

# CASE STORY ON GENDER DIMENSION OF AID FOR TRADE

**INTEGRATING GENDER INTO THE NATIONAL EXPORT  
STRATEGY (NES) – A CASE FOR UGANDA.**

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## **INTEGRATING GENDER INTO THE NATIONAL EXPORT STRATEGY (NES) – A CASE FOR UGANDA.**

***Vision:** “To create a dynamic and competitive export-driven economy for national prosperity and development, with more participation of women.”*

### **Background:**

In 2008, the Uganda Export Promotion Board (UEPB) working with ITC embarked on engendering the NES. The overall aim of engendering the NES was to ensure that it fully accommodates both genders so that it is a catalyst for greater and better social and economic development. Specific strategies were formulated for gender mainstreaming and priorities established. These include key elements like educating and empowering women and broadening women's equitable participation at all levels of decision-making. The design and implementation of the Strategy recognizes the specific challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in participation in the export sector.

### **Specific objectives:**

- To unlock the untapped potential of Ugandan women and increase contribution in export trade.
- To add greater value to the current national strategy initiatives, and yield competitiveness and developmental benefits for women beyond the set targets.
- To create gender-sensitive export support policies, improve and strengthen the capacity of support institutions to provide relevant, targeted services to women engaged in the export trade.
- To facilitate the achievement of the Millennium Development Goal 3 - Reduction of gender disparity in education, and access to and control of productive resources.

### **Key elements of Uganda's engendered NES:**

- A clear political will and commitment at the highest level. NES launched by H.E. The President.
- The responsibility for NES implementation rests at the highest level (UEPB) and adequate accountability mechanisms for monitoring progress have been put in place.
- The process towards integrating gender into the NES took a multi-stakeholder consultative effort which included public, private, civil society actors and academia as well as development partners.
- UEPB formed Partnerships and strategic alliances with women's organizations, NGOs and development agencies for knowledge and resource sharing in implementing the NES.

### **Immediate results of the NES:**

- The coming into force of the EAC Common market has increased income-earning opportunities for women, employment and significantly improved the income situation of women, most of who previously engaged in informal cross-border trade.
- A number of projects and programs targeting women and/or gender mainstreaming have been instituted following the engendering of the NES. These include Enterprise Uganda's "Strengthening Women Entrepreneurs' Program" (SWEPE); DFCU Women in Business; Technoserve (U) Women in Business Program; UWEAL/UEPB – ACCESS program; FIT (U) Rural Information System; UIA Women Entrepreneurship Network.

**NES Planned outputs; indicators and immediate results:**

Key Output Area	Planned outputs	Indicators	Results
1. Trade Finance (BOU; Ministry of Finance)	At least 3 trade finance schemes accessible to women.	Diversity of collateral instruments including group lending favorable to women	The warehouse receipt system established. Banks have introduced new Loan products e.g. group lending that is favorable to women
	At least 2 trade finance outreach drives per district every year.	Geographical spread of microfinance institutions in the country targeting women producers and entrepreneurs.	More new banks were licensed bringing the total number of commercial banks and MDIs to 22.
2. Trade Facilitation (UEPB; UBOS)	All service providers in the commercial environment to establish a gender equity measurement system within 2 years.	Gender classification	Gender classification system is already developed by UBOS used for DATA analysis.
	Improvement in the current average time taken to process trade documentation by 40%.	Length of time taken for women to register business, obtain license and commence operation	UEPB is working with the UCC&I to identify more women producer groups for training in export documentation.
3. Trade and Market Information (UEPB)	At least 50% of business women and support organizations have regular and instant access to current market information.	Number of established trade information systems that meet the needs of women to export.	UEPB has developed sector profiles giving up to date export market information, analysis, quality & standards issues and supply capacity information
	Establish at least one ICT centre per Region or district.	Number of ICT based information management training seminars conducted for women.	4 Regional Export Information Points (REIPs) were established in 2009 by UEPB as pilot projects.
4. Skills and export competency development (UEPB; NAADS; EUG; MUBS; UWEAL)	200 exporters trained export skills in a year with 50% women.	Number of women exporters that have received export management training.	500 urban women entrepreneurs have received business management training 21 rural Women groups with 3,150 members have received business training.
	At least 20 women owned businesses to be certified by UNBS within the year.	Number of women business possessing relevant international certificates: GMP, GHP, HAACP, ISO 22000	146 men and women trained and received certificates in GMP, GHP, HAACP, ISO 22000 and other areas.
	Increase the number and value of exports by women by 40%.	Improve performance among existing women exporters.	Numerous trainings are conducted by UEPB giving special interest to women exporters
5. Policy and	To export sector. 50% of	Number of organizations	All the 4 NES Gender

