

# **Governance of Non-State Social Protection Initiatives: Implications of Addressing Gendered Vulnerability to Poverty in Uganda**

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## Abbreviations

CBO	community-based organisation
CIVICUS	World Alliance for Citizen Participation
CPRC	Chronic Poverty Research Centre
CSO	civil society organisation
DENIVA	Development Network of Indigenous Voluntary Associations
FIDH	International Federation for Human Rights
FOWODE	Forum for Women in Democracy
HIV/AIDS	human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immune deficiency syndrome
IDP	internally displaced person
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
KaDDAN	Katakwi Development Actors Network
KALG	Katakwi District Local Government
KDDP	Kambara Deaf Development project
LWF	Lutheran World Federation
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MoES	Ministry of Education and Sports
MoFPED	Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development
MoGLSD	Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoLHUD	Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development
NARI	Namulonge Agricultural Research Institute
NAWOU	National Association of Women's Organisations in Uganda
NGO	nongovernmental organisation
NSA	non-state actor
OECD	Organization Economic Cooperation and Development
OVC	orphans and vulnerable children
PAPRO	Patience Pays Professional Organisation
PASGR	Partnership for African Social and Governance Research
PWDs	people with disabilities
RoU	Republic of Uganda
SACCO	savings and cooperative credit scheme
SILC	savings and internal lending club
TAPA	Toil and Promote Agriculture
UBOS	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations Human Rights Commission for Refugees

## Definitions of key terms

Non-state actor	Any organisation or group providing social protection services of any kind independent of government.
Social protection	Any service to assist people exposed to a social or economic vulnerability.
State actors	Arms of government, including multilateral and bilateral state donors, and intergovernmental agencies of non-African governments.
Vulnerability	Exposure to risk, shock, barrier, deprivation or harm over which one has little or no control or means of self-defence.
Gender	Distinctive, socially constructed and socially learned attributes, entitlements and privileges associated with being male or female and the relationships among women, men, girls and boys; between women, and between men.
Gender equality	A situation where men and women enjoy equal status in a given society, the differences are recognised and equally valued, and both genders face equal conditions for realising their full human potential, and have the opportunity to participate, contribute to, and benefit equally from national development.
Gender equity	Fairness in treatment of women and men according to their respective needs. The treatment may be different but considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities. In the development context, a gender equity goal often requires built-in measures to compensate for the historical and social disadvantages of women.
Gender relations	Social relations between women and men and, in particular, how power is distributed between them.
Gender sensitivity	Awareness of the different needs, roles and responsibilities of men and women and the understanding that the differences can result in differences in access to and control over resources, level of participation in and benefit from resources and development.
Gender responsiveness	Awareness of gender concepts, disparities and their causes and taking action to address them.
Gender neutral	Situations where gender is not relevant to the development outcome, and that do not worsen or improve gender norms, roles or relations.
Gender blind	Unawareness of gender concepts and their likely impact on life experiences and outcomes.
Governance	Mechanisms and processes required for citizens and groups to articulate their interests, mediate their differences and exercise their legal rights and obligations.

**Abstract**

Non-state actors (NSAs) are offering social protection services in Uganda to address vulnerabilities associated with poverty. Information is limited on their adequacy and efficacy and how their governance mechanisms address gender concerns. This study aimed to fill that gap.

The research was conducted December 2012 to May 2013 in Katakwi and Kyegegwa Districts, selected for their levels of poverty and vulnerability associated with the civil war, cattle rustling and influx of refugees from neighbouring countries. The design was cross-sectional and used semi-structured questionnaires, key informant interviews, focus group discussions and case studies with NSA beneficiaries and representatives and opinion leaders.

Formal NSAs deliver mostly promotive services such as capacity building in farming and human rights sensitisation while informal NSAs provide mainly preventive services like savings and credit, and burial and moral support. The needs are great and the resources limited, so only the immediate problems are handled. For gender issues such services are only symptomatic treatment: what is needed are preventive and transformative interventions to deliver sustained reduction in gendered vulnerability. Large and formal NSAs depend on donor support, and community-based organisations on contributions, neither of which is sustainable.

The NSAs have governance instruments, but these are gender blind and broad in definition. Formal NSAs are accountable to the government and donors but not to their clientele. The contrary is true for informal NSAs.

A national policy that accommodates the local context is needed to support delivery of NSA services; to facilitate offering of transformative and preventive interventions of long-term and strategic nature; to guide NSAs to incorporate gender responsiveness as a guiding principle in their interventions; and to require NSAs to engage local communities in programme development. Gender should be integral to all policy and programming, supported by gender training at all levels.

**Keywords:** Uganda, gendered vulnerability, social protection, non-state actor, governance

## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Background

About 47 per cent of people in sub-Saharan Africa live below the poverty line of US\$ 1.25 a day (United Nations, 2012) and many more are economically insecure. Vulnerability exists across all ages, ethnicities, religions, castes, locations and genders, and women constitute a higher proportion of both the poor and those vulnerable to poverty (Sweetman, 2011; United Nations, 2009, 2012).

