

WOMEN AND GOOD GOVERNANCE

An Action Research Report

Assessing the Participation of Grassroot Women in Decentralized Development Planning Processes in Nebbi District Local Government



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ABBREVIATIONS

AAIU-NDI	Action Aid International Uganda-Nebbi Development Initiative
ACDO	Assistant Community Development Officer
AFARD	Agency For Accelerated Regional Development
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CAO	Chief Administrative Officer
CDO	Community Development Officer
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
DPU	District Planning Unit
DWC	District Women Council
EDF	European Development Fund
FAL	Functional Adult Literacy
FEW	Field Extension Worker
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
HIV	Human Immune Virus
HLG	Higher Local Government
HURINET	Human Rights Network (Uganda)
IPF	Indicative Planning Figure
LC	Local Council
LGDP II	Local Government Development Programme II
LLC	Lower Local Council
LLG	Lower Local Government
MP	Member of Parliament
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
PDCs	Parish Development Committee
PEAP	Poverty Eradication Action Plan
PELUM	Participatory Ecological Land Use Management
PIC/PMC	Project Implementation/Management Committee
PMA	Plan for the Modernization of Agriculture
PWD	People With Disability
SCC	Sub-county Chief
SNV	Netherlands Development Organization
TPC	Technical Planning Committee
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
UPPA	Uganda Participatory Poverty Assessment

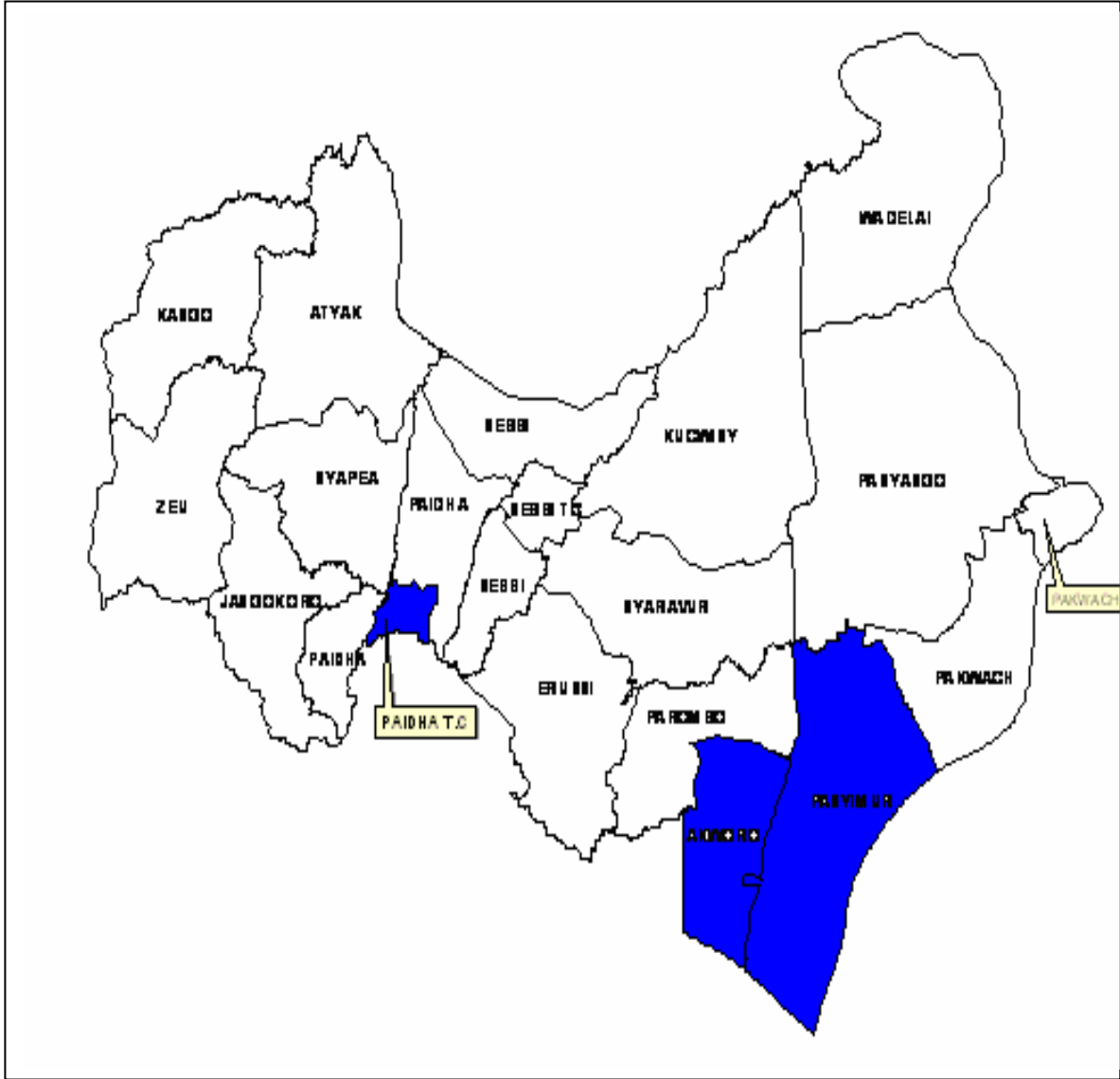
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Figure 1: Map of Nebbi District showing the study sites



ABSTRACT

True development can be seen as a process whereby poor people, men and women, bring about changes in their lives and transform the societies in which they live. In Uganda, it is believed that decentralization, a policy that shifts responsibilities for development to local authorities, brings decision-making process closer to the people so that they become agents of their own change. This explains why the transfer of responsibility for planning, management, and the raising and allocation of resources under legislative, financial, and personnel decentralization was shifted from the central government to local governments. However, for decentralization to bring governance closer to the people, the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda requires, among others, local governments to develop a comprehensive and integrated development plans incorporating the plans of the lower level councils. This implies that any prospective beneficiary from the development plan should participate, and participate effectively during planning, otherwise they lose out in the sharing of the cake.

One constituency that has had a rather raw deal in Nebbi district are the women. Although they constitute the majority of the population, women have remained the poorest compared to men (*feminized poverty*); lack voice in local council structures (*minority democracy*); and have continued to receive marginal returns to their votes (*no value for votes*). Among the factors blamed for this state of affairs is their lack of, or ineffective, participation in local development processes. The question this research has explored was therefore why grassroots women do not engage in such processes where the 'cake is divided'. The study central question was, 'what factors explain the ineffective participation of grassroots women in decentralized development planning processes in Nebbi district lower local governments?'

Answers to this question were obtained through individual interviews of 273 randomly sampled women in three Sub Counties of Panyimur and Akworo and Paidha Town Council. The quantitative data generated was corroborated by focus group discussions involving 90 women (women council I-III, women councilors, female youth council, female persons with disabilities and representatives of women groups) and key informant interviews with 12 political and administrative leaders in the lower local governments who spearhead the planning processes in their local councils. Documentary reviews, video recordings and photographs were also used to capture key highlights. Preliminary findings were presented to a feedback and strategy design workshop that brought together all key stakeholders from government and the civil society. It is from this workshop that action points for enhancing women's participation were identified.

Summary of key findings and their implications

Awareness of the planning and budgeting process

1. 67.8% of the women were not aware of village planning meetings even though over 90% consider it as their right to participate in such development planning. The implication is that the needs of women were not incorporated in the development plans.

2. 88.2% and 84.9% of the respondents have not heard of their parish/ward and LLG development plans respectively. The implication is that they had no basis for demanding for services and accountability from their leaders.

Practices of planning and budgeting management

3. 91.9%, 97.4% and 98.5% of the women had never participated at village, parish and LLG planning and budgeting meetings respectively. Women's limited participation was accounted for by: poor mobilisation strategy, wrong timing of meetings and lack of facilitation for such meetings. This implies that key decisions were taken by men.
4. 96.3% and 98.5% never ever participated in village and parish levels feedback meeting respectively. The absence of feedback was attributed to the failure of the leaders to organize feedback meetings, lack of facilitation and self seeking leadership at all levels. Therefore women have insufficient knowledge about the developmental interventions their LLGs would be engaged in.
5. 85.2%, 96.7% and 97.4% of the respondents had never been involved in the implementation of village, parish and LLG projects respectively. And almost all (97%) did not participate in the monitoring of the LLG budgets. This low participation at such critical stages of the project cycle has a bearing on ownership, utilisation and sustainability of the local government projects by the people. It also perpetuates corruption and impunity among leaders through the diversion of projects, dealing with tenderers who do shoddy jobs, and outright theft of development funds.

