WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS AT THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEVEL IN UGANDA

SURVEY REPORT

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SUBMITTED TO UN WOMEN

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TABLE OF CONTENT

List of Figures

List of Tables

LIST OF ACRONYMS

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
EC	Eectoral Commision
EPRC	Economic Policy Research Centre
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FOWODE	Forum for Women in Democracy
GoU	Government of Uganda
iKNOW Politics	International Knowledge Network of Wowen in Politics
KII	Key Informant Interview
LC	Local Council
LG	Local Government
MDGs	Millenium Development Goals
NRM	National Resistance Movement
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
PDM	Parish Development Model
PWDs	People with Disabilities
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UBoS	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
UN	United Nations

ABSTRACT

Uganda adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and was one of the first countries to integrate them in its National Development Plan. Under Goal 5, countries commit to promoting and guaranteeing women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making. This survey report is a follow up of the baseline survey of women in local governments that was conducted by the Uganda Bureau of Statistics in 2017 and addresses three specific objectives:

1) To update and track progress towards attainment of gender parity in political representation at LG level;
2) To assess the extent to which women in LGs effectively contribute to local decision-making processes; and
3) To provide a deeper understanding of the factors that hinder elected women in LGs from effectively fulfilling their mandate.

The study was undertaken using Local Government (LG)'s election data from the Electoral Commission and survey data collected through key informant interviews with political leaders at the LG levels and focus group discussions with community people. The survey was conducted in Gulu, Nwoya, and Pader in the North; Napak, and Moroto in Karamoja sub-region; Pallisa and Bugiri in the East; and Kiryandongo in the West. Survey data was analysed using both quantitative (descriptive statistics) and qualitative techniques, which involved qualitative data from focus group discussions and open-ended survey responses from individual respondents was analysed through the following steps: transcribing the qualitative responses; pooling the transcribed responses from the various FGDs according to specific research questions; identifying the main ideas that occur in the answers to each question and creating themes; and writing narratives to describe the themes.

Overall, findings indicate that Uganda is yet to attain gender parity in political representation at local government level. Additionally, the executive committees at the district level, which are in charge of decision-making, are dominated by men. The report documents the key factors that limit the performance of both male and female political leaders in LGs and provides recommendations to address them.

1. INTRODUCTION

Equal participation of women in local decision-making processes is critical for prioritising women's needs in local governments (LG) agendas and attainment of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) (UN WOMEN, 2018).[1] In Uganda, LG councils[2] have powers enshrined in the LG Act, 1997 to make and implement development plans based on locally determined priorities; make, approve and execute LG budgets; raise and utilise resources according to their priorities; and make ordinances and bye-laws, among other roles (GoU, 1997). Women's participation and representation in LG councils open up avenues to enter arenas of political decision-making and advance women's interests (Asiyati, 2016).

The 1995 constitution of Uganda and the 1997 LG Act provide several avenues for increasing women's participation in LG politics. The Act stipulates that women should constitute a third of any local council. In addition, by adopting the SDGs, including goal 5, Uganda committed to ensuring women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all decision-making levels in political life. Despite affirmative action, women in Uganda remain underrepresented in LGs. A survey of the 2016 national elections by the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBoS, 2017) showed women constitute about 46% of total elected representatives in LGs (UBOS, 2017). Even when considered in relative terms, such under-representation of women at different governance levels results in a democratic deficit (UN WOMEN, 2018). It also means that women's empowerment issues and concerns may not be well articulated and captured adequately at LC meetings. They may be less likely to be mainstreamed in development interventions at the different LG levels.

Previous studies have highlighted several factors responsible for the under-representation of women in

LGs in Uganda, see, e.g. (Johnson, Kabachu, & Kayonga, 2003; Nsubuga & Olum, 2009; Kadaga, 2013; UN WOMEN, 2018). First, Uganda is a patriarchal society where men dominate decision making, and women who participate in politics are ridiculed and perceived to be attempting to become "men". Second, women's care responsibilities, especially unpaid care services, leave women with little or no time to invest in political activism. Third, lower literacy and education attainment levels among women limit their capacity to engage in technical processes associated with elected offices and councils. Fourth, women have limited access to resources, notably income, yet electoral processes are increasingly commercialised in Uganda. Other factors include limited self-confidence and fear rooted in limited command of the English language, which is the official language of communication, cultural factors (traditional beliefs and attitudes) that discourage women's participation, and lack of understanding of how local councils operate.

Whereas women's participation in politics is necessary globally, women representation in local government does not always guarantee that they will have any substantial influence over policy decisions or articulate women's interests as documented in Malawi (Kamlongera, 2008). Effective participation of women depends on the incentives available to them as representatives and requires a conscious and deliberate action on the women's part to make a difference. It also requires adequate knowledge and understanding of how the system works (Asiyati, 2016). For Uganda's case, the few studies that have attempted to examine women participation in politics in local governments have often overlooked the issue of effective representation. In the context of this study, effective representation refers to the extent to which the elected leaders in LGs can perform their official roles and responsibilities.

Although UBoS conducted a previous baseline on women representation in LGs in 2017, the UBoS study's

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[1] SDG 5 seeks to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls; while indicator 5.5.1(b) recognizes the need for gender balance in political decision making in LGs.

[2] A Local Council is the highest political authority within its area of jurisdiction and has legislative and executive powers. The Councils regularly meet as required to make key decisions on matters that affect their lives.

scope was limited. In particular, the UBoS study only captured information (election data) for three LG levels, i.e. the district (LCV), the municipality (LCIV) and the sub-county (LCIII). By then, the parish (LCIIs) and village (LCI) level elections were yet to be conducted — they were conducted in 2019. In addition, since the 2016 election, several by-elections have been held— which could have affected the proportion of women in elected positions. Moreover, the baseline survey was conducted in only two districts (Kamuli & Wakiso)— the two districts do not form a representative sample of LGs in Uganda.

Additionally, the baseline covered the period immediately after the 2016 national elections—then it was too early to properly assess the effectiveness in representation, particularly for women occupying leadership positions for the first time. Against the above background, EPRC, in collaboration with UN Women, undertook a successor survey to address some of the above gaps. The survey offered an opportunity to capture information about effective representation by men and women local council leaders since they have been in office for a reasonable time (over three years).

Given the importance of adequate representation of women in LG councils and the gaps that existed in the reviewed studies, the specific objectives of this study were:

1) To update and track progress towards attaining gender parity in political representation at the LG level (equal representation).

2) To assess how women in LGs effectively contribute to local decision-making processes (effective representation).

3) To provide a deeper understanding of the factors that hinder elected women in LGs from effectively undertake their official roles and responsibilities.

The rest of the report is organised as follows: chapter two presents a synthesis of the literature, chapter three presents the data, sources and methods of collection; chapter four presents findings in line with the specific objectives of the study; the report ends with chapter five on conclusion and recommendations for policy consideration.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides a synthesis of; the policy frameworks that the Government of Uganda has domesticated to increase women's participation in politics, participation rates in politics at the local government level, select efforts by UN Women to improve women's political participation rates, and the known factors that undermine women's participation in politics.

2.1 Policy frameworks on women participation in political processes

Like many African countries, Uganda is a signatory to global, continental and regional commitments to achieving gender equality in political decision-making (Africa Barometer, 2021). Some of the commitments provide for affirmative action with specific targets to be achieved, while others do not. Below are examples of some of the commitments that Uganda has adopted over the years.

Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW): Uganda adopted this over 4 decades ago (in 1979). Article 7 of the CEDAW requires States Parties to take appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country and, in particular, to ensure to women, on equal terms with men, the right to vote in all elections and public referenda and to be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies. However, the CEDAW instrument has no affirmative action neither specific targets.

The UN Economic and Social Council resolution 1990/15: This was adopted in 1990, and the instrument calls on governments, political parties, and professional and other representative groups to adopt a 30 percent minimum proportion of women in leadership positions to achieve equal representation.

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action: The instrument was adopted in 1995. It outlines 12 strategic objectives and critical areas of action, including "Women in Power and Decision Making" It has neither affirmative action nor specific targets.

The 2003 UN General Assembly resolution on women's political participation (A/RES/58/142): Article 1 (e) calls for the promotion of gender balance in all public positions and requires governments to take appropriate measures to encourage political parties to ensure that women have a fair and equal opportunity to compete for all elective and non-elective public positions.

The 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Uganda adopted the SDGs in 2015. Specifically, SDG 5 underscores women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making. It is a continuation of the third Millennium Development Goal (MDGs 3) that called for gender equality and empowerment. Women's political participation is identified as the primary indicator.

East Africa Gender Act (2016): The Act provides respect for gender parity in power and decision making by 50-50 ratio.

2.2 Levels of women's participation in politics and associated factors

Despite the policy frameworks, women's political participation at the local government level, which is believed to be a training ground for women in politics, is still low. Women constitute only 21% of the councillors in local government politics on the African continent and about 35% in East Africa (Africa Barometer, 2021). The observed participation levels are not any different for Uganda, where women constitute about 46% of total elected representatives in LGs (UBOS, 2017). A recent study by FOWODE (2020) confirms the composition of leaders in primary leadership positions in the local governance structure is still dominated by men, with women representation considerably low, especially in top positions. Specifically, the following are reported as percentages of the top district leadership positions occupied by women; District Chairpersons (2.6%),

Vice-Chairpersons (26.5%), Chairperson District Service Commission (16.8), District Speakers (13.7%) and Chief Administrative Officers (14.5%) (FOWODE, 2020).