Gendered vulnerability is linked to the patriarchal culture that defines and perpetuates gender-biased institutional structures and processes, according men superior power and economic privilege in all spheres of life (Moser, 1993). Women face the same risks as men, and a set of their own (Holmes and Jones, 2010a). For example, they are allocated important but time-consuming and unremunerated activities in reproduction and production at home and in the community (Abdourahman, 2010) and have limited reproductive health rights, face gender-based violence, and are denied opportunities to exercise meaningful voice and agency (CPRC, 2008; Luttrell and Moser, 2004; United Nations, 2009; 2012). The unremunerated and heavy time burden on women and girls affects their mobility to participate in productive sectors such as education and the labour market. The cumulative result is “feminization of poverty” (Abdourahman, 2010:19).

Women experience economic vulnerabilities through wage differentials, unequal access and control over productive resources, denial of education and work opportunities and greater insecurity associated with gender-biased sociocultural norms (Holmes and Jones, 2010a; United Nations, 2009; 2012). Social sources of vulnerability often are more important barriers to sustainable livelihoods and general well-being than economic shocks and stresses (CPRC, 2008). These multiple gender-specific vulnerabilities are interconnected (Abdourahman, 2010; CPRC, 2008), so interventions should focus on gender interests and needs (Molyneux, 1985, quoted in Moser, 1993). These needs may be practical or strategic. Practical gender needs are about coping with the consequences of gender bias, while strategic gender needs are about changing the bias itself.

Social protection is seen as a key strategy for tackling the poverty trap (Lwanga-Ntale et al. 2008), but to be effective it needs good governance in the delivery of interventions (Holmes and Jones, 2009; Kabeer, 2008).

### 1.2 Country context

Since independence in 1962, Uganda has suffered political, social and economic shocks with negative socioeconomic effects (Kanyehimba, 2002). Recent peace and security in most parts enabled a 6.7 per cent increase in average gross domestic product for 1986–2010 (MoFPED, 2012) and a reduction in poverty from 56.4 per cent in 1992/93 to 19.7 per cent (MoFPED, 2014). However, 43 per cent of the people are vulnerable to falling back into poverty. In rural areas, 27.2 per cent of people live below the poverty line, 46 per cent are insecure, and only 27.5 are middle class. In urban areas 9.1 per cent live below the poverty line, 26 per cent are insecure and 65 per cent are middle class. The Central region, which hosts Kampala, is dominated by the middle class, the East and West by economically insecure people and the North by the poor. Uganda is among the poorest countries in the world, with a human development ranking of 161 out of 187 countries (UNDP, 2011).

MoFPED (2014) identifies several sources of vulnerability, including dependence on subsistence agriculture, limited wage earning opportunities, unstable employment, few assets, and limited access to risk-coping mechanisms such savings, borrowing or support from friends or family. Agriculture accounts for 43 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product and 85 per cent of export earnings, and provides raw materials to most agro-based industries (NARI, 2003; FOWODE, 2012). According to FOWODE (2012), 72 per cent of all employed women and 90 per cent of rural women work in agriculture, compared with 53 per cent of rural men.

The majority of the poor are women and children, especially orphans and street children. Others are people with disabilities, female-headed households, the elderly, refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs), households affected by HIV and AIDS,



and isolated communities (CPRC, 2005). Women-headed households account for about 27 per cent of the chronically poor households in rural areas and 40 per cent in urban areas (Jato, 2004). Sociocultural stereotypes and unequal division of labour mean that women and girls undertake the largest share of domestic activities that do not carry any economic value (Blackden, 2004; NCG, 2008; Otiso, 2006). Blackden (2004) reports that women work between 12 and 18 hours per day compared with around 8–10 hours for men.

Women's lack of voice in household decision-making limits their access to and control over productive resources such as land, credit and inputs, and income from the proceeds of their labour. They also face bias in labour markets and are excluded from a variety of economic, social and political institutions (Blackden, 2004; Devereux et al., 2002; Kyalisiima, 2007; MoLHUD, 2008; NCG, 2008; UNFPA and MoGLSD, 2009). They have limited sexual and reproductive rights. A Nordic Consulting group study found that women's ownership of registered land had improved from 7 per cent in 1995 to 18 per cent in 2008 especially in urban areas although the average holding remained small. Women's lack of control over their own labour and earned income means they cannot save, so they need access to credit. But because they do not own assets for collateral or have formal jobs, they cannot meet the criteria for loans (Blackden, 2004; NCG, 2008). There is lack of financial products to suit rural women, and microfinance institutions have high interest rates and short borrowing periods. Consequently, women borrow small amounts, which are inadequate for investment and yet have to be serviced on a weekly basis (FinScope, 2009). Blackden (2004) argues that the differences in decision-making power within the household and limited economic opportunities are major factors in the poor health outcomes in Uganda, including the high levels of maternal and child mortality, and that economic dependence of women—exacerbated by cultural impositions such as bride wealth, early/forced marriage, polygamy and widow inheritance—increases their vulnerability. Sexual and gender-based violence has become common (FOWODE, 2010; FIDH and FHRI, 2012; NCG, 2008; Otiso, 2006; UNFPA and MoGLSD, 2009). Such practices undermine girls' and young women's dignity, freedom of choice and agency, and lower their social status.

