

REPORT OF THE GENDER EQUALITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION STUDY FOR THE INSPIRE PROJECT IN BUSOGA AND LANGO SUB-REGIONS

MAY 2025

GESI REPORT



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List of Acronyms

A2N	Africa 2000 Network	MoGLSD	Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development
CC	Community Conversation	MSD	Market Systems Development
CSA	Climate Smart Agriculture	MAAIF	Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries
CSO	Civil Society Organisation	NAP	National Agriculture Policy
CBO	Community-Based Organisation	NDP	National Development Plan
EOC	Equal Opportunity Commission	PEA	Political Economy Analysis
EKN	Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands	PIP	Participatory Integrated Planning
FINASP	Facilitation for Innovation and Sustainable Productivity	PMEL	Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning
FO	Farmer Organisation	PSA	Private Sector Actor(s)
GBV	Gender-based Violence	R4S	Resilience for Social Systems
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion	SACCO	Savings & Credit Cooperative Organisation
GoU	Government of Uganda	SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
HH	Households	SHF	Smallholder Farmers
INSPIRE	Integrated & Sustainable Production for Inclusive and Resilient Economies	VEDCO	Volunteer Efforts for Development Concerns
IWRM	Integrated Water Resource Management	VSLA	Village Savings & Loan Association
LSB	Local Seed Businesses	WCDI	Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation
MDA	Ministries, Departments and Agencies	WENR	Wageningen Environmental Research
MoFPED	Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development		

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Executive Summary

This Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) study was conducted as part of the inception phase of INSPIRE, a five-year project funded by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and implemented by GOAL Uganda and partners. INSPIRE aims to enhance the income and livelihood resilience of 200,000 small-holder farmers across Busoga and Lango through sustainable farming systems, inclusive market participation, strengthened farmers institutions, and more equitable decision-making at both household and community levels.

Recognizing that gender and social inclusion are fundamental for sustainable development and climate resilience, the GESI study aimed to understand the barriers, opportunities, and root causes of inequality within INSPIRE's operational areas. The study employed a five-domain conceptual framework, encompassing access to resources, control over resources, roles and responsibilities, decision-making and participation, and cultural norms and beliefs, and collected both quantitative data from 1,100 households and qualitative insights through focus group discussions in six districts.

The findings revealed persistent gender and social inequalities that affect access to land, income, services, and decision-making power. Although women are legally entitled to own land, cultural norms continue to limit their ownership and control, often confining them to poorer-quality plots or temporary arrangements that depend on male relatives. Survey data indicate that men dominate decisions regarding land use, crop choice, and household expenditure, while women's access to financial services remains constrained by a lack of collateral, mobility limitations, and social norms that restrict independent financial management.

Market access and information remain significant barriers for women, persons with disabilities (PWDs), and small-holder farmers (SHFs). Women's ability to sell produce independently is limited by time constraints, transportation barriers, and prevailing beliefs that marketing is a male activity. Similarly, access to agricultural extension services and reliable information is poor across all groups, but particularly acute for women and PWDs. Most households reported rarely seeing government extension workers, and digital information sources remain inaccessible for many due to a lack of connectivity and devices.

Women's workloads remain disproportionately high, with women bearing primary responsibility for domestic chores, caregiving, and farm labor, leaving little time for community engagement or leadership. While survey respondents reported that household decisions are often made jointly, focus group discussions revealed that men still hold more influence over key economic and agricultural decisions. Women's participation in community leadership is growing, but remains hindered by literacy barriers, cultural norms, a lack of economic resources, and a lack of confidence.

The study also highlighted the prevalence of gender-based violence (GBV), particularly in Busoga,

linked to poverty, alcoholism, and entrenched patriarchal norms. Although reporting mechanisms exist, underreporting, victim-blaming, and stigma continue to undermine justice for survivors.

INSPIRE project will promote gender-responsive programming.

Key actions include supporting strengthening women's financial access through VSLAs and formal financial institutions, improving the dissemination of tailored information, challenging harmful gender norms through participatory approaches, and promoting women's leadership and entrepreneurship. Targeted interventions will address GBV prevention (under PIP in pathway 1), inclusive participation in market systems (pathway 3), and reduced workload burdens for women (PIP). By integrating these strategies, INSPIRE aims to ensure that women, youth, PWDs, and marginalized farmers are not only reached and supported, but actively empowered to shape and benefit from sustainable and resilient rural livelihoods.

1 Introduction

1.1. Background

The promotion of gender equality and social inclusion, as well as the empowerment of women, youth, persons with disabilities and refugees, is central to the mandate of GOAL Uganda. GOAL and its INSPIRE partners consider GESI as a fundamental driver of their development approach. INSPIRE believes that gender equality and social inclusion are rights and essential for poverty alleviation, as well as the sustainable management of ecosystems and their ability to deliver development impact.

In this regard, we, as INSPIRE, will promote the full participation and empowerment of women, youth, persons with disabilities, and small-holder farmers in our interventions, ensuring that development benefits these social groups equally.

The PIP and Community Conversation approach provides an opportunity to address inequalities and reshape interventions, activities and practices to serve and empower these social groups equally. The participants become catalysts for change and equal partners in the quest to promote resilient farming communities and well-managed natural resources in Uganda. Through the engagement of women and small-holder farmers, success can be achieved in collective conservation and restoration of degraded hotspots, as well as the adoption and practice of sustainable farming systems and the sustainable management of natural resources.

This GESI analysis will help to integrate GESI-related considerations and actions into project interventions. It will also provide critical information on the position of women, men, youth, persons with disabilities, and SHF in natural resource management, as well as their opportunities, and inform the further design of GESI indicators to measure our impact.

The INSPIRE project - with funding from the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands – is a five-year program implemented by GOAL Uganda with three other partners (Wageningen University & Research, Resilienza Uganda and Agriterro). It covers the rural lowland communities in two sub-regions of Busoga and Lango. INSPIRE aims to contribute to “increased income and livelihood resilience of small-holder farmers to climate change and market failures”.

The consortium will implement the project in nine districts: four in Lango (Alebtong, Lira Rural, Amolatar, and Dokolo) and five in Busoga (Kamuli, Buyende, Kaliro, Luuka, and Jinja Rural).

INSPIRE will work with and through local partners: VEDCO, FINASP, and A2N. A total of 200,000 small-holder farmers are expected to be reached. The program leverages four strategic pathways that will contribute to improved land conservation, food security and income for 200,000 small-holder farmer households. These include:

Pathway 1: Inclusive Decision-Making and Action: Promoting household and community-level inclusivity in decision-making processes.

Pathway 2: Sustainable Farming Systems: Enhancing the sustainability, productivity, and resilience of small-holder farming systems to withstand shocks.

Pathway 3: Inclusive Market Participation: Empowering small-holder farmers to actively participate in and benefit from inclusive market systems.

Pathway 4: Enhanced Voice and Influence: Strengthening small-holder farmers' ability to address market system-related challenges through advocacy and influence.

1.2. Objectives and focus of the assignment.

This GESI study focused on generating information on specific aspects of gender and socio-economic relations and inequalities and examining their implications for the INSPIRE project.

The study's specific objectives were:

- 1) **To better understand the root causes of gender and social inequalities** and their potential effect on the value chains, land conservation, resilience, food security and income.
- 2) **To examine differences in control over resources** by men and women and how the level of control impacts the socio-economic status of men and women.
- 3) **To examine differences in access** to various productive resources, opportunities and services by men and women, including the factors that facilitate/hinder access, and the rationale behind their existence.
- 4) **To explore decision making at household and community level** (what decisions do men and women make in the family/community), and to elaborate on the reasons behind potential differences in gender.
- 5) **To facilitate an effective gender and disability inclusion approaches** into the Project's Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) framework, project work plan, budget, and key project interventions.
- 6) **To support the design and development of effective gender and disability capacity-building initiatives** for INSPIRE project participants, partners, and staff.

1.3. Methodology

The Conceptual Framework

The GESI study was organized around the five gender and inclusion domains. The Domains Framework breaks inequality into five distinct but interrelated areas: Access to Resources, Control over Resources, Roles and Responsibilities, Decision-Making and Participation, and Cultural Norms and Beliefs. These domains help us to understand better the structural factors that influence relations and provide a foundation for creating more inclusive strategies and interventions. This section provides an explanation of each domain.

- **Access to Resources**

This domain focuses on who has access to key resources, including land, education, healthcare, and technology. If certain groups (often women or marginalized populations) do not have equal access to these resources, they will be at a disadvantage when it comes to economic opportunities and personal growth. For the INSPIRE project, it implies finding out: *Who has access to the resources? Who is left out?* Answers to these questions will help identify gaps and create targeted initiatives.

- **Control over Resources**

This domain focuses on control. Having access to resources does not necessarily mean having control over how they are used. This domain explores who makes decisions about resource distribution and usage. Control is often where power lies — if women or marginalized groups do not control the resources, they have limited autonomy over their own lives. For the INSPIRE project it implies finding out: *Who decides how resources are being used? Who has a say?* Answers to these questions will help to open up discussions on issues of equality and shared decision-making.

- **Roles and Responsibilities**

This domain looks at the division of labour within society, including both paid (productive) work and unpaid (reproductive) work, such as housework and caregiving. The unequal distribution of these responsibilities, particularly the disproportionate burden placed on women, limits their ability to engage in training and meetings, and to access markets or paid employment. For the INSPIRE project, understanding these dynamics will help in discussing and addressing responsibilities, roles, and rights, as well as finding ways to free up time and increase economic participation.

- **Decision-Making and Participation**

This domain focuses on who has a voice in decision-making — either in the family, community, farmer group or cooperative. For the INSPIRE project, it is critical to determine whether women and other

groups are systematically disadvantaged in this area. Greater understanding might inform mentorship initiatives and lead to designated positions in representative bodies.

- **Cultural Norms and Beliefs**

This domain focuses on cultural norms and societal beliefs that shape roles and expectations. These beliefs can either promote or hinder equality. In some societies, norms dictate that women should stay at home and men should work outside, which limits women's autonomy and opportunities. For INSPIRE, it is essential to understand how cultural norms and beliefs impact participation in farming systems and markets, and how they may serve as barriers or enablers to the increased participation of vulnerable groups in project activities and the broader agricultural economy.