To overcome the observed low participation rates, UN Women supported civil society organisations (CSOs) have made some deliberate efforts to conduct community awareness sessions to sensitise people about the importance of women's participation in politics. For example, before the 2016 elections in Uganda, UN Women supported a media campaign called "*minibus*" that involved dialogue on women's leadership in public transportation. The follow-up assessment of the program revealed that it reached many people and positively impacted their perception of women's leadership (iKNOW Politics, 2018). However, such and other efforts have not yet yielded equal participation of women in local politics as several other factors continue to undermine women participation. They include; cultural aspects, gender stereotypes, economic and financial constraints, low levels of educational attainment and COVID-19, among others.

Culturally, Uganda is a patriarchal society with strong cultural and religious influences. There is a belief that women are supposed to be led but not to lead. Traditional attitudes towards gender equality influence women's advancement in political participation (iKNOW Politics, 2018; Ilesanmi, 2018). This is further exacerbated by the burden of household chores that women are culturally supposed to perform. In most cultures in Uganda, women are valued and respected as mothers and daughters who are expected to bring wealth to the family upon marriage. Women are also seen as guardians of culture and traditions, and therefore society holds them responsible for imparting cultural values to the younger generation. These are, in most cases, used by their male opponents to marginalise and justify why women should be excluded from political participation processes.

There is also anecdotal evidence that some men refuse their wives to participate in politics. It is not always the case that women lack the will and attributes to participate in politics but are systematically discriminated against by their spouses with the view

that women would be exposed to a double role of balancing political career and family responsibilities. There have been media releases where women have been barred from participating in politics until when they are supported by their husbands/spouses. To this effect, some women deliberately pull out of their political careers to keep peace at home and not jeopardise their families. This implies that even if the Ugandan Constitution has adopted a minimum quota (1/3) for women at local government, social pressures remain a significant barrier.

The cultural factors are further exacerbated by gender stereotypes where women are portrayed as weak and incapable of making smart decisions (Ilesanmi, 2018). Women have been depicted across generations as capable of trivial matters, engaged in gossip and hearsay, incompetent and less intelligent. Such attitudes make it even harder for them to stand against their male counterparts.

Economic/financial support for women candidates is one of the most cited barriers to political participation. Money is essential for smoothening out the electoral process, from nomination to campaigning and reaching constituents. Initial financing is, for example, required to launch a campaign for candidature, such as gaining exposure and building name recognition, travelling and organising a campaign team, and ultimately winning the party nomination. Literature (Africa Barometer, 2021; iKNOW Politics, 2018; Ilesanmi, 2018; Ballington & Kahane, 2014; Kakumba, 2010) shows that lack of funding constrains women's political participation to the increasingly large amounts of money that is required for election campaigns. Unequal access to finance and resources creates an uneven political playing field, which dissuades women from taking an active role in the electoral process. In addition, given that much of a campaign's early money often comes from the candidate herself, this self-financing is often a significant obstacle for women's effective participation in politics.

The lack of adequate education and professional training is another decisive factor that prevents women from active participation in local politics. Inequitable access to higher education also limits women's ability

to enjoy the opportunities with men on an equal footing in the political sphere, including issues of expressing themselves in public (Africa Barometer, 2021; Guloba, 2019; iKNOW Politics, 2018).

Women's limited knowledge of the existence of political parties also hinders their effective participation in local politics in Uganda. Political parties provide a platform for candidates to express themselves and seek support among voters. However, Guloba (2019) noted that more men than women knew about more than two political parties in Uganda, a country with 29 registered political parties. Limited knowledge of political party representation limits participation as candidates and preliminary support from parties. Also, it limits women's choice stream on which party will present their ideologies better and eventual decline in contesting for any post.

The challenges mentioned above have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and associated mitigation measures, limiting women's participation in local political electoral processes (Africa Barometer, 2021). COVID-19 exacerbated pre-existing gender inequalities and created new constraints to women's participation in decision-making. Uganda's 2021 elections, for example, were associated with restrictions on public

gatherings, halting campaigns and limited to posters, media appearance and online campaigning. However, it should be noted that local level candidates were ill-prepared to switch to such campaigning platforms due to inadequate resources.

The recent studies conducted in Uganda do not systematically track SDG indicator 5.5.1(b). For example, the 2020 Reality Check report by FOWODE assesses national commitment to promoting women's presence and participation in leadership and decision-making positions in the public sector. FOWODE does the assessment by providing a detailed breakdown of the number of public sector employees by sex. On the other hand, this study sought to update and track progress towards attainment of gender parity in political representation at the LG level; assess the extent to which women in LGs are effectively contributing to local decision-making processes; provide a deeper understanding of the factors that hinder elected women in LGs from effectively fulfilling their mandate. The study primarily relied on election data obtained from the Electoral Commission (EC), and primary data collected through key informant interviews with political leaders in selected LGs, and focus group discussions with community people.

3. DATA AND METHODOLOGY

The study entailed the use of both secondary quantitative and primary qualitative data. Secondary data on local government elections were obtained from the Electoral Commission, while primary data were collected from LGs through key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs).

3.1 Secondary data collection

Sex disaggregated secondary election data for all categories of political positions were obtained from the Electoral Commission for the following election cycles: Local Government (2011); Local Government (2016); and LCII and LCI elections (2019). Secondary data was used to address the first objective—the proportion of seats held by women in LGs.

3.2 Sampling and sample sizes

Qualitative primary data was needed to answer the research objectives on the quality of political representation, i.e. effective participation in LGS legislative/deliberative bodies. This information was collected through interviews with key informants—political leaders at the administrative levels in local governments—and focus group discussions with community members. Purposively, the survey was conducted in districts where UN Women supports the implementation of interventions.[3] Eight (8) districts were randomly selected to represent the north, east and west region. The central region was not included because it has only two UN WOMEN districts of operation (i.e., Kampala and Wakiso). Wakiso district was considered during the 2017 baseline.[4] On the other hand, Kampala is not a typical local government in the sense that it is managed by the Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA) while the rest of the other districts are managed as LGs—under the 2005 Local Government Act of 2005—and are coordinated by the Ministry of Local Government. The 30 districts where UN WOMEN

supports interventions are spread across regions as follows: North (18), east (6), west (4) and central 2). The 8 districts were selected proportional to the total number of UN Women districts in the region; hence, the chosen districts per region were: 5 for the north, 2 for the east and 1 for the west. The selected districts by region were: Gulu, Nwoya, and Pader in the North; Napak and Moroto[5] in the Karamoja sub-region; Pallisa and Bugiri in the east; and Kiryandongo in the west.

At the district level, the LCV Chairperson and four Ministers (executive members of the district council)) were interviewed. In each district, LCIII Chairpersons were drawn from four randomly selected Sub counties. Also, a councillor (a non-executive member of the district council and preferably a directly elected or woman councillor) was selected from one of the selected sub-counties. One parish was randomly selected from each sub-county, and from each parish, two villages were randomly selected to get eight LCI Chairpersons. Focus group discussions (10 persons per group) were held in each selected village, hence eight FGDs per district. Therefore, we targeted 176 KIIs and 64 FGDs in the survey (see details in Table 1), but 172 KIIs and 65 FGDs were interviewed and formed a basis for the primary data analysis. To better elicit responses and capture differing views between men and women, separate focus groups based on sex were held.

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3   The districts where UN WOMEN has operations are: Kampala, Wakiso, Kyegegwa, Kasese, Bundibugyo, Kiryandongo, Bugiri, Kamuli, Tororo, Pallisa, Kaberamaido, Amuria, Arua, Yumbe, Moyo, Adjumani, Gulu, Lamwo, Nwoya, Omoro, Pader, Amuru, Kitgum, Kotido, Moroto, Napak, Amudat, Nakapiripirit, Abim, and Kaabong.
4   Pre-testing of survey instruments was done in Wakiso district.

5   Napak and Moroto were chosen to ensure representation of Karamoja sub region, which is considered to be vulnerable compared to other sub regions.

Table 1:	Sample sizes of survey respondents by category of leadership		
Type of respondent	# Districts	Sample size per district	Total sample in study districts
Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)			
LCV Chairpersons	8	1	8
Councillors	8	5	40
LCIII Chairpersons	8	4	32
LCII Chairpersons	8	4	32
LCI Chairpersons	8	8	64
All key informants	*8*	*22*	*176*
Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)			
FGDs with communities	*8*	*8*	*64*

3.3 Data collection approach

Four (4) field teams with four enumerators each (one being a team leader) were recruited to conduct the field data collection exercise in the 8 selected districts. Each team was assigned 2 districts grouped as follows: Kiryandongo and Nwoya (Team 1); Pallisa and Bugiri (Team 2); Gulu and Pader (Team 3); and Napak and Moroto (Team 4). The field teams were deployed simultaneously in the assigned areas. The team leaders were responsible for mobilising respondents, assigning KIIs and FGDs to enumerators, and conducting some interviews. The enumerators were responsible for conducting KIIs and FGDs as guided by their team leaders. Two enumerators conducted each FGD; one led the discussion while the other focused on correctly capturing/documenting the responses. The researchers from EPRC were responsible for supervising team leaders and enumerators and performing random spot checks to ensure quality data collection. The communications officer covered important fieldwork activities and documented stories used to enrich the study report's qualitative part.