### **1.3 Legal and policy context of social protection in Uganda**

Uganda's constitution protects and promotes the human rights of vulnerable groups such as children, the elderly, PWDs, women, and other marginalised groups. It guarantees rights to social justice and economic development and access to education, food security, clean and safe water, work, decent shelter, clothing, pension and retirement benefits. It outlaws discrimination and obliges the State to take affirmative action in favour of groups marginalised on the basis of gender, age, disability or any other reason created by history, tradition or custom in order to redress the imbalances that exist against them. The constitutional provisions have been translated into specific laws directly related to social protection for vulnerable groups including the Children's Act, Local Governments' Act, Employment Act, and the Equal Opportunities Commission Act, among others.

The commitment to address risk and vulnerability to poverty is articulated as a cross-cutting theme in the Poverty Eradication Action Plan, the overarching public policy framework for 1997–2008. The National Development Plan 2010/11–2014/15 identifies social protection as a key focus area and has as a goal the expansion of social protection to reduce vulnerability and enhance productivity (RoU, 2010). Other national policies relevant to social protection are those on orphans and vulnerable children, disability, older persons, elimination of child labour, equal opportunities, gender, and universal primary and secondary education.

The constitution guarantees the right of civic organisations to engage in peaceful activities to influence government policies, and it guarantees the independence of NGOs that protect and promote human rights (RoU, 1995). The NGO statute provides for registration of NSAs and establishes a National Board of Non-governmental Organisations under the Ministry of Internal Affairs (RoU, 1989). The law requires all NSAs to register with that board.

The National Development Plan stresses the need for NSAs to be involved in its implementation (RoU, 2010). The NGO policy recognises NSAs as an essential supplement to government efforts in improving the quality of life through education, health, water and sanitation, environmental management, infrastructure development, humanitarian and relief support, policy development, and championing of participatory systems (Ministry of Internal Affairs, 2010). Mainstreaming of gender in these initiatives is a central objective guided by the national gender policy (MoGLSD, 2007).

#### **1.4 Research problem**

NSA growth in Uganda accelerated in the 1970s and 1980s in response to poverty created by long political and economic turmoil. Since 1986, NSA roles have expanded beyond relief and humanitarian services to focus on development by empowering and meeting the needs of marginalised people. Some 12,952 NSAs provide social protection services in Uganda. Expansion has been facilitated by a conducive legal and policy framework that emphasises integration of gender as guided by the national gender policy.

Gendered vulnerability to poverty is a major concern in Uganda despite State and NSA efforts and clear evidence that gender-sensitive governance has high potential to reduce the problem (Corner, 2005; Holmes and Jones, 2010a; 2010b; 2010c) and ensure pro-poor growth and adequate protection of the poorest and most vulnerable. There is limited documentation on the adequacy and efficacy of NSA social protection interventions or how much governance mechanisms address gender equality and women's empowerment. In particular, information is scant on the degree to which NSAs address practical and strategic gender needs to facilitate transformative change (Holmes and Jones, 2010a). Greater agency offers more opportunities for women to move out of oppressive social and economic relationships.

A number of studies in Uganda assess social protection (Barya, 2009, 2011; Bukuluki and Watson, 2012; Kasente et al., 2002) but largely document state mechanisms with little focus on the influence of NSA governance mechanisms on gender-based vulnerability. Calder and Nakafeero's (2012) gender situation analysis does not cover NSA governance. This study seeks to fill the information gap.

#### **1.5 Objectives**

The specific objectives were to:

- To examine how much formal and informal policies, laws and regulations of selected non-state social protection initiatives influence the effectiveness of NSAs in addressing gendered vulnerability to poverty
- To assess how accountability mechanisms influence the effectiveness of NSA initiatives in addressing gendered vulnerability to poverty
- Identify the policy implications of governance mechanisms used by NSAs in addressing gendered vulnerability to poverty.

#### **1.6 Research questions**

The research addressed two questions:

- To what extent do formal and informal policies, laws and regulations of selected NSAs' social protection initiatives influence the design and implementation and consequent effectiveness of programmes in the focus area? The assumptions were that governance determines the design, implementation and targeting of initiatives, and that gender-sensitive policies, laws and regulations influence the effectiveness of NSAs.
- How do accountability mechanisms influence the effectiveness of NSA social protection initiatives in addressing gendered vulnerability to poverty in the study areas? The assumption was that gender-sensitive accountability did influence programme effectiveness.

## **2 Literature review and theoretical framework**

### **2.1 Gender and vulnerability to poverty**

Poverty is not simply about low income, but it includes hunger and undernutrition, illiteracy, lack of access to safe drinking water and basic health facilities, social discrimination, physical insecurity, and political exclusion (CPRC, 2008; United Nations, 2009). According to CPRC (2008) poverty has five dimensions: insecurity, lack of political voice, spatial disadvantage, social discrimination, and poor work opportunities. The poor are susceptible to political, environmental, social and economic shocks and stresses (Holmes and Jones, 2009) that increase their vulnerability. Unfortunately, most social protection programmes focus on economic risks and assume that their effects are homologous across the gender divide.

Both economic and social risks are influenced by gender dynamics and have important differential impacts on men and women (Holmes and Jones, 2011). For example, in economic crises women often are the first to lose jobs in the formal sector (World Bank et al., 2009), and cuts in public expenditure are likely to affect women more because they typically have greater responsibility for household health and education access (Quisumbing et al., 2008). The effects of economic malaises on men and male identities are also increasingly being recognised. Silberschmidt (2001), for instance, highlights how unemployment and low incomes are undermining the “male breadwinner” role and generating negative coping strategies such as sexually aggressive behaviour and gender-based violence in a bid to reassert traditional masculine identities. However, women have higher risks of vulnerability to poverty largely attributed to cultural perceptions of their role (CPRC, 2008; Holmes and Jones, 2010a; Lutrell and Moser, 2004).

