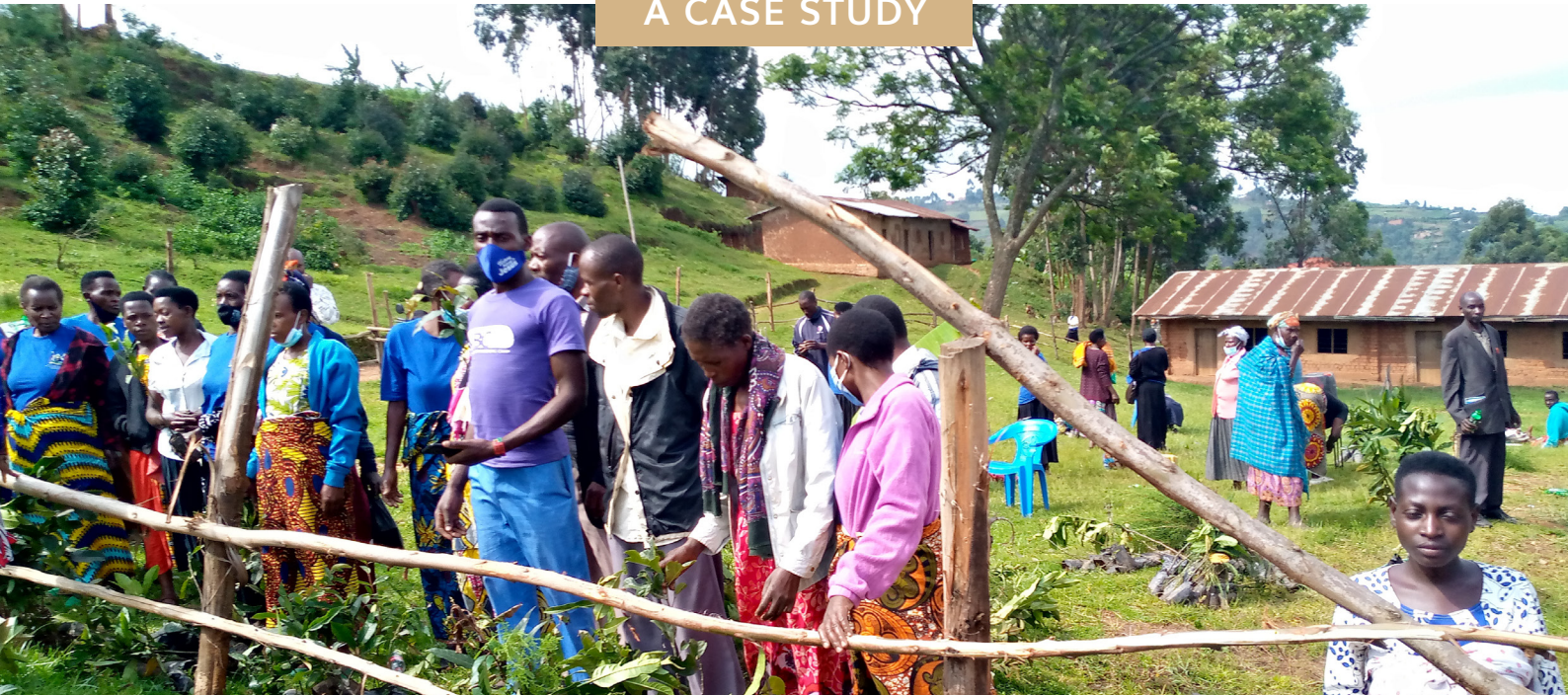


Towards Gender Equality in Water Security and Climate Resilience in Uganda:

Gender Transformative Approach in the Mukirwa community, Upper Maziba Catchment

A CASE STUDY



Key Messages

- ▶ Gender equality is critical for ensuring sustainable water security and for building climate resilience by all. Government needs to appreciate the importance and give highest attention towards addressing the underlying causes of gender inequalities in Uganda
- ▶ The Ministry of Water and Environment, the mandated

institution for climate change, need to establish a mechanism where future community level climate change adaptation and water security projects integrate issues of gender equality as part of their project design.

- ▶ Gender equality is achieved through transformative change processes. It requires participation

and collaboration of all stakeholders at the various levels. Scaling up the lessons from Mukirwa community, and other similar initiatives is useful strategy for the Government to consider. The Ministry of Gender need to provide the necessary guidance for scaling up the lessons at national level

The case study provides an overview of gender inequality issues and gaps relating to water security and climate resilience building in Uganda's Mukirwa Community in Rubanda District, Kagera/Lake Victoria Basin. It highlights the lessons from designing a local community gender transformative project towards addressing the gaps. The project is one of the five demonstration projects in Africa under the AIP WACDDEP-G program in Africa.

