuli, Kalam-

gala, Kayunga, Wakiso, Kibale, Bundibugyo, Kihuru, Koboko, Nebbi, Kitgum, Ntungamo, Ouke, Kole, Nakasongola and Kisoro. Last Financial Year 2016/2017, the Programme rolled out to the entire country with separate budgets for each District and Municipality.

Target Population

The primary target beneficiaries of the Programme are women within the age bracket of 18-65 years. The assumption is that those beyond 65 years will be catered for under the Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment of Elderly Persons (SAGE) Programme. Since the Youth Livelihood Programme (YLP) targets young women aged 18 – 30 years (the Programme guidelines stipulate that 30% of the Youth Interest Group members should be female), the female youth already benefiting from YLP are not considered as beneficiaries for UWEP. The Programme strongly emphasizes the integration of the following categories of women into beneficiary groups:

- (i) Unemployed women.
- (ii) Vulnerable Groups e.g. Single young mothers, Widows and gender based Violence (GBV) survivors.
- (iii) Women with Disabilities.
- (iv) Women living with HIV/AIDS.
- (v) Women heading households.
- (vi) Women slum dwellers.
- (vii) Women living in hard to reach areas, and
- (viii) Ethnic minorities.

Criteria for selection of beneficiaries

The beneficiary women groups are identified and selected through a community participatory process that involves LC 1 and Women Council leaders as trusted members of the community. The selection of the women to benefit under the UWEP is undertaken by the Beneficiary Selection Committee chaired by the Sub-County Chief with members including the Chairperson of the Sub-County Women Council and the Community Development Officer. The respective LC 1 Chairpersons confirm that the selected women group members are bona fide Ugandans who reside within their respective communities (the catchment area for the group membership may be a village, parish and must not go beyond a Sub-County/Town Council/City Division).

For purposes of continuous involvement of the women and ensuring their representation in Programme processes, the Sub-County Women Council Chairperson and the District Women Council Chairperson are co-opted onto the Sub County Technical Planning Committee (STPC) and the District Technical Planning Committee (DTPC) during the approval of the Enterprise Proposals. The STPC submits the verified Women Proposals to the Sub County Executive Committee for endorsement and thereafter to the DTPC for approval with relevant documentation. The DTPC also submits the approved Women Proposals to the District Executive Committee for endorsement to ensure that equity issues are taken care of. Districts can approve proposals to the tune of Shs12.5 million while proposals exceeding Shs12.5 million to a maximum of Shs25 million are approved at the Ministry.

Terms and Conditions

- (i) Zero interest for repayments made within the first twelve months (one year) and a service fee of 5% per annum for the repayments made after 12 months. The service fee is meant to cater for inflation.
- (ii) No physical assets/collateral required;
- (iii) Repayment period of 1-3 years, depending on the nature of the enterprise;
- (iv) Each repayment schedule is based on the nature and maturity period of the enterprise;
- (v) Accessible for both existing and new groups.
- (vi) Formal registration of groups not a precondition for access (but encouraged after access of funds as part of enterprise sustainability).

Table 1: Status of Programme Financing (Budget versus Actual Releases) by Financial Year.

Financial Year	Budget	Actual Release (UGX)	Performance Rating
2015/17	3,000,000,000	1,982,500,531	66
2016/17	43,000,000,000	24,339,347,328	57
2017/18	39,176,457,000	10,859,852,162	28
TOTAL	85,176,457,000	37,181,700,021	44

The Programme had an initial budget of allocation of UGX. 585 Billion in the Public Investment Plan for the first 5 years (FYs 2015-16 to 2019-20). To date however, the Programme has received a cumulative release of UGX. 37,181,700,021. This translates to only 44% of the budget allocation that has been made for the Programme for the FYs 2015-16 to 2017-18.