According to CPRC (2008:73) “a social compact to end chronic poverty cannot be found without gender parity... leadership and effective public policy can find better and faster routes to gender parity”. Greater agency offers more opportunities or options for women to move out of oppressive social and economic relationships and gives them voice to articulate their interests. In many countries, efforts to ensure that public policies and laws for addressing vulnerability to poverty are consistent in terms of providing equal treatment and/or opportunities to citizens are often weak or uneven (Holmes and Jones, 2011:9). The enforcement of existing anti-discrimination policies and laws remains weak and under-resourced, especially at the sub-national level (CPRC, 2008).

### **2.2 Social protection as a key strategy for addressing gendered vulnerability to poverty**

Social protection consists of policies and programmes to reduce poverty and vulnerability by diminishing people’s exposure to risks and enhancing their capacity to manage economic and social risks such as unemployment, exclusion, sickness, disability, and old age (OECD, 2009; UNRISD, 2010). The African Union’s Social Policy Framework states that “the minimum package of essential social protection should cover essential healthcare, as well as benefits for children, informal workers, the unemployed, older persons and persons with disabilities” (Amdissa, 2013). Oduro (2010, cited in Devereux and Getu, 2013) refers to social protection as “traditional family and community support structures and the interventions by state and NSAs that support individuals, households and communities to prevent, manage, and overcome the risks threatening their present and future security and well-being.”

Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler’s (2004) definition focuses on formal and informal initiatives that may provide social assistance to extremely poor individuals and households, social services to groups that need special care, social insurance to protect people against the risks and consequences of livelihood shocks, and social equity to protect people against social risks such as discrimination or abuse. This approach entails a full range of interventions that fall into four categories:

- **Protective** social protection interventions provide cash safety nets through social assistance programmes for the chronically poor; relief such as disability benefits, single parent allowances, social pensions for the elderly poor and waivers on health and

education charges; and in-kind support such as setting up orphanages and providing services for refugees.

- **Preventive** social protection averts deprivation through social insurance interventions such as pension and maternity benefits, health insurance, unemployment benefits, informal savings arrangements, funeral support, and services such as advice on crop or income diversification.
- **Promotive** social protection raises incomes and capabilities to create opportunities for fighting poverty, for example through microfinance and school feeding programmes.
- **Transformative** social protection addresses concerns of social equity and exclusion through social empowerment. Such interventions foster collective action for workers' rights, creating voice and authority in decision-making for women, upholding of human rights for disadvantaged groups, changes to the regulatory framework to protect socially vulnerable groups against discrimination and abuse, and sensitisation to transform societal attitudes and behaviours to enhance social equity.

Social protection initiatives aim to institutionalise the systems that guarantee assistance for the very poor and protect the vulnerable from livelihood risks and social discrimination (DRT, 2009). Banerjee et al. (2009) and Karlan and Zinman (2010) note that the effectiveness of NSA social protection depends on the comprehensiveness of their programmes in terms of coverage of basic causes of vulnerability. Unlike the state, most NSAs can only focus on a few community needs not on the broader (transformative) measures.

There are various ways in which social protection can enable the poor and vulnerable to escape from poverty and better manage risks and shocks. Social protection can help reduce gender disparities by helping men and women manage trade-offs between immediate needs and future livelihoods (OECD, 2009). Vreyman and Verhulst (2004) and Bergh (2006) suggest that high levels of social protection provide a good basis for anchoring socioeconomic growth at either the household or community/national levels. For example, by strengthening the employability of poor and vulnerable people, social protection builds self-reliance.

In Uganda, the state emphasises protective social security welfare through regular, non-contributory cash payments or in-kind hand-outs and care services (MoGLSD, 2013). NSAs play an important role, too. However, vulnerability to poverty remains a key challenge, and is most acute in post-conflict areas where no attempts have been made to develop long-term social protection measures.<sup>1</sup>

### **2.3 Governance and non-state social protection**

NSAs may be international, national or community based, religious or secular, formal or informal. Formal social protection mechanisms include those associated with market-based institutions such as banks, insurance companies and microfinance institutions, and not-for-profit organisations that are legally registered and have a formal structure (Luttrell and Moser, 2004; PASGR, 2012). Informal mechanisms work on the basis of collective action or community, family, neighbourhood or traditional solidarity networks, but might have neither legal identity nor formal governance or management structures (PASGR, 2012). According to Amdissa (2013), formal social protection actors are guided by economic and social principles, while informal actors are guided by religious and cultural principles, as well as family and community values. Formal mechanisms have been criticised for ignoring the diverse range of indigenous, informal social protection mechanisms that have been in place for centuries (Devereux and Getu, 2013; Muiruri, 2013; Mamo, 2013; Niringiye, 2013). Formal social protection actors are largely financed from public or donor funds (Amdissa, 2013).

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<sup>1</sup>See the civil society strategy for social protection in Uganda 2011–2015).

