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# WOMEN, WATER AND CLIMATE CHANGE

**Capacity Needs of Women and Women Led Organisations in relation to their decision-making agency, power, choices in access to water and climate information and services.**

## ABOUT THIS BRIEF

**T**his brief is a snapshot derived from the capacity needs assessment and gap analysis of women and women-led organizations in relation to their decision-making agency, power, and choices in access to water and climate information and services.

The brief summaries strategies to enhance women's agency and decision-making power in relation to access to and control of water and climate information and services at all levels.

The assessment was undertaken in Uganda in Kagera/

Lake Victoria Basin (Maziba Sub Catchment area) in selected four districts of Kabale, Rubanda, Rukiga and Ntungamo.

The goal of the assessment was to identify the capacity needs and gaps as well as develop strategies to enhance women's agency and decision-making power in relation to access to and control of water and climate information and services at all levels.

The objectives of the assessment were to: analyze capacity needs and gaps; map gender inequalities.

## KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF THE ASSESSMENT

The assessment noted that there have been efforts to enhance participation of women in decision making processes through development of enabling legal and policy frameworks in Uganda.

The Uganda policy and legal framework promotes inclusive access to water and climate information and services of all persons irrespective of gender, age, location, and Disability.

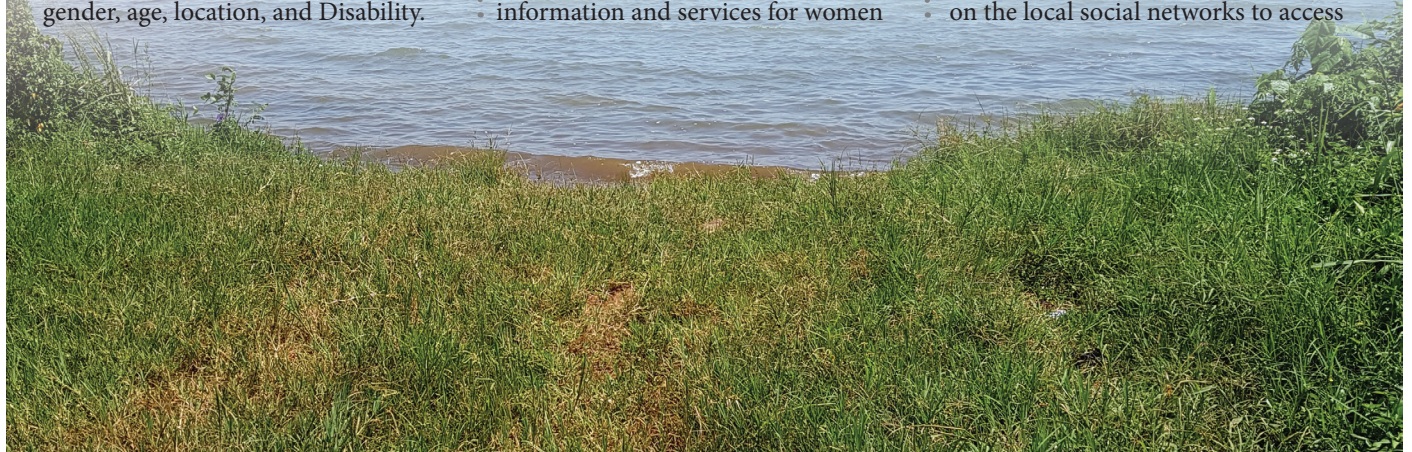
For stance the Uganda Water and Sanitation Gender Strategy 2018-2022 shows women are the major water collectors, users and managers at households and are the major promoters of household and community sanitation activities.

There is a general understanding of access to water and climate resilience information and services for women

and the most vulnerable women.

Women have been engaged in discussions and sharing opinions on water and climate resilience information and services at all levels.

The assessment noted that working with existing local structures to relay information to women and mostly the vulnerable women who depend on the local social networks to access





information is effective.

Despite these efforts registered, there are still several gaps and inequalities that hinder women and most vulnerable women from access to water and climate information and services.

Including low reading culture; limited availability of information,

- lack of gadgets like phones, television and radios; conflicting priorities while listening to radios and watching television and lack of weather forecasting facilities at community level.

- Limited awareness, ignorance; lack of knowledge and skills to deliver such information; limited dissemination

- of climate related information; lack of gadgets to provide climate information due to poverty; limited channels to deliver such information at community level; affordability in related to costs of access to information; COVID-19 pandemic overshadowed other programs.



