

**Gender, tenure and community forests in Uganda:  
Policy and practice for women's participation**

**By**

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## Abstract

Despite the trend toward greater participation of communities in forest management, women have been largely shut out of decision making. Yet women depend on forest resources for subsistence, as safety nets and even for income. This study reviews policies, legal and institutional frameworks, organizations working in forests and district level governments to understand the extent to which Uganda's constitutional provisions supporting gender equality are being practiced. It finds important progress in gender mainstreaming but weak implementation at all levels. For example, the Forestry Policy, Forestry Act and Forestry Plan all address gender and women's specific needs. Nevertheless, institutional, legal and policy frameworks are not backed up by relevant legal provisions for ensuring compliance.

Through interviews in three districts at varying distance from the capital Kampala, the study also examined the extent to which gender features in projects and programmes that involve forests. On the one hand, about three-quarters of organizations not specific to forestry had written gender policies and had strategies to promote gender integration, perhaps due to donor pressure as a condition for funding. Only one third of these organizations reported success. On the other hand, the majority of forest-specific organizations had no policy on gender and did not show any intention of promoting gender in forest management.

At the district level, integrating gender in forest management activities was hindered by the limited number of women in technical and leadership positions, absence of the gender focal persons required by law, and inadequate knowledge and skills on gender equity issues by councilors and district technical staff. At community level, women's groups are supporting capacity building and access to loans from micro-finance institutions, which may improve women's ability to participate effectively in the management of forest resources. Nevertheless, all levels would benefit from the development of indicators for monitoring and the design of specific targeted gendered strategies for practitioners.

**Key words: Gender, Institutions, Forest programs, Forest Management, Tenure, Forests/trees**

## Introduction

Over the past five years, global interest over addressing and/or reducing the gender gap in various spheres of development has taken a new and heightened urgency. A broad range of multi-lateral and bilateral organizations such as the UN, FAO, World Bank, EU, CIDA and USAID have undertaken action to ensure that their development policy and practice is not only gender aware, but have developed a range of tools and instruments to track progress towards gender equity. This change has been echoed by the development research community, most recently seen in the reform of the CGIAR and an unprecedented effort among participating centers to integrate gender in their research cycles in more meaningful and effective ways and to be jointly accountable for development outcomes. This renewed global interest is preceded and possibly informed by a similar global wave of reforms in the 1990s that saw broad scale decentralization of authority in many polities across developing countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. In the forestry sector, where a large and growing literature documents women's important roles in forest management, evidence increasingly suggests that despite their importance women, who are among the poorest of the poor, and who depend on forest resources for subsistence, as safety nets and even for income, continue to be marginalized in processes of rulemaking and in the distribution of the benefits of forest resources (Agarwal 1994; Pottinger and Mwangi 2011;). Thus the current re-focusing on gender equity occurs against a backdrop of national laws and policies, currently under implementation, and which are intended at improving gender equity in resource use, access and benefits, to enhance gender equity and more generally community participation. There is need to understand and to remedy the continued lack of involvement of women in forest management in a global setting characterized by increasing connectivity, international trade regimes and climate change, which all add to the vulnerability of women's rights to resources .

In Africa, Uganda has taken a strong lead in placing gender equity concerns as part and parcel of a national development agenda ( Aili 1997, Gorretti 2005, and Obaikol 2008). Ratification of international treaties such as the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the African Charter on the Rights of Women and a pledge to implement the Millennium Development Goals are examples of such commitment. These global instruments and commitments have been domesticated through the Constitution, which adopts an affirmative action approach to achieve gender parity. The Constitution has subsequently been operationalized in a national Gender Policy/Law, as well as relevant laws and policies in Forestry, Land and related natural resources sectors. But to what extent have these innovations in the forestry sector resulted in appreciable gains for women at the grassroots in Uganda? The global narrative would suggest that little has been achieved and policy scholars and practitioners would suggest that the road towards implementation is a narrow one, fraught with challenges that can undermine the best of intentions.

This study, which is part of a broader comparative research with Nicaragua, shines a light on the implementation of gender equity provisions in Uganda's forestry sector. It identifies barriers and opportunities to improving women's rights and access to forest resources and benefits. It adopts a multi-level approach, reviewing policies, legal and institutional frameworks, assessing organizational practices and programmes at national and district levels, and examines how gender issues are approached at the community level. The study is a stock-taking exercise that will inform policies and practices intended to enhance gender equity in forest management in Uganda.