In most of sub-Saharan Africa, most economically active adults work outside wage employment, so they lack labour market protection and access to formal social security such as unemployment insurance and contributory pensions. Informal sector and self-employed workers face high levels of income insecurity and uninsured livelihood risk. Other groups that need special attention because of their particular vulnerabilities include pastoralists and the urban poor (Devereux and Getu, 2013).

Informal institutions comprise family and kin associations, savings and credit groups, and forms of traditional insurance initiatives such as burial societies (Norton et al., 2001). Their central characteristic is the collective arrangements that provide forms of insurance through pooling of resources and assistance to people in temporary or chronic crises (Norton et al., 2001).

Muiruri (2013) notes that traditional solidarity networks based on kinship and extended families continue to be the first source of support in many African communities, especially “for coping with contingencies and shocks”. Mitlin et al. (2011) highlight the importance of collective savings among low-income urban citizens in developing countries in raising incomes, consolidating and protecting individual and collective assets, and reducing political exclusion. They note that some savings groups have not only evolved into substantive institutions but also contributed to changed relations with government agencies that support a more effective pro-poor and accountable state. Using an example of collective not-for-profit health insurance schemes, Norton et al. (2001) argue that informal NSAs, particularly through micro-insurance, offer efficiencies to both the provider and the receiver—by smoothing revenue for the former and expenditure for the latter—because local micro-insurance structures enjoy “cohesion, direct participation, and low administrative costs”. Van Ginneken (1999) recommends inclusion of insurance functions in multifaceted local level organisations such as cooperative associations and rotating credit societies.

Funeral associations are important support mechanisms for the poor in many societies especially when other forms of collective action for social protection are absent. Members’ contributions in burial societies help to pay for funerals and related ceremonies (Norton et al., 2001). Norton et al. (2001) argue that local organisations that pool resources against risk are likely to develop a high capacity to meet demand, which not only delivers direct benefits but also develops social and organisational capacity to assist poor people and specific groups such as women to effectively negotiate rights and entitlements from both private sector and state service providers.

Self-help groups are the most common form of NSA in developing countries (Ahmadi, 2007). Their mutual goal is for members to help each other to cope with a shared problem. While in traditional society family and friends provide this social support, in the contemporary world people often choose to join with others who share their interests and concerns (Borman, 1992).

Norton et al. (2001) stress that the poor have differing resources and problems and need social protection policies and programmes tailored to their specific position, priorities and preferences, and that interaction between poor people’s organisations and the state is crucial in developing “institutionalised” social protection. Consequently, community-based mechanisms are increasingly pivotal in the design of social protection interventions and scaling up of development activities (De Coninck and Drani, 2009).

Good governance in social protection initiatives significantly influences their service delivery (Holmes and Jones, 2009; Kabeer, 2008). The World Bank (1992) defines governance as the manner in which power is exercised in the management of economic and social resources for development. According to Corner (2005), governance is the mechanisms and processes required for citizens and groups to articulate their interests, mediate their differences and exercise their legal rights and obligations. Brody (2009) defines governance as decision-making by a range of interested people (or stakeholders) including those in positions of power and ordinary citizens. This study draws from Corner’s (2005) view, which defines governance as comprising the structures, rules, instruments and capacities needed in the management of the affairs of a given initiative.

Hyden (1992) notes that effective governance is characterised by citizen influence and oversight, responsive and responsible leadership that includes the rule of law and inter-group relations. Effective governance is seen as a means for reducing poverty and ensuring more equal, democratic, corruption-free societies, and a means of promoting social justice and gender equality and furthering the realisation of the rights of all citizens (Brody, 2009). By implication, governance can only be effective if it leads to more equal opportunities for women and men in choices and rights, and responds to the needs and priorities of women and men; and if both women and men exercise their rights to participate in making decisions that affect their lives (Ibid). Other important components of good governance are equity, rights, and respect for rule of law. Evidence shows that social protection programmes with high women's participation in governance have had good gender impact; increased women's confidence and addressed traditional barriers (Holmes and Slater, 2012). It is important that the governance process, including policy and programme design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) have a gender perspective.

Devereux and Getu (2013) note that the effectiveness of social protection depends on both the choice of the instruments and how well they are designed and delivered. Factors essential for NSA performance include remuneration, skills and supervision of staff (Gerring, 2007); sociopolitical and cultural contexts in the area of operation (Boone, 2003); individual organisational ethics; and commitment to local populations (Tsai, 2007). Boone (2003) found that institutional choices are controlled by pre-existing structures such as political-economic relations (economic strength) and communal structure (social hierarchy). In this regard, CBOs, which are more inclined to capture local contexts, are more likely to evolve organisational and governance structures that have a greater chance of effectiveness. According to Tsai (2007), results are better when organisations operate with moral commitment and standing in a community. CBOs, which have a bigger moral stake in a location, are more likely to be effective than international or national NSAs.

#### **2.4 NSA and social protection provision in Uganda**

Uganda's NSAs have increased from the 15 that existed between 1970 and 1980 to 12,952 officially registered with the NGO Board, NAWOU, DENIVA or the NGO Forum in 2011. Many more are not registered. This growth is attributed to the conducive legal and policy framework (RoU, 1989; 2006, Ministry of Internal Affairs, 2010), in particular the liberalisation and privatisation policies and increased availability of foreign funding.