1.4. Geographic Scope and Data Set

The GESI study was implemented in six districts, covering three subregions: South Busoga (Kamuli and Luuka), North Busoga (Buyende and Kaliro), and Lango (Amolatar and Alebtong). The qualitative data was collected in March by a team of 8 project staff. The quantitative data collection took place in March and April.

The survey collected both quantitative and qualitative data. For the household survey, 1,100 households were interviewed (227 female-headed households). Twenty focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted, with four in each of the five districts, resulting in a total of 202 respondents, including 99 women.

Survey type	Tools	Number reached	Percentage of total
Quantitative	Household survey	1100	
	Female respondents	624	57%
	Female-headed households	227	21%
	Households with PWDs	207	19%
	Households with < 2 acres	583	53%
Qualitative	FGDs on GESI	202	
	Female respondents	99	49%
	PWDs	2	1%
	FGDs on PEA*		

**For our analysis on power dynamics, some data were collected during the Political Economy Assessment (PEA) focus group discussions.*

1.5. Key Study Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

- What are the existing policies and legal provisions regarding gender equality and social inclusion? What are the key gender-based constraints and opportunities for men, women, persons with disabilities, and small-holders in the INSPIRE's operational area?
- What are the differences in access and control over productive resources, opportunities and services by men and women, persons with and without disabilities, small-holders and those with access to more land? What are the drivers? How does this impact their socio-economic status?
- What are the differences in decision-making power within the household and community? What are the underlying drivers of (in)equality and their implications?
- What are the key GESI-based constraints and opportunities in INSPIRE's operational area, and what are the strategies for action by region?

1.6. Limitations of this Study

There were only a few limitations, and the study was largely completed in line with its design. Some locations proved difficult to reach, such as the Amolatar District (due to seasonal flooding). There were also some challenges in achieving the required female representation in the sample, as well as in recruiting an adequate number of female members of the research team. In the end, the female representation was well covered.

1.7. Organization of the Report

Chapter Two provides some background on gender equality and social inclusion in Uganda. Chapter three details the study findings. Chapter Four outlines the gender action plan for the project, summarizing the key GESI-based constraints and opportunities identified through the analysis, the underlying drivers, and key recommendations for action. Actions have been organized to include interventions that reach men and women, PWDs and micro and small-holder farmers, to close gaps in equality.

2 Review of the Literature on Gender and Social Inclusion

This section is based on the available literature on gender and social (in)equality. More specifically, it addresses the status of gender equality and social inclusion, the current operational and legal context, and the challenges linked to limited policy implementation. It also reviews what is known about the key gender-based constraints and opportunities for men, women, persons with disabilities, youth and small-holder farmers relevant to the INSPIRE project, framed around the five gender and inclusion domains which inform the structure and approach of this report.

2.1 Gender Equality and Social Inclusion from a National Perspective

Uganda's estimated total population is 46 million, comprising 51% females and 49% males. The majority of the population (71%) reside in rural areas. Overall, Uganda is one of the youngest nations in the world, with approximately 74% of its population under the age of 30. 22% are people aged 31-59 years, and only 4 % are aged 60 years and above. For the INSPIRE project area of Busoga and Lango, the figures are similar as reflected in the 2024 census.

The Government of Uganda considers gender equality and women's empowerment essential to socio-economic transformation. It has made gains in the country's socio-economic development and has maintained peace and stability for over three decades. For example, between FY2010/11 and FY2021/22, the nominal GDP more than doubled from UGX 64 trillion to UGX 162.12 trillion. Progress has also been made in narrowing gender gaps in economic participation, education, health, and political empowerment. This progress is reflected in Uganda's improved score on The Global Gender Gap Index - Uganda scored 0.7249 in 2022, up from 0.717 in 2020¹.

Uganda is one of seven countries globally that have reached gender parity in entrepreneurship. Women comprise 40% of all business owners and fare relatively well in financial inclusion, with 49% of Ugandan women having access to some form of financial service, compared to 57% of Ugandan men. However, access to bank loans remains low for women.

2.1.1 A conducive legal, policy and institutional framework

Uganda's progress and ambition towards gender equality are reflected in various foundational documents, structures and policies. Some of those most relevant to the INSPIRE project are listed here:

- **The 1995 Constitution** guarantees equality of women and men before the law, promotes affirmative action for women and other marginalized groups and provides for the rights of

¹ Gender Equality Strategy 2022-2025 United Nations Development Programme Uganda Country Office Rethinking and rebalancing economic, political, social and environmental systems to become inclusive and sustainable.

women.

- **Uganda's "Vision 2040"** prioritizes gender equality as a cross-cutting enabler for socio-economic transformation and notes the persistent gender inequalities in access to and control over productive resources such as land; limited share of women in wage employment in non-agricultural sectors; sexual and gender-based violence and limited participation in household, community and national decision-making.
- **The Third National Development Plan (NDP III)**, which integrates the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), has a goal of "Increasing Household Incomes and Improved Quality of Life of Ugandans" with gender equality considered as one of the crosscutting issues.
- Other **equality provisions** have been mainstreamed in relevant laws; for instance, the Land Act, 1977, was amended to give women and children land rights. It provides for spousal and children's consent before disposal, transfer, or mortgaging of family land. In March 2021, the passage of the Succession (Amendment) Bill addressed the historical discrimination faced by girls and women, as the law previously gave preference to male children in cases of inheritance and land ownership.
- **The Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD)**, established in 1998, leads gender mainstreaming and women's advancement efforts in Uganda, succeeding an earlier ministry created in 1988. It coordinates national programs, oversees gender focal points in ministries with support from the Equal Opportunities Commission, and promotes gender integration in district development plans and budgets through local Community-Based Services/Gender Departments.
- There are ongoing **efforts to lobby for the passage of the Marriage Bill, Sexual Offences Bill and National Legal Aid Bill**. The Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development (MoGLSD) developed the National Policy on the Elimination of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) to address the critical problem of GBV in Uganda.
- The **Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC)** produces the annual State of Equal Opportunities in the country as well as Gender and Equity compacts for MDAs, tracking the country's progress towards improving the livelihood and wellbeing of the most vulnerable. Based on EOC's assessment, the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MoFPED) issues the Gender and Equity Compliance Certificate for Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs). MDAs (ministries, departments and agencies). These MDAs are obliged to establish sector-specific gender policies and strategies to guide gender mainstreaming in their work.
- The **National Agricultural Policy (2013)** provides a guiding framework for the implementation

and monitoring of a gender sensitive and responsive system in Uganda. The policy argues that achieving gender equality at all levels of agriculture is a human rights issue.

2.1.2 Limited Policy Implementation and Other Barriers to Progress

Despite this progress in legal equality and the development of enabling policies and structures, significant gaps persist in the economic, political, and social inclusion of women in the development process, with many of these gaps widening during the COVID-19 pandemic. This leads to the criticism that much of the gender equality achievement in Uganda is around formal equality (adoption of laws and policies for treating women and men equally), and not substantive equality.

The implementation of gender policy frameworks varies across different institutions, with technical capacity often constrained **and limited financing for the institutional framework for gender** mainstreaming. While financing for gender equality has been institutionalized through gender provisions of the Public Finance Management Act, the budget allocated is minimal. For instance, MGLSD's allocation from the national budget has consistently been less than 1% and amounted to only 0.4% in the 2022/23 fiscal year.

The numerous gender-responsive legal, policy, and institutional frameworks established in Uganda are not consistently enforced, largely due to MDAs lacking adequate funding and human resources to implement gender policies, limited knowledge in gender and equity programming, and insufficient gender-disaggregated data.

2.2 Key Observations for INSPIRE Related to the Five Gender and Inclusion Domains.

To link the findings of the literature survey to our framework of analysis (the five domains), key observations related to the domains are listed below: 1 & 2) access to and control over resources; 3) cultural norms, beliefs and GBV; 4) roles and responsibilities; 5) decision making and participation.

2.2.1 Access and Control Over Resources

Land in Uganda, like in most societies, is closely tied to wealth, social status, and power, providing the basis for food, shelter, and economic activities. There is a strong correlation between the decision-making powers and the type, quality and quantity of land rights. Due to the misunderstanding of customs relating to land and the pervasive patriarchal system, women are regularly denied full benefits of this resource and discriminated against in land matters.

Land rights and management remain male-dominated in Uganda. Only one-third of the land is owned or co-owned by women. There is widespread support for this inequality. 27% of the population supports unequal land rights, reaching as high as 54% in the Mid-Northern sub-region. As a result, women do not enjoy complete and equal ownership of land, and it is usually accessed through male relatives. The

access they possess is highly dependent on the good relationship that a woman has with male relatives.

While women may be rendered vulnerable and marginalized regarding ownership, access and control of land and other productive resources, they are not without agency. Women exercise agency, strategize and engage in coping mechanisms to maximize security, optimize livelihood options and resist constraints, norms and rules.

In 2021, about 39.9% of women in Uganda were engaged in some entrepreneurial activity compared to 36.1% of men, according to the 2021 Mastercard Index of Women Entrepreneurs (MIWE)². Women-owned enterprises (WOEs) were primarily located in accommodation and food services, at 60%, and 19%, respectively, while their share of businesses was lowest in agriculture, fishing, transport, and storage. Only 0.4% of women-led businesses with fixed premises were in the agriculture sector, and women owned only 16.3% of all agricultural businesses³.

Most women entrepreneurs are challenged in accessing credit. While most banks have SME units, their services are gender-neutral except for the Finance Trust Bank (FTB) and the Development Finance Company of Uganda (DFCU). Microfinance institutions, Village Savings and Credit Associations and SACCOs serve a significant section of women clientele. The Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme (UWEP) is an initiative of the Government of Uganda aimed at improving access to financial services for women and equipping them with skills for enterprise growth, value addition, and marketing of their products and services. Additionally, the Uganda Investment Authority (UIA) was established in 2000. The UIA established a SME division with the overall goal of promoting sustainable domestic investments and supporting SMEs. However, the UIA's SME Division works with enterprises with a minimum of five workers, which immediately disqualifies most of Uganda's women-led businesses.