The study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent do the institutional, legal and policy frameworks that govern natural resource management/forest management in Uganda, address gender issues and the role of women in forest management.
2. To what extent are women involved in decision making, agenda definition and benefit-sharing at multiple levels of governance (local, district and regional scales)? What are the main impediments to their greater participation?
3. Do external actors such as NGOs and governments (local, regional and national) support women's participation in community forest management? In what way and with what outcomes?

Findings from three districts of Uganda ( Mpigi, Masaka and Rakai), show that there has been little improvement of women's status in forest management. Progress in achieving gender equity has been slow as there is little to show in practice after more than a decade of implementation. For example a review of national policies and laws revealed that the policies and laws are not backed up by relevant legal provisions for ensuring compliance consequently; there is weak policy implementation at all levels of governance. At the district level, we found limited number of women in technical, political and leadership positions who could spear head gender mainstreaming in the districts. At community level, the quality and extent of women's participation in decision-making in forest management was found to be enhanced when they join formal forest user-groups possibly because of increased contact with external NGOs and women's groups that support capacity building. We recommend that indicators for monitoring progress and milestones with a time frame to be achieved by policy makers and for practitioners should be developed by the Forest Sector Support Department (FSSD) together with the ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development. Public debate on gender and natural resources management should be increased in order to sensitize politicians and professionals who are still gender insensitive.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows: the first section provides a background of gender in forestry use and management, the second section outlines the methodology, the third section presents findings at the level of law on paper, and practices at different level of governance, including at community level. Discussions of findings are presented alongside the results. The fourth and final section presents the study's conclusions and recommendations.

## **Factors that influence participation of women in sustainable forest Management in Uganda**

Access to different plant and tree resources in different societies is complex. This access is characterized by nested and overlapping rights that are politically, socioeconomically and culturally determined (Rocheleau and Edmunds, 1998, Fortmann *et. al* 1988, Larson *et. al* 2010, Namarundwe and Nontokezo 2005 and Nsita 2005). Often this nestedness and overlapping is related to customary tree and land tenure, which confers different ‘bundles of rights’ upon different users depending on their sex, age and kinship.

Gender barriers in forest management among the Baganda, an ethnic group found in the Buganda Kingdom in Central Uganda, were extensively studied by Howard *et al.* (2007). The study showed that the legal, customary and normative rights regimes around natural resources constitute and reflect unequal gender power relations. The regimes ensure women’s access to spaces and species that are essential to fulfilling their livelihood obligations, reinforcing women’s orientation toward production for subsistence and ultimately conferring greater privileges and status upon men.

In addition to cultural and social norms, Muhereza (2006), Buyinza and Naguula (2007), Kugonza *et al.* (2009) and Schroeder (1999) have all stressed several other major constraints to women’s participation: the imbalance in sharing revenue accruing from tree products, unequal opportunity for conservation education and training, the general under-valuation of women’s roles in sustainable forest management and disregard of women’s specific needs and priorities regarding forestry. The limited consideration of women’s needs arises from their lack of participation in policy formulation and decision making. Policy makers, the majority of who tends to be male, lack data and information mostly to women’s needs and aspirations. This combination of constraints fail to provide adequate incentives for women to engage more fully in forest management, if not shutting them out altogether.

At the community level, a study by Kazoora *et al.* (2006) and Ellis *et al.* (2006) of farmer group associations registered with the National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS) programme revealed that although women constituted 61% of the founding members, men dominated the leadership of these associations. This indicates that women are also marginalized in decision and rule making in formal farmer group associations. Similarly, Obua *et al.* (1998), Kugonza *et al.* (2009) and Banana and Turiho-habwe (1994) also reported significant differences among men and women in terms of willingness to participate in forest management activities. In addition to increasing women work burden, gender imbalance between the rights and responsibilities over forest resources were cited as major factors negatively affecting women’s willingness to participate in sustainable forest management. Women normally have multiple, often, disproportionate responsibilities, and little ownership or control over productive forest resources. This imbalance contributes to women’s subordinate and disempowered position relative to men in respect to forestry resources.

In addition, often both men and women have contrasting perceptions, priorities and goals in respect to forest management and women’s specific needs. These constraints are typically not addressed while making partnership agreements between communities and forest authorities (Buyinza and Naguula 2007). However, studies in India and Nepal (Agarwal 2001, Agarwal 2006, Agarwal 2010; Agrawal and Yadama (2004) show that women’s participation in decision making at the user-group level and in forest committees had a positive impact on forest sustainability. Women’s participation for example enhanced forest regeneration and reduced

illegal harvesting due to improved monitoring. This is in line with Buyinza and Naguula (2007) observations that, for the CFM approach to succeed, local people, especially women, should be stakeholders in rule and decision making. However, effective women's participation is hindered by their inability to read and speak English (due to their low education).

