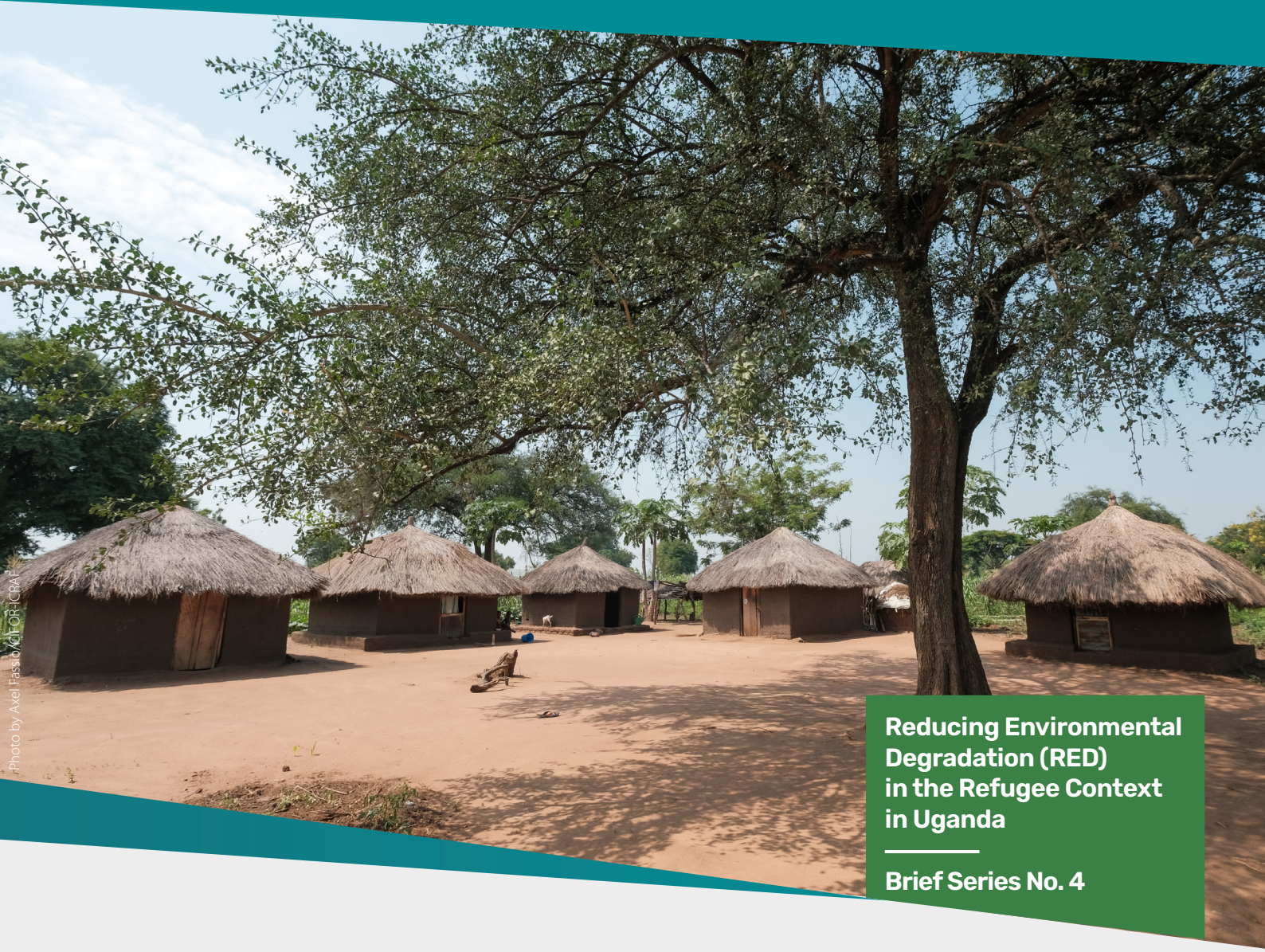

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Reducing Environmental Degradation (RED) in the Refugee Context in Uganda

Brief Series No. 4

Capacity development for local leaders in gender integration and enhancing women's participation in energy, environment and climate resilience programmes in refugee settings in Uganda

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CIFOR | World Agroforestry | Enabel | JEEP Joint Energy and Environment Projects | Save the Children | USDA NIFA | PennState College of Agricultural Sciences