**Most women do not have a culture of reading about various issues that may affect them and majority cannot read and write, they spend most of their time on domestic chores like taking care of children, rural women are in gardens or at home preparing meals for the family. More to note, vulnerable women like women with disabilities and poor women are overwhelmed by survival needs which they tend to prioritize.**

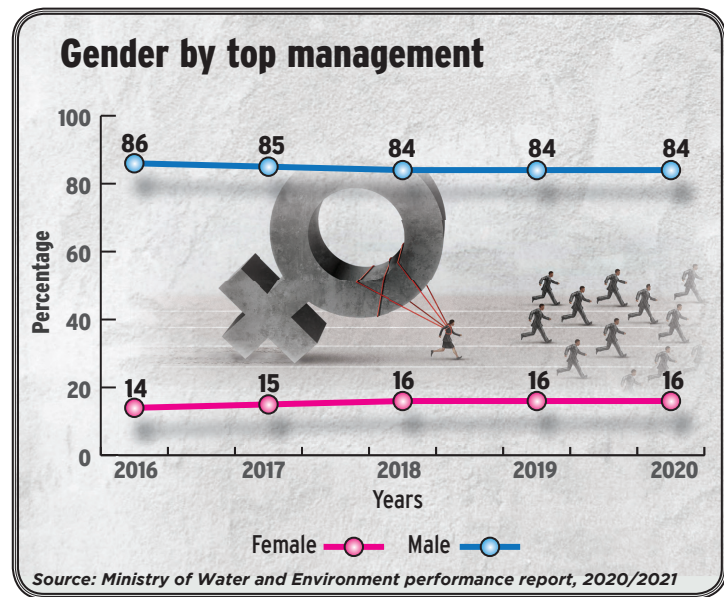
**Female-KII-CEWIGO**

The assessment also learnt that there are some capacity gaps and inequalities, excluding women in planning and decision-making regarding water and sanitation development.

The women representation in Ministry of water and environment in top management where decisions are made is at 16%. This is illustrated in the chart.

A gender analysis of the staffing structure at the MWE indicates that 34% (115) staff is female and 66% (221) are male.

The assessment observed limited number of women-based organizations promoting women participation in decision making processes within water and environment in Uganda.



## BEST PRACTICES

**The assessment identified a number of best practices government of Uganda through the line ministry, district local governments and development partners have exhibited to ensure women are included and actively participate in decision making process as well as improved access to water and climate information as highlighted and listed below.**

**1** The 1995 Constitution of Republic of Uganda provides for affirmative action in political leadership; this has substantially increased the number of women in decision making positions, for instance 35% women representation in parliament and to a minimum of one third in all local governments in Uganda. The Uganda 2040 Agenda ensures women's equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision-making.

**2** MGLSD is as a national machinery that coordinates other Ministries Departments and Agencies(MDAs) to take on gender aspects.

**3** Gender focal point persons in the water sector enhanced inclusion of

women in decision making processes.

**4** Enforcement of the Public Finance Act – ensures inclusion of gender and equity in plans of MDAs.

**5** Adoption of international legal and policy framework that enhance inclusion of vulnerable in plans at all levels.

**6** Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) supported by UN Women to ensure data users integrate gender perspectives in statistics.

**7** Affirmative action in the constitution of Uganda that promotes participation of women in decision making processes.

**8** Promote good working relationships between government and development partners.

**9** Ministry of Water and Environment(MoWE) has Gender Focal Points(GFPs) and sociologists.

**10** MoWE has a gender strategy 2018-2022; the strategy further noted that formation of all water catchment management committees should have at least 30% of women in leadership positions and representation of all other vulnerable groups like youth and persons with disabilities.

**11** MoWE guideline that promotes women's representation in key positions in water sector management at all levels.

**12** MoWE had a female minister in charge of water and environment.





**13** Policy and legal frameworks support women's participation in decision making processes i.e. women represent over 80per cent in the water Boards and WUCs at all levels (according to Water Officer at MoWE).

**14** Translate policies, guidelines, manuals into accessible formats in popular versions.

**15** Target use of local media to reach out to people in the communities.

**16** MoWE disseminate the translated community resource book at all levels.

**17** Women given priority for training at the Water Resources Institute

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Through analysis of the assessment findings, the following recommendations were generated that include; Continuous awareness raising, capacity building of women to voice and participate in decision making, enforcement of policy and legal provisions, develop guidelines for inclusion, strengthen coordination and networking to reach women.

Provide sufficient information in communities through local and accessible media platforms, review the laws

and policies to increase the number of representation of women, provide a slot for vulnerable women to be part of the committees, review the laws and policies to increase the number of representation of women, provide a slot for vulnerable women to be part of the committees, empower women with leadership skills, build women with confidence to deliberate as well as creation of a network and support systems to mentor women in leadership.

### i) Strategies for enhancing agency of women and other vulnerable women in access to water and climate resilience information

#### **Provide transport means to ease mobilization and monitoring:**

Women and other vulnerable persons can be easily accessed at grassroot levels, to achieve this there is need for government to provide transport means i.e. procurement of enough vehicles and motorcycles for the department of community services, natural resources and water services departments to facilitate their movements to implement government programs at community level.

**Improve funding through enhanced resource mobilization strategies:** The department of community development services and that of natural resources both reported with concern the limited funding yet they have a big role of mobilizing and raising awareness at community level, in order to scale up mobilization of women and vulnerable women at community level, advocacy and training of women to access water and climate resilience information and services, there is need to deliberately increase funding.