Why gender equality in water security and climate resilience building?

Gender equality is a core development objective, fundamental for the realization of human rights and key to effective and sustainable development outcomes. It has been observed that no society can develop successfully in a sustainable way without providing equitable opportunities, resources, and life prospects for males and females so that they can shape their own lives and contribute to their families and communities. Although many gender gaps have narrowed over the years in Uganda, substantial inequalities remain across all sectors in society, especially in low-income areas and among disadvantaged groups.

There is therefore need to address the gender inequalities that continue to disadvantage women especially within the context of water management, development and climate resilience by following a gender transformative approach. This means dealing with the root causes of the harmful practices which hinder women to determine and implement solutions to their own issues. This will entail revisiting the existing community level frameworks and social structures.

Uganda is one of the five pilot countries in Africa for the Africa Water Investment Program-Gender Transformative Water Climate and Development Program (AIP WACDEP-G¹). AIP WACDEP-G is developed as a program to trigger long-term change with the goal to ensure that the preparation, development, governance and management of climate resilient water investments and institutional development strategically advance gender equality. The program is also being piloted in Benin, Cameroon, Tunisia and Uganda.

What are the main gender inequality issues and gaps in Mukirwa community?

Mukirwa Community is in Hamuhambo Town Council in Rubanda district in the Kigezi sub region, in the Maziba catchment, southwestern Uganda. The area currently faces several climate change related challenges that include rapid loss of vegetation cover, high rates of soil loss in some areas, poor water quality, changing rainfall patterns, floods, landslides and wetland degradation. Prolonged dry seasons, causing water stress with effect on water demands for domestic use and farming.

Whereas both men and women in the community are affected by climate change, it is women who are the most impacted, since their livelihoods are more directly dependent on natural resources. The gender challenges identified by the community members and leaders during field interactions include cultural and traditional beliefs and practices that emphasize some

activities as for men and women, resource inheritance and control being largely by man (land, bicycle, radio). Additionally, girls are encouraged to marry at a young age leading to high girl child school dropouts. Physical and emotional abuses of women and girls by men at household level were also reported. Other gender-based discriminations include leadership positions dominance by men. These, among others have resulted into women input being missed in some of the interventions to address climate change impacts.

On the positive side, the Mukirwa Community has made some minimal attempts in addressing issues of gender such as reserving the position of community conservation group chairperson exclusively for a woman. They also have affirmative action of at least 30% of leadership positions going to women. They encourage and support their members to keep the girls in school to at least learn to read and write so that they can be able take up leadership positions. Most women now own mobile phones where information can be shared and are also used for radio listening. Women are also involving some men in the making of improved cook stoves, though the participation is still too low.

The root causes of the gender-based inequalities are linked very much to the cultural and traditional beliefs and practices like over emphasis on gender division of labour between men and women, and resource ownership and control only by men at household level. There is much segregation in terms of access and control of resources, information and services like land, livestock, climate information, equipment at home and financial returns thereof.

How is the project designed towards bringing gender transformational change in the community?

The project was designed with the intention of contributing to tackling the underlying causes of gender-based inequalities in the community. Whereas it is recognized that women and men may play different roles in natural resource management and benefit sharing, some of the roles are merely socially conscripted and based on harmful norms that need to be changed.

The project also recognizes that women are being impacted most by climate change, since they are more directly dependent on natural resources for deriving livelihoods. Therefore, both men and women need to be equally involved in climate change resilience interventions including planning, decision-making processes and benefiting. The GTA will promote equality amongst the gender and other vulnerable groups for social, economic, and environmental sustainability, thus building their climate resilience.

¹ AIP WACDEP has been implemented since 2020 in five countries (Benin, Cameroon, Tunisia, Uganda and Zambia) in the Five Sub-Regions and Five Transboundary Basins in Africa

The project builds on the interventions of the project “Enhancing Resilience of Communities to Climate Change through Catchment Based Integrated Management of Water and Related Resources in Uganda” (EURECCCA) that is being implemented by the Ministry of Water and Environment (MWE) with financial support from the Adaptation Fund. The EURECCCA project covers the wider Maziba Catchment and recognizes that women play an important role in water security as well as climate change resilience which is a good base for applying gender transformative approaches. The project is also being implemented in collaboration with GWPEA in relation to the capacity building component.