2.2.2 Cultural Norms, Beliefs, and Gender Based Violence

Uganda is still a patriarchal society with varied social and cultural norms, beliefs, practices and attitudes that continue to undermine the situation and position of women and girls in society. This helps to sustain unbalanced power relations between women and men, girls and boys in public and private spheres, at household, community and national levels, supported by gender stereotyping and male bias. Manifestations of these norms and beliefs include the following:

- **Prevalence and acceptance of domestic violence** are still high: twice as many women as men experienced spousal violence in their lifetime; one in two Ugandan women has been a victim at least once during their life, and one in three in the last 12 months. More than one in two Ugandans agree that spousal violence against women is justified under certain circumstances –

² Mastercard Foundation, 2022. The Mastercard Index of Women Entrepreneurs: how targeted support for women-led business can unlock sustainable economic growth.

³ Mugabi, E. 2014, Women's Entrepreneurship Development in Uganda, IFP seed publication.

two in three in the West Nile and Mid-Eastern subregions.

- **Prevalence of early marriage** remains pervasive with regional disparities: on average, one in two Ugandan women is married before turning 18, up to two in three women in the East Central, Mid-Eastern and Mid-Northern sub-regions. Early marriage is widely accepted, but only for girls, while many communities believe that men should be married later. This is despite the legal marriage age for males and females being 18.
- **Domestic "care" tasks are seen as women's work**, leading to heavy labour burdens for women and girls and limiting access to paid work and other income.
- **Land belongs to men, and women's access is mediated through men.** It is also common to find widows and their girl children being denied inheritance rights and control over land and property upon the demise of a husband and/or father.

2.2.3 Roles and Responsibilities

In numerous reports, it is indicated that at all income levels, women do the majority of housework and care, and correspondingly, spend less time in market work. Women spend 30 per cent more time on housework than men, and 70 per cent more on childcare. These differences have an impact on women's ability to seize economic opportunities and participate effectively in the market.

Improving attitudes towards the division of household chores and caring activities between girls and boys is not translating into changes in practice. In comparison, two-thirds of Ugandans agree that girls and boys should have an equal share of caring responsibilities, and half of the population reports that, in practice, girls are still doing more housework.

In agriculture, because women's roles in the farm economy are undervalued, the resources they can control, their share in benefits and their agency to act are also limited, leading to multiple forms of discrimination, biases and or gender gaps.¹ In Uganda, marketing of food and cash crops by small-holder farmers in general, and by women farmers in particular, takes place in the village market/rural trading center, the roadside retail market, assembly markets, wholesale markets or by direct trading at the farm gate. Mobility restrictions on women, which limit their access to public spaces, including markets, restrict their market opportunities. Social norms restricting women's interactions outside of socially acceptable networks limit their access to information about inputs and markets. Furthermore, these norms exclude women from negotiations and market interactions.

World Bank research also affirms this, demonstrating that women's greater childcare responsibilities and difficulties in accessing input and output markets without transport are the most significant drivers of the gender and equity gap in agricultural productivity in Uganda: with two-fifths of the gap attributed to women's greater childcare responsibilities and one-fifth to their difficulty in accessing inputs and

outputs markets without transport⁴.

In situations of natural and human-induced disasters, including climate change, unequal gender roles and inequalities in access to decision-making spaces, services and economic opportunities are often worsened. For instance, water scarcity exhibits gendered variations; watering crops is closely associated with women's role in household food provision, whereas watering animals is linked to men's role in securing the health and safety of livestock for income and social security. In times of drought, women, compared to men, must cope with matching time and labour inputs to meet the season's expectations, selling assets for food purchases, accessing micro-credit from informal sources, and taking migratory employment in the urban informal sector.

Floods in central and eastern Uganda have increased the risk of water-related diseases, particularly cholera, typhoid, and malaria, resulting in a higher domestic care burden on women and girls. This is because they are traditionally expected to care for the sick at home and within health centres.

Climate change-induced losses of crop fields and other assets correlate with a rising trend in suicide rates among men,⁵ out-migration into the non-farm economy or cities [UN Women, 2022], and a rising trend in the incidence of gender-based violence as men attempt to cope by asserting control over women's earnings [UNFCCC, undated; UN Women, 2022] linked to men's assigned role as breadwinners.

2.2.4 Decision-Making and Participation

Progress has been made in the representation and participation of women in national politics as is guaranteed by the national Constitution of 1995, the Parliamentary Elections Act (2005) and the Local Government Act (1997). Women in Uganda hold 46% of local government positions, 33% of parliamentary seats and 43% of the cabinet positions. The legislation ensuring the participation of women in government in Uganda is widely hailed as progressive in the elimination of gender discrimination amongst a broad range of civil society actors and international observers. The Local Governments Act states that one-third of the District Council at the lower committee level, including parish or village councils, shall be women. These statutes are further reinforced by the Land Act, which stipulates that at least one-third of the members of the Land Board, the Land Committee, and the sub-county land tribunals should be women.

Despite these achievements, Uganda has a relatively high representation of women in political leadership; however, the level of influence women hold is not commensurate with their numbers.

⁴ Ali et al. Investigating the Gender Gap in Agricultural Productivity: Evidence from Uganda. World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 7262, May 2015.

⁵ Pyburn, Rhiannon, and Anouka Van Eerdewijk (eds). Advancing Gender Equality through Agricultural and Environmental Research: Past, Present, and Future. Washington, DC: International Food Policy Research Institute, 2021

Several studies indicate that women have less voice and representation in decision-making processes at all levels, from the household to the national and international levels. However, metrics on voice and concrete data at the farm level are scarce.⁶

Literacy levels are low in rural Uganda, and there are few women in these communities with the necessary levels of education and/or experience to effectively participate in and engage with decision-making processes. For example, the Land Act stipulates that the chairperson of the land committee should be able to speak and write English, and that one member of the committee should possess knowledge and experience in matters relating to land. It further states that members of the sub-county land tribunal should have completed a minimum formal education of ordinary level or its equivalent. Identifying individuals at the community level who meet these criteria is often a challenge, and both women and men without the necessary qualifications stipulated by law are regularly appointed.

Securing women's access to justice remains a challenge: one-third of the population believes that women do not enjoy the same opportunities as men to access justice, i.e. from police, courts of law and local traditional authorities. The same share agrees that unequal access is justified⁷.

⁶ Coulter, Janna E., Rebecca A. Witinok-Huber, Brett L Bruyere & Wanja Dorothy Nyingi. 2018. Giving women a voice on decision-making about water: barriers and opportunities in Laikipia, Kenya. *Gender, Place & Culture A Journal of Feminist Geography* Volume 26, 2019 - Issue 4

⁷ OECD: UGANDA SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND GENDER INDEX (UGANDA-SIGI)

3 Findings of the Study

In this section, we discuss the findings of GESI focus group discussions and the GESI-related questions in the baseline survey. They are presented according to the five domains outlined in Section 1.3.

3.1 Access and Control Over Productive Resources

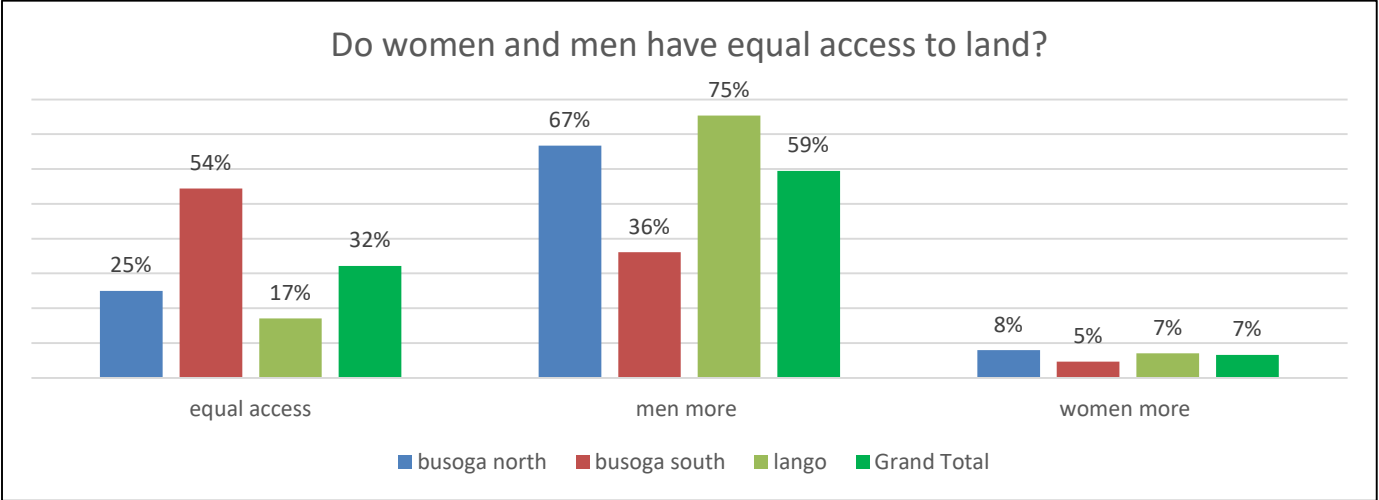
This section examines the differences in access to and control over productive resources, opportunities, and services between men and women, as well as the drivers and their impact on the socio-economic status of men and women. In the context of INSPIRE, there are several critical productive resources:

- Land,
- Farm Inputs,
- Agricultural Services,
- Financial Services.

3.1.1 Access and control over land, farm inputs and information

Access to land is acquired through customary inheritance, purchase, renting, or borrowing from family members or friends. There are no legislative provisions that prohibit women from owning or inheriting land. In all FGDs this statement was confirmed. Nevertheless, both the survey and the FGDs revealed that access and control are easier for men compared to women. Women's legal entitlement is often superseded by cultural norms which dictate that women cannot inherit or own land. In cases where women and girls do have access to land, they are often allocated land of lower quality. Since girls leave the household after marriage, land is only made available for a certain period. However, female members may buy land if the spouse or clan head consents to or is informed about the transaction. Additionally, women who return to their parental home after separation from their husbands are often allocated some land. Widows inheriting land can lead to conflict, if it is not certain that she will stay in the house of her late husband, leaving a possibility of the land being transferred to another clan. The FGD in Luuka indicated that a widow could inherit and cultivate the land, but not sell it.