Summary

This brief reports on the delivery of a training package for capacity development on gender integration and enhancing women's participation in energy, environment and climate initiatives in refugee settings in Uganda. The content of capacity development material was informed by studies in gender analysis and capacity needs assessments conducted by ICRAF and partners in the Reducing Environmental Degradation in the Refugee Context (RED) project, implemented in five refugee hosting districts: Adjumani, Kiryandongo, Madi-Okollo, Terego and Yumbe. During the research phase, key informant interviews and focus group discussions were conducted. These targeted engagement and consultations with district and sub-county level government technicians, political leaders and other stakeholders, including representatives from the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), the private sector, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs), refugee welfare councils (RWCs), and vulnerable groups (including people living with disabilities (PWD), young people and the elderly).

Key challenges limiting gender integration in energy, environment and climate resilience activities include limited knowledge about gender mainstreaming and a low number of women in leadership roles in environmental and natural resource management (E&NRM). Men and women have important but differing roles in the use and management of natural resources; however, women's participation in both decision making and implementation is undervalued. The higher social status and political power that men enjoy blocks female participation in decision making forums; while division of roles and tasks by gender means both groups remain relatively uninformed about each other's needs and preferences. This is particularly problematic given that refugees are disproportionately female. Environmental degradation is a key challenge facing refugee hosting districts, where rapid growth in population increases the pressure on natural resources, especially in the supply of food, water, construction materials and energy, resulting into land degradation and increased vulnerability to climate change.

This brief presents the process of capacity development for government, refugee and host community leaders and other stakeholders in effective gender integration and increased women's participation in E&NRM and the associated governance structures. Gender mainstreaming in E&NRM not only fosters men's and women's ability to cope with environmental challenges but also highlights the underlying structural inequalities that require consideration to address the disproportionate impacts of the climate crisis on vulnerable groups as well as the environment. This brief's recommendations are directed at the district and local government authorities responsible for addressing environmental degradation, inadequate access to sustainable cooking energy, and the many climate-change related challenges.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Uganda hosts the largest number of refugees and asylum seekers in Africa of the 1,741,331 hosted, 51.3% are female and 48.6% are male, while 79% are women and children. This year alone (2024) saw more than 129,857 new arrivals, including 25,134 births, registered in Uganda (UNHCR 2024). An influx of refugees into the refugee-hosting districts that border with South Sudan and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has placed significant strain on natural resources, particularly woody biomass to meet cooking energy and construction needs. This has led to considerable landscape degradation.

Women and girls interact more with natural resources as they are responsible for the collection of water, fuel wood, wild food plants and harvested crops, among other items. It is uncommon for them to receive economic recognition for such household responsibilities; while women and girls are also at increased risk of gender-based violence (GBV) during collection activities, particularly if long distances are involved.

Surveys conducted by Save the Children and ICRAF (Save the Children 2022; Kyomuhendo et al. 2024) highlight significant gaps when it comes to gender integration in E&NRM, as well as low participation from women in natural resource coordination structures. Surveys identified challenges to include:

- Inadequate knowledge of gender integration in E&NRM.
- Limited numbers of women in technical and decision-making positions.
- Insufficient funding.
- Poor coordination and reporting mechanisms.
- Weak monitoring and evaluation processes.

However, the presence of supportive technical and political leaders, the existence of gender responsive policies, and the availability of development partners all present valuable opportunities to advocate for gender integration in E&NRM.

1.2 About the Reducing Environmental Degradation in the Refugee Context in Uganda (RED) project

The project, which falls under CIFOR-ICRAF's Refugee-Hosting Engagement Landscape programme, aims to reduce environmental degradation as well as enhance environmental protection, forest restoration and sustainable energy for displaced populations and host communities in the districts of Adjumani, Madi-Okollo, Terego, Kiryandongo and Yumbe. The project is implemented by a consortium made up of the International Centre for Research in Agroforestry (ICRAF), also known as World Agroforestry, which has now merged with Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR); Joint Energy and Environment Projects (JEEP); and Enabel, under the leadership of Save the Children International. With funding from the European Union Trust Fund, the project was implemented between 2021 and 2024. Technical support for gender integration was provided by Ag Sciences Global at Pennsylvania State University's College of Agricultural Sciences, which collaborated with ICRAF; while funding also came from the United States Department of Agriculture – National Institute of Food and Agriculture (USDA-NIFA), and Hatch Appropriations of the United States Government. Capacity needs identified in previous project outputs – a brief on capacity needs in gender integration (Brief 2), and a gender respective action plan (Brief 3) – Kyomuhendo et al. (2024) and Kobugabe et al. (2024) – informed capacity development for leaders in gender integration and enhanced women's participation in energy, environment and climate resilience in refugee settings in Uganda (discussed in the current brief).