**Mobilize women in homogeneous groups:** Formation of relevant groups to promote confidence in voicing and provision of incentives to these groups such as access to revolving funds to improve their livelihoods and in turn lead to empowerment women in decision making and participate in information sharing engagements.

**Empower women economically:** The finances are needed for their movements to attend meetings to share their views as well as learning from themselves and service providers who organize meetings in designated venues outside their communities. The income will also help the vulnerable women to purchase/construct water tanks to harvest water for domestic use particularly the most vulnerable women (elderly, women with disabilities and rural women from the hard-to-reach areas).

**Targeted training engagements:** The ministry Water and Environment should coordinate with its implementing partners to organize trainings

specifically targeting vulnerable women who have been left out in the water and environment sector like women with Disabilities in order to increase their access to water and climate resilience information and services. This category of people is more affected by shortage of Water and climate change.

**Effective enforcement of the legal provisions that enhance inclusion of women in decision making:** The assessment established weaknesses in implementing the policy and legal framework at national and district levels.

Compliance with legal provisions; There is need for compliance with legal frameworks to sustain the results. The Ministry of MGLSD & MWE should review and amendment of some of the legal frameworks to ensure gender and equity compliance.

**Implement affirmative action:** There is needed to enforce affirmative action in Water User Committees and general leadership of water and environment

at all levels to enhance women participation in decision making. The provision of at least one third of women of all categories to sit on water and environment committees should be implemented to increase women's participation.

**Research and Documentation:** All stakeholders in water environment sector should invest in research and documentation on gender and social inclusion in the sector.

**Women in water sector leadership profiling:** Profiling women in leadership and management positions in the water sector should be regularly conducted and publicized at different platforms to show the disparities that exist so as to influence policy change.

**Provide enabling Environment:** There is need for an enabling



**The government through Ministry of Water and Environment in partnership with its development partners should develop and disseminate simplified messages on water, climate and early warning and response to communities. Develop and share audio-visual materials for easy access to all.**

environment for women to participate in decision making at all levels. This is because even the few women in key leadership positions still face different challenges in executing their roles.

**Empower women to break negative attitude:** The assessment noted that women have been affected with stigma, discrimination, low self-esteem among others. Dealing

with such negative attitudes requires training and skilling to empower women and other vulnerable persons to gain self-confidence, build positive attitudes and gain strategies to deliberate and effectively participate in leadership and decision-making processes in water and climate resilience and services.

## ii) Strategies to enhance agency and choices of women to participate in decision making processes related to water and climate resilience

**1** Work with the different organs of government to develop guidelines and strategies that will form a critical mass of women in decision making processes to increase their participation from 30% to 50% the number of women who are on important committees like water user committees; considering age, location and disability.

**2** Continuous awareness raising and advocacy on effective implementation of laws and policies that protect and promote women and persons with disabilities rights to participate in decision making.

**3** Provide sufficient information in communities through local and accessible media platforms as well as use of community-based facilitators to disseminate information to women and other vulnerable communities at community level and translate laws in simple and accessible formats i.e.

local languages and in formats accessible to women with disabilities.

**4** The ministry MWE should also review the laws and policies to increase the number of representation of women, provide a slot for vulnerable women to be part of the committees since they can ably represent their concerns better than any other person.

**5** Empower the women and most vulnerable women with skills and knowledge on governance and leadership, debating, developing of position papers and petitions as well as public speaking to be in position to make informed decisions and participate with confidence.

**6** Creation of a network and support systems for empowering women leaders who will be acting as mentors and role models for other young women.

## PROPOSALS

### Proposed areas of training to empower women and women-based organizations promote/ participate in decision making processes

- Leadership and Governance
- Team building and group dynamics
- Advocacy and Networking
- Gender and social Inclusion
- Fundraising
- Policy and legal framework
- Sensitization on the need to participate in decision making processes.
- Confidence building

## KEY MESSAGE

**Participation and access to information is a human right:** The Government of Uganda through its line ministries should strategically plan for inclusion of women and vulnerable persons in decision making processes and enhance their access to information related to water and climate resilience at all levels.

## ABOUT

### GLOBAL WATER PARTNERSHIP EASTERN AFRICA

The Global Water Partnership Eastern Africa (GWPEA) is one of 13 regional arms of Global Water Partnership, which is a global, multi-stakeholder action network that is dedicated to working with countries towards the equitable, sustainable, and efficient management of water resources and whose vision is a water secure world.

GWPEA was constituted in 2003 by stakeholders to support the sustainable development and management of water resources at all levels in the Eastern Africa region. Key to GWPEA's mandate is the promotion of integrated water resources management (IWRM) for sustainable development.

Currently, GWPEA comprises the following nine (9) Country Water Partnerships (CWPs): Burundi, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan, and Uganda, and has over a total of 200 partners drawn from its respective member states. GWPEA works closely with these CWPs to address water-related challenges such as drought, floods, food insecurity, and climate change within the region.