Formal NSAs have a relatively narrow social base and are thin on national coverage; most are urban based and concentrate in Kampala with a token presence in rural areas (Makubuya et al., 2002). The Central region, including Kampala, has 45 per cent of the formal NSAs, followed by Northern and Eastern regions (Table 1).

Table 2: Formal social protection NSAs in Uganda

Region	NSAs
Nationwide*	200
Central	5,790
Eastern	874
Northern	1,023
Western	600
Did not indicate areas of operation	4,465
Total	12,952

\* Work in more than on region.

Note: NSA's high presence in Northern and Eastern regions is associated with the high levels of vulnerability caused by war and conflict.

Source: Compiled from NGO Board, NGO Forum, NAWOU and DENIVA documents.

NSAs are classified according to their founders or controllers and operation area. Formal NSAs have a legal status while informal NSAs are registered in a sub-county or district, mainly for administrative and collaboration purposes. The three main NSA types are CBOs, national NGOs and international NGOs. These could be faith based or secular. CBOs are controlled wholly by Ugandans, operate in sub-counties and lower administrative units, and must be non-commercial (Ministry of Internal Affairs, 2010). CBOs include both formal and self-help groups. National NGOs are controlled fully by Ugandans, are registered only within Uganda and have authority to operate within or across two or more districts. International NGOs are incorporated and partially or wholly controlled by citizens of one or more countries not belonging to the East African Community, and operate in Uganda under a certificate of registration (Ministry of Internal Affairs, 2010). National statistics show that 52 per cent of the NSAs are national, 17.2 per cent international and 30.4 per cent community based. One in four is faith based.

National NSAs differ in membership or constituencies, geographical dispersion, motivation and values, leadership, objectives, role, methods of work, funding, and capacity (Dicklitch, 1998). There are membership-based and occupational organisations such as trade unions, professional associations, cooperatives, and women's groups. Occupational organisations are some of the better organised, partly because they represent the educated and professional elite, while CBOs, especially self-help groups, do the most to reach the poor (Barya and Bazaara, 1999).

Increasingly NSA clusters are being formed such as the NGO Forum, most of which extend activities to the sub-county level. This provides the opportunity for addressing sector partnership and quality assurance in a harmonised manner. Most of the international NSAs closely collaborate with national NSAs and the government.

Some NSAs support communities directly while others are intermediaries between CBOs and foreign NGOs or for government programmes. Traditionally NSAs in Uganda were mostly charity driven, largely providing humanitarian services (Oloka-Onyango, 2000), but they have now expanded to health, education, microfinance, infrastructure, agriculture economic empowerment and human rights. The groups targeted include vulnerable children, the poor, those with disabilities and people living with HIV/AIDS. Most NSAs provide more than one service. The majority of the international organisations focus on child development services such as food supplements and child protection, skill development and social support for behavioural change. A large proportion of national and district NSAs are engaged in promotive activities including services to generate income or provide microfinance.

Formal NSAs are highly dependent on donors and the state for both funding and technical support (Semboja and Therkildsen, 1995). However, differing funding objectives and operating modalities prevent harmonisation of the development agenda or transparency in M&E. Donor interests often determine the objectives and priorities, turning some NSAs

into donor puppets (Makubuya et al., 2002) and affecting their accountability. The excessive donor dependence highlights the fragility of the NSA sector and weak sustainability of the interventions. Informal CBOs and self-help groups obtain funds from their members and occasionally well-wishers.

By design most social protection initiatives disregard the gendered aspects of vulnerability to poverty, ignoring that men and women are not only affected by the same risks differently but also face different risks (Holmes and Jones, 2010a). Moreover, part of the vulnerability targeted by social protection is built into the social and cultural structures that inform the design and implementation of the initiatives. Accordingly, insensitivity to gender differences often is carried forward into the social protection initiatives, which inhibits gender-orientated governance and accountability.

## **2.5 Conceptual and analytical framework**

This study identifies with the transformative approach to social protection of Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler (2004) for its potential to address the complex nature of risk and vulnerability. Transformative social protection addresses fundamental issues of equity, empowerment and social rights, not just income and consumption transfers (Holmes and Jones, 2010b; Thakur et al., 2009), so it deals with both practical and strategic needs.

Governance significantly influences the extent to which gender differences in vulnerability are addressed (Corner, 2005). To ensure effective action and results, governance mechanisms should be gender sensitive, giving explicit attention to empowerment. The design and implementation of programmes must look beyond support for women's domestic roles and participation in traditional low growth sectors (Holmes and Jones, 2010c). Policies and programmes should be attentive to household dynamics, invest in both practical and more strategic implementation practices (Ibid) and make gender equality and the realisation of women's rights central goals.

This study argues that selection of specific populations and interventions, and effectiveness in achieving objectives are influenced by the gender sensitivity of NSA governance. Accountability involves balancing the needs of stakeholders in decision-making processes, activities and commitments (Blagescui et al., 2005), so it has a bearing on programme design and implementation. An organisation with a high level of accountability is more likely to involve beneficiaries and other stakeholders in the identification of needs and the design of response mechanisms and interventions. It is more likely to meet its targets.



### **3 Methodology**

This study was conducted December 2012 to May 2013. It was cross-sectional, employing both quantitative and qualitative methods in collection of the primary data. The secondary data were obtained through an in-depth desk review and content analysis of published and grey material and the selected NSAs' documents.