3.4 Data analysis

Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics (means, percentages). Qualitative data from focus group discussions and open-ended survey responses from individual respondents was analysed through the following steps: transcribing the qualitative responses (making clear notes); pooling the responses from the various FGDs according to specific research questions; identifying the main ideas that occur in the answers to each question – some ideas may be repeated in multiple questions; applying critical thinking about the most frequent main ideas and creating themes; writing narratives to describe the themes and comparing them to related previous studies, and including quotations where appropriate to illustrate some main ideas.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents findings on the distribution of political seats in LGs by sex, perceptions about the performance of male and female political leaders and the factors that constrain women's participation in politics at the local government level. The findings in line with the first objective are drawn from the available LG election data and are presented in sub section 3.1. Survey findings complement the election data results and are used to address the second and third study objectives.

4.1 Presence of women in local government politics

Secondary data obtained from the Electoral Commission was used to track progress towards attaining gender parity in political representation at the LG level. We tracked SDG indicator 5.5.1(b), which should be expressed as the percentage of total elected positions in LGs held by women according to UN WOMEN. The findings based on the 2011 and 2016 local government elections are presented in Figure 1; they indicate that men predominantly occupy a political position in LGs. The percentage of seats held by women in LG increased by two (2) percentage points to 46% in 2016 from about 44% in 2011. Despite the positive changes favouring women, Uganda has yet to achieve gender parity in access to political decision-making in LG – women remain underrepresented. The finding concerning

the sex-disgregated distribution of political seats in LGs is similar to what UBOS found in the baseline study. The change in terms of the percentage of total elected positions in LGs held by women between the period 2016 and 2021 was not captured due to data limitations – the available 2021 election results were not sex-disaggregated.

Table 2 breaks down the elective positions by gender for the 2011 and 2016 elections. The results show that men disproportionately occupy more seats for all categories of openly contested positions. The highest political office in the district is that of the District Chairperson; in 2011, only Kanungu district was headed by a woman, and in 2016 only Kanungu and Kumi districts had female political heads. Since the District Chairperson is critical in decision making – presides at meetings of the executive committee, women hardly partake in top-level decision making in LGs. Overall, when positions reserved for Special Interest Groups are excluded from the analysis, we observe that women account for just one (1) percent of the total seats openly contested. This means that women cannot compete favourably with men; the reasons for this were obtained through a survey and are presented in section 3.4 and Table 8.

| Figure 1 | Percentage of elective political positions held by women in local government |
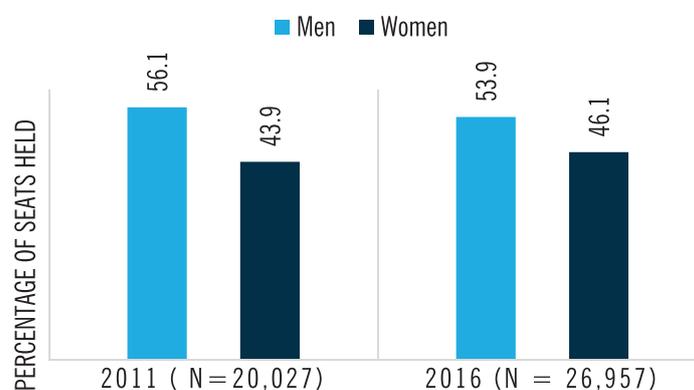
Source: Electoral Commission; 2011 & 2016 Local Government Elections

Table 2	Distribution of elective positions held by men and women in local government							
Elective position (openly contested seats - Available for both males & females)		2011			2016			
		Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	
District Chairpersons	Count	111	1	112	110	1	111	
	Percent	99.1	0.9	100.0	99.1	0.9	100.0	
District/City Directly Elected Councillors	Count	1,312	24	1,336	1,366	23	1,389	
	Percent	98.2	1.8	100.0	98.3	1.7	100.0	
Municipality/City Division Chairpersons	Count	25	2	27	35	4	39	
	Percent	92.6	7.4	100.0	89.7	10.3	100.0	
Municipality Directly Elected Councillors	Count	367	11	378	565	13	578	
	Percent	97.1	2.9	100.0	97.8	2.2	100.0	
Subcounty/Town/Municipal Division Chairpersons	Count	1,263	23	1,286	1,933	31	1,964	
	Percent	98.2	1.8	100.0	98.4	1.6	100.0	
Subcounty/Town/Municipal Division Directly Elected Councillors	Count	7,082	79	7,161	6,666	51	6,717	
	Percent	98.9	1.1	100.0	99.2	0.8	100.0	

Source: Electoral Commission; 2011 & 2016 Local Government Elections

We noted in the introduction section that when UBoS conducted the baseline study in 2017, the elections for parish councils and LCI/village chairpersons were yet to be held. In Table 3, we present results from the parish council elections. Notably, women account for about 30 percent of the total membership of parish councils; this is below the mandatory one-third of the membership of each LG council as provided for in the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda. With the advent of the Parish Development Model (PDM), parishes are the lowest unit of planning for service delivery and poverty alleviation in LGs. Therefore, positioning women in parish councils becomes vital in ensuring gender equality and equity concerns are adequately mainstreamed in development projects. However, as per the 2019 election results, the top leadership position at the parish level (i.e. LCII Chairperson) is dominated by men – women account for 6.5% of LCII Chairpersons. Similar to the district level, at the parish level, women account for a meagre 6.5 percent of the elected LCII Chairpersons – the highest political position at the parish level. One particular elective position dominated by women (73.5%) is Secretary for Finance, suggesting that women are generally trusted as handlers of public finances.

Compared to parish councils, results from the LCI/village chairpersons elections indicate an even more pronounced gender imbalance; about three (3) percent of the elected LCI Chairpersons are women (Figure 2). The reasons for the gender gap were elicited from the survey and are presented in sections 3.4 and Table 8.

Figure 2	2019 LCI/village Chairpersons by sex
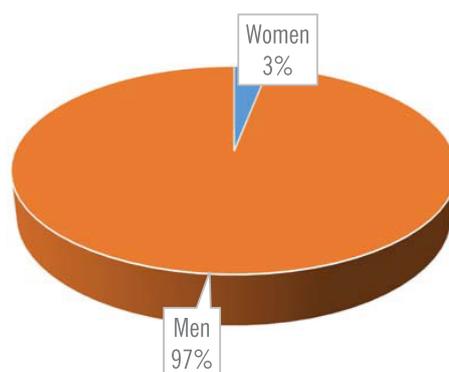
Source: Electoral Commission; 2019 LCI/Village Chairpersons elections

Table 3	2019 parish councils composition by sex					15

Elective position (openly contested seats - Available for both males & females)	Men		Women		Total valid observations
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	
LCII Chairperson	5,175	93.5	361	6.5	5,536
General Secretary	4,714	83.7	921	16.3	5,635
Secretary for Finance	1,477	26.5	4,092	73.5	5,569
Secretary for Information, Education and Mobilisation	3,979	71.4	1,597	28.6	5,576
Secretary for Older Persons	3,902	91.6	359	8.4	4,261
Secretary for Production and Environmental Protection	3,329	61.0	2,130	39.0	5,459
Secretary for PWDS	3,508	82.3	753	17.7	4,261
Secretary for Security	5,234	96.0	217	4.0	5,451
Secretary for Women Affairs	239	4.7	4,803	95.3	5,042
Secretary for Youth	4,202	91.5	391	8.5	4,593
Vice Chairperson/Secretary for Children Welfare	4,275	74.9	1,433	25.1	5,708
All positions (including reserved seats for women only)	*40,034*	*70.1*	*17,056*	*29.9*	*57,090*

Source: Electoral Commission; 2019 parish council elections

In summary, the results as per the LG elections have shown that women remain underrepresented in local government politics. Having disproportionately fewer women than men in LG politics offers men an unfair advantage, ultimately overshadowing women in decision-making. This also implies that issues that specifically affect women may not be prioritised during planning and budgeting.

4.2 Profiling (characteristics) of political leaders in LGs

A survey complemented the Electoral Commission's election data, and in **Annex 1,** we present the characteristics of the political leaders interviewed in the survey. According to the findings, the mean age of the leaders was 48 years, with that of women (51 years) being relatively higher than the one of their male counterparts (about 48 years). In terms of education, more men (31%) than women (29%) had attained A'level or other higher levels of educational qualifications when they contested for the political position held. Most (about 46%) of the women leaders had completed O'level. The finding corroborates one of the reasons cited for comparatively fewer women leaders than men. Leaders' illiteracy and low education attainment levels cause some women to shy away from contesting for political positions.

Most political leaders in LGs were married (54.2% for women and 61.5% for men). This is because being married is perceived to be a sign of responsibility. Hence it is an added advantaged during political campaigns. Indeed, not being married was one factor that hindered people, especially women, from contesting for political positions. On the other hand, 4.2 percent of women leaders had divorced/separated from their husbands, but none of the men leaders reported ever being divorced. It is also important to note that more women leaders (about 21%) than men leaders (less than 1%) were widowed. This could mean that some women will only join politics after their husbands have passed on; before then, they keep away from politics to safeguard their marriages.