Conclusion

This study reveals that women are willing to participate in all the stages of the local government planning processes and consider doing so as their rights as well as taking responsibilities for their own development. However, it also indicates that grassroots women are generally strategically excluded from such processes. Thus, from a human rights perspective, women's rights are highly violated in the decentralized planning processes as they are denied the right to participate in the planning processes. From a gender advocacy focus, women's needs and interest are excluded from the male-dominated policy making arena given that it is the men whose voices are heard and put into resource consideration. These exclusions perpetuate gender inequality and as an act of good governance, make decentralized governance none transparent/accountable to women hence participatory decentralized planning continues to remain a rhetoric that can not promote equitable local choice responsiveness. Given such a phenomenon, a right-based intervention is direly needed so that development beneficiaries (men and women) are able to demand and obtain the right to effectively participate in all stages of their development. They should also hold the right to audit interventions and ensure that service delivery meets their needs.

PART 1: JUSTIFICATION FOR THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Nebbi district, located in West Nile region of Uganda, is one of the 76 districts of Uganda. It is bordered by Arua district to the north, Gulu district to the east, Masindi district to the southeast and the Democratic Republic of Congo to the West and South. The district has 1297 villages¹ with a total of 435,360 people (composed of 48% males and 52% females; distributed as 90.2% rural and 9.8% urban). Besides, the people have a poor well-being (health, literacy) status.² Unfortunately, it is the women who are more disadvantaged. Women have a high maternal mortality rate (505 per 100,000) coupled with only 33% of them aged 10 years and over being literate compared to 67% of men.

Why such a difference in the wake of decentralization policy that should ideally promote gender and geographical equality remains unclear. The perpetual complaint has been that women generally do not effectively participate in local government planning and budgeting processes where decisions about allocation of resources are made. Their absence means that they cannot influence allocation of resources for the women and so the situation above is likely to continue unabated. This study, therefore, delved into exploring just this but with a focus on participation for improved services delivery.

1.2 Background to the study

Women, gender and development: The call for reversal

The quest for engendering development has been a critical ethical question of ensuring that, first, there is development equity; but, second and more importantly, that social hegemony in which women take a subordinate position is reconfigured. This demand emanates from evidences in the past five decades where the 'masculine concept of progress' saw women as essentialized, homogenized, and 'other people' to whom development was to be delivered.

¹ UBOS, 2002 Census results.

² These are fundamental indices for human development measure. Worst scenario can be exemplified by locational variations and taking women as a heterogeneous group. The district development plan indicates such differences between men and women in longevity of life (women – 45 years and men-43 years), literacy (women-33% and men 67%) and in waged employment (women-21% and men-79%). (see DPU, 2005).

While from the 1970s onward, most mainstream approaches to development changed (or adapted) from women in development through women and development, gender and development, and gender mainstreaming, the current emphasis on empowerment from a women's perspective provides a limelight within which women should be seen as both agents and beneficiaries of their own development. It should no longer be an issue of letting women participate in projects on terms decided by others; enabling women enter the market as others; and taking political positions as others; etc. Rather, development should be approached from a social transformation approach. This transformation should include all structures – the household, market, government and civil society arenas so that institutions (values, and beliefs), which create and perpetuate women's subordination are eliminated.

In this way, true development can be seen as a process whereby poor people, men and women, bring about changes in their lives and transform the societies in which they live (Chambers, 1983: 111-114). This is contrary to the 1950s - 1970s 'prevailing orthodoxy of development where the professionals had the answers, and local people, with their traditionalism, were really a part of the problems' (Chambers, 1998: xiii cited in Blackburn and Holland, 1998).³ That is why participatory development became an indispensable approach for both efficient management approach and promoting empowerment of the weaker social groups like women (Slater and Watson, 1989: 153).

The popularization of participatory approach as a 'new tyrant' in development (Kothari, 2001) is based on the perceived importance of participation, namely, it: brings together different stakeholders in a common decision-making arena; increases the likelihood of successful policy implementation and the share of manager's dilemmas; empowers beneficiaries; improves needs-based service delivery; encourages resource cost-sharing; and promotes policy inclusiveness and transparency (see Mosse, 1994; Fowler, 1998; Guijt and Shah, 1998; Cernea 1991).

These premised merits however, presupposes that all stakeholders – the leaders and the led, the state and non-state institutions, and women and men share as partners in decision-making and implementation. Blackburn and Holland (1998b: xv) already cautioned about the flagshipping of participation just as Burkey echoes that 'if participation is to release people's creative energies for development, it must be much more than a policy statement and mere mobilization towards

³ While Chambers (1998: 9-12) identifies the basic principles of participation that Gaventa (1998: 13) operationalized as 'handing over the stick', institutional change, and collaboration, Pretty (1994) models a seven component typology of participation: passive participation; participation in information giving; participation by consultation; participation by material incentives; functional participation; interactive participation; and self-mobilization. UNDP summarizes this typology using a participation degree scale basing on the fact that participation is both a means to other things and an end in itself. According to the scale participation occur through manipulation; information sharing; consultation; consensus building; decision-making through negotiation; risk-sharing among actors; partnership building; and self-management.(at <http://www.undp.org/SI/ Documents/Manuals/Empowering/chapter1.htm>).

preconceived plans. It must be participation in all aspects and at all levels of development work (1993: 56).

These cautions call for participation beyond the informative and consultative level (Chambers, 1993; Burkey 1993; Pretty, 1994), what Rahman termed ‘People’s Self Development’ (Rahman, 1993: 178) which creates policies and development that are ‘needs-oriented’ geared to meeting both material and non-material human needs; and ‘endogenous’ stemming from the heart of each society’ (Burkey, 1993: 30-32) where both women and men collectively and mutually identify their needs and act towards its solution.

Yet, the romanticism of participatory development and governance approach downplay aspects that deter effective participation such as opposition, influence, manipulation, and conditionalities from external stakeholders (Gulhati, 1990: 15) let alone the bureaucratic culture of governance (Cockery, Lands and Bosseyt, 1995: 12) that constrain effective policy making process. Besides, women who are more disadvantaged than men are never given affirmative actions as opportunities to participate (Mohan, 1995; Mosse, 1994). Not surprising, decentralization has become atypical of ‘democratic centralism’ (Lakwo, 2003). To this Nelson and Wright (1995) point out that:

Participation has ... positioned people very differently in relation to the development apparatus ... – as a presence, as objects of a theoretical process of economic and political transformation; as expected ‘beneficiaries’ of programmes with pre-set parameters; as contributors of casual labor to help a project achieve its ends; as politically co-opted legitimizers of a policy; or as people trying to determine their own choice and direction independent of the state.

Therefore, for participatory governance to move beyond political machination and officialising strategies (Escobar, 1995) local governments needs to accord women all ways and means in order for them to partake as prudential actors and partners in the entire process of development management. Such a space for participatory governance within a state-controlled arena starts where development policies are made and implemented.

Decentralization and popular participation in Uganda

The popularity of participatory development infiltrated into governance circle. It challenged centralized governance where a few ‘hungry lions’ lead the majority in their selfish interests. Decentralization⁴ is seen as a possibility to make local

⁴ Decentralization is defined as the transfer of responsibility for planning, management, and the raising and allocation of resources from the central government ministries and agencies to field units of central government ministries or agencies (deconcentration); subordinate units or levels of government (devolution); semi-autonomous public authorities (delegation); or non-governmental private or voluntary organizations (privatization) (Rondenelli and Chema, 1984). These constitute the basis upon which Litvack and Seddon (nd) identifies three main types of decentralization: (i) political decentralization that basically aims at a pluralistic politics and representative government whereby citizens or their elected representatives have

governments popular, people-centered, and local needs responsive. That is why Rondenelli (1981: 133-134) contends that the popularization of decentralization in the 1970s and 1980s in ‘developing countries’ aimed at opening up government systems – that was the confine of elites - for the citizens thereby taking the citizens aboard in local governance and transforming development process from an inside-out approach.

In Uganda, decentralization as a policy goal and as an instrument aims at the shifting of responsibilities for development to local authorities i.e. bringing decision-making process closer to the people so that they become agents of their own change (SNV, 1999: 27; Ofei-Aboagye, 2000). It takes a pragmatic (preserving the monopoly of governance) and reformist agenda (opening governance to the populace) (see SNV and DPU, 1997). This explains why the transfer of responsibility for planning, management, and the raising and allocation of resources under legislative, financial, and personnel decentralization was shifted from the central government to local governments.

Box 1: Objectives of decentralization in Uganda

Objectives of decentralization in Uganda (Statutes No. 15 of 1993)

- *transferring real power to the local governments and thus, reduce the work load on remote and under-resourced central officials;*
- *bringing under control (political, managerial, and administrative) the delivery of services to local people to improve effectiveness and accountability and to promote a sense of people’s ownership of local government programmes and projects;*
- *freeing managers in local government from constraints of central authorities to allow them to develop organizational structures that are tailored to local conditions;*
- *improving financial accountability and responsible use of resources by establishing a clear link between the payment of taxes and the provision of the services they finance; and*
- *improving the capacity of local governments to plan, finance, and manage the delivery of services to their constituents.*

(Source: Nsibambi, 1998)

The above stated objectives of decentralization revolve around the creation of functioning local bureaucracies under the direction of accountable and democratically elected leaders (Councils) who take responsibility for the development and good governance of the people in the geographical areas under their jurisdiction (see box 2). To achieve this, local governments have the mandate to champion the development processes in their jurisdiction according to the roles as shown below.

more power in public decision-making i.e., the formulation and implementation of policies; (ii) administrative and fiscal decentralization that seeks to redistribute authority, responsibility and financial resources for providing public services among different levels of government by the transfer of responsibility for the planning, financing and management of certain public functions; and (iii) economic or market decentralization where there is shift in responsibility for functions from the public to the private sector.