#### **3.1 Study area**

Katakwi and Kyegegwa Districts were purposively selected to represent the two broad tribal groupings of Nilotic (the Eteso in Katakwi) and Bantu (the Batooro in Kyegegwa) people; to represent the north eastern and western regions and to compare rural and urban and cultural aspects. Other criteria included the level of poverty and vulnerability and the presence of both state and non-state social protection actors.

##### *Katakwi*

Katakwi's two counties of Usuk and Toroma are subdivided into nine sub-counties. The main ethnic group is the Eteso. Other groups are immigrants such as the Bakenyi, Bagisu, Kumamu and Karamojong. Katakwi has a population of 169,814 of which 51.2 per cent are female, and a high population growth rate of 6.5 per cent, compared with the national average of 3.4 per cent (KALG, 2010). Population growth is responsible for land fragmentation, environmental degradation, low land productivity, reduced real household incomes, and stress on social service delivery. Only 2 per cent of the population is urban. The dependency ratio is estimated at 89.4 per cent (KALG, 2010).

Civil war and armed conflict, especially with the Lord's Resistance Army since 1987, and cattle rustling by the Karamojong since 1986 led to 90 per cent of the people moving into IDP camps, loss of life and poverty (Onyige, 2004) with rape and abduction being common. The return of peace in the early 1990s led to resettlement and small-scale production activities (KALG, 2010). Infrastructure is still poor with no electricity and with a very poor road network that is largely impassable during the rains.

Some Katakwi people traditionally are pastoralists with subsistence farming. Commercial farming constitutes 1.3 per cent of economic output, trade 3.8 per cent and paid employment 5.9 per cent (UNFPA, 2009). In the North Eastern region as a whole, 75.8 per cent of the population lives below the poverty line (MoFPED, 2014). The common severe drought and flooding worsen food insecurity. The poverty situation is characterised by high rates of early marriage, poor access to and use of social services, large families and poor family welfare, high mortality and morbidity, high school dropout rates especially among girls, environmental destruction, lack of land and land fragmentation, poor sanitation, low incomes, high unemployment, social conflict, lawlessness and insecurity, promiscuity, and reduced farm productivity. The sub-counties next to Karamoja are the poorest owing to cattle rustling.

Infant mortality per 1,000 live births has declined from 116 ten years ago to 65, and under five mortality from 192 to 108 per 1,000 live births, but the health status remains poor: life expectancy at birth is 46 years, maternal mortality is 328 per 100,000 live births, fertility rate is 7.2 children per woman, contraceptive prevalence is 23 per cent (KALG, 2010), and communicable diseases account for 54 per cent of the disease burden. The HIV prevalence of 6.9 per cent is among the highest countrywide. Only 28 per cent of pregnant mothers attend the required four prenatal clinic visits. Katakwi has only 1 major public hospital, 1 health centre with only a surgical theatre, and 21 other low level health centres. Only 52 per cent of the population lives within 5 km of a health unit.

Gender relations are influenced by patriarchal beliefs and customs such as bride price, food taboos and limitations on women's mobility. Son preference in education and property rights and ownership of productive resources such as land are entrenched in the social fabric (MoES, 2009). In general men control the money while women remain in the unpaid subsistence sector (World Bank, 1993). The unequal gender relations undermine efforts to increase production and alleviate poverty (KALG, 2010) and are associated with gender-based violence common in the district.

### *Kyegegwa District*

Kyegegwa District has one county called Kyaka, which has seven sub-counties and one town council. The population is estimated at 159,800 with 50.4 per cent of them female (Kyegegwa District Local Government, 2010). The growth rate is 3.7 per cent. The majority are the Batooro people, with a mixture of Bakiga, Bakonjo, Banyakole, Banyarwanda and Congolese refugees camped in Kyaka sub-county. The first refugees arrived in the 1950s from Rwanda (Barongo, 1998) and since then refugees have come from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sudan, Somalia, Burundi, Kenya, Central African Republic and Malawi (RoU, 2007). Immigrants from other parts of Uganda also come in search of agricultural land.

Kyegegwa's main economic activity is agriculture, and more than 80 per cent of the population depends on subsistence farming. Other activities are small-scale processing of coffee, tea and maize, and handcraft. A few people depend on employment and trading.

One in five people lives below the poverty line (MoFPED, 2014). The main causes of poverty are low agricultural productivity, lack of markets for agricultural produce, limited access to credit, idleness and redundancy especially among the youth, lack of knowledge and skills, and poor work attitude. Land ownership and accessibility are becoming increasingly difficult with population growth and initiation of various development projects.

The poor population health status is compounded by the inadequacy of health facilities, dilapidation of infrastructure and insufficiency of trained staff (Kyegegwa District Local Government, 2010). Only 53 per cent of the approved positions are filled by qualified health workers. The doctor to population ratio is 1:102,200, midwife to population ratio is 1:10,570 and nurse to population ratio is 1:9,730.

The district lacks basic infrastructure such as piped water and electricity, and has a poor road network that is impassable during the rains. Access to basic social services and facilities such as health centres and markets is limited.