The main occupation for both men and women before they joined politics was farming. This is expected because the agricultural sector, and particularly farming, remains the biggest employer in Uganda. Before being elected, about 53 percent of men and 29.2 percent of women depended on agriculture as their primary livelihood source. Most of the respondents served their first term in office (58.5% for men and 41.7% for women), and the majority contested under the NRM party (91.3% for women and about 80% for men). Also, important to note is the fact that most leaders in LGs (62.5% for women and 53.4% for men)

already had relatives in politics-these were mainly parents (reported by 39.4% of the leaders) and siblings (reported by 36.2% of the leaders). This suggests that having relatives who occupy political positions is an inspiration for many people to join politics – they perhaps serve as role models.

4.3 Joining politics

Table 4 presents the reasons why people join politics in local governments. The top four motivational factors are the same for both men and women, although to varying degrees. They are:

a)   The desire to serve people in the community, for example, by representing the voiceless such as widows, orphans and PWDs. This is in agreement with UBoS (2017) findings which found that women leaders joined politics to act as women's mouthpieces to express ideas, views, and opinions of the people.

b)   Glaringly evident leadership gaps are seen in the form of weak and non-transparent leaders.

c)   The need to promote development, for example, through lobbying for the increased provision by the government of goods and services such as road infrastructure and agricultural inputs.

d)   Response to pressure or constant demand from people to be their leader – vote of confidence.

Other reasons include the need to gain more respect from the people and recognition in the community, inspiration from a political background, and the desire to get close to individuals who hold substantial political power.

The selected individual political leaders in LGs were asked to indicate whether they had received some support (cash, non-cash or both) during the process of contesting for the posts they held at the time of the survey. **Table 5** presents the percentages of men and women who reported that they received support during the period preceding the elections. At least 94 and 91 percent of men and women, respectively, said they received cash and non-cash support. The most frequently cited forms of support received by both men and women were: cash, help in preparing manifesto, voluntarily campaigning for the candidate, printing campaign posters, capacity strengthening in public speech and fuel to facilitate travels. This is in line with findings from previous studies, e.g. UBoS (2017) and Rameez (2018), who found that local government political contestants usually obtain support from families, friends, and civil society organisations during campaigns.

Table 4	Reasons why people join politics in Local Governments (% reporting)		
Stated motivation for joining politics	**All (n = 172)**	**Women (n = 24)**	**Men (n = 148)**
Desire to serve	62.2	75.0	60.1
Noticeable leadership gap	48.3	37.5	50.0
Need to promote development	37.8	45.8	36.5
Pressure/request from people/supporters	34.9	33.3	35.1
Draw respect/attain recognition	12.8	16.7	12.2
Need to unite people	11.1	4.2	12.2
To get connections to power holders	10.5	8.3	10.8
Inspiration from political background	9.3	20.8	7.4
Employment opportunity	8.7	-	10.1
Represent political party/political briefs	3.5	4.2	3.4
Source: 2020 Women in Local Governments Survey – Key Informant Interviews			

Reasons why people join politics in Local Governments (% reporting)

Table 5	Forms of support received during the pre-election period; % of leaders reporting		
Type of support received before the pre-election period	**ALL (%)**	**Women (%)**	**Men (%)**
Did you receive some support (1 = Yes)	94.19	91.64	94.59
Forms of support received:	*All (n=159)*	*Female (n=22)*	*Male (n=137)*
▪ Cash/Money	28.93	22.73	29.93
▪ Writing political manifesto	22.01	22.73	21.9
▪ Fuel to facilitate movements	5.66	13.64	4.38
▪ Printing of campaign posters	8.18	9.09	8.03
▪ Training in public speaking	7.55	9.09	7.30
▪ Sensitization about election processes	2.52	9.09	1.46
▪ Voluntary campaigns	14.47	9.09	15.33
▪ Payment of nomination fees	1.89	4.55	1.46
▪ Voluntary monitoring of polling stations to curb cheating	3.14	0.00	3.65
▪ Means of transport e.g. cars, motorcycles	3.14	0.00	3.65
▪ Items for donation to voters (e.g. local brew, balls, foodstuffs)	0.63	0.00	0.73
▪ Moral support in form of e.g. ideas, counselling	0.63	0.00	0.73
▪ Payment for radio talk shows	1.26	0.00	1.46

Source: 2020 Women in Local Governments Survey – Key Informant Interviews

Men and women face similar challenges during the pre-election period. The critical challenges encountered by the surveyed leaders included: the high cost of conducting campaigns coupled with the lack of funds, voters demanding money in exchange for votes, the negative campaign from the political opponents, poor road network which complicated travels, limited time for campaigning and covering the entire constituency and use of abusive language and bullying (Table 6). The challenge of the high cost of campaigns was cited by relatively more men (68.5%) than women (43.5%) probably because men spent more than women on campaigns, as shown in Figure 2. Among the key challenges reported by comparatively more women than men are negative campaigns from political opponents and use of abusive language and bullying - these are likely to deter some women (the faint-hearted ones) from participating in politics. Participants in one focus group discussion observed;

Politics is harsh and yet women tend to give up easily. For example, during political campaigns, men ridicule and demean women; use vulgar and abusive language; and expose ugly secrets about their female opponents with intent to damage their credibility.

Table 6	Challenges experienced during pre-election period (% of cases)		
Challenge encountered	All (n = 166)	Women (n=23)	men (n=143)
High cost of campaigning	65.06	43.48	68.53
Voters demand money	39.16	39.13	39.16
Negative campaign from political opponents	33.13	39.13	32.17
Poor road network	21.69	21.74	21.68
Limited time to traverse the electorate	19.88	21.74	19.58
Abusive language and bullying	19.28	21.74	18.88
Voters lacked voter education	18.07	17.39	18.18
Negative attitude towards a candidate's party	14.46	17.39	13.99
Tribalism and segregation	10.84	13.04	10.49
Monetised politics from opponents with money	10.84	8.70	11.19
Hatred from people in the community	8.43	8.70	8.39
Intimidation from other contestants	6.63	13.04	6.99
Electoral malpractices	6.63	4.35	6.99
Intimidation from the incumbent	6.02	0.0	6.99
Negative support from family members	4.82	13.04	3.50
Voters lining up behind candidates scared off some voters	4.82	4.35	4.90
Men see women as inferior	4.82	17.39	2.80
Not being married at the time of the campaign	1.20	8.70	3.50
Too much rain - disrupts campaign programs	0.60	0.0	0.70

Source: 2020 Women in Local Governments Survey – Key Informant Interviews

During the survey, the political leaders were asked to estimate their money on the most recent political contests. The average expenditures by category of leader are presented in **Figure 3.** Across all positions, women spent less money on campaigns compared to men. The difference in spending by men and women on campaigns is remarkable at LCV Chairperson Level; on average, women spent 27.5 million shillings while men spent 70 million shillings. This shows that men control resources, and they are willing to invest in standing for political leadership heavily. This finding corroborates the fact that political campaigns are highly monetised, especially at higher positions.

Figure 3	Estimated amount of money spent on the most recent elections
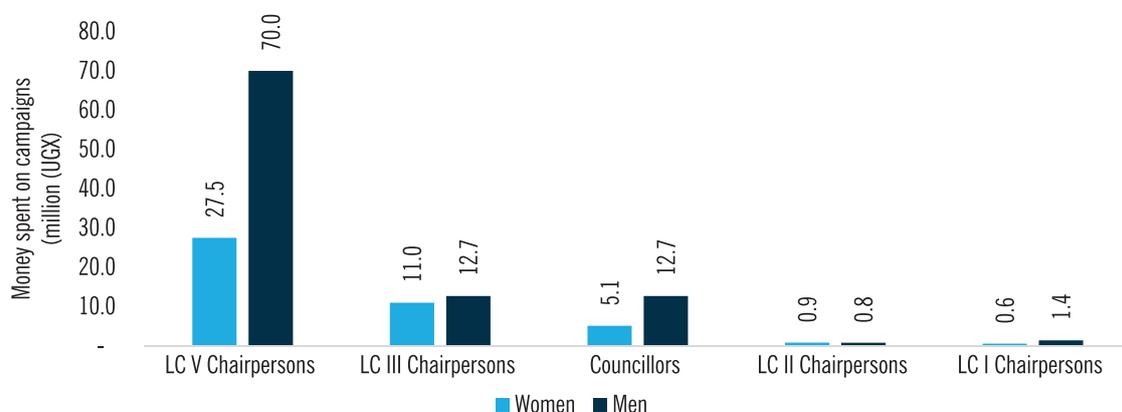
Source: 2020 Women in Local Governments Survey – Key Informant Interviews

4.4 Reasons for the unbalanced political representation in LGs

Earlier in section 3.1, we noted that Uganda is yet to achieve gender parity in access to political decision power in LG. During the survey, the key informants were asked to explain why women generally occupy disproportionately fewer political positions in LGs. The most frequently cited reasons were; women have a tendency of underrating themselves and hence shy away from participating in politics (reported by 42% of the respondents), some husbands refuse/stop their wives from participating in politics (reported by approximately 40% of the respondents), and women fear to compete with men for directly elected positions (reported by about 27% of the respondents).