Figure 1 Access to land by gender (N:1,100)



Things are changing, however, and over the past few years, there has been an increase in land buying, unlike in the past when land was typically owned and inherited. **More women now own or have control over land** – a shift driven by rising divorce rates, women escaping GBV and women’s increased involvement in productive ventures. The acquisition of land is often on a commercial basis (through rent or purchase), compared to earlier times when it was frequently given out freely by the head of the clan. Government policies on women’s empowerment and land ownership have also contributed to an increase in women buying and inheriting land, supported by their growing financial independence (FGD Alebtong).

According to the survey, male-headed households have approximately 20% more land than female-headed households, with averages of 2.90 and 2.42, respectively. Although the average acreage of land rented is the same, fewer female-headed households rented land compared to their male counterparts, at 60% and 45%, respectively.

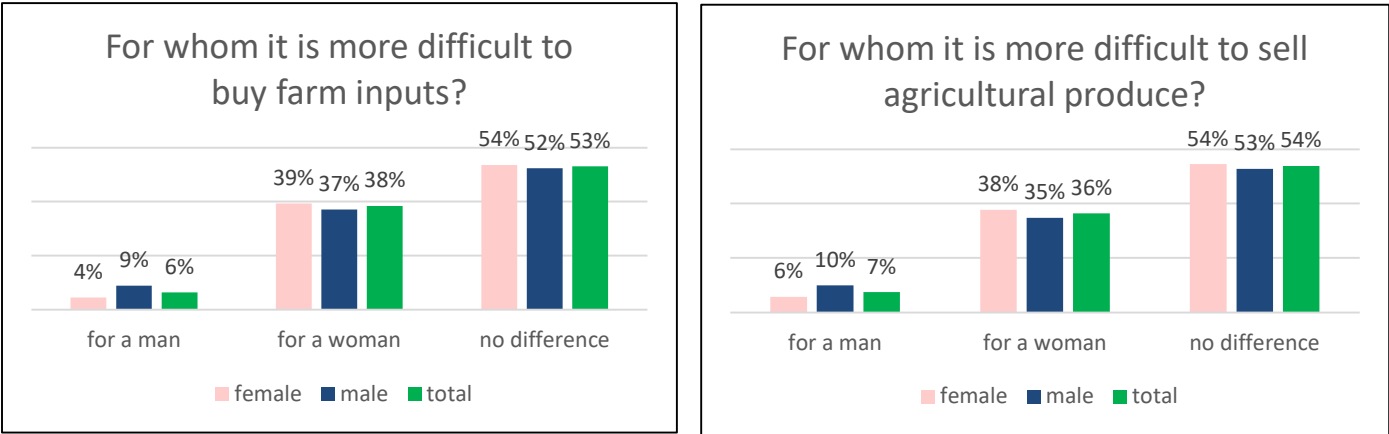
Table 1 Access to land by gender of head of household (N:1,100)

	Man	Woman	Total
Average land size	2.90	2.42	2.80
Average rented land	1.54	1.54	1.54
HH renting land	340	60	400
% HH renting land	60%	45%	57%

The FGDs confirm that for women and men, **accessing the market can be challenging due to a limited network that restricts their access to market inputs, services, and information.** This is impacting

women more than men, due to 1) lack of time to travel to distant places; 2) cultural norms that disallow /discourage women to travel; and 3) lack of suitable transport options that are acceptable for women traveling safely; and 4) norms which consider selling produce to be a man’s business. Survey data found that up to 38% of respondents reported that women face more challenges in accessing the market to buy inputs. For 53% of respondents, there is no difference between men and women.

Figure 2 Buying agricultural inputs. Figure 3 Selling agricultural produce by gender (N:1,100)

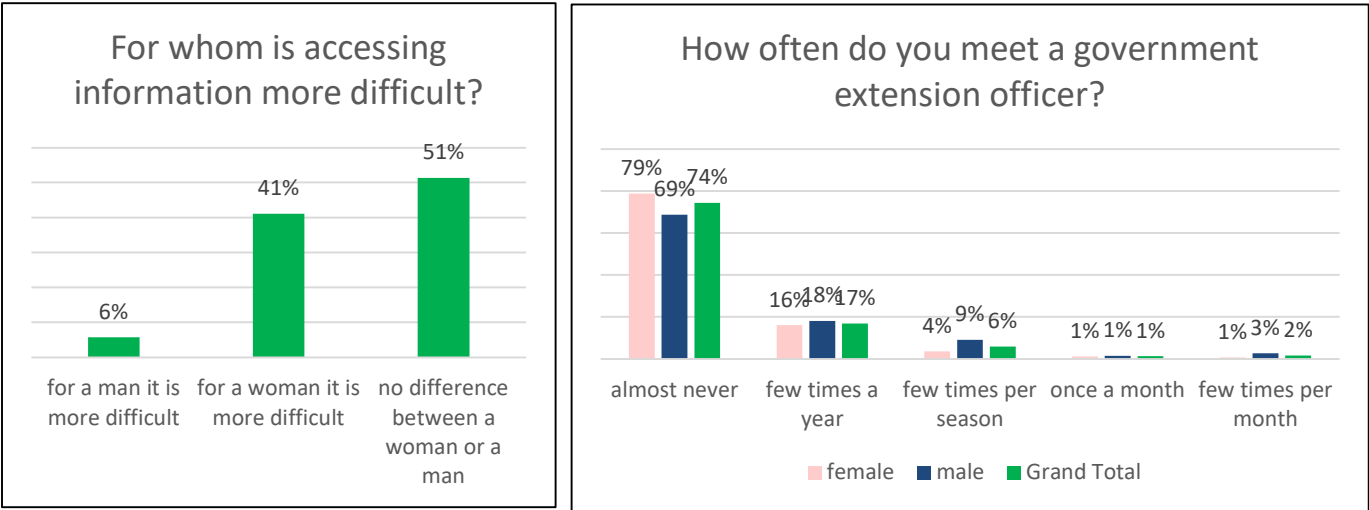


Survey data found that up to 36% of respondents reported that women face more challenges in accessing the market to sell produce. For 54% of respondents, there is no difference between men and women.

Small-holder farmers often face bigger challenges than large, commercial farmers with extensive networks and the ability to spend resources on finding the right buyer. For people with disabilities, the young and elderly, the challenges of accessing markets are bigger. The challenges include long distances to the market, inadequate transportation, and the inaccessibility of trade cooperatives or producer organizations, which further restrict their market access. Their social network and knowledge may also be less extensive than those of others.

Lack of access to information is a consistent challenge across all social groups surveyed for this study. Information on the internet is inaccessible for most people due to a lack of internet connectivity and sometimes a lack of access to a phone. Research has shown that persons with disabilities and women have much less access to a phone than men without disabilities. **Extension workers are largely absent, with 74% of respondents reporting that they almost never see a government extension worker.** The positions of extension officers at the sub-county level are frequently unfilled, and the “catchment” for those in place is too large to manage properly. Survey data confirmed that women are significantly more likely to face challenges in accessing information, with this issue being more prevalent in the Lango subregion.

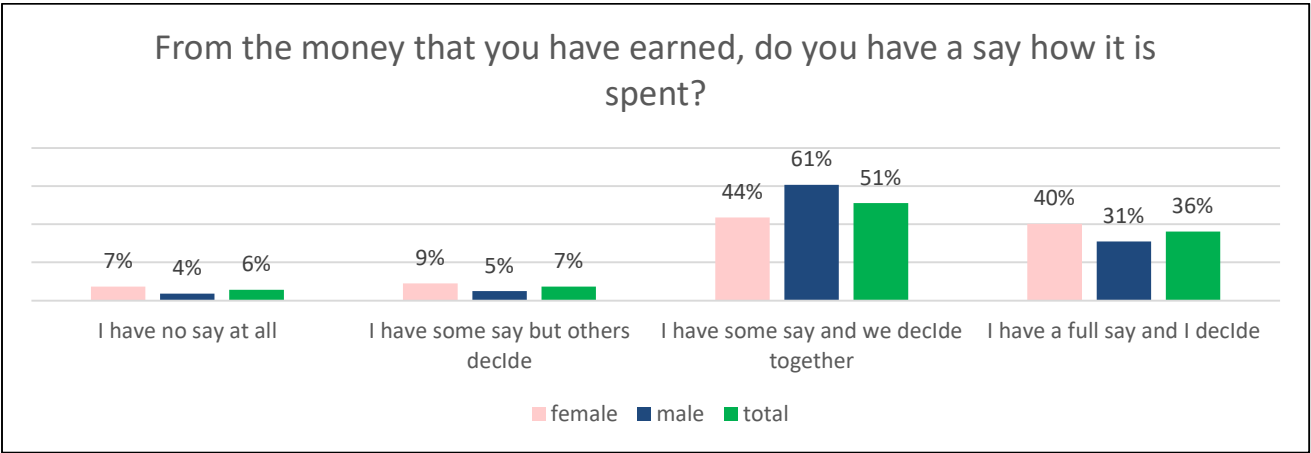
Figure 4 Accessing information in general and extension officer, by gender (N:1,100)



3.1.2 Access and control over funds and income

Participants in FGDs indicated that **men typically control household incomes, as they are considered the head of the household and have** the final say in all decisions made within the household. For the money earned by women, the husband needs to know what she wants to do with it and to grant permission before it is spent, to ensure another man does not secretly pay her expenditures. Additionally, men often perceive women as impulsive buyers. These norms and practices severely limit women's financial decision-making. Survey data found that men were more likely to report that decisions were made together, i.e. 61% for male and 44% for female respondents. But women, more than men, mentioned that they had a full say, i.e. 40%.