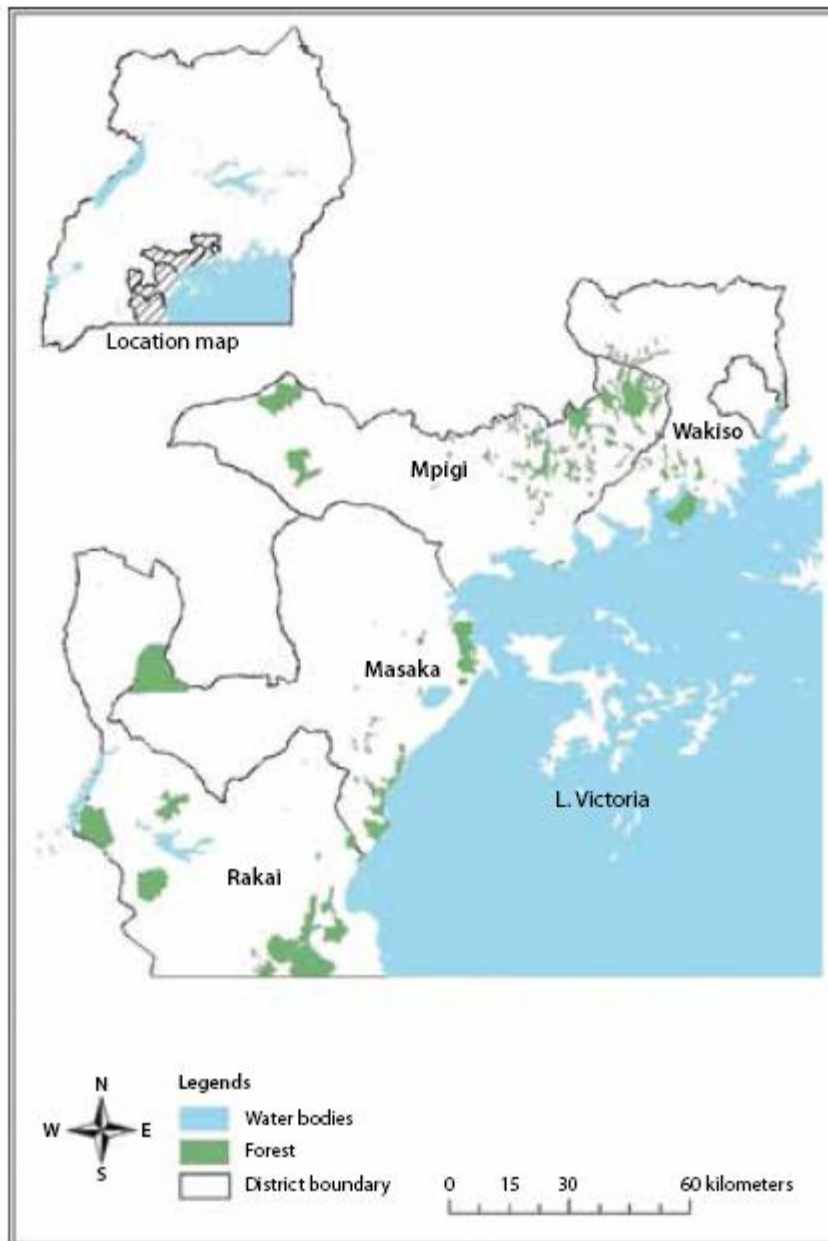
At both national and international level, Uganda has made important progress towards eliminating gender barriers in forest management. For example, Uganda has ratified and signed several global accords on gender equality and women's empowerment, including the Convention of Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Platform of Action. In addition, Uganda has pledged to implement the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, which include the promotion of gender equality, by 2015. The country is also a signatory to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (1986) and to the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa that came into effect on 25 January 2005. Uganda has also ratified international protocols to promote sustainable forest management and community empowerment. The Convention on Biological Diversity, for example, promotes indigenous knowledge and recognises the vital role women play in conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

Again at the national level, Uganda has several policies, legal and institutional frameworks to support equality between men and women, including the Constitution, the Uganda Gender Policy, the National Environmental Management Policy, the Water Policy, and the Uganda Forestry Policy. However, social norms, the gendered division of labour and gendered behavioural norms, as well as gendered spaces and species, all limit women's participation in decision making and participation in forest management (Howard *et al.*, 2007). These social norms and cultural practices constrain women's visibility, mobility and behaviour, even when they are members of informal or formal groups (Mwangi *et al.* 2011, Shackleton *et al.*, 2011) or whether they have been provided for in national policies, projects and programmes (Mukasa *et al.* 2012). However, according to Bandiaky-Baddji (2011), most decentralization policies in the land and forestry sector in many countries are gender neutral or outright gender blind, a major pathway through which gender inequality is re-produced and sustained.