Other factors reported by key informants to hinder women's participation in councils and politics generally included the following: compared to men, women are less literate; women have a lot of care roles (e.g.

pregnancy and child care) to attend to, and so engaged in politics is considered an extra responsibility; and the cultural belief that leadership is meant for men only and that it is deemed unfeminine for women. The study findings agree with Rameez (2018), who found that women shun active politics due to biological, economic, psychological, religious and political factors.

Participants in focus group discussions were asked to give their reasons for the lower number of women than men holding political positions in LGs. The reasons mentioned by FGD participants are similar to those cited by the key informants and are presented in **Table 8.** The most commonly reported limitations that women face were: lack of or no control over the money needed to facilitate the campaigns, fear that they (women) are not good enough to convince the voters, unsupportive husbands who believe that politics will make their wives disrespectful to them, the general public belief that men are better leaders than women, low levels of educational attainment, and the burden of

Table 8	Reasons that limit women's participation in LG politics
Reasons that limit women's participation in politics	% FGDs reporting (n=65)
Lack of money to facilitate the campaigns - politics is highly monetised, yet men usually control resources	69.2
Fear, low self-esteem & shyness — some women lack skills in public speech & fear that they may not be able to convince voters	56.9
Unsupportive husbands - men discourage or stop their wives from contesting for fear that when they win, they will become disrespectful	56.9
Culture & the belief that men are better leaders discourage women	50.8
Low levels of education attainment	47.7
Overburdened by domestic work and have no time to engage in politics	33.9
Believe that women cannot handle challenging issues and make key decisions independently	18.5
Fear of domestic violence that is likely to ensue from husbands	15.4
Fear of failure - women are afraid that if they contest, they might lose, or if they win, they may fail to serve the people satisfactorily	13.9
For so long, politics has been dominated by men, so women fear to race against already established male opponents	12.3
Many women these days are not married & society judges unmarried women harshly — they are assumed to be reckless and irresponsible	7.7
Politics is a dirty game, and so women should steer clear of politics	6.2
Politics is harsh & yet women tend to give up easily — it's not for the faint-hearted[1]	6.2
Tribalism - if a woman is not from the area, people do not vote for her	1.5
Sexual exploitation in exchange for votes	1.5
Poor performance of previous women leaders	1.5

1   For example, during campaigns men ridicule/demean women & use vulgar and abusive language & expose ugly secrets about their female opponents — this is intended to damage the credibility of women.
Source: 2020 Women in Local Governments Survey — Key informant interviews

shouldering most of the domestic responsibilities. The belief that men are better leaders compared to women was reported in at least half (50.8%) of the surveyed communities. This belief (social norm) discourages some women from contesting for political leadership positions where men are contenders. In countries like Burundi, Rwanda, Somalia and Sudan, persuasive storytelling by women leaders has proved effective in shifting social norms about women's public and political participation (Care, 2020).

Our finding regarding the lack of money to facilitate campaigns is in line with Kakumba (2010) conclusion who found that poverty had reinforced the widespread 'monetisation' of local elections - those with money buy their way into power using material things like sugar, soap and salt. This could partly explain why leaders may not feel obliged to represent their communities effectively after they have bribed their way into office.

4.5 Women's access to decision-making power in LGs

To assess the extent to which women effectively contribute to decision making in LGs, we examined the gender composition of the executive committees at the district level – this is where decisions are made. Findings indicate that men dominate the executive

committees. Of all the male councillors interviewed, about 96 percent were executive committee members compared to 83 percent for the women councillors (**Table 9**). Having fewer women than men on the executive committees implies that women may not effectively contribute to decision making – the few might be out-voiced by their male counterparts.

4.6 Perceived performance of political leaders in LGs

A clear understanding of their official roles and responsibilities is necessary for leaders to serve the people they represent effectively. We attempted to assess whether leaders in their various positions understand what is expected of them. Detailed findings disaggregated by category of leader and sex are presented in **Table 10**. The fact that the leaders were able to mention their roles and responsibilities is an indication that they know what is expected of them in the various capacities they serve. For the LCV Chairpersons, the most frequently reported roles and responsibilities were: to supervise and monitor both government and non-state programmes; plan, discuss and pass budgets; attend council meetings; communicate people's demands and concerns to the council; and foster and ensure security, law and order in the community. Other commonly reported roles by all

Table 9	Sex disaggregated composition of the executive committees		
Committee	**% who belong to the executive committees**		
	All councillors (n = 35)	**Women (n = 12)**	**Men (n = 23)**
Belong to a committee (1 = Yes)	91.43	83.33	95.65
Committee	*n=32*	*n=10*	*n=22*
▪ Finance & Administration	18.75	20.00	18.18
▪ Production & Marketing	18.75	30.00	13.64
▪ Health, Education & Sports	18.75	0.00	27.27
▪ Water & Works	21.88	20.00	22.73
▪ Other committees	21.88	30.00	18.18

Source: 2020 Women in Local Governments Survey – Key Informant Interviews

leaders except the LCV Chairpersons were sensitising communities about development issues, and serving as a link between the sub-county and district. Another role/responsibly mostly reported by LCI Chairpersons is to resolve conflicts such as land wrangles and theft. Similarly, we assessed community members' knowledge regarding the roles and responsibilities of their leaders; overall, their responses were pretty much similar to what the leaders stated, indicating that they truly understand what their leaders are meant to do while in office. Findings from FGDs are presented in **Annex 2**.

Having ascertained that the leaders understand their roles and responsibilities, they were asked to self-assess their performance. The perceived extent to which a leader can fulfil one's roles and responsibilities were also used as proxies for adequate representation. The findings presented in **Figure 4** indicate that comparatively more women (66.7%) than men (52.7%) rated themselves very well; that is, to a great extent, they fulfil their roles and responsibilities. Also, it is essential to highlight that no woman and a negligible percentage of men (1.4%) reported total failure to fulfil their roles and responsibilities as leaders.

Table 10	Assessing political leaders' knowledge of their roles & responsibilities			
Role/responsibility		**All**	**Women**	**Men**
Panel 1: LCV Chairpersons		**(n=8)**	**(n=2)**	**(n=6)**
Supervise and monitor both government and NGOs programmes		87.50	50.00	100.00
Attend council meetings		50.00		66.67
Plan, discuss and pass budgets		50.00	50.00	50.00
Foster and keep security, law and order		50.00	100.00	33.33
Communicate peoples demands/needs		37.50	100.00	16.67
Community sensitization on development issues		25.00	50.00	16.67
Monitor technical personnel		25.00		33.33
Resolve conflicts		12.50	50.00	
Panel 2: LC III Chairpersons		**(n=35)**	**(n=1)**	**(n=34)**
Supervise and monitor both government and NGOs programmes		80.00	100.00	79.41
Plan, discuss and pass budgets		54.29		55.88
Communicate peoples demands/needs		48.57	100.00	47.06
Community sensitisation on development issues		37.14		38.24
Attend council meetings		31.43		32.35
Foster and keep security, law and order		22.86		23.53
Resolve conflicts		14.29		14.71
Monitor technical personnel		14.29		14.71
The linkage between the sub-county and district		14.29		14.71
Uphold and protect the constitution		5.71		5.88
Panel 3: LC II Chairpersons		**(n=28)**	**(n=3)**	**(n=25)**
Resolve conflicts		78.57	100.00	76.00
Supervise and monitor both government and NGOs programmes		64.29	33.33	68.00
Community sensitisation on development issues		39.29		44.00
Foster and keep security, law and order		32.14		36.00
Communicate peoples demands/needs		25.00		28.00
Attend council meetings		17.86	33.33	16.00
Linkage between the sub-county and district		17.86	33.33	16.00
Plan, discuss and pass budgets		10.71	66.67	4.00
Uphold and protect the constitution		3.57		4.00

Role/responsibility	All	Women	Men
Panel 4: LC I Chairpersons	**(n=66)**	**(n=6)**	**(n=60)**
Resolve conflicts	63.64	83.33	61.67
Community sensitization on development issues	62.12	50.00	63.33
Foster and keep security, law and order	53.03	33.33	55.00
Communicate peoples demands/needs	51.52	50.00	51.67
Supervise and monitor both government and NGOs programmes	43.94	50.00	43.33
Linkage between the sub-county and district	21.21		20.00
Attend council meetings	10.61	33.33	8.33
Plan, discuss and pass budgets	6.06		6.67
Uphold and protect the constitution	6.06		5.00
Panel 5: Councilors	**(n=35)**	**(n=12)**	**(n=23)**
Supervise and monitor both government and NGOs programmes	80.00	75.00	82.61
Communicate peoples demands/needs	57.14	58.33	56.52
Plan, discuss and pass budgets	40.00	33.33	43.48
Community sensitization on development issues	37.14	50.00	30.43
Linkage between the sub-county and district	28.57	33.33	26.09
Attend council meetings	22.86	25.00	21.74
Foster and keep security, law and order	17.14	16.67	17.39
Resolve conflicts	8.57		13.04
Monitor technical personnel	8.57	8.33	8.70
Uphold and protect the constitution	5.71	8.33	4.35