1.3 Why capacity development in gender integration in energy, environment and climate resilience in refugee settings in Uganda

Capacity development refers to "the process through which individuals and organizations obtain, improve and retain the skills, knowledge, tools, equipment and other resources needed to do their jobs competently or to a greater capacity" (UBOS 2018). Building leaders' capacity in gender integration enhances their effectiveness to address the diverse needs and priorities of women, men, young people and other marginalized groups; although it does not address the underlying lack of desire for gender equality that exists in some instances. The Ministry of Environment is mandated to integrate gender issues into E&NRM, project management, policies and procedures; promote equal access to and control of natural resources by both men and women; promote equal representation of both men and women in decision making, planning and sustainable management of resources; establish mechanisms for equitable natural resource sharing; and build capacity of local government officers and all their structures for gender mainstreaming (Ministry of Water and Environment 2016). These government recommendations are stipulated in the Environment and Gender Mainstreaming Strategy 2016–2021. As such, the capacity development process undertaken as part of this project also contributes to the government's agenda.

Table 1. Project outcomes, outputs and beneficiaries

Intended outcomes	Expected outputs	Direct beneficiaries	Indirect beneficiaries
• Improved access to sustainable energy sources. • Increased capacity for energy construction and maintenance. • Reduced dependence on unsustainable energy. • Decreased conflicts between refugees and host communities. • Strengthened local energy, environment, and climate programming.	• Assessment of inclusive market systems for alternative energy. • Development of a social behaviour change strategy to enable awareness raising and training activities. • Creation of green livelihood opportunities for young people and women. • Distribution of energy-efficient stoves and heat-retaining baskets. • Enhanced conflict resolution mechanisms. • Improved capacity for gender-responsive environmental programming. • Development of policy guidelines for resource management. • Operational mechanisms for coordinated local action. • Increased women's participation in decision making.	234,800 refugees and host populations: • Adolescents, youth, and women: 3,000 individuals participating in green income-generating activities. • Female-headed households (HH): 44,000 households (60%), including young mothers and persons with disabilities. • Energy efficient technology recipients: 231,000 individuals • Local government employees: 100 staff members. • Civil society personnel: 100 from environmental and energy-focused organizations. • Private sector involvement: 30 companies contributing to technology awareness.	• 2,128,500 individuals, including: • Local and national government stakeholders. • Participants in water catchment management zones. • Children and young people in schools and trading centres.

Table 2. Summary of training participants

District	Nationality	Age category				Total	PWD	
		<25 years		>25 years				
		M	F	M	F		M	F
Madi-Okollo	Refugee	0	0	4	2	6	0	0
	National	1	0	12	3	16	0	0
Yumbe	Refugee	0	0	3	3	6	0	0
	National	0	0	17	4	21	0	0
Terego	Refugee	0	0	2	2	4	0	0
	National	0	0	18	4	22	1	1
Adjumani	Refugee	0	0	3	6	9	0	0
	National	0	0	13	12	25	1	2
Kiryandongo	Refugee	0	0	3	3	6	0	0
	National	0	0	18	8	26	1	1
Total		**1**	**0**	**93**	**47**	**141**	**3**	**4**

Lessons from the RED project also informed various activities implemented by ICRAF and the consortium to enhance gender integration and women's participation in E&NRM. These activities include development of a gender-responsive environmental action plan (GREAP) for each of the five refugee-hosting districts; these plans were then signed and launched on 26 November 2024 (Kobugabe et al. 2024). Training sessions on gender mainstreaming in E&NRM resulted in the development of individual actions plans (see Table 4), enhancing women's participation in coordination structures and strengthening working modalities to increase women's involvement.