The project is designed around three components:

1 Capacity and Skills development: enhancing community and stakeholders’ capacity in applying gender transformative approaches in water security and climate resilience interventions.

Strengthening stakeholders’ capability to apply gender transformative approaches covering skills in project planning, management, documentation, and reporting; business and financial management including sales and marketing; and building their advocacy capacity to influence decision-making at District and Sub County level. The stakeholders include Maziba catchment members composed of local government relevant departments, civil society organizations, heads of learning institutions, faith-based organizations, and service providers. The project focuses on mindset change towards gender equality at community level.

2 Livelihood improvement: the project focuses on improving the community livelihoods in a manner that is gender transformative and climate resilient, through the following four interventions:

- promoting water rain harvesting and storage for improved water and food security while promoting gender equality in its access and control.
- promoting sustainable production, management and utilization of biomass energy sources and clean cooking technologies for both men and women
- increasing incomes among women, men and youth through eco-agriculture and equal access to saving and credit facilities for their livelihood improvement
- enhancing catchment protection through soil and water conservation and eco-agriculture activities

3 Learning, Documentation and dissemination of Lessons learned: the project employs the approach of “Action learning” whereby implementation shall be done alongside monitoring and evaluation of project activities together with specific events to review practices on key themes, supporting an adaptive management approach that enables project strategy to be guided by learning plus wider dissemination of the best practices.

The Table below provides the summary of gender inequalities/gaps in the target community and how the AIP WACDEP-G project is designed to contribute towards gender equality in water security and climate resilience. The table also show how a Gender Transformative Project design is different from the designs of other regular community projects.



Gender Gaps/ Inequalities	Non-gender transformative community projects	Gender transformative community project (eg. Mukirwa)
<p>1. Community level projects for water security and climate resilience are not implemented with gender transformative approach</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In most cases gender issues were considered during program or project preparations as part of environmental and social impact assessments which are mostly requirements of financiers. Gender analysis not integrated as an approach to inform the designing of projects. In particular, EURECCCA involved women as beneficiaries but didn't address the root causes that affect their meaningful participation and benefiting equally from the project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender equality is one of the key objectives of the project. The project design is informed by gender analysis.
<p>2. Inequalities in access to and control of natural resources for water security and climate resilience building. For example, <i>customary land tenure systems restrict women from control and ownership of land. Men have control over the use of household productive resources (labour, animals, agricultural tools, water pumps). Women and children are burdened with extra water collection responsibilities especially at times of drought.</i></p> <p>3. Inequalities in access to technology, information and services for water security and climate resilience building. For example, <i>Men more likely adopt new technologies such as crop varieties and fertilizers. Men have better access to weather information than women.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Projects do not aim to address the root causes of gender inequalities. In most cases gender is mainstreamed into project activities that are aimed at water security and climate resilience. 	<p>The project is designed to contribute in addressing the root causes of gender inequalities in water security and climate resilience. Project interventions are informed by gender analysis towards addressing gender inequalities by challenging existing practices or social/cultural norms. The interventions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> provide equal access to economic opportunities such as access to land, water, credit, training, information through convincing local authorities, traditional leaders, and the society mobilize partners and work with women agencies in promoting gender equality issues at community level contribute in breaking the barriers towards gender transformative process through supporting women agencies, sensitizing communities, influencing behaviours
<p>4. Networks and partnerships that promote gender integration in water and climate programs are not adequate and not capacitated</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The wider stakeholders that have role in water security and climate resilience building mainstream gender in their programs and projects. However, they do not work collaboratively to influence structural level gender inequalities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the project considers enhancing capacities of stakeholders, and working together with the stakeholders as key strategy to bring change at community level in addressing the gender inequalities in water and climate
<p>5. Inadequate capabilities (knowledge, skills, attitudes) of women and women agencies to make choices challenging systems and norms that perpetuate inequality. For example, <i>Female headed households are more likely to be food insecure in times of drought or flooding. Severe droughts tend to increase migration by men but reduce migration by women, likely due to shortages of off-farm employment opportunities</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are no targeted capacity development efforts made by such projects for transforming gender inequalities and harmful gender norms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity development activities are considered as key part of projects, especially for institutions that are working on water, climate change, gender equality and in women empowerment programs. Training activities on enhancing agency of women and women-based organisation to influence decisions at local level