Source: 2020 Women in Local Governments Survey – Key Informant Interviews

Figure 4	Self-rating on the extent of fulfilment of roles & responsibilities
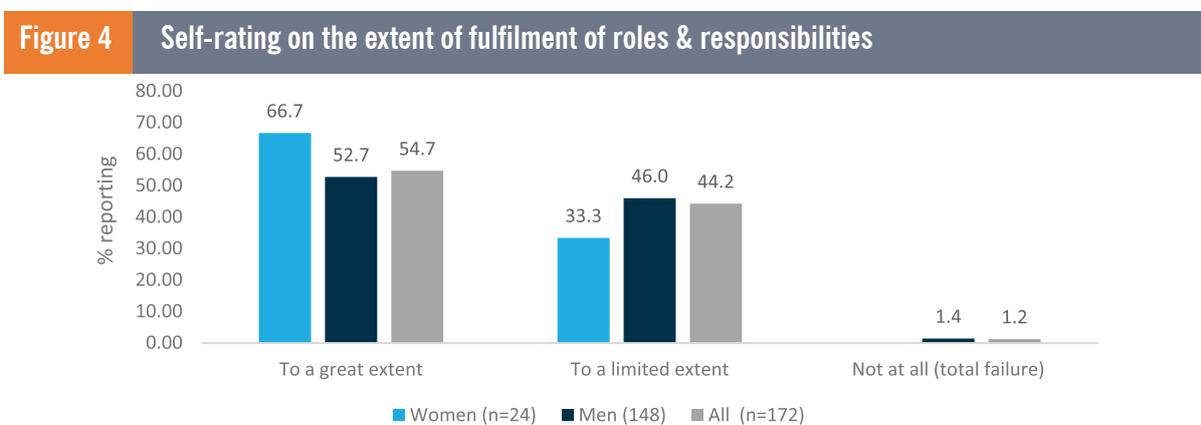
Source: 2020 Women in Local Governments Survey – Key informant interviews

All interviewed individual political leaders were also asked to provide their opinion about the general performance of men and women leaders; the findings are contrary to the self-reported performance presented in **Figure 5**. While with self-reported performance assessment, women leaders ranked themselves better than men. However, the results shown in Figure 4 indicate that male leaders are generally perceived to be better performers than women. When asked to comment on the performance of men and women political leaders,

at least 43 percent of the interviewed political leaders in LGs said to *a great extent, men fully and effectively undertake their roles and responsibilities* compared to about 39 percent of the respondents who gave the same report about women leaders. Correspondingly, more respondents (about 3%) believed that women leaders have failed to undertake their roles and responsibilities than those (about 2%) who said the same about men leaders in LGs.

| Figure 5 | Perceived extent to which political leaders in LGs fulfil their mandates | 23 |
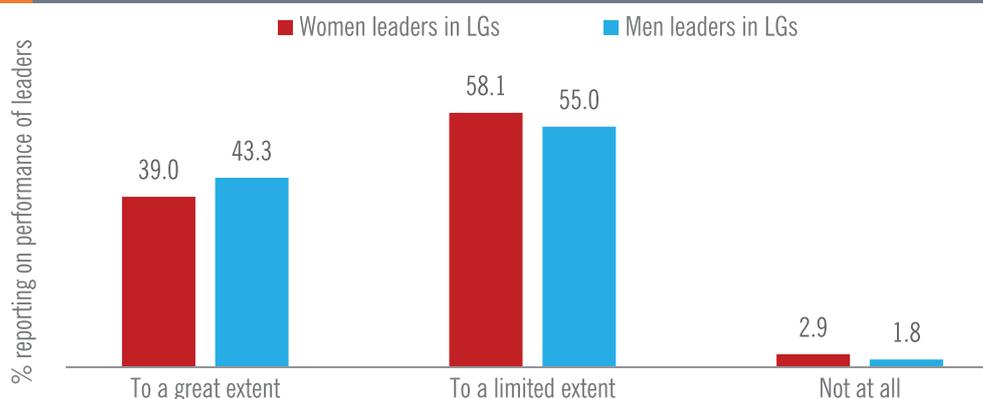
Source: 2020 Women in Local Governments Survey – Key informant interviews

The survey respondents (key informants) were asked to give reasons why they thought female leaders do not perform as well as their male counterparts in undertaking their designated roles and responsibilities. The following were the most frequently mentioned reasons: women leaders are shy and hence fail to actively participate in council meetings (reported by about 45% of the respondents); women leaders have many other competing commitments such as child care which hinder them from giving full service (reported by 27.6% of the survey respondents); men tend to dominate the council meetings - they are relatively more assertive and usually push through their agendas (reported by 18.4% of the respondents), and women have a tendency of skipping council meetings hence not effectively contributing to decision-making (reported by 15.3% of the respondents).

To check whether or not the leaders were not overrating their performance, community members, through focus group discussions, were asked to rate their leaders' performance. The results presented in Table 11 are to some degree consistent with the self-reported performance where we noted that generally, there are fewer women than men (except for councillors) who have completely failed to fulfil their roles and responsibilities. Generally, LC I Chairpersons were ranked better than leaders at higher administrative levels; the majority (77.5% and 67.4% of the FGD participants reported that women and men LCI Chairpersons, respectively, have a great extent fulfilled their roles and responsibilities. All respondents were satisfied with women leaders' performance at the LC II level compared to a great extent (about 38%) who reported that male LC II Chairpersons have totally failed. The majority of the respondents considered both men and women LC III Chairpersons to be fulfilling their roles and responsibilities to a limited extent. Generally compared with other leaders, Councillors were ranked the poorest performers. More than half (51%) of the FGD participants said that women councillors had totally failed to fulfil their roles and responsibilities. Similarly, 40 percent of the FGD participants reported that male councillors, too, had failed. Indeed, in several focus group discussions, participants lamented;

Once elected, Councillors do not come back to the community to gather people's views on the challenges thay are facing. They completely abandon their roles and responsibilities and only return at the time of the next campaigns.

Table 11	Performance of men and women leaders by LG position as perceived by the people			
Position	Sex of leader	% reporting on the level of the leader's performance		
		To a great extent	To a limited extent	Not at all
LC I Chairpersons	Women	77.5	22.5	0.0
	Men	67.4	30.9	2.5
LC II Chairpersons	Women	100.0	0.0	0.0
	Men	29.6	32.7	37.9
LC III Chairpersons	Women	5.0	92.5	2.5
	Men	37.7	43.8	18.7
LC V Chairpersons	Men	31.4	28.4	40.4
Councillors	Women	15.7	33.1	51.2
	Men	20.4	39.6	40.0

Source: 2020 Women in Local Governments Survey - FGDs

On the other hand, the surveyed political leaders who reported that they had managed to perform their roles and responsibilities were asked to cite the significant factors they attributed to the registered success; the findings are presented in **Table 12**. The critical factors mentioned by the different categories of leaders were similar, and they are teamwork with fellow political leaders; leaders' ability to mobilise and sensitise communities about projects/programmes, community support and cooperation during project implementation, leaders' love and personal commitment to serve the people, leadership experience, reasonable funding from the central government and zero tolerance to corruption.

Similarly, community members were asked to give the primary reasons that have enabled their political leaders to fulfil their roles and responsibilities, at least to some extent; the reasons cited were generally the same for all categories of leaders. Moreover, some of the reasons cited by individual leaders were indeed among those mentioned by community members. The most frequently cited success factors by communities: the leaders' ability to mobilise and coordinate people to participate in government projects/programmes; being cooperative and maintaining good working relations with the people; having good working relations with fellow leaders; being approachable, listening to

Table 12	Factors that have enabled political leaders to perform their roles and responsibilities to some extent				
Success factor	Percent responses				
	LC V Chairpersons (n = 8)	LC III Chairpersons (n = 35)	LC II Chairpersons (n = 28)	LC I Chairpersons (n = 66)	Councillors (n = 34)
Team work with fellow political leaders	87.50	57.14	50.00	39.39	58.82
Reasonable funding from the central government	12.50	22.86	10.71	6.06	32.35
Good mobilisation and sensitisation skills	25.00	57.14	46.43	36.36	38.24
Zero tolerance to corruption and bribery		5.71	14.29	16.67	11.76
Relevant experience (e.g. in writing good project proposals)	12.50	14.29	10.71	9.09	5.88
Community support and cooperation	25.00	51.43	50.00	63.64	41.18
Love and commitment to serve	25.00	22.86	17.86	27.27	26.47

Source: 2020 Women in Local Governments Survey — Key informant interviews

people's views and taking the necessary action; always attending council meetings; supportive communities; being accessible and available to offer services - most of them reside within the community; being honest; long experience in the same positions; and funding from both local revenue collections and the central government to support project implementation (**Annex 3**).

