



Policy Brief

Gender & Agroecology in Uganda

Executive Summary

July 2025

Agroecology offers a sustainable approach to agriculture, crucial for addressing Uganda’s food insecurity and climate challenges. Women, who constitute 56% of Uganda’s agricultural workforce, face systemic barriers such as limited land rights, unequal access to resources, and exclusion from decision-making processes, hindering their participation in agroecological practices. Strengthening women’s access to land, financial services, and gender-sensitive extension programs is vital to bridging these gaps. Supporting women-led initiatives and valuing their indigenous knowledge can enhance agroecology’s effectiveness. Collecting gender-disaggregated data and addressing policy gaps will ensure inclusive agricultural development. Empowering women in agroecology will boost resilience, productivity, and food security across Uganda. Advancing women in agriculture equals to advancing entire households and societies.

Policy Recommendations

- ⚖️ **Strengthen Land and Resource Rights for Women:** Reform policies to ensure women’s access to land, financial services, and agroecological inputs through joint land titling and support for women’s cooperatives.
- ⚖️ **Promote Gender-Sensitive Extension Services:** Train extension officers on gender and agroecology and develop targeted programs for women farmers, offering technical assistance, updated practices, and better market access.
- ⚖️ **Support Women’s Leadership:** Fund women-led agroecological initiatives and establish platforms for sharing indigenous knowledge. Ensure women’s participation in agricultural decision-making at all levels.
- ⚖️ **Enhance Gender-Disaggregated Data:** Expand efforts to collect gender-disaggregated data to better inform agricultural policies that address women’s contributions and challenges.
- ⚖️ **Invest in Agroecological Practices:** Focus on climate-resilient agroecological practices that consider gender dynamics and



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Context

Agroecology is a holistic agricultural approach that integrates ecological, social, and economic factors to design and manage sustainable food systems. It merges traditional knowledge with scientific innovation to promote biodiversity conservation, environmental protection, and resource enhancement. Beyond farming, agroecology is a culturally sensitive approach that amplifies the voices of marginalized groups with vital knowledge about food preservation and crop diversity.

Agroecology fosters resilience through techniques like composting, crop rotation, and soil erosion reduction, helping to address climate-related challenges such as droughts and erratic rainfall.

In Uganda, where 68% of the population works in agriculture, contributing 24% to GDP, smallholder farming practices dominate. However, low-impact farming, deteriorating soil fertility, and climate change necessitate a shift to more sustainable practices. Despite producing more food than it consumes, Uganda faces serious hunger issues, ranking 105th on the 2024 Global Hunger Index, with 26% of children under five stunted and 37% of the population undernourished.

Women, who comprise 56% of the agricultural workforce, are disproportionately burdened with household and care duties and face systemic challenges. Limited access to land, financial services, decision-making power, agricultural inputs, and extension services—exacerbated by gendered social norms and weak policy implementation—hinder their productivity and economic contributions. Addressing these disparities is crucial for achieving food security and promoting equitable agricultural transformation.



Gender Roles in Agroecology

 Unequal or limited access to resources, such as access to land, organic inputs and tools, or to training around climate change related adaptive solutions, as well as loans and credits prevents women from implementing agroecological practices and securing loans in order to make long-term investments.

 Gendered division of labour consisting of the uneven work burden for unpaid subsistence farming and household duties, increases probability of precarious income and basic needs coverage as well as poverty.

 Limited access to agricultural extension services either because of a lack in gender-sensitivity among extension services or a gender bias that prevents women from learning agroecological state of the art practices and benefit from capacity building services.

 Missing valuation of women's indigenous knowledge in favour of scientific approaches overlooks their critical knowledge around seed saving, crop rotation, etc.

 Limited access to markets reduces women's opportunities to engage in formal markets and rather pushes them to informal ones with limited pricing power. It also lowers their options in networking and increasing their economic returns from their agricultural production.

 Policy gaps and limited support to women's cooperatives lead to insufficient supportive structures for female farmers which makes scaling up even harder.

Policy gaps and Systemic Challenges

 Women managing agricultural plots in Uganda are less likely than men to receive extension services, contributing to the productivity gap. Expanding outreach to female farmers can improve productivity.

 Access to quality extension services is limited for both genders, with women facing greater disparities. Only 14% of women farmers benefit from extension services compared to 30% of men. This stems from a shortage of extension staff and fewer female extension workers.

 Agricultural credit access remains a challenge, with rural women disproportionately affected due to a lack of collateral, limiting their ability to secure financing.

 Policy gaps, poor implementation, and insufficient sex-disaggregated data hinder gender-sensitive policy development, leaving women marginalized in agriculture, food security, and rural development.

 The Marriage Act (2000) and Succession Amendment Decree (1972) lack clear provisions on property division, and customary practices favour male land ownership. Revising these frameworks is crucial for gender equity in

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ABOUT THIS POLICY BRIEF

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