Table 3. Modules for gender responsive environment programming

Module	Main subject
Module 1	Understanding gender and key gender concepts
Module 2	The environment and its intersection with gender
Module 3	Gender planning
Module 4	Gender mainstreaming in environmental interventions
Module 5	Developing a gender responsive action plan for an environmental intervention

2 Developing the gender integration capacity of government, community leaders and other stakeholders in energy, environment and climate resilience

Gender training has a significant role in building local leaders' capacity as it supports them to understand gender dynamics and challenges relating to their work (UN Women 2012). Stakeholder consultations carried out by ICRAF revealed inadequate technical skills in gender planning, implementation and reporting as major challenges. In response, ICRAF organized training sessions to support stakeholders to better address gender issues in natural resource and environmental management; these training sessions targeted district and local government officials, political and technical leaders, representatives from the Office of the Prime Minister, refugee welfare councils, community-based organizations and the private sector (see Table 2).

Based on the capacity needs identified, five interlinked modules were developed (Table 3); these were covered in a three-day training workshop. Each gender-related topic was divided into subtopics; methods of delivery included cards, buzz groups, plenary sessions and photos (Figure 1).

An assessment of trainees' understanding of gender was undertaken pre- and post-training to evaluate the effectiveness of the course content. Relevant findings are presented in Sections 2.1.

The training on gender-responsive environmental planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting took place across the five districts in the first half of 2023. A total number of 141 (94 men and 47 women) participants were trained in effective integration

Figure 1. Training in gender responsive programming in energy, environment and climate resilience

Table 4. Sample of an individual action plan

Action	Responsible person/ organization	Start date	End date	Required resources	Potential threats	Outcome

of gender in natural resource management and governance. As the overall objective was to build stakeholders' capacity in gender responsive environmental planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting, the training advocated for planned mainstreaming of gender during all stages of E&NRM to ensure the voices and concerns of women are heard and considered throughout natural resource management and governance cycles. Trainees were also equipped to become ambassadors of gender mainstreaming through developing individual action plans for integrating gender into their routine work roles and responsibilities (see Table 4).

2.1 Training highlights

Initial gender analysis indicated that women, whether formally or informally employed, do more 'reproductive' work (i.e., household chores, caring for children and other household members) for the benefit of the entire family, while men concentrate on 'productive' work, which is at times for personal gain. Relatedly, men have more time to rest and interact with other people compared to women.

Based on pre-training assessment results, most participants said they had attended gender training before although they lacked knowledge around how gender relates to energy, environment and climate resilience programming. After training, participants appreciated the need to integrate gender into planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting to address entrenched negative gender norms. A social behavioural change (SBC) strategy, as championed by Save the Children, could be one way to change mindsets beginning with leaders as agents of change who can lead by example.

Discussing the intersectionality of gender and environment, energy and climate change revealed how gender norms impact on the enjoyment of natural resources by men and women. Men use natural resources for commercial purposes, while women use natural resources to provide for domestic needs. Natural resources are also controlled by either government (for centrally managed resources like land and forests) or men (for privately-owned resources). Although women are allowed to access and use these resources, they do not have control over or ownership of the same resources, and in most cases men benefit more from natural resources.

Participants appreciated that incorporating gender in individual action plans would ensure gender is considered and visible in their interventions. Through their action plans, they were therefore able to make specific commitments that can be monitored and evaluated by CIFOR-ICRAF.

Through the gender analysis, participants were able to learn the importance of considering all gender categories when it comes to planning and implementation of interventions. The importance of having disaggregated data was highlighted as helpful across diverse areas, including resource allocation, implementation, monitoring and reporting.

2.2 Implementation of individual action plans

Meetings with district and subcounty leaders in the five project districts were then scheduled, to follow up on individual action plans developed during the training sessions. Stakeholders that participated in the previous training sessions on gender responsive environmental planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting in 2022 and 2023, were given an opportunity to present what they had achieved in relation to what they had promised. Generally, stakeholders reported that the training changed their way of thinking, in terms of considering women's opinions during decision making in matters of energy, environment and climate resilience. They noted that they are now proactive to integrate gender issues, involve women and other marginalized groups in E&NRM, and report on their activities using gender-disaggregated data. However, they voiced frustration at being unable to reach out to many sub-counties due to inadequate funding. Similarly, they found negative attitudes from some community members still hindered effective integration of gender in E&NRM, for example women are 'not supposed to' own land. This highlights a need to advocate for perception changes at community level, if women are to become fully involved in leadership and E&NRM.