Figure 5 Decision making on spending by gender (N:1,100)

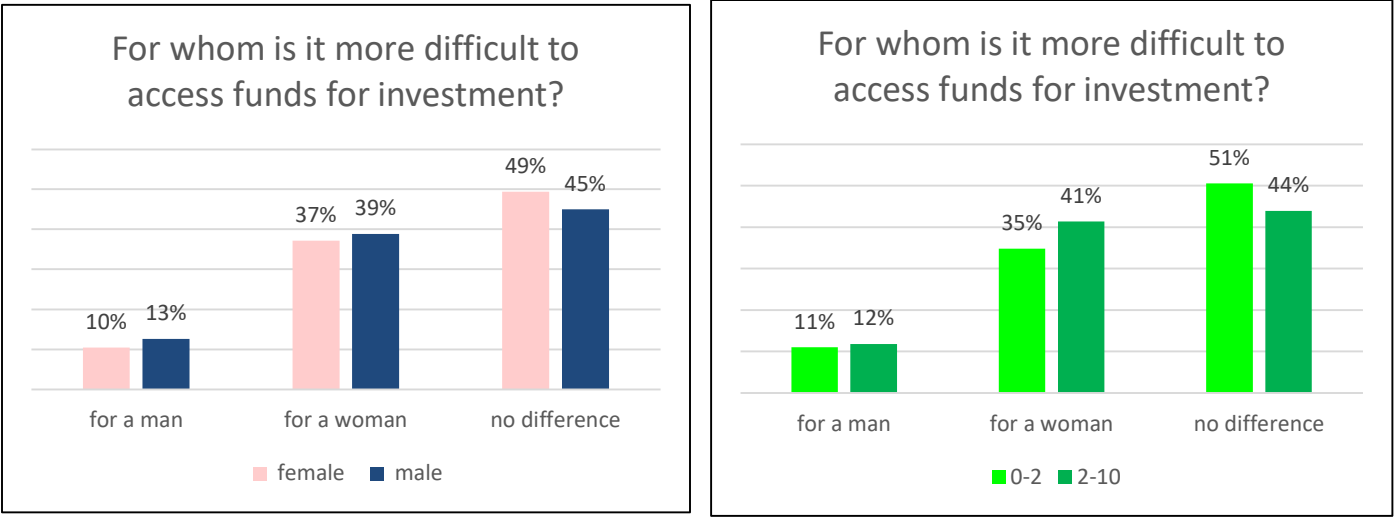


The way finances are managed within the household frequently leads to conflict. FGD participants reported that these are resolved through mediation by clan leaders or religious leaders.

Participants in the focus group discussions reported that **women and men have equal access to financial resources**. However, there are important distinctions in ease of access to different kinds of finance along gender lines. In Alebtong, **women may have more chances to access family support and capital**, as they are often considered reliable due to their perceived stability, particularly in relation to children, and their reputation for being financially prudent. When it comes to external resources, **women may have more access to loans from VSLAs** because of their active participation and trust within these community-based savings groups. It was said that men and women generally have equal access to capital from banks. However, women may face challenges such as limited collateral or financial literacy, which can impact their ability to leverage this access fully. In Amolator, this lack of collateral was mentioned as a reason for not having equal access to bank loans, with more relying on SACCOs and VSLAs, which are more flexible and community-based.

The **limited access of women to bank loans is explained by the fact that women typically have less control over assets, such as land or property**, which are often required as collateral for formal loans from banks. Moreover, they frequently lack, more than men, essential documents such as national identity cards, which are often necessary for opening bank accounts or applying for loans. Since banks are usually located in urban settings, mobility restrictions also limit women’s access, with safety concerns and cultural norms regarding women's travel beyond sub-county borders adding to the barriers for women to access formal loans. Figure 6 shows the responses of the questionnaire survey; thirty-eight per cent reported that for women, it is more difficult to access funds for investments, with male and female respondents differing hardly at all. For respondents from micro-farms, just over half (51%) suggest that the accessibility of funds for women is equal to that for men (and for both, not easy).

Figure 6 Easiness of accessing funds for investments for a man or woman, by gender & land size (1,100)



Besides the supply side constraints, **women are more risk-averse than men** and avoid seeking loans from banks due to concerns about repayment and debts, preferring the more flexible and lower-risk nature of VSLAs. In the FGD in Amolatar, it was mentioned that women often fear the shame associated with defaulting on loan payments, which makes them more cautious about seeking loans, particularly from formal financial institutions.

A lack of access to guarantors further disadvantages women in accessing loans, as banks often require guarantors in addition to collateral. Women may face difficulties finding suitable guarantors, especially in patriarchal societies where men are often regarded as the primary financial decision-makers.

In all FGDs, it was mentioned that **persons with disabilities and farmers with very little land face more challenges accessing loans** than others. Persons with disabilities face physical, social, and informational barriers in accessing formal sources of capital. Facing many of the same challenges as women, their mobility challenges and inability to read or hear, and issues of discrimination and stigmatization, further limit their access. Farmers with very little land (<2 acres) face limited access to formal sources of capital due to issues such as a lack of collateral, irregular income, and limited financial literacy. However, they may find Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) or community-based lending more accessible.

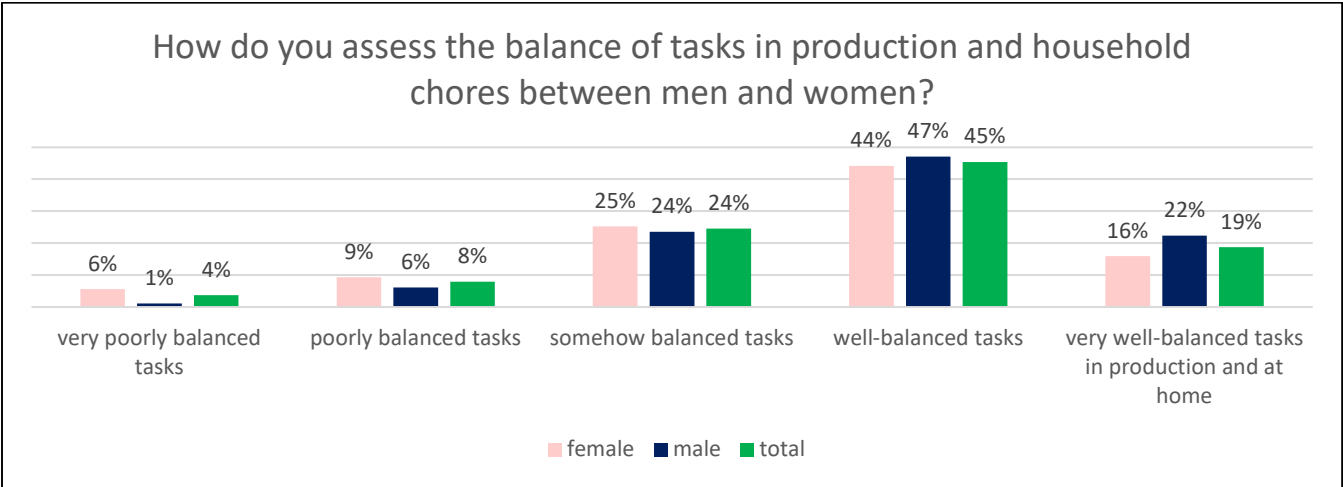
3.2 Roles and Responsibilities

The FGDs reveal that at the household level, **women feel overburdened with responsibilities**. Women are often assigned to do the more laborious garden work, such as planting, weeding and the main share of harvesting. In addition, they are expected to do the household chores, look after the children, and fetch water. Their busy schedules leave little room for active participation in community affairs. Some female members referenced spouses' alcoholism and their lack of a sense of responsibility to look after their family, which creates an extra burden for women. In the FGDs in Busoga, participants explained that instead of taking up their responsibilities, men often prefer to take more wives.

According to respondents, **men are responsible for tasks that require physical strength**, such as animal rearing, construction work, road works, ensuring household security, and planting trees. They are regarded as the head of the household, providing directives and making key decisions, and are generally given more authority and respect in community matters.

Women are primarily responsible for domestic duties, including childcare, cooking, attending to visitors, and managing the health and educational needs of children. They also manage the family gardens, in particular those for food crops. Women are often viewed as caretakers and are seen as secondary to men in the household. They are considered to have reproductive roles and are not seen as the owners of the home. They may be treated as "squatters" and can be chased away if they "misbehave."

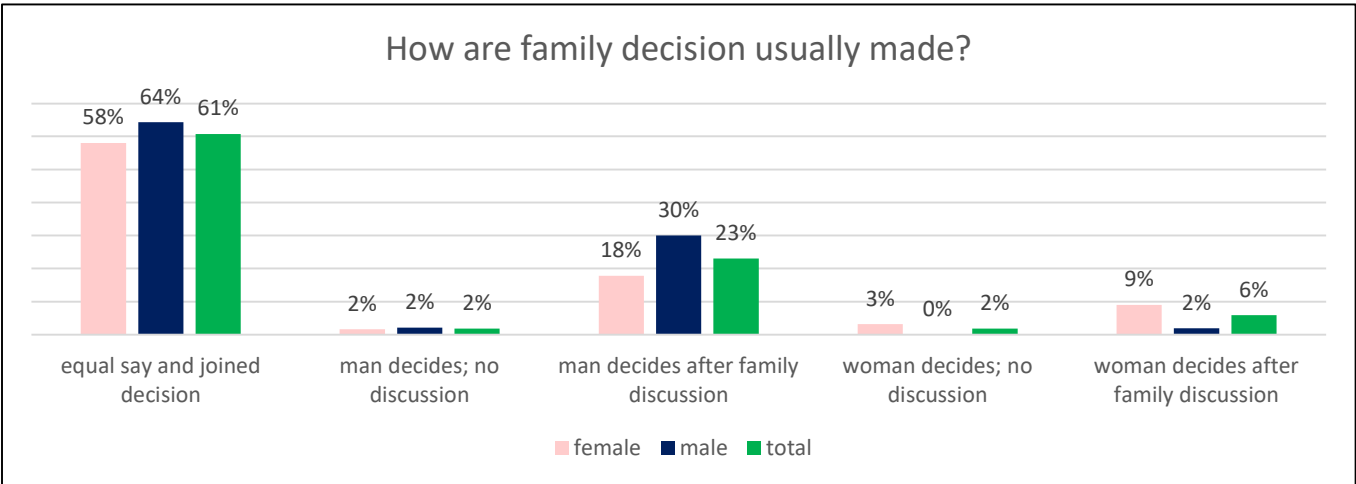
Figure 7 Balance of tasks in production and household chores between men and women (N: 1,100)