## **Methods and Materials**

### *Description of study area*

This study was conducted in three districts of Uganda: Mpigi, Masaka and Rakai, which are part of the Lake Victoria agroecological zone (Figure 1). Several property-rights regimes exist in this area. There are many central and local forest reserves in addition to private and communal/sacred forests in the Lake Victoria crescent. Several studies have found degradation of forestry resources to occur in all property-rights regimes in this region (Banana and Ssembajjwe (2000) and Waiswa *et al.*(2011).



**Figure 1. Lake Victoria Crescent covering the study districts of Mpigi, Masaka and Rakai**

Deforestation is being driven by several forces; including weak forest governance institutions, high demand for forest produce (due to increasing population) and poor implementation of government policies in the environment sector (Banana *et al.* 2010). However, most of the population in the study area practices agroforestry subsistence-farming systems. Farmers grow a mix of crops, including perennial (banana and coffee) and annual (maize, beans, vegetables, etc.) crops, trees (e.g. *Artocarpus heterophyllus*, *Mangifera indica*, *Ficus natalensis*, *Eucalyptus*) and fodder grasses (e.g. *Pennisetum pupureum*). Due to the small land-holdings, encroachments on forest land for production of horticultural crops or conversion of private forest land to more profitable agricultural production occur frequently in the region (Namaalwa *et al.* 2001).

#### *Criteria for selecting study districts and sites*

The three districts of Mpigi, Masaka and Rakai have many forests under private-, government and communal-tenure regimes. In addition, these districts demonstrate variation in the extent to which external actors (NGOs and government) are involved in promoting local communities' participation in forest management. Rakai district, located 180 km from Kampala, the national capital, is the most remote. But it has many NGOs that have been actively involved in HIV/AIDS prevention programs and community-based natural resources management for the last 20 years.

Mpigi is located 30 km from Kampala and, because of its proximity to the capital, has many government projects targeting communities. Masaka district is located about 100 km from Kampala and therefore has less external influence. In the three districts, there are also a number of sites established by the Uganda Forestry Resources and Institutions Centre (UFRIC) since 1993. They follow the protocols of the International Forestry Resources and Institutions (IFRI) research programme (Ostrom 1998), which has examined relationships among local forest institutions, forest conditions and rural livelihoods for the last two decades (Banana *et al.* 2007).

#### *Study methods*

To understand the extent to which legal and policy frameworks that govern NRM/forest management institutionalize gender participation in practice, we reviewed various government policy documents and laws including the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda (1995), Uganda Forestry Policy (2001), National Development Plan (2010), National Forest Plan (2000), Uganda Gender Policy (2007), National Action Plan on Women (2006), National Environment Management Policy (1994), Local Government Act (1997), Land Act (1998), National Forestry and Tree Planting Act (2003), among others.

For each of the above policy and law documents, we examined the provisions that relate to women's participation and gender equity and the type of participation intended. We also identified the mechanisms and strategies for the implementation of these rules and strategies. The following key questions were asked:

1. Do the various natural resources policies, strategies and mission statements refer to women as a target group?
2. Do they offer training in gender or participatory resource management?
3. Do they clarify on roles, responsibilities, and duties of various actors in implementing gender programmes?



To explore the extent to which gender features in projects and programmes, we conducted key informant interviews with personnel in organizations in the forest and natural resources sector between April and September 2011. We interviewed a total of 20 organizations that were not specifically involved in forestry (mostly NGOs and development agencies) that had past and or current forest projects. After an initial situation analysis/institutional mapping, respondents/NGOs were selected using a snowball sampling technique. In addition 10 organizations that were specifically involved in forestry (national and local government institutions, programmes and projects) were also studied. The following key questions were asked:

1. Does your entity/organisation have a written gender policy that affirms a commitment to gender equity?
2. What are the main obstacles, in your experience, to women's participation in forest management in Uganda?

The Local Government Act 1997 envisioned that local communities could participate in decision making about the environment and forestry issues through village councils and through the councilors elected to serve in parish, sub-county and district councils. We conducted interviews at the district and sub-county level in Mpigi, Masaka and Rakai districts with elected councilors who sit on the production committees to understand the extent to which Uganda's constitutional provisions supporting gender equality are being implemented by the local governments.