Table 2: The status of financing of women projects as at 28th February 2018

Total number of projects financed	3,499
Total number of beneficiaries	44,570
Total Amount Disbursed	UGX. 18,480,722,372

Table 3: Summary of Disbursements, Projects Funded and Beneficiaries by Financial Year

FINANCIAL YEAR	NO OF PROJECTS	AMOUNT DISBURSED	% age	NO OF WOMEN BENEFICIARIES
2015 - 16	94	456,011,300	2.5%	1,222
2016 - 17	2,318	12,016,510,093	65.0%	29,544
2017 - 18	1,087	6,008,200,979	32.5%	13,804
TOTAL DISBURSEMENT	3,499	18,480,722,372		44,570

From Table 3, it can be noted that a big proportion of disbursements; over UGX 12 billion was made to women groups in the Financial Year 2016/2017 with a direct benefit to 2,318 Projects and 29,544 women. By the end of the 1st and 2nd quarters of FY 2017/2018, about UGX 6 billion had been disbursed for women projects.

Table 4: Summary of Disbursement by component

Component	No. of Projects	Amount Disbursed	% Investment	No. of Women
Capacity building and skills component	112	709,013,350	3.8%	1,349
Women Enterprise Fund	3,387	17,771,709,022	96.2%	43,221
Total	3,499	18,480,722,372		44,570

From the above analysis more funds, up to UGX 17.7 billion, has been released specifically under the Women Enterprise Fund, which component avails women groups interest-free credit for enterprise development on a revolving fund basis. But also, funds have gone to the capacity building component to a tune of over UGX 700 million.

Table 5: Summary of disbursement by sector

Sector	No of Projects	Amount Disbursed	% Investment	No of Women
Wholesale and Retail Trade	1,503	7,730,185,021	41.80%	19,518
Agriculture	1,203	6,063,565,543	32.80%	15,379
Services	367	2,266,395,397	12.30%	4,430
Industry	359	2,064,110,192	11.20%	4,442
Agro Forestry	40	179,505,371	1.00%	485
Agro Industry	22	141,383,248	0.80%	262
ICT	4	26,777,600	0.10%	42
Creative Industry	1	8,800,000	0.00%	12
Grand Total	3,499	18,480,722,372	100%	44,570

Overall, majority of Women are still embracing traditional enterprises in the categories of Wholesale and retail trade at 41.80% and Agriculture at 32.80% of the total funded projects. Interestingly, some Women groups have embraced manufacturing and processing and accommodation and food services. Whilst on a small scale, such transition is an indication that some groups are breaking gender barriers by venturing into enterprises hitherto perceived to be a preserve of men. A classic example is 'Epikosi Kikio Women Group' in Katakwi which ventured into metal fabrication and welding and is transferring these skills to other members of the community.

The inability to have wide diversification of enterprises is partly attributed to limited sensitisation provided by Local Governments, varied climatic conditions and cultural barriers. Monitoring visits conducted by the Ministry indicated that limited sensitisation/guidance of the Women groups was instrumental in limiting the group choices to traditional enterprises. The knowledge implementing partners had acquired during the Training of Trainers (TOTs) did not fully cascade downwards to the Women groups.

Table 6: WEF-Disbursements by Region as at 28th February 2018

Region	Amount Disbursed	No. of Projects	No. of women beneficiaries
Central	3,466,528,408	641	7,945
Eastern-1	2,947,558,646	569	7,011
Eastern-2	2,392,080,387	461	5,896
KAMPALA METROPOLITAN	1,536,253,214	212	2,458
Northern	4,659,290,331	819	11,303
Western	3,479,011,386	797	9,957
GRAND TOTAL	18,480,722,372	3,499	44,570

The Northern region has scoped the highest amount of disbursements with UGX 4.6 billion spread across 819 Projects directly benefitting 11,303 Women. Central, Western, Eastern-1 and Eastern-2 regions fol-

lowed in the sequence respectively.

The newly created Kampala Metropolitan region indicated the least amount of disbursements of UGX 1.5 billion. It should be noted that this region was carved out of the original central region to create efficiency and effectiveness in Programme Management. This, partly explains the smaller number of projects funded and amounts disbursed to this region.

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE CHARACTERISTICS OF UWEP BENEFICIARIES

Below are highlights of the demographic profile of UWEP women beneficiaries. Such disaggregated data helps stakeholders understand the category of the Programme target beneficiaries.