Box 2: Roles of local governments

The roles of local governments as is in the LGA 1997 are:

- *Provide vertical and horizontal information and insights to all stakeholders;*
- *Coordinate the mapping and mobilization of local capacities and resources especially the informal private sector with the expectation that this will promote local economic growth, employment and production of surplus that the local government can in turn tax;*
- *Provide a domestic framework to promote the participatory formulation, conceptualization and operationalisation of local development plans;*
- *Ensure the fair and equitable targeting of poverty reduction programmes at the local level;*
- *Facilitate the development of socio-economic and physical infrastructure; and*
- *Generate greater trust and accountability between state and its citizens by involving local leaders, entrepreneurs and civic organizations in democratic dialogue and in the workings of government.*

(Source: Uganda, 1997)

Decentralization and the policy making process

The above noted roles constitute to a large extent the public policy making function of local government. Such public policy processes, Rebecca Sutton (1999) argues, should be owned by the people (women and men) and it should involve organizations outside the government too. In this way, it is required that government's provision of common goods and services should be within a gateless process for all actors (policy makers, implementers and beneficiaries).

Therefore, for decentralization to bring governance closer to the people, one notable mechanism that can be used is development planning and budgeting. The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, 1995 (articles 97, 98, 176(2), 190 and the 6th schedule) and the Local Governments Act, 1997 (section 7, 31, 36, 37, 38, 75, and the 2nd and 4th schedules) stipulate the roles and functions of local councils in regards to planning; a critical role in public policy management. As body corporate, local governments are supposed to:

- establish a functional, District Planning Unit that is charged with planning facilitation, coordination and negotiation roles at the district level.
- have functional Technical Planning Committee (TPC). This committee is composed of technical personnel within the local government (i.e. both government and NGOs).
- develop a comprehensive and integrated 3 Year Development Plan incorporating the plans of the lower level councils.

The legal requirement of all local governments to plan and budget is based on the fact that a development plan:

- acts as a management tool in guiding operational direction placing the local government mission first. The various development actors are therefore guided by the plan to pull all resources [manpower, finance, time and logistics] in one direction thus, reducing the popular tendency of management by crisis.

- is a resource mobilisation guide. Given the fact that local government resource envelopes are limited, there is a great need to balance local choices/needs against the available resource capacity. A plan, therefore, provides a shopping guide for additional resource needs mobilisation from outside the local government coffers, intended to facilitate the realization of the local government goal.
- Is a monitoring and evaluation toolkit. While local government autonomy is guaranteed, their integrity is dependent on the level of service delivery, transparency and public accountability. A plan, therefore, provides an avenue for measuring the delivery status of local governments in relation to the community set target.

1.3 The problem statement

Development as is enshrined in the 1995 Ugandan Constitution is a human right (Uganda, 1995). This right is not gender blind! Yet, there is glaring evidence to the widening gender inequalities between men and women, boys and girls, in all the facets of human, social, and economic development. In a local government setting, this raises a question as to the responsiveness of policy makers and implementers to the needs of women as policy beneficiaries. Thus, although the current decentralization policy aims at bringing services closer to the grassroots population as local governments are expected to be local choice responsive, 'whose choice?' has remained a fundamental question normally unanswered.

In the last 4 years, AFARD has been working towards the promotion of gender equity and equality in development processes and outcomes respectively. Despite the strategic plan developed for the Women Council (WC) as LLGs complained that lack of such plans ensure women's exclusion, its use was limited. LLG officials turned around and said WC structures were central government creation hence responsibilities.

As a response, we changed the working strategy beyond the WC structure into ensuring that women as a constituency benefited, as their right, from decentralized services delivery. To do so, gender responsive budgeting approach was used. With the help of tools like gender-aware budget statements, gender-aware policy appraisal, gender-disaggregated beneficiary assessment, and gender-disaggregated public expenditure incidence analysis it became clear that the planning processes and outcomes were gender blind. Sector analysis, target setting, and accountabilities lacked gender-disaggregated data. Resource allocation was also in favor of the men-dominated sector (administration) than women's services sector. Numerous challenges were ascribed to this as are summarized in box 3 below.

Box 3: Challenges to gender responsive planning and budgeting (GRP)

Lack of skills: The skills of undertaking a thorough and detailed GRPB is lacking in both the LLGs and at the district level. As such, more often than not departments end up developing gender-neutral or gender-blind plans and budgets.

Low levels of education of councilors: This limit many councilors ability to question the intents of departmental budgets as they fear to be confronted by technical staff.

Low awareness of civic rights: Generally, the communities of Nebbi district have low levels of awareness of their civic rights and responsibilities as such they do not attend planning and budgeting meetings.

The high cost of service delivery: Priority in the district budget is given to administrative costs. In the 2004/05 district budget, administrative costs took 52.2% of the total expenditures compared to 47.8% for the services sectors. Hence, the actual cost is 1.1 shillings to deliver 1.0 shilling worth of service.

Emphasis on hardware intervention instead of an integrated 'software and hardware' project support approach.

Lack of understanding between women council members and councilors who both have a similar role of championing women's cause in the local government development processes.

Source: AFARD Advocacy Report, May, 2006

Still, no reason was given to explain why grassroot women respond the way they do annually. This study, therefore, took as its starting point the need to explore why grassroot women do not engage in such processes where the 'cake is divided' in order to kick-start the process of public dialogue and partnership with women.

To understand women's ineffective participation in the entire development processes, the study looked at (i) women's knowledge of the entire planning cycle; and (ii) how the various institutional managers execute the planning processes.

1.4 Study objective and scope

This social-policy action research primarily focused at the grassroot women in order to (i) explain why they have ineffective participation in local government planning processes so that (ii) appropriate actions are taken to explore, within the policy arena, how women's citizenship entitlements can be enhanced. The opening of such a space is relevant to ensure that as citizens women can demand for services (by participating in decision-making processes) and ensure that such services are provided timely and in the right quality and quantity (by holding local government leadership accountable).

1.5 The study question

To meet the above objectives, this study asked a fundamental question: *What factors explain the ineffective participation of grassroot women in decentralized development planning in Nebbi district lower local governments?* The focus on planning is not simply limited to development design. Rather, decentralized planning is seen as the entire process of the development plan design, execution, and monitoring and evaluation. As such, this central question is broken down into:

- (i) *In what ways are decentralized planning and budgeting conducted in Nebbi district lower local governments?*
- (ii) *How are grassroot women involved in the processes?*
- (iii) *In what ways do the involvements facilitate or constrain women's effective participation in the planning processes?*

1.6 Methodological considerations

The Study area

This study was carried in all the three counties of Nebbi district covering the lower local governments (LLGs) of Panyimur in Jonam, Akworo in Padyere, and Paidha Town Council in Okoro specifically covering eleven parishes/wards distributed as follows: Nyakagei, Ganda, and Boro in Panyimur; Kasatu, Murusi, and Kituna in Akworo; and Central, Omua, Cana and Oturgang in Paidha TC (see table 1 below). As was observed by the district executives of the women's council and the HURINET (U) funded advocacy and lobbying workshops, these areas are identified as where women's participation has been weakest. Below are the key highlights of the socio-economic indicators of the LLGs.

Table 1: Key characteristics of the study areas

Indicator	Lower Local Governments			Nebbi DLG
	Panyimur	Akworo	Paidha TC	
Total area (km ²)	183.9	99.4	29	3,288
Number of parishes	3	4	4	87
Number of villages	49	35	46	1,329
Number of households	4,335	3,080	5,211	90,040
Average household size	4.8	5	4.6	4.8
Total population	20,729	15,330	24,079	435,360
-Female (%)	10,728	8,007	12,588	227,304
Population density (person per km ²)	113	154	830	132
Sex ratio (%)	93	91	91	92
Overall budget (Ushs)	92,710,082	34,659,353	468,984,831*	15,561,024,937
Budget per capita (Ushs)	4,472.5	2,260.9	19,476.9	35,742.9
Main economic activity	Farming, fishing	Farming	Farming, trade	Farming

Sources: UBOS 2002, NDLG, LLG development plans (2005/06), LLG final accounts.

Data management

To ably answer the questions raised, a study team composed of 6 research assistants drawn from civil society organizations, local government, and the District Women Council (DWC) under the team leadership of AFARD participated in the study between February and April 2006.