Three sub-counties were randomly selected from each district, making a total of nine sub-counties for the study. A list of names of 70 councilors of the production committees from the selected sub-counties was generated. Another list of names of 30 councilors from the production committees of the three district councils was also generated, making a total population of 100 councilors. From this list, 20 councilors (20% of the study population) were randomly selected as respondents. Six respondents were also randomly selected from the technical staff in the directorate of natural resources in the three districts who sit in council making a total of 26 respondents (6 ex-officials and 20 elected councilors – 16 males and 10 females).

Women councilors were interviewed by a female researcher, while male councilors were interviewed by a male researcher. The interviews were intended to determine how individuals gain access to these decisions making forums and their relative abilities to influence agendas and advance their goals.

To explore men's and women's notions of participation and tenure/rights and to understand the conditions that encourage/discourage participation of men and women in decision making at the community level, we conducted 18 focus group discussions with forest adjacent communities in the districts of Mpigi, Masaka and Rakai selected from different forest property regimes, i.e. private forests, community forests and state forests. Focus group discussions were conducted in Luganda (the local language) in an informal setting. The researchers who facilitated the discussions were from the same ethnic group (Baganda ethnic group). Female researchers facilitated the women focus group discussions, while male researchers facilitated the men's groups. The groups were however, not segregated according to age poverty levels. The following key questions were asked in the focus group interviews:

1. What kinds of and benefits and activities in relation to the forest do men and women of this user group/community do?
2. Does this user group/community have links with other actors such as forestry officials, NGOs, politicians, local councils or researchers who assist you in making decisions related to forest management?
3. What do you understand by the terms ‘rights and participation’?

In addition to focus group discussions, household interviews were conducted in 12 communities randomly selected from 18 forest adjacent study communities. A total of 288 (174 males and 114 females) respondents were interviewed. The key questions asked in the household surveys were what forest products are harvested by men, women and the youth and who makes decisions on what forest produce to harvest, what products to sell and use of funds obtained from the sale of forest produce at household level.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Policy and Legal underpinnings**

Based on the country’s constitutional provisions, the Government of Uganda has put in place a number of policies, legal and institutional frameworks that support equality between men and women. Table 1 shows the relevant policies and strategies put in place to institutionalize gender and the gaps that exist in these policies. To mainstream gender in the forest sector, as required by the constitution, the Forestry Policy, the Forestry Act and the Forestry Plan are all gender sensitive.

The National Forest Policy (Republic of Uganda 2001) specifically states that the government will ensure the integration of gender concerns and issues into the development of the forestry sector. Strategies for implementing the policy will specifically account for gender differences in the perceptions and uses of forest products. This will include efforts to:

- Increase security of tenure over forest resources for women and youth.
- Encourage active participation of women and youth in decision making, resource management and sharing of benefits.
- Promote changes in attitudes and organizational cultures to break down gender barriers and to provide mutual respect and dignity for all people irrespective of social group, gender or background.

## Implementation of gender policy in projects and programmes

Despite efforts to include gender in projects and programmes that involve forests as stipulated by policy and law, we find that the majority of forest-specific organizations had no policy on gender and did not show any intention of promoting gender in forest management. On the other hand, 15 out of 20 organizations not specific to forestry had written gender policies and had strategies to promote gender integration (Table 2), perhaps due to donor pressure as a condition for funding. However, only six out of 20 organizations reported success. Perceived success stories by non-forest specific organisations studied included increased availability of capacity building scholarships for women and economic empowerment of women by microfinance institutions (Table 3).

Although the NFA and DFS (government agencies specifically involved in forestry) did not have an organizational gender policy, they had strategies of involving local communities in forest management. For example they have a focal person to integrate gender in forest management through CFM arrangements. Without a policy on gender, most staff in these organizations found it difficult to introduce changes to implement gender in forest management outside CFM arrangement. The staff had no incentive to encourage women's participation since their efforts or performance could not be rated higher if they made extra efforts to involve women in forest management.

Only one government initiative, the Farm Income Enhancement and Forest Conservation project (FIEFOC), promotes the involvement of women in on-farm tree planting by providing seedlings of their choice such as fruit and fuel wood tree species while men are provided with seedlings suitable for timber and poles which they prefer. In addition, the project takes affirmative action for women by specifically soliciting for female applicants. Still, women make up only about 30% of FIEFOC applicants.

## Implementation at District and sub-county levels

We found that limited number of women in technical and leadership positions, absence of the gender focal persons required by law, and inadequate knowledge and skills on gender equity issues by councilors and district technical staff (Table 4) hindered integrating gender in forest management activities in the local governments. In all the three study districts, there was no gender focal person or female forester graduate employed by the district forest services at the time of the study. The gender focal person at the district is responsible for mainstreaming gender in all district programmes and projects in addition to sensitizing district personnel and the political leadership on gender issues. Absence of a gender expert in all the three districts at the time of study may suggest that gender is given a low priority by the district service commissions which are responsible for hiring staff in the districts.