4.7 Factors that limit the performance of political leaders in LGs

We noted in **Figure 5** that the majority of the political leaders in LGs (both men and women) could fulfil their designated roles and responsibilities only to a limited extent. A few others fail entirely. According to discussions held with selected political leaders, the key factors that limit the performance of political leaders in LGs are: limited funds needed for operations and project implementation, lack of transport means which hinders monitoring of ongoing activities, delayed release of funds to LGs, which sometimes leads to implementation failure, lack of cooperation among the people in the communities, and misunderstandings among political leaders which frustrate or stall project implementation processes (**Table 13**). The insufficient central government transfers, for example, not only reduce the LG leaders' capacity to integrate communities into local development projects but also affects the LGs' responsiveness to community needs

Table 13	Challenges that limit leaders' ability to play effectively do their job		
	% responses		
Challenges	All (n = 172)	Women (n = 24)	Men (n = 148)
Limited funds for operations & project implementation	51.7	50.0	52.0
Lack of transport means to monitor community activities	44.8	29.2	47.3
Delayed release of funds from the central government	25.0	29.2	24.3
Lack of cooperation from community members	17.4	25.0	16.2
Misunderstandings among leaders	15.7	12.5	16.2
Poor attitude of other people within the community	9.3	8.3	9.5
Council members are demotivated – no salary	9.3	8.3	9.5
Sickness	8.7	4.2	9.5
Lack of enough information on the local government Act	7.6	4.2	8.1
Wide area of operation	7.0	8.3	6.8
Poor relationship with the technical personnel	5.8	12.5	4.7
Lack of stationery	5.2		6.1
Lack of office space	5.2	4.2	5.4
Lack of technical personnel to consult	4.1		4.7
Lack of Training	4.1		4.7
Lack of refresher training opportunities	3.5		4.1
Diversion of funds meant for projects	3.5	12.5	2.0
Low academic qualifications	2.9		3.4
Resistance against some projects	2.3	4.2	2.0
Corruption at every level of the local government	1.7		2.0
Insecurity e.g. cattle raiding	1.2	4.2	0.7
Gender discrimination-women undermined	1.2	8.3	

Source: 2020 Women in Local Governments Survey – Key informant interviews

According to the communities, the percentages of men and women leaders who have completely failed to fulfil their roles and responsibilities are generally low. Community members were asked to cite reasons for the total failure of some leaders. The most frequently reported reasons for both men and women leaders are given below;

(i)   Some leaders are rarely on the ground and do not gather information on people's challenges, needs and possible solutions. Once elected, they do not come to the community to pick people's views on the challenges they are facing. They abandon their roles and responsibilities and only return at the time of campaigns.

(ii) Some leaders never provide feedback to community members after council meetings. Some FGD participants lamented that;
"Some leaders (especially councillors stop attending council meetings and receiving their allowances, they never organise meetings to provide feedback from the meetings."

(iii) Practising nepotism when distributing resources and jobs leaves out competent persons and leads to inadequate service provision. In Kiryandongo district, for example, it was reported in one of the FGDs that;
"When a technical school was constructed in the area (Kiryandongo I cell), relatives and friends of the councillors were chosen to enrol for courses & others to take up administrative jobs at the school; Also, NUSAF inputs (cattle) were given to relatives of councillors."

(iv) Some leaders are not approachable, confine themselves to their offices and do not cooperate with the people in the community.

(v)   Some leaders are corrupt and misappropriate project funds and other resources during project implementation. For example, members of focus group discussions held in a specific district reported that mango seedlings were purposively delivered for women's SAACOs. However, the councillors did not distribute the SACCOs seedlings to the intended beneficiaries; instead, they sold them for personal gain.

(vi) Some leaders have failed to exercise fairness in implementing projects in the community; some areas are continuously left out (neglected) in service delivery.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

This survey report follows the baseline survey of women in local governments conducted by the Uganda Bureau of Statistics in 2017. The specific objectives were: (i) To update and track progress towards attainment of gender parity in political representation at LG level; (ii) To assess the extent to which women in LGs are effectively contributing to local decision-making processes; and (iii) To provide a deeper understanding of the factors that hinder elected women in LGs from effectively fulfilling their mandate. The objectives were addressed using LG elections data from the Electoral Commission and complementary primary data from a survey.

In line with the first objective, we note that Uganda is yet to attain gender parity in political representation at the local government level. Evidence from the available LG elections indicates that the number of seats held by women as a percentage of the total seats held by women and men in the selected districts was estimated at 46 percent in 2016 – this is an improvement from about 44 percent in 2011. The dominance of men cuts across all political positions. The most frequently cited reasons by key informants are; women have a tendency of underrating themselves and hence shy away from participating in politics, some husbands stop their wives from participating in politics, women fear to compete with men for directly elected positions, lack of or no control over the money needed to facilitate the campaigns, the general belief that men are better leaders than women, low levels of educational attainment, and the burden of shouldering most of the domestic responsibilities.

Under objective 2, we assessed the extent to which women effectively contribute to decision making in LGs partly by examining the gender composition of the executive committees at the district level where decisions are made. Survey findings indicate that men dominate the executive committees. Of all the male councillors interviewed, about 96 percent were

executive committee members compared to 83 percent for the women councillors. Additionally, the extent to which a leader can fulfil one's roles and responsibilities was also used to proxy for adequate representation. Performance assessment was done at three levels: self-assessment, assessment of leaders by the key informants, and assessment of the leaders by the communities. Results from self-assessments indicate that comparatively more women (66.7%) than men (52.7%) rated themselves very well; to a great extent, they fulfil their roles and responsibilities. Consistent with the self-reported performance, communities' assessment indicated that generally, fewer women than men (except for councillors) have wholly failed to fulfil their roles and responsibilities. Contrary to the two levels mentioned above of assessment results, perceptions provided by individual political leaders about men and women leaders' general performance indicate that men have performed better than women. At least 43 percent of the interviewed political leaders in LGs said to a great extent, men fully and effectively undertake their roles and responsibilities compared to about 39 percent of the respondents who gave the same report about women leaders.

Finally, in line with the third objective, the key factors that limit the performance of both male and female political leaders in LGs are: limited funds needed for operations and project implementation, lack of transport means which hinders monitoring of ongoing activities, delayed release of funds to LGs which sometimes leads to implementation failure, lack of cooperation among the people in the communities, and misunderstandings among political leaders frustrate or stall project implementation processes. However, the fundamental causes of poor performance according to the communities are: some leaders are rarely on the ground and do not gather information on people's challenges, needs & possible solutions; others never provide feedback to community members after council meetings; some leaders practice nepotism while distributing resources and jobs, hence excluding competent persons and contributing to poor service

provision; some leaders are not approachable - they confine themselves to their offices and do not cooperate with the people in the community; others are corrupt and misappropriate project funds and other resources during project implementation, and some leaders have failed to exercise fairness and equity in the implementation of projects in the community (some areas are continuously left out (neglected).

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the key findings of the study, we propose the following recommendations for policy consideration;

a) **Design and support implementation of a mentorship program:** A mentorship program should be designed to build women's confidence and interest in the contest for political positions. The beneficiaries should be women who aspire to become politicians, while the mentors should be other women with successful political careers. Women should understand that holding a political post is a call to community service that should not compromise domestic relations in the mentorship program. Additionally, during mentorship, men should be encouraged to participate.

b) **Create a special fund for women who wish to join politics:** Given that lack of or no control over resources (especially finances) is one of the critical limitations to participation in politics, the government should create a special fund where women who wish to join politics can access credit at a subsidised interest rate. This would enable women to afford the must-have requirements such as nomination fees and printing of campaign posters. To level ground for both men and women, regardless of one's financial stand, Governments should demonetise politics – politics should not be a game of money. Political contestants found guilty of "buying votes" should face the law.

c) **Strengthen programmes that promote women's education attainment**: Since low levels of education, attainment disqualifies some women from contesting for political posts

and limits the confidence of elected women leaders to contribute effectively to decision-making at council meetings, programmes that further encourage Girl child education, second-chance education and adult education should also be promoted.

d) **Launch campaigns using persuasive storytelling to shift social norms:** There is a need to change people's negative narratives about women's participation in politics, which can be achieved through campaigns. Campaigns through storytelling to change attitudes and beliefs about women's political participation has been tested and proven effective in Burundi, Rwanda, Somalia and Sudan. In these countries, mass media campaigns using radio, social media, and events provided spaces for successful women leaders to share experiences (success stories). The outcome was that many significant people (including husbands of married women) developed a positive attitude towards women's political participation and became more supportive than a deterrent.

e) **Strengthen avenues through which leaders and communities can interact:** Ongoing efforts by the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) such as Barazas should be organised more frequently and at various administrative levels in local governments to enable people to give views receive feedback from their leaders. Reporting by leaders should further be encouraged through radio talk shows, and it should be supported as part of accountability to the people. The government should also increase facilitation for or provide better transport means to LG leaders, especially at the lowest administrative levels, to conduct field visits and monitor government programmes throughout their areas of jurisdiction.

f) **Encourage wise voting:** Following the complaint that some leaders are not approachable and do not cooperate with the people, the latter should be educated/empowered not to vote such leaders again when their term of office expires.

g) **Enhance transparency in project implementation:** OPM should strengthen its oversight and reach out roles to curb corruption and misappropriation of project resources. With the local leaders, OPM should communicate to target beneficiaries what is due to them and provide a reporting channel that people can use in case their leaders misbehave.