Methodological triangulation was used in data collection. A quantitative individual survey was conducted only among grassroot women. The interviewers randomly sampled these women radiating outwards from the LLG headquarters. The survey used a short, closed and open-ended questionnaire that captured data in regards to the women's knowledge of and participation in local government planning processes. Each interview lasted between 1-1.30 hours.

Besides, qualitative methods were also used. Focus group discussions (FGDs)

involving 30 participants per local government were held. These were women from women council I-III, women councilors, female youth council, female person with disabilities and representative of women groups. The FGDs primarily focused at the institutional analysis as to why the women leaders think the grassroot women don't participate in the planning processes. To complement the FGD, video recording and photography were also done.

Key informant interviews were conducted with both the LLG technical and political leadership especially the Sub County chiefs/ Town clerks, Sub Accountant /Town Treasurer, Assistant Community Development Officers, Secretary for Finance and Planning and Chairperson LCIII. In total, 12 people were interviewed. These are people who spearhead the planning processes in their local councils. They are not only aware of the practices undertaken but also know why they adopt certain practices even if it does not conform to the prescribed guidelines of Ministry of local government/finance and development planning.

Documentary review complemented these other methods. It involved a literature study on decentralization, participation, women, gender and development. The LLG budgets and plans were also reviewed using the approved LLG guidelines to ascertain whether the prescribed processes are always followed. Equally, a review of AFARD's earlier works on gender and decentralized development were also conducted.

Finally, a feedback and strategy workshop was held. The workshop aimed at widening the understanding of the insights of how decentralized planning is conducted in practice, why and how women are excluded, and what ought to be done for an effective mobilization of women for effective participation in the local government planning processes. Political and technical leaders from both the study LLGs and the district local government participated in this workshop together with representatives of women councils and civil society organizations. During the workshop, the study findings (part II of this report) were presented and the way forward (part III of this report) was exhaustively discussed and agreed upon. Thus, the leaders concerned with local development processes were made aware of the effects of their policy practices on women's participation in development policy processes.

Data analysis was done concurrently. While the quantitative individual survey data was analyzed using SPSS software, content analysis technique was used to analyze the qualitative data.

Report generation

A number of reports were produced first for internal discussion basing on the findings from each of the methods used in data collection. These reports were

collated into a single report that was used during the feedback/strategy design workshop. This final report, therefore, incorporates the views of the workshop participants.

1.7 Organization of the report

This report is organized in three parts. In this part 1, justification for the study, the background to the study, problem statement, study objectives and scope, and methodological issues are explained. The second part provides the empirical findings and implications of the study in relation to the research question. It explores on the characteristics of the study population, knowledge and practices of decentralized planning processes. Finally, the last part builds on the first two parts and is specifically focused on a call for action to address the challenges identified. It provides the proposed action points requisite for building women's citizenship.

PART 2: FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

2.1 Introduction

This section presents the analysis of the research findings. It is organized in two sections. The first section focuses on the awareness of the planning and budgeting process. It covers the general knowledge about: (i) planning and budgeting meetings and the right to participate in such meetings; (ii) development plans and budget availability; and (iii) plan and budget contents in respect to services provision. The second section presents the practices used by local government functionaries in the planning process in terms of village mobilization, planning and budgeting meetings, feedback systems, plan implementation processes, and monitoring system.

2.2 Characteristics of the study population

The individual survey covered 271 women of whom:

- 35.1%, 39.9% and 25.1% were from the LLGs of Panyimur, Akworo, and Paidha town council respectively.
- 42.8% were under 30 years, 36.9% between 31-50 years, and 20.3% more than 50 years old. Their minimum age was 17 years and maximum age was 80 years (hence a median age of 38 years).
- While 87.1% were married, 2.2% were single and widows composed 10.7%.
- 42.8% had no education as compared to 45.0% with primary and 12.2% with secondary and beyond levels of education.
- 55.0% were engaged in (subsistence) farming as compared to 41.7% in petty trade (of food vending and fish mongering) and only 3.3% as waged/salaried workers.
- 21.0% were women leaders (in councils and resource persons for projects)⁵, 9.6% were members of community based organizations, and 69.4% ordinary housewives.

⁵ The community resource persons were mainly Traditional birth attendants, Parents-Teachers' Association/Management Committee members, and community facilitators (adult literacy and NUSAF). These are women who are presumably exposed to development programmes.

2.3 The approved planning framework

The Local Governments Act 1997 (section 36-3) provides for the district as well as the LLGs composed of sub counties and town councils to develop comprehensive and integrated development plans that incorporates the plans of lower council administrative units (parishes and villages). This mandate is exercised through the planning and budgeting cycles that emphasize that villages develop their plans (often a priority list determined by the village councilors) for onward submission to the parish/ward and eventually to the LLG.

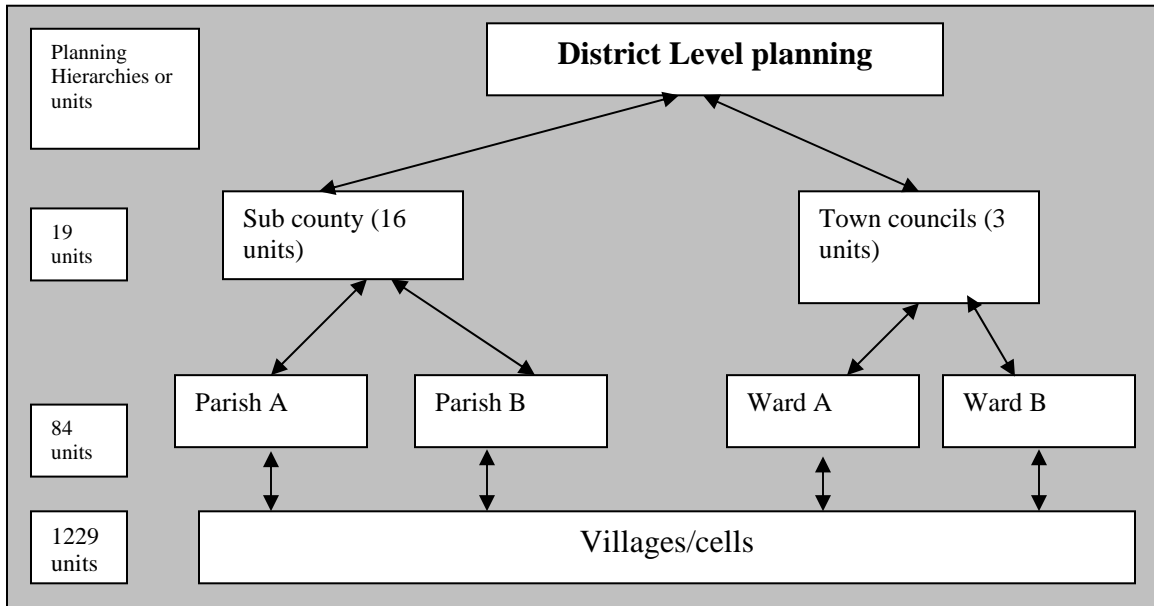
A two way process that should work in conformity characterizes the planning cycle: bottom-up (getting opinions from villages to the higher levels) and top-down (respecting guidelines and options from the center downwards). Before the plan approval and implementation, a number of interconnected activities such as problem identification, data collection and analysis, generation of alternatives and choices and plan conference have to be implemented (see table 2). For the aforementioned to succeed, it is required that the people who should participate in the process are not only knowledgeable of when these activities take place but also the importance attached to these planning interventions.

In essence, therefore, under decentralization, district planning process should begin at the village levels, ascending to the parish levels and to the sub-county levels with a preliminary plan and budget conference. At the LLG, a similar process should be done and an annual plan submitted to the district level for the formulation of a comprehensive district plan (see figure 3 below).

This process involves de-briefing the community on Budget Framework Paper, Annual and Medium Term Budget and Annual and Medium Term Plan. It also involves the review of past performance – budget, projects, and linkages established; soliciting for proposals for implementation in the coming year; and prioritizing the activities identified.

These process are ideally replicated in the feedback process whereby the district, after the plan approval on June 30th, should brief the LLGs of their projects that have been adopted in the district plan/budget. Similarly, the LLG should give a feedback to the parishes which in turn should provide a feedback to the village on what priority areas have been identified and listed for implementation in the financial year.

Figure 3: Prescribed decentralized planning process



Source: Lakwo (2003).

When properly followed, these processes should have been able to open up local government system for the transparent participation of all actors. It should have made local government interventions local priorities responsive (Griffin, 1989) and people empowering as the state-market-Civil Society Organization relations is improved (Loclan and Mouffee, 1996; Mayo and Craig, 1995).