Awareness around the value of gender mainstreaming has increased understanding of the different complementary values men and women play in E&NRM and governance. This has also facilitated more harmonious coexistence as well as natural resource use between men and women. A male government representative from Yumbe District shared this key success story:

> *"Ever since I attended the gender training in Arua, my attitude towards doing domestic work changed. After realizing that women carry a burden of domestic chores as well as many other responsibilities, I decided to work together with my wife. I do some chores such as sweeping and cleaning the compound, taking care of our children, the animals. As a result, our home environment has changed. My wife is very happy, she gets time to rest, there is generally more peace and joy at home."*

3 Effective participation of women in environment-related coordination structures

Coordination structures play a critical role in achieving sustainable E&NRM because they ensure coherent standards when activities are implemented by different stakeholders. The survey conducted by ICRAF to assess the level of women's participation in coordination mechanisms indicated low participation of women and other marginalized groups. The limited participation of women in decision-making structures denies them the opportunity to share their ideas, experiences and contributions in environmental planning, policy making and practical implementation of programmes. An assessment conducted by the Belgium Development Agency Enabel found the main coordination structures in the five refugee-supporting districts are:

- District Executive Committee
- District Technical and Planning Committee
- District Production and Natural Resource Committee
- District Environment Committee
- District Disaster Management Committee
- Subcounty Production Committee
- Refugee Welfare Council Committee

Representatives from these structures were therefore trained by ICRAF on interlinked modules that gave approaches to attracting and retaining women in coordination structures; particularly focusing on the effective participation of women in energy, environment conservation and climate change multi-stakeholder platforms. Training was intended to enhance the capacity of key personnel at community, sub-county and district level.

Table 5. Participants in training sessions aimed at increasing women's participation in coordination structures

District	Nationality	Age category								Overall		Total	PWD	
		18-25		26-35		36-59		60+						
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F		M	F
Madi Okollo	Refugee	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	0
	National	0	0	13	6	11	5	0	1	24	12	36	0	0
Terego	Refugee	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	2	2	4	0	0
	National	1	0	3	3	13	1	1	1	18	5	23	1	0
Adjumani	Refugee	0	0	0	1	2	1	0	0	2	2	4	0	0
	National	0	0	5	4	14	5	2	0	21	9	30	0	0
Kiryandongo	Refugee	0	0	2	2	1	1	0	0	3	3	6	0	0
	National	0	0	4	1	15	4	1	1	20	6	26	1	0
Yumbe	Refugee	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	2	3	0	0
	National	1	0	5	2	12	2	0	0	18	4	22	0	0
Total		**2**	**0**	**35**	**23**	**68**	**20**	**5**	**3**	**110**	**46**	**156**	**2**	**0**

Table 6. Modules covered in the training sessions aimed at increasing women's participation in coordination structures

Module	Main subject
Module 1	Understanding gender and key gender concepts
Module 2	Understanding women's time
Module 3	Women's empowerment
Module 4	Mainstreaming women into multistakeholder platforms: practical approaches
Module 5	Developing a gender responsive action plan for attracting and retaining women in multistakeholder platforms

Figure 2. Youth leader in Adjumani explains the need to promote girls' education to empower them for leadership

3.1 Key insights from training

- Through group and plenary discussions on gender and how it intersects with energy, environmental protection and climate resilience, it was noted that women interact more with natural resources compared to men. Cultural restrictions were identified as the major barrier to women's participation in coordination structures. Therefore, participants appreciated that enhancing women's participation in coordination structures requires deliberate effort to genuinely listen to and value women's opinions and give them a conducive environment to express themselves while addressing environmental issues. The importance of appreciating women's contributions in environmental conservation cannot be underestimated since this both builds their self-esteem and motivates them to do more; this was also recommended by other researchers (UN Women 2015; UNDP 2020).
- While discussing men and women's respective activities and responsibilities across a 24-hour period (using the 24-hour activity profile), participants reflected on the fact that women have multiple roles. While women are significantly involved in 'reproductive' roles (i.e., household chores, caring for children and other household members), they also are involved in 'productive' roles like farming, office work and running small businesses, as well as other community engagements; this limits their participation in coordination structures. Participants suggested a solution might be to work more collaboratively as a team in families to reduce women's workloads (that of their wives/sisters/mothers); this would enable them to participate in coordination structures and engage in other development-oriented programmes.
- Key district-level leaders emphasized the important role leaders must play in breaking barriers (like sexual harassment, discrimination and disrespect) which hinder women from participating in coordination structures. They noted that this could be achieved through the sensitization of community members, leading by example and empowering women, beginning with those in leadership. Refugee settlement leaders mentioned that efforts are being made by development partners to empower women in leadership, and that this had policy backing; for example, 30% of a RWC committee must be women. Encouraging women to attend adult education classes was also suggested as an empowerment tool since this helps to improve their communication skills and build confidence.
- Pre-training assessment results indicated that most participants had attended at least one gender-related training, although they were not able to relate it to the use and management of natural resources. By the end of the training, assessment indicated that participants had a better understanding of gender and the crucial need for women's participation in coordination structures.
- Appreciating women's contribution to development or even at home increases their self-esteem, builds more supportive families and improves gender equality. The importance of recognising women's contributions to environmental conservation was also recommended because this increases the number of champions who will act as future role models to other women and the whole community (UNDP 2020).