Women made up only 5% of technical and political leadership positions in all three study districts. Women's access to political power in representative bodies such as local councils faces major limitations that include patronage networks, the structure and organization of political parties, and gender biased cultural practices ( Bandiaky-Badji 2011). This poor representation affects women's ability to set the agenda and influence decision making in the council. And the few women who hold these positions of influence had little impact on elevating the living standards and addressing the needs of rural women who actually live in close proximity to, and

ultimately use, forests. Because most forest adjacent communities do not have good education facilities, their children never make it to leadership positions. Most leaders and professionals (both men and women) who are in leadership position are born, raised and study in urban centers where the standard of education is high. Such leaders and professionals do not relate easily to the needs of the marginalized forest adjacent communities and therefore cannot respond to their development needs adequately.

### Gender at the community level

The household survey showed that most of the households harvest forest products for subsistence use. The survey also showed that forest access and use is strongly gendered. Products most harvested by men for subsistence use were firewood, poles, water, craft materials, cultivation, herbs and fodder. Men also reported hunting, grazing and fishing as major activities in several communities (Table 5). Products most harvested by women for subsistence use were firewood, craft materials, water, herbs, cultivation and pole, fruits, forest foods and mushrooms while girls and boys collect water, firewood, fruits, mushrooms and honey.

Less than five percent of the people interviewed reported harvesting forest produce for sale. Selling of forest produce is also gendered. Forest produce harvested and sold by men included timber, poles, and raw materials for making drums and firewood while women harvested and sold firewood and handicrafts (baskets and mats).

With exception of handicrafts and firewood, women rarely made decisions on what to harvest, sale or use of funds obtained from the sale of the forest produce (Table 5). Thus the current efforts which are intended at improving gender equity in resource use, access and benefits and enhance women participation in decision making have not yet yielded positive results at the community level.

Focus group discussions revealed that that the quality and extent of women's participation in decision-making in forest management is enhanced when they join formal forest user-groups. For example, all the eight communities with formal associations reported that women members regularly attend meetings, participate fully and freely express their opinions and there is equitable sharing of most benefits. For example, both men and women have equal access to technical and financial support from NGOs and financial institutions. Both men and women have equal chance of networking with other user-groups. This may be attributed to the fact that all formal associations in the study area have linkages with external actors such as government agencies, NGOs, local councils and politicians who are instrumental in capacity building, creation of awareness about the change in forest law, community mobilization, and monitoring of the association activities. Similarly, Sun *et.al.* (2011) and Mwangi (2011) established that gender composition among forest associations may influence participation in rule making, rule enforcement and exclusion-the three most important indicators of governance.

On the other hand, we found that communities with no formal user-groups were not able to participate effectively in forest management activities. Only one, out of ten communities in the study area that had no formal forest associations reported any form of success at rehabilitating forest resources adjacent to their communities. Forest degradation still continues in most of the

forested areas these communities use. With limited contact with forestry agencies and external actors, members of these communities did not appreciate the concepts of “participation” and “rights” to forest resources and were not aware about the change in forest law to allow them to participate in forest management. Unfortunately formal forest associations in form of collaborative forest management (CFM) are found in only a few of the central forest reserves because the negotiating process for formation of these associations is lengthy and agreements are executed in English, which discourages women participation.

Access to forest products was determined by forest tenure. The communities have a legal right to harvest NTFPs from government forest reserves but limited access to private forest resources. However, short-term illegal encroachments for timber or charcoal harvesting, followed by planting seasonal horticultural crops such as vegetables, beans and maize, is widespread in the study area.

No doubt, both men and women have contrasting perceptions, priorities and needs in respect to forest management at project, district, community and household levels. These constraints are typically not addressed while attempting to mainstream gender in forest management at the different levels of governance.

## Conclusions

Principal findings of the review of Uganda’s policy and legal documents and analysis of the extent to which Uganda’s constitutional provisions supporting gender equality are being practiced at project, district, community and household levels indicate that:

- i. Uganda has made important progress in the institutional, legal and policy frameworks that govern natural resource management, including mainstreaming gender and the role of women in forest management.
- ii. The policies and laws are however, not backed up by relevant legal provisions for ensuring compliance consequently; there is weak policy implementation at all levels of governance.