Table 2: Prescribed local governments planning and budgeting schedule

	Activity	When to be done	Who are involved	Expected output
1	Dissemination of policy and planning guidelines	30 th September	District and ministries	Circulars sent to LLGs
2	Consultative meeting on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implications of policy guidelines • Planning and budgeting processes • Participation of development partners in the process and areas of complementarities between government and partners • Indicative planning figures by all actors 	1 st week of October	LLG executive committee, LG TPC, Development partners (CSO, NGOs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Synchronized plan and budget process • IPFs declared by all partners including CSOs • Consensus built
3	Dissemination of consultative meeting-planning and budgeting programme	2 nd week of October	SCC/TC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circulars on P&B sent to LLC • Harmonized approach, process and timeframe
4	Community (village and parish) level consultations	2 nd week of October	Village and parish councils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community priorities identified

5	Consolidation and submission of community proposals and plans to LLG	2 nd week of November	Parish Chief, parish councils, PDCs	• Community proposals consolidated and submitted
6	Planning and budgeting conference to review performance and agree on priorities	15 th November	Council, TPC, Development partners	• Priorities agreed upon by a wide spectrum of the stakeholders
7	Consolidation and costing of LG priorities	3 rd week of November	TPC secretariat	• Priorities costed and consolidated
8	Discussion of LG draft plans and estimates	15 th March	Sectoral committees	• Synchronized draft plan and budget
9	Consolidation and incorporation of sectoral committee recommendations	March-April	Executive committee	• Recommendations incorporated into draft plan and budget
10	Consolidation and preparation of LG three year draft plan and annual estimate	30 th May	TPC secretariat	• Final three year draft plan and annual estimate in place
11	Presentation of LG three year plan and budget estimates to council for approval	15 th June	Finance secretary/ Speaker	• Plan and annual budget approved
12	Dissemination of information in plan and budget to HLG and LLCs	30 th June	SCC/TC	• Formal submission of approvals and recommendations to HLG and LLC
13	Plan and budget implementation	Continuous/monthly	PMCs, LCIII, LCII, LCI	• Plan and budget implemented
14	Plan implementation reviews	Quarterly	Councils, CSO, TPC	• Reviews done

Source: MoLG, 2004. Harmonized participatory planning guide

2.4 Awareness of the planning and budgeting process

2.4.1 The need for annual village plan process

In line with the required annual planning process, 93% of the interviewed women indicated that it is important to have the annual planning process conducted in their villages. The majority (80.8%) also attributed this to the need for poverty reduction. Similarly, 83% responded that they would participate in this process when involved. Their prime motives for participation are to ensure that:

- plans are based on their needs (52.8%);
- effective follow-up and monitoring of projects is done (19.6%);
- they know of LLG planning processes (7.0%); and
- projects are equitably distributed in all villages (4.4%).

Given these reasons, it was, therefore, not surprising that 89.7% consider such processes as their human rights and maintained in the FGDs that their participation would be the means with which to contribute views for their own development and that such development should be in line and informed by community views.

Table 3: Awareness of planning and budgeting meetings

Indicators	Awareness of planning meeting	Would have attended if made aware	Consider participation in village planning a right
Total	32.2%	83.0%	89.7%
By age group:			
- Upto 30 years	31.9%	88.8%	88.8%
- 31-50 years	35.0%	77.0%	95.0%
- > 50 years	30.9%	81.8%	81.8%
By marital status:			
- Married	34.7%	83.1%	90.7%
- Single	33.3%	83.3%	83.3%
- Widow	17.2%	82.8%	82.8%
By educational attainment			
- None	22.4%	88.8%	87.1%
- Primary	39.3%	78.7%	90.2%
- Secondary and more	45.4%	78.8%	97.0%
By Occupation			
- Farmer	30.9%	81.9%	94.0%
- Petty trader	32.7%	86.7%	83.2%
- Salaried employee	66.7%	55.6%	100.0%
By social position			
- Women leader	47.4%	68.4%	96.5%
- CBO member	34.6%	76.9%	92.3%
- Ordinary women	28.6%	88.3%	87.2%

Source: Individual survey

2.4.2 Awareness of the planning and budgeting meetings

Given the above sentiments, respondents were asked whether or not they are aware of the mandated roles and functions of the LLG in regards to organizing and coordinating planning meetings in order to get village priorities for inclusion into the parish/ward and the overall LLG development plan. As can be seen from table 3, it clearly emerged that 32.2% were aware of the planning and budgeting meetings.

In all the responses there were significant relationships with women's education level and position in society. It is only women with secondary education and beyond and women leaders who are by far aware of such meetings.

2.4.3 Awareness of the approved plans and budgets

The decentralization policy also mandates local governments to develop and disseminate (in relevant forms and contents), the development plan intentions and budgets to the people they serve. Among these are the women at LCI levels. Therefore, LLG development plans and budgets are very important (public) documents required for resource mobilization, allocation, and utilization. This is

because the starting point in the development plan and budget utilization is having its constituency aware of its intentions for the year so that the people have realistic expectations from their leaders.

Individual women were asked if they have ever heard of their parish and LLG development plans. As can be seen from table 4, it was found out that: (i) only 11.8% responded being aware of parish development plans with a marked bias in favor of women with secondary education and women in leadership position; and (ii) only 15.1% responded to being aware of the LLG development plan. Still, it is women with secondary education and women leaders who were aware of such plans.

The limited awareness of the availability of the LLG development plan and budget featured prominently during the FGDs. It was noted that women had very scanty knowledge of these documents. For instance, in the FGD in Akworo it emerged that none of the participants knew of the LLG plan. Likewise in Paidha TC only four out of thirty people had seen the plan and budget document without reading it. Even the Councilors who approved the documents were found not to have copies of the plan neither had they read it.

These revelations were attributed to the fact that:

- The plan and budget are too bulky to read and internalize. No plan and budget summaries are made during or after the plan and budget have been approved.
- Very few copies are usually made for only the Chairperson, Speaker, Town Treasurer/Sub-Accountant and the Town Clerk/Sub-county Chief leaving the rest of the council members to depend on the words of mouth of the leaders. Attempts by LLG leaders to apportion this weakness to inadequate funds during key informant interviews were found unconvincing given that the FGDs stated that it is the LLGs managers' management practice not to make the people aware so that they are not held responsible for inactions or diversion of resources.

Table 4: Heard of development plan and budget and service provision

Indicators	Heard of parish development plan	Heard of sub county development plan	Aware of services being provided in the village
Total	11.8%	15.1%	34.7%
By age group:			
- Upto 30 years	3.4%	10.3%	31.9%
- 31-50 years	19.0%	17.0%	57.0%
- > 50 years	16.4%	21.8%	36.4%
By marital status:			
- Married	11.0%	15.7%	34.7%
- Single	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%
- Widow	13.8%	13.8%	31.0%
By educational attainment			
- None	11.2%	7.8%	25.0%
- Primary	9.8%	16.4%	37.5%
- Secondary and more	21.2%	36.4%	57.6%
By Occupation			
- Farmer	11.4%	12.1%	30.9%
- Petty trader	9.7%	15.0%	35.4%
- Salaried employee	44.4%	66.7%	88.9%
By social position			
- Women leader	22.8%	33.3%	54.4%
- CBO member	15.4%	15.4%	53.8%
- Ordinary women	8.4%	9.6%	26.1%

Source: Individual survey

2.4.3 Awareness of services and service providers

Given that plans are translated into services delivery in which direct financial resources are spent, women's awareness of service delivery in the LLC was also asked. However, only 31% of the women reported having known of at least one service (see table 6). A closer look at the type of services indicates that these are either visible projects or those in which it is a must for the women to participate.

Table 5: Service provider by known services being offered

Type of service	Service providers						Total
	Sub county	District	Area MP	Central Government	NGO	None	
Safe water sources	7.0%	1.8%	0.7%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	10.7%
Construction	4.8%	1.1%	-	0.4%	1.8%	1.5%	9.6%
Extension services	1.5%	-	0.7%	2.2%	5.2%	-	9.6%
Health	0.4%	-	-	0.4%	0.4%	-	1.1%
None	1.5%	-	-	0.4%	0.4%	66.8%	69.0%
Total	15.1%	3.0%	1.5%	3.7%	8.1%	68.6%	100.0%

Chi=335.959, df=20, sig=.000*

Source: Individual survey

Although the main service providers noted was the sub county/town council local government, it was also noted that NGOs are playing a major role. Such a recognition stem from the working strategy employed by NGOs (and even area MPs) in engaging with the people in the projects they support. For instance, it was reported in Panyimur that World Vision is supporting orphans and vulnerable children with scholastic materials, goat keeping and the community with sanitation and primary education services. In Paidha TC, the role of area MPs also featured under his loan scheme to women organized in groups at village level. For instance, an old woman remarked, *'I only know of our village meeting held during Ujanga (Area MP) loan scheme where we decide on who are eligible for the next disbursement of money and the repayment rate'*.

2.5 The practice of planning cycle management

In this part, we present the actual practices used by the LLG planners from mobilization to evaluation stages. Women were asked if they have ever participated as mobilizers for the village meetings as well as having participated in the planning and budgeting meetings at all levels and the responses are provided in table 6 below.