3.2 Lessons learned and proposed best practices

- Women are overburdened by domestic chores which limits their exposure to opportunities and participation in decision-making platforms.
- Leadership styles are influenced by socially prescribed gender roles, power relations and experiences.
- Participants suggested targeting and sensitizing existing community groups like Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs) as well as women, men's and youth groups, since they are already mobilized.
- Government programmes, like Development Response to Displacement Impact Project (DRDIP) and the Parish Development Programme, require 50% of group leadership roles to be held by women before consideration is given to a specific intervention.
- There is a need to encourage women to attend adult education classes to improve their communication skills and build confidence.
- Ownership of resources, accessibility and control is still culturally predetermined; more advocacy is required around the equal sharing and ownership of resources, especially land.
- It is equally key for women to realize they have the potential to lead and participate in decision making. Men need to ensure a supportive environment to encourage the participation of women. Rural unemployed women were reported to have low esteem driven by fear of their spouses among other factors (UNDP 2018).
- There is a need to bridge the gap between elders and young people to enable a two-way sharing experience and transfer knowledge from older to younger generations. Younger generations have the willingness and strength required to drive

more sustainable natural resource management. However, they need both current and traditional knowledge to achieve this. Trained leaders and stakeholders are expected to advocate for increased women's participation in coordination structures, spearheading women's empowerment so they are able to freely participate and express their views among men. Leaders were urged to identify approaches that focus on the recruitment and retention of women leaders and their membership in coordination structures.

3.2.1 Participant feedback

"As a cultural leader, I have been advocating for allocation of land to both men and women so that we can tackle the issue of perpetrated poverty in Terego. We decided that the cultural belief that women cannot own land must stop. Personally, I have daughters who are working with NGOs outside the country; they have supported the family, they have bought land and built good houses. All of us are happy. This is something that I want all other families to adopt. We shall slowly see a big positive change in Terego." Cultural Chief, Terego District

"I encourage my wife to always go on these short training courses so she can add to the skills she already has and keep learning. I also encourage her to volunteer to make group presentations and contributions in engagements like this. I have encouraged her to join politics, and I want her to even go higher. This will add value to her as a woman as well as to our family. I am happy for her; our children and her parents are very happy. This kind of support is the same thing I am advocating for women with my fellow men." Male staff member, Romogi Subcounty, Yumbe District

4 Strengthening existing platforms and coordination structures

In a bid to increase women's participation in decision making around with in environmental action planning and programming, existing platforms and coordination structures were strengthened through dialogue, and particularly through the sharing of best practice and recommendations.

ICRAF carried out dialogue meetings with District Technical Planning Committees, District Executive Committees, District Environment and Natural Resources Committee, District Disaster Management Committees, Subcounty Environment Committees, Subcounty Production Committees, Refugee Welfare Council Committees, key community leaders (religious, cultural and opinion leaders) and representatives from civil society organizations. The purpose of these dialogues was to raise awareness on the relevance and importance of increasing women and girls' participation in E&NRM and identify the factors and practices that can promote women's inclusion in environmental management at district and subcounty levels.

Key things discussed during dialogue meetings included: the role of coordination structures in promoting increased participation of women, addressing the negative gender norms, factors limiting women's participation, and addressing negative attitudes towards women in leadership among others.