- 16,460 beneficiaries representing 70.3% of the Women beneficiaries are household heads while 29.7% are not. Marrieds and Separated constituted 74.9% and 3.9% respectively while Single and Widows had a similar proportion of 10.2% and 10.4% respectively.
- 10,912 women representing 44% of the women beneficiaries have more than 5 children.
- 13,883; 56% of the beneficiaries have less than 5 children.
- 74.7% of the Women beneficiaries have more than 5 members in a home, 9.4% have exactly 5 members, 8.1% have exactly 4 members in a home and 4.3%, 2.7% and 0.8% have exactly 3, 2 and 1 member in a home respectively.
- 37.4% of the Women beneficiaries are school drop-outs at primary level. 13.5% never had an opportunity to attend formal education and 23.5% completed primary seven. Very few beneficiaries completed A level; 1.2%, O-Level; 8.6%.
- 7.6% of the Women beneficiaries do have disabilities. The disabilities include; sight, hearing, physical, intellectual and emotional disabilities among others.
- 14.7% of the targeted women beneficiaries are Gender Based Violence survivors
- 9.1% live in slum areas. 19.7% live in hard to reach areas.
- 14.5% of the women beneficiaries do belong to ethnic minority groups

Recovery of revolving funds

The repayment of the revolving fund is ongoing across the Country. Out of a total UGX 3,081,353,344 expected to be recovered by the end of February 2018, UGX 1,547,086,543 has been recovered. This amount represents 50.2% of the total amount due to date. Seven; 7 groups have to date fully paid up (100% Repayment). It is important to note that the recovery rate has been calculated using an estimation of amount due based on the dates of receipt of institutional support to the Local Government. The following measures have been put in place by the Ministry to boost the rate of funds recovery;

- Routine monitoring and implementation support
- Invoking of sanctions against poor performing local governments
- Active involvement and participation of women council leaders at various levels including the National Women Council.
- Active involvement and participation of Political leaders at district and municipality levels
- Active involvement and participation of RDCs
- Improved working relationship with Ministry of Local Government

BENEFITS OF THE PROGRAMME

- 1) Women Empowerment**
Women have been able to access credit to establish their businesses at zero interest. In addition, the Programme has provided an opportunity to Women to start and grow their enterprises and provide self-employment opportunities. Women have been able to re-

ceive training to improve their business and how to manage them better. The Programme has provided a platform to inspire and support women business ideas. The group approach has given Women an opportunity to improve knowledge and skill through mentoring each other. The greater involvement of the Women in mobilization, sensitization, prioritization and planning for their needs, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of Programme activities has created a sense of empowerment and confidence to take charge of their destiny. The skills provided through the basic training in financial management, entrepreneurship, business development, group dynamics and life skills, further strengthen the empowerment of the Women involved in the Programme.

- 2) Women Economic Engagement: 44,570**
Women in 3,499 projects by February 2018 were engaged in self-employment through vocational trades and income generating activities financed under UWEP.
- 3) Financial Inclusion:** All the Women supported under the Programme, receive the funds through the Commercial Banks. A number of these Women groups had never had any dealings with the Banks before but are now holding savings accounts in the Commercial Banks. This is a great achievement in the promotion of financial inclusion among the vulnerable Women.

4) Reduction of the Dependency Syndrome

The revolving funds approach is making a significant impact in the mind-set of the Women by inculcating positive values of hard work for a living, as opposed to the non-sustainable quest for free things (hand-outs). The reports received from the groups indicate that Women have been able to contribute to the management of their homes and contribute to school fees of their children and improve the quality of life in the home.

IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES AND MITIGATION MEASURES

- The demand is very high and the resource envelop that was available in the financial year was low. The Programme has only been able to fund 10% to 15% of the groups that have applied. A case in point is Rukungiri district whereby 320 groups applied and only 24 have been supported.
- It has been observed that women are mainly engaged in traditional enterprises such as poultry, piggy and produce buying and selling. The Programme is therefore encouraging diversification of business as the best way to reinvest group profits for better results.
- The bank charges involved in managing the group projects are high especially when the groups have been advised to withdraw funds in a phased manner.
- Training of groups: The groups are being taken through basic training in group dynamics to be able to resolve the emerging internal challenges.
- Rescheduling of repayments and or refinancing projects genuinely affected by natural calamities. The affected projects are being considered on a case by case basis for rescheduling of the repayments and or refinancing depending on the magnitude of losses incurred.

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