Table 6: Participation in mobilization and planning and budgeting meetings

Indicators	Participated in mobilization	Participated in village planning	Participated in parish planning	Participated in sub county budget conference	Participated in sub county plan approval
Total	5.5%	8.1%	2.6%	3.3%	1.5%
By age group:					
- Upto 30 years	2.2%	1.8%	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%
- 31-50 years	2.2%	5.2%	1.1%	1.8%	0.4%
- > 50 years	1.1%	1.1%	0.7%	0.7%	0.4%
By marital status:					
- Married	5.5%	8.1%	2.2%	2.6%	1.5%
- Single	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%	0.0%
- Widow	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%	0.4%	0.0%
By educational attainment					
- None	1.1%	1.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
- Primary	1.8%	4.1%	1.1%	1.5%	0.4%
- Secondary and more	2.6%	2.6%	1.5%	1.8%	1.1%
By Occupation					
- Farmer	3.3%	4.8%	1.5%	1.1%	0.4%
- Petty trader	1.1%	2.2%	0.0%	1.5%	0.4%
- Salaried employee	1.1%	1.1%	1.1%	0.7%	0.7%
By social position					
- Women leader	4.1%	5.2%	2.2%	3.0%	1.5%
- CBO member	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%
- Ordinary women	1.1%	2.6%	0.0%	0.4%	0.0%

Source: Individual survey

2.5.1 Mobilization for planning meetings

To start the planning process after the IPF has been disseminated, the entire village is expected to meet and generate their needs under the facilitation of the LLG personnel. This means that a well thought and managed mobilization strategy plays an important role in enabling and preparing the people to take on the task ahead. The positive attributes of mobilization however, hinges on the actors involved in the mobilization and the strategy employed.

From the above table, it can be seen that the level of women's involvement in mobilization was minimum (5.5%) and the main reasons to explain this phenomenon were that the women were not informed to mobilize (60.1%), and in some instances (8.1%) the respondents said the meeting to send them out for mobilization were not held.

Involvement in mobilization was found to have a strong relationship with education level, social position, marital status and type of occupation of the respondents. As can be seen from the table, those with secondary education as well as women leaders, the married women were more involved in mobilization with a confidence level of 100% respectively.

2.5.2 Participation in planning meetings

For the ideals of the local government participatory bottom-up planning and budgeting process to be realized, it is demanded that planning meetings be held. This is done in order to integrate the needs and aspirations of the lower councils. In short, no village needs (participatorily derived in a meeting), no development plan!

These meetings are conducted at the village, parish and LLG levels. While the entire population of a council is required to participate in the village planning meeting and the budget conference, the opposite is true for the parish meeting, which is mainly achieved through a representative participation.

In all the three levels (as portrayed by table 6), women's non-participation in planning and budgeting meetings was recorded at 91.9%, 97.4% and 98.5% for village, parish and LLG levels respectively.

Except in Paidha TC (where copies of the attendance sheets were available), there was no documentary evidence to the effect that village planning meetings were

organized. It was reported in the FGD that not the entire village members are involved in the planning and budgeting process. Rather, it is the LC1 executives, parish chief and Parish development Committee representatives who convene the village meetings and come up with their priorities. At times, women are forced to sign attendance list yet they have not participated in the meetings. In Akworo, the acting Sub-county Chief confirmed that no village planning meeting was held except for some parish meetings which were held in Kituna and Rero. Similarly, a woman noted that:

In our village no meetings are held, because I have never heard or seen it taking place. May be others who are more important than us are invited for such meetings. The only meeting I know of is that where LCs sit to settle disputes and get money for court fees (a 35 year old respondent from Paryem east village, Boro parish, Panyimur LLG)

The main obstacles to women's effective participation at this stage were noted to be:

- Bad mobilization strategy. There is foremost the intentional none mobilization of the women constituency. Besides, the household-to-household approach rarely finds women at home because they are busy meeting their survival strategies. Worse of all, the male mobilisers employ selective mobilization: first giving priorities to the men; secondly, to those who they perceive as knowledgeable and can offer *developmental* ideas; and lastly, to those with whom they share same political ideology.
- Conflict of roles with that of women mobilisers as the village Chairpersons mostly hijack assignments that have anticipated financial gains. For instance, a woman mobiliser in Paidha TC noted that, '*I have no job to do as the Chairperson has taken-up all my tasks*'.
- Lack of facilitation during village planning meetings. A woman noted in Panyimur "*If meals and even drinks can be provided during burials, funeral rites, marriage ceremonies... why can't the same be done for our village planning meetings given that these meetings are very important for our development*".
- Poor timing that does not allow women to balance between their immediate livelihood needs and the long-term governance issues. In Paidha TC, the women traders commonly known as "*Abicamukani*" (or petty traders involved in immediate buying and reselling of goods in the market) noted that they are always busy and when invited for meetings the timing is not appropriate.

The Speaker Paidha TC in this regard concluded that:

In village meetings mainly men respond and as a result women issues do not turn-up on the priority list. Women are kept out of the political domain due

to the heavy work load which keep them at home and as a result they (women) remain inadequately informed and unaware of not only government programmes but also their right to participate in affairs that govern them.

2.5.3 Feedback systems

The importance of feedback in the planning process cannot be over emphasized. Not only does it enable synchronizing of divergent and opposing opinion, but it is also a very powerful process in providing accountability (both political and financial) to the population. The local government planning cycle provides for a number of feedbacks on the status of lower local council (LLC) approved priorities (projects). It is the obligation of LLG to make such communication to LLC by 30th June latest in a suitable and easily consumable format.

In order to get insights into whether or not feedback on approved projects is provided to the grassroot women, respondents were asked if they have ever received feedback on village and parish projects and the response is shown below.

From table 7 below, it can be seen that only 3.7% and 1.5% reported having received feedback on village and parish projects respectively. The main channel of feedback was through the local council executives. This scenario was attributed by the individual women to:

- Feedback meetings have simply not been organized (44% and 40% at village and parish level respectively).
- Lack of facilitation (22% and 26% at village and parish level respectively) to communities for such activities. Women stated in the FGDs that their LLGs are self-seekers concerned more with their personal gains in the development process. Feedback being a non-economically rewarding venture end up not being attended to. Many also alluded that because of the non-economic gains their LLG have become adamant at making budget provision for feedback on priorities to LLC.

The key informant interviews and FGDs also pointed out that feedback on village and parish priorities from the LLGs were channeled through the Parish Chiefs, Councilors, and PDCs. On rare occasions, LC III Chairpersons communicate such priorities but depending on their mobilization tours in the community.

However, the fact that no written communication is used leaves a lot to be desired given the shortcomings of verbal communication. Additionally, given that feedback is provided by the Chairpersons during their visits or tours of the LLGs have two serious pointers: first, it falls short of the mandated two weeks period

for which feedback is to be availed to the LLC; and secondly, it leaves the whole process at the mercy of the Chairperson's programme of visits.

Table 7: Feedback on approved projects

Indicators	Received feedback on village priorities	Received feedback on parish plan and budget
Total	3.7%	1.5%
By age group:		
- Upto 30 years	0.7%	0.4%
- 31-50 years	2.2%	0.7%
- > 50 years	0.7%	0.4%
By marital status:		
- Married	3.7%	1.5%
- Single	0.0%	0.0%
- Widow	0.0%	0.0%
By educational attainment		
- None	1.5%	0.0%
- Primary	0.4%	0.0%
- Secondary and more	1.8%	1.5%
By Occupation		
- Farmer	1.8%	0.7%
- Petty trader	1.1%	0.4%
- Salaried employee	0.7%	0.4%
By social position		
- Women leader	1.8%	1.5%
- CBO member	0.0%	0.0%
- Ordinary women	1.8%	0.0%

Source: Individual survey

2.5.4 Implementation processes

Under Uganda's decentralized system of governance, the local authorities are responsible for determining the implementation plan of LLCs based on local and national priorities. It is important to note that the relationship between district and LLG plans is an iterative one and the involvement of the local communities in the implementation of government development projects at the LLC is important to meet the national development priorities enshrined in the PEAP. Following the plan and budget feedback from the LLG by 30th June every year, implementation of the plan and budget commences immediately.

In gauging the levels of grassroots women's participation in project implementation, respondents were asked whether or not they have participated in the implementation of projects from village upto LLG level and the responses are provided in the table below.

As revealed by table 8 below, the study found that:

- At the village level, the majority (85.2%) of the village women did not participate in the implementation of the village projects. This was mainly attributed to the lack of mobilization of women (27.3%) and absence of projects in their communities (23.6%). The few women who are involved (only 14.8%) collected water, sand and sometimes made cash contribution to the projects.
- Equally at both parish and LLG projects, hardly are women involved in implementation (3.3% and 2.6% respectively). Non-mobilization (31%), tendered out projects (4.1%) and non-availability of LLG projects (32.8%) were the reasons advanced for non-participation at the LLG level.