3.3 Decision-Making, Leadership and Participation

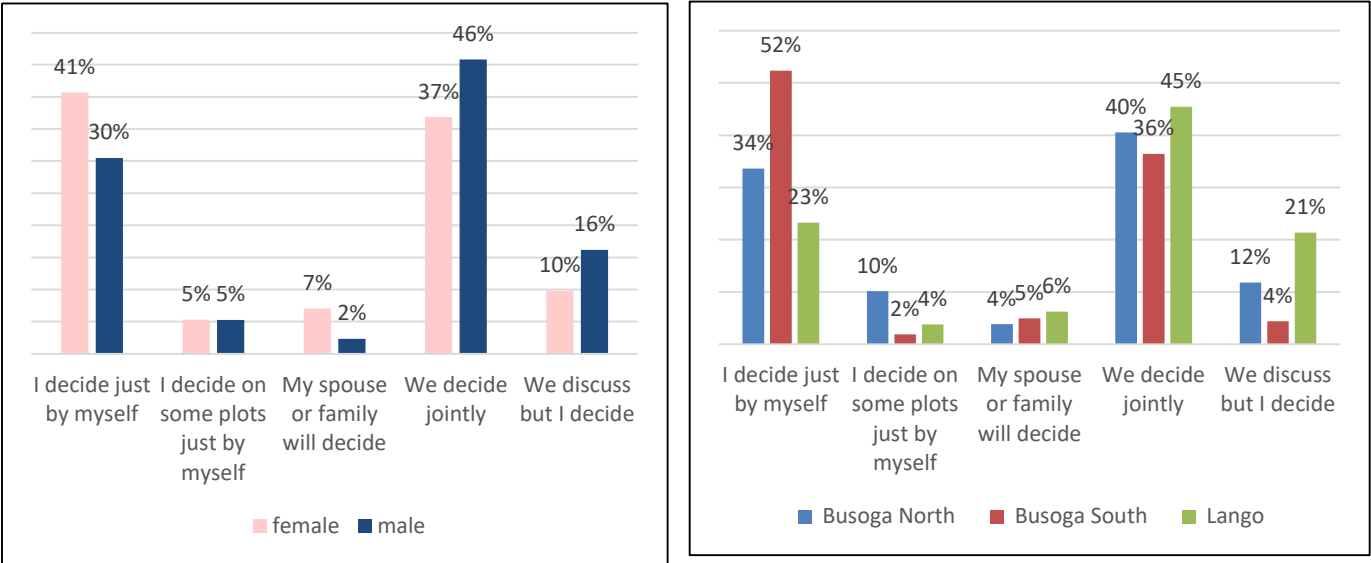
While survey respondents indicated that in around **60% of cases household decisions were made jointly and with equal say**, all FGDs reflected the fact that **men have more decision-making power, since they are considered the head of the household**. In many households, women typically have less say in decisions related to what crops to grow, the sale of farm produce, or the purchase of assets, the use of resources, access to markets, land management, and how to use income from farming. Men, on the other hand, have less influence over matters like kitchen/food issues, children's welfare, and health, as these are considered women's responsibilities. Men are less involved in household chores and caregiving responsibilities. However, the choice of school and/or hospital to visit depends more on a man's decision. These gendered roles stem from cultural norms and traditional societal gender expectations that place men as household heads with authority over financial and significant decisions, while women are expected to manage domestic duties and caregiving.

Figure 8 Family decision making by gender (N:1,100)



FGD respondents reported that men typically make decisions regarding the use of family land, as they are considered the "owners" of the land. Women, on the other hand, seek permission from men before making any decisions on which crops to grow on the land allocated to them. Survey data presented a more balanced picture, however, with over a third reporting joint decision making and a significant number of both men and women saying they decide by themselves, either with or without discussion. Women in Busoga, based on discussions in the FDGs, tend to have more say in land use, especially when the land is allocated to or owned by them. In Kamuli in particular, women have more influence than men when it comes to crop choice and land management. When it comes to selling the produce, men are more involved. Food crops are seen as the domain of women.

Figure 9 Decision making on crops by gender and region (N:1,100)



The main **barriers to achieving gender equality in decision-making at the household level** include cultural norms and stereotypes, low education levels of women, and religious restrictions. Gender stereotyping often dictates that women should be submissive, limiting their voice in decisions. Other factors include a lack of communication and understanding between partners, conflicts over household roles, peer pressure, and the absence of a shared family vision. Another cultural practice, especially in Busoga, is polygamy, which weakens the position of individual women in the household. The high level of alcoholism often causes conflict and domestic violence, impairs decision-making, and creates an environment of fear and control, preventing equal participation in decisions. A study on traditional values in the Langi culture explains: “In a traditional Lango home, a man does not decide on family-related matters without consulting his wife. The Lango believe that 'when a woman says something and you don’t listen, you get into problems'”.⁸

⁸ Interview with J.A. Obwango; in Barr Sub County quoted in: Cross-Cultural Foundation of Uganda, 2019.

FGDs participants felt that men have more influence in **community-level decision-making** than women, as cultural norms and societal structures often prioritize their voices in leadership and governance. Women's participation is generally limited, though efforts are being made to promote gender inclusivity.

For people with disabilities, the situation is worse. They do not have an equal voice in community decision-making. Their ideas are often disregarded due to societal perceptions that they cannot take action because of their disabilities. Stigmatization and mobility challenges further limit their participation.

Big farmers have a bigger say in decision-making at community level, since they have more economic power, better access to resources, stronger political connections, and can mobilize supporters easier. Consequently, small-holder farmers have less influence in decision-making and their interests are not always prioritized. As a result, decisions often turn out to be advantageous for a particular group or disadvantageous to others.

At community meetings, most **women do not feel comfortable speaking up** due to fear of stigma, not wanting to contradict their husbands, lack of confidence, and fear of judgment. They feel hesitant to express their opinions, especially when they conflict with the opinions of men. In Luuka, however, in the FGDs, it was said that women are increasingly feeling more comfortable speaking up in community meetings. This shift may be due to changing societal attitudes, increased awareness, and efforts from NGOs and the Government to empower women. Traditionally, women in Lango are not supposed to speak up in community meetings. This would be considered “acting as a man”.⁹

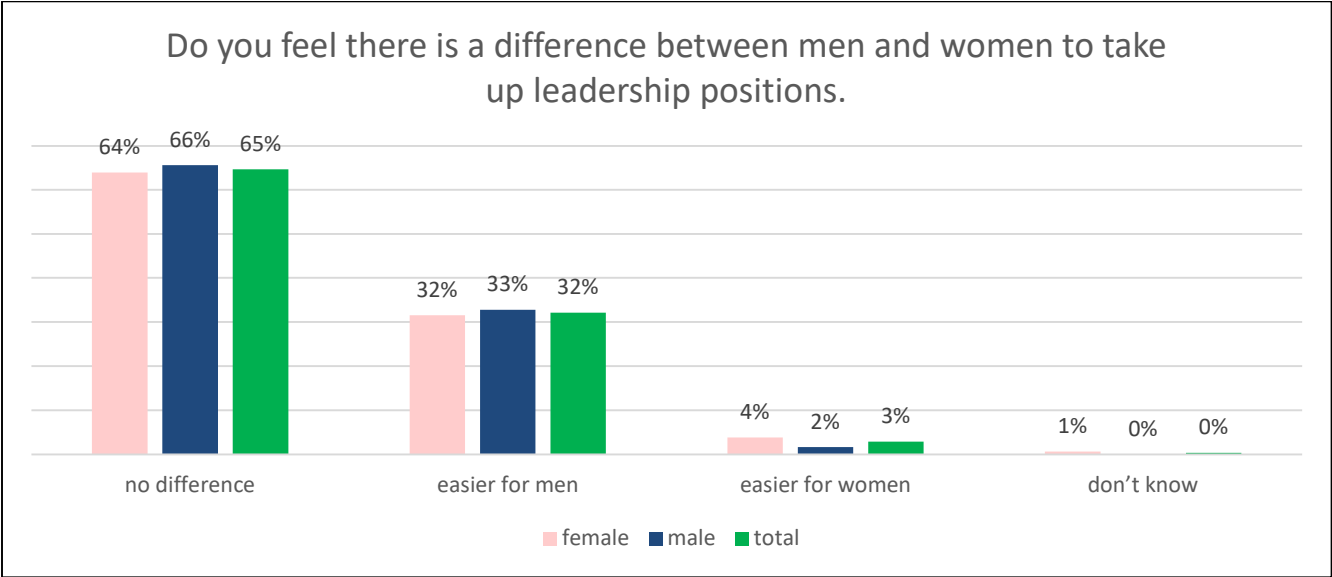
In most surveyed areas, **leadership roles at the community level** are usually taken up by men, except for positions designated for women. FGD participants affirmed that women do not have equal chances for leadership positions. However, they noted that women are increasingly taking on leadership roles, serving on executive committees, and holding leadership positions at the local council level and within institutions. This increases their involvement in decision-making and strengthens their influence on community affairs. Some women have successfully assumed leadership roles thanks to factors such as education, support from their husbands, wealth, and active participation in community activities. There was recognition in FGDs that affirmative actions have been helpful, and that successful women in leadership often had community support, a strong network, support from their husbands, were literate, and demonstrated good leadership traits that were observed by the community. In Kamuli and Buyende districts, the FGD respondents reported that women have successfully taken positions such as councillors, LC chairpersons, and vice-chairpersons, with their literacy levels and trustworthiness playing key roles in their success. In Luuka District, the FGD reported that men typically hold chairperson positions, while women take on roles such as vice chairperson, secretary, and treasurer, due to their

⁹ Cross-Cultural Foundation of Uganda, 2019: CULTURE AND THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN AND GIRLS IN LANGO

good handwriting and trustworthiness.

On the question in the baseline survey about who it is easier for to take a leadership position, a majority stated that there is no difference between men and women. There is hardly any difference in the assessment between male and female respondents. Thirty-two per cent mentioned it is easier for men, and only 3% said it was easier for women.

Figure 10 Taking up a leadership position (N:1,100)



Actions are being taken to increase gender and social equality, including women’s participation in decision-making, by both Government and NGOs. FGD participants in Alebtong reported that there is continuous advocacy for women’s participation in community work, along with affirmative action to provide women with platforms to express themselves.

The formation of community groups, such as VSLAs and women-led groups, creates platforms that strengthen women's participation by providing them with spaces to share their views, make decisions collectively, and develop leadership skills. These groups empower women and increase their involvement in community activities and decision-making.