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ANNEXES

Annex 1:	A comparison of characteristics of female and male political leaders in LGs		
Characteristic	**Women (n=24)**	**Men (n=148)**	**ALL (n=172)**
Age (years)	51.04)	47.91	48.35
Highest level of education attained (%)	*n=24*	*n=148*	
▪ No formal education	4.17	8.78	8.14
▪ Primary	20.83	31.76	30.23
▪ Secondary – O'level	45.83	27.70	30.23
▪ Secondary – A'level	8.33	5.41	5.81
▪ Tertiary (Diploma or Certificate)	12.50	12.16	12.21
▪ University	8.33	13.51	12.79
▪ Adult education for Karimojongs		0.68	0.58
Marital status: (%)	*Women*	*Men*	*All*
▪ Married – monogamous	54.17	61.49	60.47
▪ Married – polygamous	20.83	37.16	34.88
▪ Divorced or separated	4.17	0.00	0.58
▪ Widow/widower	20.83	0.68	3.49
▪ Never married	0.00	0.68	0.58
Main occupation before joining politics: (%)	*Women*	*Men*	*Total (n=172)*
▪ Farming	29.20	52.70	29.17
▪ Business	20.80	15.54	20.83
▪ Teaching	16.70	10.81	16.67
▪ Civil servant	16.70	4.73	16.67
▪ NGO worker	4.20	4.05	4.17
▪ Security personnel	4.20	3.38	4.17
▪ Banker	4.20	2.03	4.17
▪ Construction	0.00	1.35	0.00
▪ Health worker	4.20	0.68	4.17
▪ Driver	0.00	1.35	0.00
▪ Religious leader	0.00	0.68	0.00
▪ Carpentry	0.00	0.68	0.00
▪ Politician	0.00	0.68	0.00
▪ Student	0.00	0.68	0.00
▪ Engineer	0.00	0.68	0.00
Duration of stay in politics (years)	*Women*	*Men*	*Total (n=172)*
▪ LC V Chairpersons	5.50	7.83	7.25
▪ LC III Chairpersons	4.00	7.18	7.09
▪ LC II Chairpersons	8.67	6.64	6.86
▪ LC I Chairpersons	10.00	7.97	8.15
▪ Councillors	9.00	6.61	9.00
▪ All positions	11.09	7.34	7.85

Characteristic	Women (n=24)	Men (n=148)	ALL (n=172)
Term leader is currently serving: (%)	*Women (n=172)*	*Men*	*Total*
▪ First	41.67	58.50	56.14
▪ Second	16.67	17.01	16.96
▪ Third	8.33	10.88	10.53
▪ Forth & more	33.33	13.61	16.37
Political party affiliation at the time of most recent election (%)	*Women*	*Men*	*Total (n=172) Male*
▪ Independent	0.00	12.50	10.78
▪ NRM	91.30	79.86	81.44
▪ FDC	4.35	4.86	4.79
▪ DP	4.35	2.08	2.40
▪ JEEMA	0.00	0.69	0.60
Have close relatives in politics (1 = Yes)	62.50	53.38	54.65
Relationship with close relatives in politics:	*Women (n=15)*	*Men (n=79)*	*Total (n=94)*
▪ Parents	33.33	36.71	36.17
▪ Siblings	40	39.24	39.36
▪ Spouse	13.33	8.86	9.57
▪ Children	13.33	5.06	6.38
▪ Other relatives	0	10.13	8.51

Source: 2020 Women in Local Governments Survey – Key Informant Interviews

Annex 2 Roles and responsibilities of political leaders in LGs as reported by the people in the communities

Role/responsibility	LC V Chairpersons (n=63)	LC III Chairpersons (n=65)	LC II Chairpersons (n=62)	LC I Chairpersons (n=65)	Councilors (n=62)
Settle/resolve disputes/conflicts	4.76	16.92	72.58	76.92	8.06
Ensure there is security in the area	7.94	21.54	16.13	41.54	6.45
Mobilise people to participate in programmes	3.17	4.62	8.06	24.62	6.45
Lobby & bring services closer to people	30.16	26.15	8.06	20.00	25.81
Represent the people at council meetings	7.94	10.77	9.68	18.46	43.55
Organise/coordinate meetings	3.17	15.38	11.29	15.38	8.06
Receive & disseminate information to the people & other leaders	4.76	13.85	8.06	13.85	16.13
Oversee & monitor implementation of government programmes	61.90	46.15	16.13	9.23	32.26
Gather people's needs & views, & present them at council meetings	4.76	7.69	4.84	9.23	25.81
Ensure fair distribution of development projects/services throughout the area	22.22	13.85			8.06
Link people to service providers	14.29	9.23	9.68	7.69	9.68
Plan and budget for funds allocations to projects received from the central government	14.29	12.31	3.23	3.08	9.68
Monitor usage of budgets	14.29	6.15	1.61		4.84
Give people recommendation letters	1.59	1.54	3.23	7.69	
Create awareness on the performance of government projects	6.35	9.23	8.06	7.69	12.90
Endorse (sign & stamp) official documents		1.54	1.61	4.62	
Refer difficult cases to higher administrative levels	1.59	1.54	4.84	3.08	
Discuss & pass byelaws		4.62		1.54	4.84
Serves as a witness during land transactions/sales			3.23		
Receive visitors who are intending to implement projects in the area	1.59	1.54			3.23
Approve budgets & projects/programmes	1.59	1.54	1.61		6.45
Supervise the different leaders below his/her level	1.59	1.54	1.61		
Do not know	3.17	3.08	3.23		

Source: 2020 Women in Local Governments Survey - Focus Group Discussions

Annex 3 Community perceptions about factors that have enabled some political leaders to perform their roles and responsibilities to some extent

Enabling factor	LC I Chairpersons	LC II Chairpersons	LC III Chairpersons	LC V Chairpersons	Councillors
Panel A: For women leaders					
Observations	**n = 5**	**n = 3**	**n = 4**	**n = 1**	**n = 28**
Good at mobilising & coordinating people to participate in government programmes	20.00		25.00		10.71
Good at sensitising people & creating awareness about programmes	20.00				14.29
Being cooperative & maintaining good working relations	80.00		25.00		28.57
Hard work & working with people	20.00				14.29
Being available to offer services e.g. stamping documents	20.00				10.71
Good working relationship with fellow political leaders			50.00		17.86
Is open-minded & receptive to support from technocrats			25.00		3.57
Being approachable, listening to people's views & acting on them accordingly	20.00	66.67	25.00		25.00
Ability to lobby	20.00				7.14
Always attending council meetings		33.33		100.00	25.00
Willingness and determination to serve under hardships			25.00		3.57
Knowledge of roles & responsibilities					7.14
Courage to work without fear or favour					3.57
Residing in the community					7.14
Involvement of key stakeholders in problem-solving					3.57
Supportive community	20.00	33.33			17.86
Honesty	20.00	33.33			3.57
Being educated					3.57
Support from government					3.57
Long experience in the same position	20.00	33.33	25.00		
Panel B: For men leaders					
Observations	**n = 58**	**n = 41**	**n = 48**	**n = 39**	**n = 34**
Approachable and friendly with all the people	20.69	9.76	8.33	2.56	5.88
Cooperates with people & other leaders in project implementation	18.97	21.95	27.08	20.51	5.88
Consults before taking any decision - rational in decision making	12.07	4.88	4.17	2.56	11.76

Enabling factor	LC I Chairpersons	LC II Chairpersons	LC III Chairpersons	LC V Chairpersons	Councillors
Support from the community & fellow leaders	12.07	14.63	14.58	5.13	8.82
Accessible – resident of the area/always on ground	10.34	7.32	8.33		17.65
Proper coordination & regular meetings	10.34	2.44	6.25	2.56	5.88
Truthful/honest and respectful	8.62	9.76	6.25	5.13	
Educated & knows his roles and responsibilities	8.62	2.44	4.17	2.56	8.82
Fair & just	6.90		4.17	5.13	5.88
He is patriotic & willing to serve people	6.90		4.17		
Not corrupt	5.17	2.44	10.42	7.69	
Availability of means of transport	5.17		6.25	5.13	8.82
Good at mobilisation when there are programs	5.17	2.44	4.17	5.13	5.88
Not money-minded	3.45				
Still interested in leadership & so works hard	3.45	4.88	2.08		5.88
Good communication & mobilisation skills	3.45	4.88	6.25	5.13	2.94
Good at solving conflicts objectively & fairly	3.45	19.51		2.56	
Male Political leaders can control themselves unlike women	1.72				2.94
Detests bad habits e.g. gambling	1.72				
He is not tribalistic	1.72			5.13	
Good at giving advice	1.72			2.56	
A leader and a good administrator	1.72	7.32	4.17	7.69	
Good at identifying and representing peoples' needs & views	1.72	7.32	4.17	2.56	2.94
Lobbying for development projects & attracting funding	1.72			5.13	2.94
Good at monitoring of implementation of government programs	1.72		6.25	12.82	
Funding from local revenue and central government to undertake projects	1.72	2.44	6.25	17.95	
Provides information to the people e.g. through radio talk shows	1.72	2.44		2.56	
Received induction/refresher training		2.44		2.56	11.76
Experienced – has been in office for many years				2.56	
Willingness to learn new ideas		2.44			
Men are tolerant					2.94

Source: 2020 Women in Local Governments Survey – Focus Group Discussions

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