Table 8: Participation in plan implementation

Indicators	Participated in village project implementation	Participated in parish project implementation	Participated in sub county project implementation
Total	14.8%	3.3%	2.6%
By age group:			
- Upto 30 years	4.4%	1.1%	0.7%
- 31-50 years	7.7%	1.8%	1.5%
- > 50 years	2.6%	0.4%	0.4%
By marital status:			
- Married	12.5%	3.0%	2.6%
- Single	0.4%	0.3%	0.0%
- Widow	1.8%	0.0%	0.0%
By educational attainment			
- None	5.9%	1.1%	1.1%
- Primary	4.2%	0.4%	0.7%
- Secondary and more	4.8%	1.8%	0.7%
By Occupation			
- Farmer	8.1%	1.8%	1.8%
- Petty trader	4.4%	0.4%	0.4%
- Salaried employee	2.2%	1.1%	0.4%
By social position			
- Women leader	7.4%	1.8%	1.1%
- CBO member	2.6%	0.4%	0.7%
- Ordinary women	4.8%	1.1%	0.7%

Source: Individual survey

However, the main issues that emerged in the FGDs question the implementation management of services by the government. The local government Financial and Accounting Regulations Act, 1998 together with the recent Public Procurement and Disposal of Assets Act, 2003 provides limitations to all government on procurement of services within a certain threshold to the extent that services that go beyond the threshold are supposed to be tendered out. As a matter of policy direction, the acts are very silent, negative, and frustrating in kindling community participation in most government undertakings. For instance, in most social services that need construction, the entire project cost is tendered out without having clearly spelt out material inputs from the beneficiaries. In short, the laws

kill community initiatives as the expectation is that government will do everything for us. For instance, a woman of 62 years in Bed-ku-wedu village, Oturgang ward, Paidha town council voiced that:

There is a big problem when the town council uses tenderers to implement activities for us. In one case, our spring was to be constructed using the box design which we protested because we wanted the traditional system that works without the box. When we informed the tenderer, he told us that he was sent from above. Sensing that we have no rights over him we stopped our request. Now the spring is well protected but there is no water in it and when it rains, storm water gets into the box. The community has thus, abandoned the protected spring. And, ... this means a waste of resources meant for us.

It was also mentioned that in most government undertakings, community involvement during implementation of projects is simply taken in the narrow sense of representative participation. That the communities will exercise their rights through elected leaders commonly referred to as project implementation (sometimes management) committee (PIC or PMC). However, the gender question involved in this participation during implementation is two-fold: first, men hijack the arrangement that involve financial rewards and secondly, the committee composition is dominated by men.

2.5.5 Monitoring practices

The importance of monitoring in development programming in part relates to generating management information for effective corrective and informed decisions. The main agenda for considering monitoring in this study was not only limited to unveiling the extent to which LLGs are consistent and faithful in the application of the planning and budgeting cycle guide, rather, that monitoring provides a platform for accountability. It makes leaders responsible for the outcomes of their (in)actions. To explore this fact, the study asked about (i) the participation of women in monitoring projects in their LLGs; and (ii) the accountability processes LLGs have to their communities (table 9 below).⁶

⁶ From the onset it has to be mentioned that in all the three LLGs no community based nor any workable monitoring system was found to be in existence. Only cash-driven monitoring where done.

Table 9: Participation in project implementation monitoring

Indicators	Participated in monitoring village projects	Participated in monitoring parish projects	Participated in monitoring sub county projects
Total	7.7%	2.2%	3.3%
By age group:			
- Upto 30 years	1.5%	0.7%	0.7%
- 31-50 years	4.4%	1.1%	2.6%
- > 50 years	1.8%	0.4%	0.0%
By marital status:			
- Married	7.0%	2.2%	3.3%
- Single	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
- Widow	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%
By educational attainment			
- None	2.6%	0.4%	0.0%
- Primary	2.2%	0.7%	1.5%
- Secondary and more	3.0%	1.1%	1.8%
By Occupation			
- Farmer	4.8%	1.5%	1.1%
- Petty trader	1.8%	0.0%	1.1%
- Salaried employee	1.1%	0.7%	1.1%
By social position			
- Women leader	4.8%	1.5%	2.6%
- CBO member	0.7%	0.4%	0.4%
- Ordinary women	2.2%	0.4%	0.4%

Source: Individual survey

The implementation of projects

The survey reveals that the majority of the women, 92.3%, 97.8% and 96.7%, did not participate in the monitoring of the village, parish and LLG projects respectively. The women also maintained the same reasons as in project implementation as being responsible for their limited involvement in monitoring.

The few women who participated in project monitoring were mainly the women councilors. These women did monitor projects on their individual basis for the purpose of building acquaintance with what was going on in their localities and not for any reasons of influencing or making management decisions.

During the FGDs and key informant's interviews, it was unearthed that monitoring being a "technical" and political exercise is left to the management of the technical staff and the political wing of the respective LLGs. Hence, the Technical Planning Committee and the LLG Executives are involved in monitoring of the projects. However, in most cases no management reports for action points are produced as for instance, the Town Treasurer of Paidha TC mentioned that: *"there is no monitoring mechanism to check on what the Councilors do and they do not bring any report of project monitoring and yet they are given monthly facilitation allowance"*.

Budget monitoring

The budget plays an extremely important role in policy implementation in as far as resource allocation and utilization is concerned. It also provides for the dos and the don'ts in the realization of planned activities. Thus, the involvement of the people who are to benefit from the budget out-turns is essential in making sure that (corrective) management decision are made.

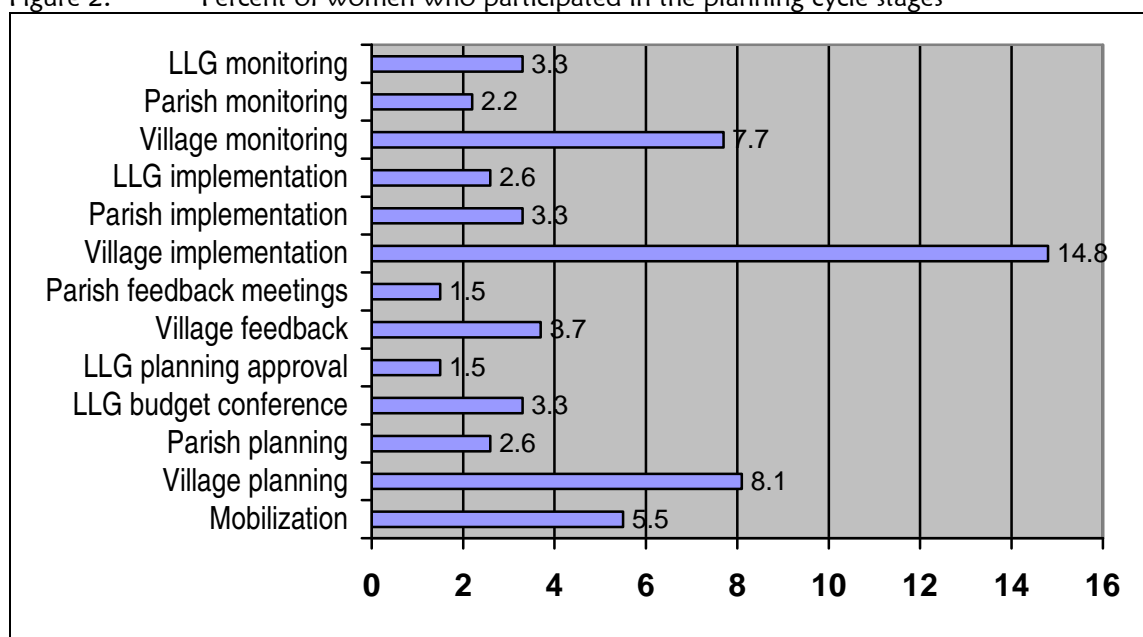
However, the study revealed that almost all the respondents (97%) did not participate in the monitoring of the LLG budgets. This was mainly attributed to women who felt that such a function is not their responsibility (35%) and those who were completely ignorant of the budget details (27.5%). In support of this, a woman in Akworo (38 years in Sirimba village, Murusi parish) noted that:

How do you expect us to know what those people (sub county authorities) have in the budget when we have never seen that budget document? I thought the budget is for the educated and enlightened who are mostly our leaders and the sub county staff.

2.6 Summary of findings and their implications

After looking at the level of knowledge of and practices used during the local government planning and budgeting processes, below we present a summary of the findings and the inherent implications. However, worth pointing is that, although majority of the women value decentralized planning and are willing to participate in it, only a few are accorded the opportunity to do so. A majority of the women are not informed of the entire planning process as some power centres in the local government structures deliberately deny women their right to information. The practices related to the planning processes also revealed that grassroot women's exclusion is prominent. From the start, they are not mobilized by the male mobilisers for planning meetings right from the village up to the LLG level. Neither do LLGs provides feedback to communities nor involve them in implementation and monitoring of projects.