While discussing the 24-hour activity profile for both men and women, participants appreciated that women have multiple roles and need support. Comments from male refugee leaders were that:

"Women are burdened with a lot of household chores compared to men and men have not paid keen attention for a long time. This training is an eye opener, I need to have time to evaluate my way of doing things and purpose to support my wife." Male refugee leader, Adjumani

"After looking at the activity profile for both women and men, I notice that women are really overburdened. I encourage men – beginning with these ones here – to be supportive. Although I am not married, I will ensure that I work with my future wife for the sake of our development as a family." Male youth refugee leader, Kiryandongo

Continuous engagement of local leaders in trainings and dialogues on gender has positively influenced certain negative cultural norms and beliefs although more needs to be done. For instance, community concerns around women owning property have now changed; some women now own land that is registered in their names and this is a clear sign of empowerment. Similarly, men expressed that they were now able to discuss with their wives matters that concern the family, unlike in the past where they tended to pass on instructions and leave family concerns to the women. In refugee settlements, cultural norms that undermine women have also been challenged; although some women still must first call their husbands in South Sudan to get permission before spending money they have earned or attending meetings.

"The issue of patriarchy in African society is no longer applicable in the current context. Women are supposed to own land and inherit family property including land so that even if I die, my wife should know where the boundary of our land is and should be a signatory to avoid extended family wrangles."
Male Parish Chief, Yumbe

"Some tribes think that marrying a woman is equivalent to taking everything away from her including her salary, credit cards, etc whereby a woman doesn't literally own anything- I have been challenging this attitude in my sphere of influence and I encourage leaders to say no to that practice that undermines women who are in the corporate arena."
Female Subcounty Community Development Officer, Kichwabugingo

5 Conclusion and recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

Gender inequalities translate into patterns of economic and social growth characterized by exclusion, since women are not as well positioned as men to take advantage of the opportunities generated by economic growth. This is evident in existing local government structures, civil society organizations and the private sector. Structural inequalities place women at a clear economic and social disadvantage, as evidenced by conspicuous inequalities in ownership of, and access to key resources like land and water. Inequalities in the quality of employment, in decision making, and in the economy of time, still prevail. Leadership capacity building should be prioritized in all sectors and departments to ensure a gender perspective is integrated into the design, implementation and monitoring of practical measures for improving the governance of natural resources.

5.2 Recommendations

- Affirmative action, not only politically and academically, but also in recruitment at different levels, to increase opportunities for women and girls, their participation in formal and informal decision-making structures and governance structures, to amplify their voices and impact E&NRM.
- Establish systems and structures to promote gender equality and women's empowerment at the national and local levels, to reduce staff turnover and promote increased women's participation in local government and organizations, including proactive recruitment of women professionals at all levels in the E&NRM sector.
- Increase budget allocations to identify, prioritize, integrate and implement gender issues along the humanitarian-development nexus, ensuring that women's needs and priorities are voiced, understood and addressed. There is a need for robust gender integration in environmental governance and management of natural resources to enable equal participation of both women and men in decision making and planning for disasters.
- Develop training materials with input from humanitarian and development practitioners who have on-the-ground knowledge of gender integration in natural resource governance. Consideration should be given to what is feasible in the local context as well as community needs and preferences, specifically those of marginalized groups, and the ability to meet these needs without burdening any group of people.
- Gender mainstreaming requires more commitment from senior management and the establishment of effective accountability mechanisms in training programmes, guidelines and other materials. An explicit policy commitment to gender equality and a gender mainstreaming strategy is a way of promoting, facilitating and rewarding efforts to bring gender perspectives to the centre of attention. Mainstreaming gender in district and organizational development plans facilitates consideration of the needs and priorities of women and other marginalized groups, and at the community level, developing and implementing individual gender responsive action plans offers an additional approach to address gender norms and inequality for the benefit of both women and men.
- More dialogue focused meetings will be required to support the advocacy of women's participation in local government committees and organizations. Diverse barriers hinder women's participation in E&NRM decision making and governance, at individual, institutional and cultural level. These barriers should be addressed simultaneously to create an enabling environment for women to reach equal and sustainable participation in E&NRM. However, breaking down these barriers and creating opportunities for women calls for collaborative efforts at multiple levels, including from local government, civil society organizations, law makers, religious and cultural leaders, and family members. Each has a role to play in paving out gender-sensitive leadership pathways. It is vital to educate members of relevant stakeholder groups, as well as their families, local communities and others, on the importance of gender equality and women's participation, to reduce opposition to women's participation and encourage acceptance of such participation at all levels.

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