For example, examination of the extent to which gender features in projects and programmes that involve forests revealed that about three-quarters of organizations not specific to forestry had written gender policies and had strategies to promote gender integration, perhaps due to donor pressure as a condition for funding. Even then, only one third of these organizations reported success. On the other hand, the majority of forest-specific organizations had no policy on gender and did not show any intention of promoting gender in forest management.

At the district level, integrating gender in forest management activities was hindered by the limited number of women in technical, political and leadership positions, absence of the gender focal persons required by law, and inadequate knowledge and skills on gender equity issues by councilors and district technical staff.

At community and household levels, the quality and extent of women’s participation in decision-making in forest management was found to be enhanced when they join formal forest user-groups. Formal forest user groups are more likely to be in contact with external NGOs and

women's groups that support capacity building and access to loans from micro-finance institutions. The facilitation offered by these organizations contributes to the improvement of women's ability to participate effectively in the management of forest resources. Fortunately, there are a lot of organizations in the three study districts that are trying to build capacity for women. Organizations that appeal to women's priorities will have positive impacts on reducing deforestation through indirect effects. For example, the Farm Income Enhancement and Forest Conservation tree planting schemes specifically target women and promote planting tree species preferred by women.

## **Recommendations**

Policies and laws mainstreaming gender and the role of women in forest management should be backed up by relevant legal provisions for ensuring compliance. All levels of governance would benefit from the development of indicators for monitoring progress and the design of specific targeted gendered strategies and milestones with a time frame to be achieved by policy makers and for practitioners. We recommend that the Forest Sector Support Department (FSSD) of the Ministry Water and Environment together with the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social development should spearhead the development of these strategies and targets. For example, the ministry should translate the Uganda Gender Policy into local languages and disseminate it to districts and sub-county officials.

The Natural Resources Committee of the National parliament should increase the public debate on gender and natural resources management in order to sensitize politicians and professionals who are still gender insensitive. The public debate must be tied to political processes that allocate budgets. This will ensure that gender mainstreaming in the Natural Resources Sector is provided for in the National budget and that parliament will demand some accountability from implementing agencies.

The FSSD should put in place mechanisms to train all heads of department and political leaders at all levels of governance in gender issues including equity budgeting. We also recommend that the district councils should increase the budgetary allocation for gender programmes at the districts and sub-county levels. For example, the district council should put in place mechanisms to train district and sub-county staff to generate and use gender disaggregated data and to fill the vacant positions of gender focal persons at the district and sub-counties.

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**Table 1. Instruments pertaining to forests, environment, participation and extent to which they institutionalize gender participation**

Instrument	Presence of Act	Presence of plan/ strategies	Inclusiveness of gender participation	Gaps in policy
Constitution (1995)	Yes	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides for gender balance and fair representation of marginalised groups; accords equal citizenship rights, freedom from discrimination and affirmative action in favour of women.</li> <li>• Text of the Constitution is nonsexist, all-inclusive and both genders (man and woman) are used instead of using the usual “man” to mean man or woman.</li> </ul>	Despite the constitution recognising equal rights between men and women, there is still unequal treatment of women, children and orphans as far as ownership of natural resources is concerned (Rugadya, M. <i>et al.</i> 2004).
Uganda Gender Policy (2007) (UGP)	Yes	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD) is the focal point for gender.</li> <li>• It has developed Uganda Gender Policy to incorporate a gender perspective into planning, resource allocation and implementation of all development programmes in Uganda.</li> <li>• The policy has an act, plan and several strategies to operationalise it in various sectors of the economy.</li> </ul>	The policy falls short of recognizing the role of women in relation to forests and trees. That could be one of the reasons why to date the FSSD has no gender policy.
National Environmental Management	Yes	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Third objective ensures active participation of individuals and communities in all the sector’s activities.</li> <li>• Two of the principles in the policy provide for equity and gender, namely:</li> </ul>	At an objective level, women are lumped into ‘communities’ creating a gap for the possibility of leaving women and the disadvantaged out from participating in