Figure 2: Percent of women who participated in the planning cycle stages



What is apparently clear is that: (i) fewer people are involved in the planning process; (ii) massive exclusion of the aged, single and widows, and the uneducated women occur; and (iii) with increasing local government levels, political space gets narrower for women. As such, women’s participation continues to be ineffective as well as their needs are not adequately reflected in the development plans. Table 10 below summarizes the implications of such ineffective participation.

Table 10: Summary of findings and implication therefrom

Findings	Implications
Awareness of the planning and budgeting process	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of the planning and budgeting meetings: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) 93% consider it important for their village to have plans. b) 90.4% consider it as their right to participate in such development process. c) 67.8% are not aware of village planning meetings. • Awareness of approved plans and budgets: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) 88.2% and 84.9% of the respondents have not heard of their parish/ward and LLG development plans respectively. • Awareness of services and providers <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Safe water provision (10.7%), construction work/feeder roads (9.6%) and extension services and OVC support (9.6%) were the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Despite women’s numerical strength, only about 23% are being included to participate in the planning and budgeting processes. As such, the planning and budgeting intents do not reflect the needs of the majority women whom the plans are meant to serve. • Women are tactically fenced-off from knowing what services they deserve from LLGs. • They are also denied the initiatives for holding elected leaders accountable for their (in)actions. • Only ‘hardware interventions’ are known by women as what is meant for them while the ‘software interventions’ are kept as discrete from them making them partially aware of government programmes.

<p>services that were ranked most.</p> <p>b) LLG (13.6%) and NGOs (7.7%) were ranked as the main service providers.</p>	
Practices of planning and budgeting management	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in meetings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only 8.1%, 2.6% and 1.5% participated at village, parish and LLG planning and budgeting meetings respectively. • Largely, no documentary evidence exist to show that village planning meetings were organized. • Women's limited participation was accounted for by: poor mobilisation strategy, wrong timing of meetings and lack of facilitation for such meetings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development remains a gift to women but not their rights. • Approved policies neglect majority views. • Male leaders (politicians and technocrats) dictate development needs over women.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback systems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Only 3.7% and 1.5% participated in village and parish levels feedback meeting respectively. b) The absence of feedback was attributed to the failure of the leaders to organize feedback meetings, lack of facilitation and self seeking leadership at all levels. c) No community based and user-friendly accountability system was found to be in place. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women have insufficient knowledge about the developmental interventions their LLGs are engaged in. • Women have ineffective participation in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of projects. • Weak ownership and sustainability of LLG projects. • It also perpetuates corruption among leaders through the diversion of projects, dealing with tenderers who do shoddy jobs, and outright theft of development funds. • Elitist domination of local development as taking the show case that they are the ones who bring development to the people. • Weak leadership transparency and accountability.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation processes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) 85.2%, 96.7% and 97.4% of the respondents were not involved in the implementation of village, parish and LLG projects respectively. b) This was attributed to women not being mobilized and absence of community projects mainly in their areas. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring practices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) 92.3%, 97.8% and 96.7% of the respondents have never participated in the monitoring of the village, parish and LLG projects respectively. b) Almost all (97%) of the respondents have not participated in the monitoring of the LLG budgets. 	

PART III: A CALL FOR ACTION

3.1 Introduction

The study findings indicated that although grassroot women are assumed to simply exclude themselves from the policy-making processes, there is a general institutionalized exclusion of their participation from the decentralized planning processes. This, in part, is responsible for the gender insensitivity of development policies right from the district to the sub county levels. Thus, the feedback workshop reiterated the need for re-orienting the operations of the LLGs leadership and women council in knowing where to place women concerns in the development arena. It was suggested that such a strategy should entail a proactive opening of space for women by local government structures, building capacities of women leaders (especially the women councils/councilors at the parish, LLG and district levels), and CSO up-take of advocacy for private-public sector partnership.

This last part of the report, therefore, presents the action points agreed upon to be pursued in meeting the need for promoting a gender sensitive development with the active involvement of women in decentralized local government.

3.2 Setting gender sensitive guidelines by district local government

Given the supervisory roles of the district local government within decentralized planning processes, it was noted that the district should:

- Develop and disseminate gender-sensitive planning guidelines for use by the LLGs and should equally audit it without waiting for Ministry officials to do the task on their behalf. This should take the form that could easily capture village priorities by gender, attendance by gender, and dates when planning meetings took place, among others.
- Provide regular (monthly) back-up technical and political support to the LLGs targeting the women council and councilors, LC1, II and III executives.
- Encourage contractors to willingly recruit women in the project implementation so that their income level increases. This shall give them morale and incentive to participate in community project implementation

3.3 Strengthening of the Women Council

As a legally institutionalized organization to champion women’s needs in local government planning processes, it was noted that the women council institution should:

- Be functionally established within the LLG structures. Women Councils need a desk within LLG offices so that they can effectively participate both on their own and in collaboration with the LLG structures.
- Have its members trained in team work, confidence building, lobbying and advocacy. This intervention will sharpen women’s knowledge and skills in speaking for and by themselves and influencing decision-making arena of not only resource allocation but also tracking the utilization of resources.
- Initiate and strengthen women fora at all levels for dialogue with local governments (which are dominated by men). It is during these fora that they can challenge the discriminatory status quo used by LLG planners.
- Lobby and advocate the LLG councils to have more women on finance committee so that during the vetting of projects women’s needs are taken into consideration.
- Network and build alliances with civil society organizations in order to reinforce the advocacy strength of the Women Council.

3.4 LLG Institutional Responsiveness

Action points	Recommended actions
Awareness of the planning processes	
Awareness on planning meetings Awareness of approved plans Awareness of services and providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a multi-channel approach to popularize the planning processes. For instance, channels such as radios, cinema shows, drama, songs and poems can be used to raise awareness on the need for people including women to participate in planning and feedback meetings. • Produce user-friendly and less bulky development plan documents. A popular abridged version should be produced in both the local language and English and disseminated.
Practices of P+B management	
Mobilizations for meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutionalize a gender sensitive mobilization checklist. • Establish and equip mobilizers with transparent and effective mobilization skills. • Establish a support fund for mobilization. • Use a multi-faceted mobilization approach. • Encourage married men to come with their spouses for planning and budget meetings
Participation in meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct meetings in the local language • Allocate funds for undertaking participatory planning.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Popularize the village planning meetings. • Undertake capacity enhancement through training for members of the Technical Planning Committee at both LLGs and the district local government in gender analysis, gender budgeting and the generation of gender aggregated data for planning.
Feedback systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make a summary list of all approved projects and charge the parish/ward councilors with the responsibilities of dissemination. • Conduct quarterly feedback meeting at the parish and LLG levels. • Establish community based feedback mechanism.
Implementation processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain projects to beneficiaries before implementation starts and avail project documents in suitable forms to the community. • Ensure project implementation committees are set with fair gender representation. • Involve the community during the tendering process through pre qualification of some contractors together with the local government technical staff and politicians.
M+E practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish gender sensitive community based monitoring system. • Document best practices from the LLGs that have been actively involving women in the planning and budgeting processes. • Report monitoring results with clear gender intents.

3.5 Building women’s citizenship and political space

For grassroot women to take up their active roles of effective participation in decentralized development, it was noted that there is a need for:

- Building women’s civic competence beyond mere vote casting. Women need to know that their votes have its entitlements in terms of resource allocation to their women’s needs.
- Self-esteem and confidence building so that women can stand firm to push for their rights.
- Women to join the LCs committees as Chairpersons so as to enable them strongly voice their concerns. The *vicedom/deputizing* syndrome can no longer be entertained.
- Mass awareness on gender issues. For many, it was pointed, gender equals to women. This has promoted male chauvinism and resistance to change.

3.6 Conclusion

While there has been a swift statement that it is women's ineffective participation that has enabled local government institutions to adopt and pursue gender insensitive policies, this study has revealed that such ineffective participation emanates from (i) selective exclusion of majority ordinary women; and (ii) deliberate practices by LLG planners to keep women in abeyance of planning processes hence hindering their effective participation in the decision-making arena. As such, male chauvinism has percolated government structures with the few men taking the prerogative to decide on what kind of development needs women should have. Such institutionalized practices, not surprisingly, has overtime led to the perpetuation of women's inability to take effective participation in the public decision-making processes.

What this study reveals are: (i) from a human rights perspective, women's rights are highly violated in the decentralized planning processes as they are denied the right to participate in the planning processes; and (ii) in gender terms, women's needs and interest are excluded from the male-dominated policy making arena given that it is the men whose voices are heard and put into resource use. As a result, gender inequality is perpetuated to the detriment of expected act of good governance making decentralized governance less transparent and not accountable to women. Hence, participatory decentralized planning is a rhetoric that can not promote equitable local choice responsiveness.

Given such a phenomenon, a right-based approach to decentralized development is long overdue. Policy beneficiaries need to be enabled to demand and audit interventions that development organizations provide to them.

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