Most of the **women, PWDs and SHFs face challenges in leadership due to lower literacy rates and self-esteem**, undermining their confidence and ability to pursue leadership roles. SHF and PWDs generally also have fewer chances of becoming leaders due to a lack of resources and political connections, as well as societal and physical barriers (PWDs). According to respondents in Amolatar and Kamuli, only in a few cases were they able to obtain leadership positions at community level. Women, PWDs and SHFs sometimes face opposition from family, stigma from the community, and a lack of qualifications for certain positions. They may have limited resources for campaigning. Household responsibilities, domestic

violence, and fear of contentious issues also hinder women's ability to pursue leadership positions.

Participation in agricultural and conservation activities, as well as community actions, reflects traditional gender norms and understandings of gender domains. Women actively participate in agricultural activities and provide the main labour for food crop production. They prioritize growing food crops and manage the kitchen gardens to ensure there is enough food for their families. In contrast, men tend to focus more on cash crops and often engage in other income-generating activities, such as formal employment, casual labour, business ventures, and livestock rearing, as they seek to meet household development needs, including construction, school fees, and other financial obligations.

According to the participants in the FGDs, **men are more involved in agroforestry and tree planting** due to their control over land and better access to financial resources. Women are typically less involved in these activities because they often lack access to land rights and tend to focus on cultivating short-term crops for household consumption. This was also explained by the difference in development priorities between men and women, with men favouring long-term investments like tree planting, while women prioritize immediate food security. In the Amolatar district in the FGDs it was mentioned that women's voices are often not heard in community work, and they have limited time due to household responsibilities. Additionally, women don't have access to resources needed for such initiatives.

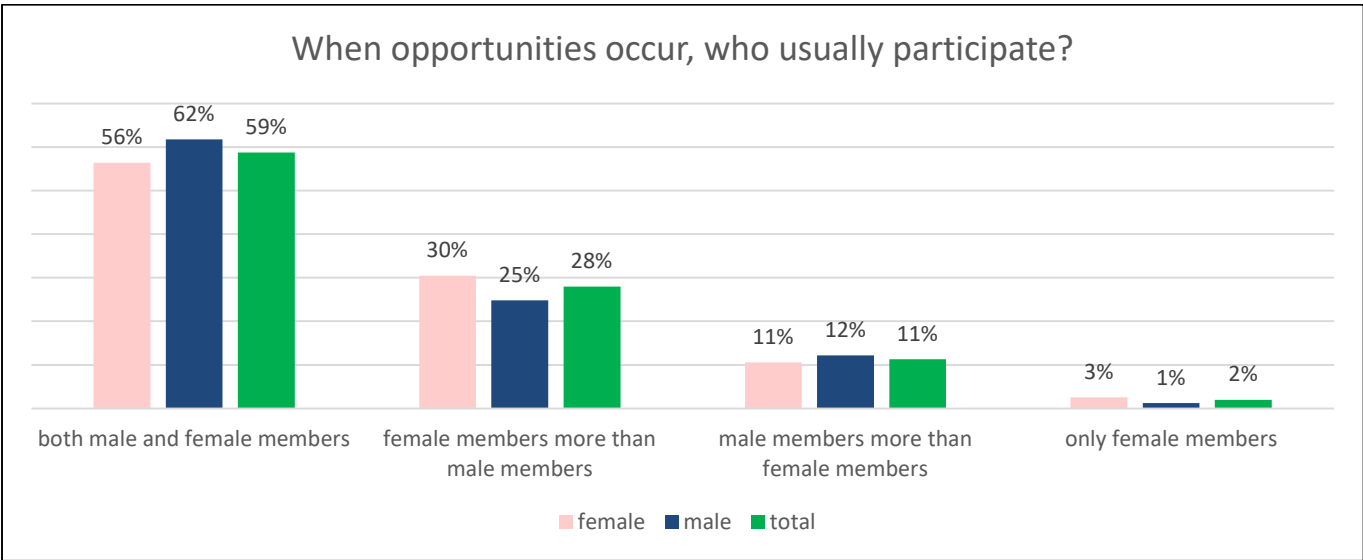
Men and women are equally involved in community action. However, poor households and individuals with disabilities are sometimes excluded due to their limited ability to contribute resources or labour. However, in Luuka and Buyende districts, men were reportedly more involved, with persons with disabilities and households from low-income backgrounds also participating in community activities. In Kamuli, women are more involved.

Both men and women participate in government or NGO programs that support farming and businesses. However, women are more likely to engage because these programs often deliberately target them to promote inclusive development. Women also tend to show more interest and proactiveness in such initiatives, as they see them as opportunities to improve their families' well-being. In contrast, some men perceive these programs as less valuable or even a waste of time. In Buyende, however, programs like PDM, NAADs, and Emyooga attract more attention from men.

For people with disabilities, it is harder to participate. The program may not have reached them during mobilization or even being ignored. Their lack of mobility, physical challenges, limited communication and resources further hinder their participation.

The results of the questionnaire survey hint at a similar, yet different, direction. More or only female members of the household score 30 per cent of those usually joining opportunities, against just 2 per cent for male members. However, the majority stated that there is little to no difference.

Figure 11 Participation in government or NGO-initiated opportunities (N:1,100)



Various barriers to women’s full participation in training or project activities were mentioned. These included domestic chores, long distances to training venues, restrictions imposed by spouses, a lack of awareness or information, and the absence of necessary documents, such as national identity cards (e.g., for PDM). Additionally, low self-esteem, religious and cultural beliefs, and societal norms often limit their involvement. In some cases, men may prevent women from participating in projects. Furthermore, if trainers do not adhere to scheduled times or if training schedules are not considerate of women's domestic duties, it can further hinder their participation and access to opportunities.

Illiteracy is another significant barrier for many women, PWDs and resource-poor farming households. Their fear of being unable to read or write can prevent them from participating in training programs. PWDs in particular have to cope with additional challenges as they require specific communication facilities.

3.4 Cultural Norms and Beliefs

Cultural norms and beliefs influence access to resources, levels of participation and decision-making practices. The fact that men often consider themselves superior and view themselves as the head of the household has been reflected throughout the earlier sections of this chapter.

GBV is widespread and at a high level in Uganda, partly linked to cultural norms and beliefs. One out of three women/girls has experienced GBV. The Busoga region has higher rates of GBV, as well as child labour, when compared to national averages. All FGDs confirmed that GBV takes place in their communities, associated with illiteracy, poverty, alcoholism and cultural beliefs and norms.

Some argue that the high prevalence of gender-based violence is the result of women’s control over

more economic resources than men (such as cattle, goats and produce) as men struggle to regain culturally ascribed dignity in their homes¹⁰.

The FGDs revealed that **communities are aware of how cases of GBV are typically handled**. People are aware that there are reporting procedures available through various agencies, including police and law enforcement, social welfare and child protection services, health services, NGOs, community leaders, religious institutions, and legal aid organisations, depending on the nature of the GBV case. Usually, they are solved at the family or clan level, with local leadership playing a significant role in mediation. In persistent or particularly grievous cases, it is referred to the local council or police for further investigation and action. The local council and clan leadership play an active role in ensuring that disputes are resolved and victims are supported; however, challenges such as victim-blaming, stigma, and underreporting may still impact the process. In cases of rape or sexual harassment, the situation is typically escalated to the police and professional health workers for proper medical assessment and legal action. However, in Amolatar it was reported that in cases of forced sex or rape, women are often at a disadvantage because they may feel compelled to forgive their spouse due to shame or cultural pressure.

¹⁰ Cross-Cultural Foundation Uganda, 2019: CULTURE AND THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN AND GIRLS IN LANGO.

4 Strategy Towards Gender Equality and Social Inclusion.

INSPIRE program follows the “Reach, Benefit, Empower, Transform” framework, similar to the one used by the CommonGround project, to:

- 1) **REACH** a greater number of women through better targeting and accounting for the key gaps in men's and women's ability to make decisions and act on them in the operational area.
- 2) **BENEFIT** women through the innovations, capacity development initiatives, and other activities the project promotes and implements.
- 3) **EMPOWER** women economically in the target project area; and
- 4) **TRANSFORM** gender relations at household, community, and value chain levels to address the restrictive gender norms and power relations that limit women's decision-making powers and control over resources that are essential for their success in their livelihood choices.

Gender and social inclusion will be integrated in all project interventions (unless specified) by paying special attention to gender and social inclusion. In PIP, GESI is an integral part of all steps in the process. In Farmers Learning Groups, one of the three lead farmers should be a female farmer and one of the two FLG representatives to an Agri-Business Cluster workshop should be a women. Women are generally well represented in VSLAs; and INSPIRE will support them to get leadership positions. Anchor coops and SACCO will develop gender and social inclusion strategies.

While simply quota can help women to be more visible, it is equally important to raise practical and concrete gender and social inclusion issues in the different interventions. The next table elaborates for each strategic gender dimension specific actions to reach, benefit, and empower women and transform gender relations at household level.

Table 2 Gender and social inclusion: strategic issues to be addressed

KEY GESI-BASED CONSTRAINTS	UNDERLYING DRIVERS	INTERVENTIONS
Access and control over land		
• Women, PWDs and SHFs in Lango and Busoga reported much lower land ownership than men.	• Patriarchy, cultural beliefs & stigmatization and customary law conflicts with government law and policies. Low literacy levels and unawareness of rights to inherit, to own and control, lead to low levels of ownership.	• Train communities on property rights and raise awareness about women's continued rights to land after death of a spouse. • Advocate for joint land titling • Link up with the A-Grip project on land-titling
Access to finance		
• Women, SHFs and PWDs have significantly less access bank services and credit. • Most women, SHFs and PWDs resort to alternative financial institutions as VSLAs, MFI and SACCOs or friends / family members.	• Discrimination, lack of access to technology, the lack of land titles, limited collateral and low literacy levels hinder the attainment of formal credit	• Support and strengthen VSLAs in their operations including digitization. • Link farmer groups to formal financial institutions for group loans. • Offer financial literacy. • Explore the use of digital financing tools to enhance women's control over sales proceeds.
Access to information		
• Women, SHFs and PWDs have significantly less access to information. Information content and mediums are not tailored for disadvantaged groups. • Women, SHFs and PWDs are not considered by information providers, including extension workers.	• Mobility and transport constraints, literacy and income (ability to buy a phone). Further cultural norms on mobility (moving around). For PWDs, information is often offered via less appropriate means.	• Identify preferred information channels for different gender and household types within each region given variations in literacy and ownership of information assets. • Develop information content tailored to the specific needs and interests of different groups. • Collaborate with community leaders to promote the importance of gender equitable access to information and to ensure that dissemination and training sessions are sensitive to the gender dynamics of each region.