t Policy (1994)			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘effective involvement of women and youth in natural resource policy formulation, planning, decision making, management and program implementation’ and</li> <li>• ‘Promotion of social equity, particularly when allocating resources’.</li> </ul>	environment management.
Uganda Forestry Policy (2001)	Yes	Yes	<p>Ensures the integration of gender concerns and issues into the development of the forest sector’. Strategies for implementing these provisions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase security of tenure over forest resources for women and youth.</li> <li>• Encourage active participation of women and youth in decision making, resource management and sharing of benefits.</li> <li>• Promote changes in attitudes and organisational cultures to break down gender barriers and to provide mutual respect and dignity for all people irrespective of social group, gender and background. Some activities include promotion of energy-saving stoves, as well as affirmative action to encourage and support women to develop professional careers in forestry.</li> <li>• The National Forestry Plan is gender-sensitive.</li> <li>• The Farm Income Enhancement and Forestry Conservation Project under the Forestry Sector Support Department have guidelines for mainstreaming gender in their activities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The NFTP Act does not provide measures to enforce the gender intentions of the policy.</li> <li>• Forest Sector Support Department has not developed a gender policy.</li> <li>• Some strategies (such as to promote commercial plantations; to introduce and popularise use of timber and timber-product substitutes and processing technologies; and to strengthen networks for participation of local, private sector in the global carbon market) are not gender-sensitive since women rarely own land, have limited rights to trees and typically have no capital; thus women cannot be actively involved in activities above.</li> </ul>

The Draft Land Policy (1998)	Yes	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• According to the policy, the government holds land in trust for the people of Uganda.</li> <li>• The Land Act and Land Sector Strategic Plan. The Land Act (1998) provides that consent of both spouses be obtained before family land is disposed.</li> </ul>	<p>The effectiveness of this provision is diminished in two major aspects:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Land registration is not common in Uganda.</li> <li>2. Spousal consent is problematic in a context in which consent assumes equal rights of spouses and balanced power relations within marriage, which is largely non-existent in many households in Uganda.</li> <li>3. The Land Act does not guarantee co-ownership of land between spouses.</li> </ol>

Table 2

**Strategies to integrate gender in non forest specific organizations:**

	<b>Response (n=20)</b>
Organizations that take gender into account during strategic planning	<b>11</b>
Organizations have operational plan that includes clear allocation of responsibilities and time for monitoring and evaluation impact of gender	<b>5</b>
Organizations have a focal person to integrate gender within	<b>7</b>
Organizations have a focal person for gender	<b>7</b>
Organizations' staff trained in gender	<b>8</b>
Organizations' staff trained in gender planning and analysis	<b>7</b>
Staff training in gender systematically budgeted for	<b>8</b>
Organizations budget adequate to support gender integration	<b>7</b>
Organizations that need reforms to integrate gender	<b>8</b>

**Table 3: Perceived success stories by organizations studied**

<b>Organizational perceived success</b>	<b>Response (n=20)</b>
Economic empowerment of women	6
Increased capacity building-Scholarships to women	5
Tree planting by women	4
Increased participation of women in community projects	3
Prevention of illegal forest harvesting activities	3



**Table 4. Analysis of gender issues in the districts and sub-county councils**

Key Gender Concerns	Effects	Recommended strategies
Inadequate knowledge and skills on gender equity issues	Resource allocation does not address male and female concerns equitably	Train all sector heads, heads of departments and political leaders on gender issues, including equity budgeting
Low budgeting and allocation of funds to mainstream gender issues	Poor mainstreaming of gender	Increase budgetary allocation for gender programmes
The revised gender policy is not adequately disseminated within various local government councils	Inadequate/ Lack of knowledge on gender policy provisions by councilors of various local government tiers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disseminate the Uganda gender policy to district and sub-county technical staff and political leaders</li> <li>• Distribute copies of the policy to all sectoral departments.</li> <li>• Translate the policy into local languages</li> </ul>
Inadequate capacity to do gender mainstreaming in sub-counties.	Limited number of technical persons to spearhead the gender mainstreaming process at the sub-county level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure participation of district and sub-county staff in generation and use of gender-disaggregated data</li> <li>• Engender the data-collection tools</li> <li>• Train community development officers in gender analysis</li> </ul>
Absence of gender focal persons as required by law at district and sub-county levels	Poor implementation of gender policy and strategies in districts	Fill vacant gender positions at district and sub-county levels
Poor recruitment of women in political and technical leadership positions	Marginalization of women's issues in policies and administrative structures	Increase opportunities for women to occupy political and administrative positions through affirmative action

Table 5. Gendered forest access, use and decision making in forest management at household level

Product	Harvest		Who sell		Who makes decision to sell		Who decides on use of funds	
	Male N=174	Female N=114	Male N=174	Female N=114	Male N=174	Female N=114	Male N=174	Female N=114
Timber	9	1	3	1	6	1	6	0.3
Poles	46	8	4	2	9	8	8	1
Firewood	62	58	6	5	8	1	9	3
Forest foods	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Agric. Products	10	6	0	0	5	8	9	1
Craft materials	16	19	4	6	2	6	3	5
Herbs	7	18	1	1	0	1	1	8
Water	19	18	0	8	0	8	0	8
Soil/Clay/Sand	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fodder	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0