regulation (UEPB; UWEAL; Min. of Lands; Office of the President)	NES focal point offices mainstream the Uganda Gender Policy into their institutions by 2010.	within NES support and service delivery networks who embrace the principle.	sectors (Dairy, Coffee, Commercial Handcrafts and Tourism) focal Institutions acknowledged.
	Review Land Act to reflect current realities by 2011.	Parliamentary procedures.	The new land act passed in 2010 and it addresses current realities and property rights at household level.
	At least four clusters of rural women in each district supported to increase volumes of production with better quality and prices by 2011.	Number of product clusters formed in key sectors. Number of clusters servicing focal export supply centers.	Women producer groups formed in the crafts sector and the International women coffee Alliance IWCA (Uganda Chapter) was recently formed.

#### **Challenges of Implementing engendered NES:**

- Limited budgetary resource allocation to implement the NES, along with the setting up of appropriate infrastructure and training personnel in gender-related aspects of their work. This affects the ability of the coordinating institution to deliver against the expectation in the NES.
- Commitment from partner institutions that support women. Most of these institutions are under-funded and so have not delivered their commitments in the NES.
- Existence of non-tariff barriers for women who participate in export-oriented agriculture, e.g. complying with SPS and environmental standards.
- Limited awareness and ownership of gender mainstreaming strategies at the lower levels, which is an essential component for successful gender mainstreaming.

#### **SWEP (Strengthening Women Entrepreneurs' Program) – Uganda's case story:**

Enterprise Uganda (EUG) is a partner institution in the development and implementation of the NES under the Skills and export competency development component. EUG is a government institution set up in 2001 in partnership with UNDP and UNCTAD to provide business development services to small and medium enterprises in Uganda, so as to improve their competitiveness, productivity and growth.

In 2008, launched the SWEP, a 3-year program sponsored by the government of Norway as one of the avenues to implement the engendered NES. The overall objective of SWEP is to enhance the participation of rural and urban women in economic development in order to contribute to job creation, improved household incomes; food security; value addition in agriculture; promote access to markets and financial services and alleviate poverty in the rural communities.

#### **Specific objectives include:**

- To provide gender sensitive training and business support services to 750 rural women entrepreneurs and 100 Urban women entrepreneurs in agri-business, textile and Crafts sectors.
- To enhance women access to existing business development services rendered by Enterprise Uganda.
- To enable women-owned enterprises overcome obstacles to accessing finance and markets (local and regional).
- To enhance enterprise productivity and competitiveness in order to spur export to the regional and overseas markets.

#### **Project interventions:**

The women have received a range of business support services including entrepreneurship training; Managing groups; Farming as a business; Market access; Business planning; leadership and management training; record

keeping; business counseling and advisory services; personal competency development through study tours, and access to finance.

#### **Results achieved:**

- 3,150 women entrepreneurs receive improved business and enterprise management skills;
- Attitudinal change - positive attitude to life, business, self and others;
- Behavioral change – networking, higher business acumen, team work; confidence; time management; information-seeking; record keeping; saving culture
- Formalization of businesses; establishment of business systems and business plans developed;
- Appreciation of the power of collective action in terms of market access; and procurement of inputs and services.
- Increased household income and therefore improved standards of living.
- More women access regional export markets e.g. Amuru Ribber Ber; Lira Integrated School-Beatrice Ayuru; Nyakakoni Women; Bakusekamajja Women group; Delight (U)-Cheers; Nina Interiors; Café Pap; Victoria Seeds.

#### **Challenges encountered:**

- Inadequate resources to reach more women;
- Low prioritization of SWEF activities by some partners e.g. Financiers; technical experts;
- Lack of confidence based on past experiences;
- Uncertainty about the future in Northern Uganda due to insurgency;
- Undercapitalization of women enterprises.

#### **Lessons learned:**

- Women need hand-holding in order to grow their enterprises and respond positively to business development support extended to them.
- Rural women perform better in groups as opposed to individuals. The group approach is therefore more effective in addressing the supply-side challenges of women in accessing regional and export markets.
- Strong family structures require that the interventions involve the spouses in order to achieve the desired project objectives.
- The success of any intervention for women hinges heavily on the commitment from other stakeholders in the service value chain. There is need for coordination amongst the various stakeholders in order to deliver value to the women. The NES should address this challenge.

#### **Conclusion:**

The engendered NES is a key strategy that if embraced by all stakeholders, should address issues of mainstreaming women into the productive sectors of the economy and empower them to contribute to the fight against poverty. This however depends on the political will and commitment of resources for implementation of the NES.

**KEY:** **UIA** – Uganda Investment Authority. **UWEAL** – Uganda Women Entrepreneurs' Association. **DFCU** – Development Finance Company of Uganda.