KEY GESI-BASED CONSTRAINTS	UNDERLYING DRIVERS	INTERVENTIONS
Access and voice on earnings and expenditures		
• Women have limited say on how family and their own earnings are spent. Their spouses or other family members may take their produce to a market. • Women have less access to family capital to invest in their businesses.	• Gendered expectations that women should surrender sales income with limited say in allocation decisions or reinvestment in their businesses. This tends to keep women's businesses stagnant.	• Promote economic empowerment for women, including financial literacy training, access to credit, access to markets and support for income-generating activities. • Engage men as allies in enabling the growth of women-led businesses
Tasks and responsibilities – distribution of workload		
• Women's workloads are significantly higher than men's. It hinders women to participate in other social and economic activities that could potentially strengthen their capacity and voice.	• Cultural norms designate unpaid care/domestic chores and some time-consuming and tiring work to women. The distribution of tasks is against women. • Technology use is limited due to terrain and poor road infrastructure.	• Implement PIP sessions to transform gender norms around men's involvement in domestic and care work. • Conduct community conversation/ dialogues to challenge gender norms around workload distribution. • Ensure monitoring and learning components assess both positive and negative impacts on women's workload to prevent harm. • Advocate for improved road infrastructure and networks to ease the burden of fetching water, firewood and harvests. Promote rainwater harvesting and woodlots to bring water and wood closer.
Decision-making, leadership and participation		
• Women have less voice in decision-making due to patriarchal norms and their limited control over land.	• Patriarchal norms and practices that limit women's involvement in decision-making related to livelihoods. • Men often use their control over land as their justification for unilateral decision-making.	• Challenge and transform traditional gender norms through community awareness programs and gender sensitivity training while raising awareness about the importance of gender equality in decision-making. • Implement joint visioning sessions to promote open communication and cooperation within households, utilising the PIP approach.

KEY GESI-BASED CONSTRAINTS	UNDERLYING DRIVERS	INTERVENTIONS
Women, PWDs and SHFs are underrepresented in most fora. Their main representation is through positions that are allocated to women and PWDs.	- Patriarchal and cultural norms and beliefs that limit their involvement in leadership positions. - Lower educational and literacy levels, combined with lower economic status make them “unsuitable” for taking leadership positions. - Heavy workload of women and SHF hinder them to spend time on leadership roles.	- Raise awareness about the benefits of women, PWD and SHF participation in various groups through community conversation sessions and PIP. - Strengthen VSLAs in which women, PWDs and SHF are somehow well-represented. - Strengthen and encourage groups to uphold principles of gender balance and inclusivity in their membership and leadership. - Continuously monitor participation rates, group dynamics and the impact of gender-sensitive interventions and affirmative actions
Gender based violence		
High incidence of gender-based violence and child labour.	- Cultural norms, abject poverty, alcoholism and low literacy and educational levels - Societal beliefs regarding dowry, early marriage.	- Challenge and transform traditional gender norms through the PIP and community conversation sessions, involving both men and women. - Awareness campaign (training, posters) on prevention of GBV, child labour and discrimination. - Use the GOAL system of safeguarding.
Women and PWD entrepreneurship		
- Women and PWD’s businesses were more likely to be unregistered, due to perceived complexities or financial constraints. - Collective agency is limited, with few participating in commodity associations. - Low skills in business management - Access to formal finance institutions is limited. - Few businesses had a marketing strategy, and none were using digital marketing solutions. - Mobility constraints for a few aggregators limited purchases, coupled with some tolerance for intimate partner violence	- Patriarchal and cultural norms and beliefs that limit their involvement in the market economy. - Limited access to skilling/training opportunities for business development.	- Conduct business management training. - Facilitate linkages to formal financial institutions and advocate for women-tailored credit services - Strengthen women's participation in VSLAs and foster strategic partnerships towards their capitalization. - Assist female businesses in development of marketing strategies, explore business networks, to reach wider markets and increase profitability. - Promote women's participation in commodity associations and other business networks.

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION (FGD) GUIDE – INSPIRE PROJECT

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION		
Date		
Location		
Participants Gender	Male	Female
People with disabilities		
Small holder farmers < 5 acres		

What are you mainly engaged in?

- Tell me in one minute what your main occupation is: farming, looking after the household, livestock? If farming, do you engage in food crops more than cash crops? Tell us how many acres your household has.

After hearing all the individuals...

- I realize that women are more into food crops / cash crops / kitchen garden, than men. Is that correct? And what is the reason for that?
- Are some of your community members involved in agroforestry, tree planting, conservation practices or community work? And if so... are women more involved than men? Or the other way around? And what is the reason for that?
- Who is most involved in community action? Men/women/equal? Do people with disabilities join? And poor households?
- Are you okay with how tasks and responsibilities are divided in your household and community? If not, why are the tasks and responsibilities not the way you prefer? What are so called barriers?

Who can access and control the use of land?

- In your community, how do men and women typically gain access to land for cultivation?
- Are there any cultural or legal barriers that make it harder for women to own or access land?
- What happens if a woman wants to inherit or buy land?
- How do decisions around land use (e.g. crop selection, leasing) differ for men and women?
- When a family owns land, who usually makes decisions on how it is used?
- Do women have a say in what crops to grow or how land is managed? Why or why not? Have you seen any changes in landownership and control dynamics over the past few years?
- Have you seen any changes in landownership and control dynamics over the past few years (Probe for what changes in landownership and control dynamics have been observed over the

past few years, what led to these changes?)

- Have you seen any changes in landownership and control dynamics?
- Who has easy/difficult access to markets?
- Please explain for whom it might be difficult to access the market. Think of men/women, smallholder/big commercial, disability, young/older age. Can you explain why it is more difficult for some groups?
- What are barriers in accessing information for women, persons with disabilities and small-holder farmers (if any)?

Income and Expenditures

- Who in the household typically controls income from farming and business? Why?
- Can women freely decide how to spend money they earn? If not, what challenges do they face?
- Have there been any conflicts related to household financial decisions? How were they resolved? What factors influence how household income is distributed and used?

Participation in Programs & Opportunities

- Do government or NGO projects offer farming or business support, who in the household is more likely to participate? Why?
- What challenges may prevent women from attending training or accessing project benefits?
- Are there any local rules or beliefs that limit women's participation in development programs?
- What about challenges that prevent **people with disabilities or small-holder farmers** from participating?

Who can access funds from family, VSLA and SACCOs and BANKS

- To what extent do **women and men** have equal access to these sources of capital, meaning to receive family support/capital, loan from VSLA or SACCO or from Banks.
- Why are there differences in the possibility to access?
- To what extent do **persons with disabilities** and **small-holders** have equal access to these sources of capital?
- Why are there differences for them?

Who is making the decisions at household level

- In your opinion, do **men and women** have equal voice when making decisions at the **household level**?
- What areas do you feel women or men are having less voice/say when making decisions at the **household** and **why**?

- What are the main barriers to achieving gender equality in decision-making at household level?

Who is making the decisions at community level?

- In your opinion, do **men and women** have equal say when making decisions at **community level**?
- What about other groups: **people with disabilities**, do they have equal say in decision making?
- What about **small-holder farmers**, do they have equal voice/say? Do the **commercial, big farmers** have a bigger say in the decisions?
- Do you feel that certain decisions usually turn out to be advantageous for a certain group, or disadvantageous for a certain group?
- In community meetings, do women feel comfortable speaking up? If not, what prevents them?
- Are there any efforts in the community to encourage women's participation in decision-making?
- Briefly, what are the expected gender roles and responsibilities of men and women in this community? How are women viewed differently from men in the community?
- How does the community respond to the incidence of GBV? (Please probe for further examples of sexual abuse. Clarify definitions of forced sex/rape, sexual harassment, sexual manipulation)
- Do women/girls or men/boys seek help when they experience GBV? Who or where do people most commonly seek help when they are exposed to gender-based violence? (Please probe further for places and people such as family members, other women, health worker, community leader, police, security people/authorities, church, someone else)?

Leadership & Membership in Groups

- Do **women and men** have equal chance to become a leader in your community? How are the positions now taken? Have you seen any successful examples of women in leadership positions? What made it possible?
- What challenges do women face when they try to become leaders?
- Do you feel that **small-holder farmers** (less than 5 acres) also have a chance to be a leader? Or a **person with a disability**? Any proof of that?
- How can the community or organizations like INSPIRE support women in leadership roles?

GENDER AND SOCIAL INCLUSION-RELATED QUESTION IN THE BASELINE SURVEY – INSPIRE PROJECT

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION		
Gender of head of household		
Gender of respondent	Male	Female
People with disabilities		
Small holder farmers < 5 acres		

1. Do you feel that men and women have equal access to land they want to cultivate?
2. If you cultivate land, or want to do so, can you decide what crop you want to grow?
3. From the money you earned by farming or business, do you have a say about how it is spent?
4. How do you assess the way household decisions are made regarding production and income?
5. Do you feel there is in your household a difference between men and women in deciding on how money is spent?
6. For whom is it more difficult to buy agro-inputs and services: a man or a woman?
7. For whom it is more difficult to access funds for investing in production: a man or a woman?
8. What crop(s) you want to expand in production for income generation in the coming seasons?
9. Which animal production do you want to expand for income generation?
10. Do you feel there is a difference between men and women to become a member of any group (or cooperative) in the community?
11. For whom it is more difficult to access information on production, prices, technologies?
12. How often do you meet a government extension officer?
13. How do you assess the balance of tasks in production and at home between men and women?
14. How do you assess the way community decisions are generally made?
15. When opportunities (government or NGO-projects) come up, which members of the household are usually joining?
16. Do you feel that there is a difference in possibility between men and women to take a leadership position in the community?
17. How do you assess the balance of tasks in production and at home between men and women?
18. What is your opinion on the way household decisions are made on production and income?
19. Do you feel there is in your household a difference between man and woman in deciding on how money is spent?