The local government has interventions to address persistent inequality, vulnerability, risk and homelessness, with a focus on gender inequalities, abject poverty and HIV and AIDS. Gender mainstreaming, social inclusion and poverty are articulated in the district development plan. However, the discriminatory norms and practices of local cultures such as women's limited voice in decision-making in politics and family on issues of sexuality and reproduction, health care, and use of productive resources such as land, proceeds from their labour and farm products hinder economic progress and social transformation (Kyegegwa District Local Government, 2010).

### **3.2 Sampling procedure and data collection**

Mapping of all the NSAs at the sub-county level was conducted in the selected districts; for each district two sub-counties with urban and rural communities portraying different characteristics and experiences especially in gender and vulnerability linkages were selected for the in-depth study. In Kyegegwa, Kyegegwa Town Council and Mpara sub-counties were chosen for the high levels of population vulnerability and the presence of internal migrants and refugees and the resultant high-tension population dynamics. Omodoi and Katakwi sub-counties were chosen in Katakwi for their high concentration of NSA activity and high levels of vulnerability. In both these predominantly rural sub-counties there were respondents from a few urban areas.

National level mapping used secondary data from the NGO Board, Registrar of Companies, NGO Forum, National Associations of Women's Organisations in Uganda (NAWOU) and Development Network of Indigenous Voluntary Associations (DENIVA). Identification of NSAs at the district level involved using secondary data from the district registry and umbrella organisations. All formal and informal NSAs were identified using local parish leaders and with the help of assistant community development officers.

A sample of 36 NSAs from Katakwi and 10 from Kyegegwa was selected for the in-depth study of internal governance processes and their influence on NSA effectiveness, especially in addressing gender and vulnerability to poverty from the beneficiaries'

perspective. Using the snowball method and with the help of local leaders and heads of NSAs, 95 female and 65 male beneficiaries of NSAs (80 per district), who were well versed in traditional and formal systems of social protection, were purposively selected for the semi-structured interview. Also, 46 purposively chosen representatives of the selected NSAs were interviewed using a semi-structured questionnaire that, unlike that of the beneficiaries, had questions for institutional analysis of gender responsiveness. Thirteen key informants were interviewed and 10 in-depth interviews of beneficiaries were conducted.

Focus group participants and key informants were purposively selected on the same basis as survey respondents, provided that they had not participated in the survey. Four focus group discussions each for women and men, split equally between the two districts and with an average of 10 people each, were held.

Triangulation of the different methods covering similar material provided in-depth understanding of how NSA governance influenced effectiveness of interventions in addressing women and men's needs in the selected districts. The qualitative methods, including key informant interviews, focus group discussions and observation supplemented the semi-structured interviews. For the key informant interviews, opinion leaders and district officials were interviewed. Gender analysis tools, specifically the Harvard framework, were used to solicit information about gender differences in poverty, limited access and control over productive resources, and how social protection initiatives addressed women's and men's concerns and priorities.

### **3.3 Policy engagement**

Before the main study, consultations with state and non-state policy actors were held at national and district levels to elicit information on key issues to be explored and to validate the methodology. This enabled the research team to understand the status of social protection services in Uganda. They found that:

- No policies aligned NSA operations with State initiatives;
- Information on gender-specific reporting was non-existent;
- Social protection initiatives were broad in design with little or no regard for gender or vulnerability of the target population;
- Performance evaluation focused on inputs and outputs with no effective accountability to the communities;
- Studies on gender issues in governance and linkage to performance were lacking;
- Many fragmented, uncoordinated and overlapping initiatives existed and programme inputs were not effectively linked to outputs, outcomes or impact;
- Local leaders were selected to represent their communities in decision-making;
- The types of social protection and vulnerabilities and their causes varied, and involvement of and accountability to communities were limited;
- Some registered NSAs were not in operation;
- Vulnerability and poverty were recognised as affecting women, orphans, the elderly and persons with disabilities (PWDs);
- National-level data did not provide details or up-to-date information on NSAs;
- No clear link or joint M&E existed between NSAs and the State;
- Many interventions existed but the gender dimension of their governance mechanisms was not well documented.

During the second phase of the study another stakeholder meeting in Katakwi shared preliminary findings from phase 1 with NSAs in the districts.

### **3.4 Data management and analysis**

Quantitative data from the semi-structured questionnaire were analysed using SPSS version 16. Analysis was done at the bivariate level, largely utilising cross-tabulations for a number of variables. Case studies, key informants interviews and focus group discussions were audio-recorded with the respondents' consent and then transcribed. The content was analysed and emerging themes integrated with the quantitative information.

Whereas poverty levels in the two study districts were known, it was not possible to obtain disaggregated data for the local areas of operation or individual communities to establish the before and after effects of interventions, so the study used a post-test assessment of the beneficiaries to obtain individual and group perceptions. To avoid bias arising from one category of individuals, it was necessary to gather views from other stakeholders such as opinion leaders and NSA programme staff.

### **3.5 Limitations**

Data from the NGO Registration Board were incomplete but details were available on activities implemented by most NGOs, the specific target groups, and governance features. Information on the activity status of registered organisations was not available, but observations indicated that most were not registered and many unregistered NSAs were operational.

Most NGOs and CBOs in the district records were unknown to the communities. Also, NSAs thought that the mapping exercise was intended for financial support and so many groups were formed quickly during the survey. NSAs formed after the team's visit in December 2012 were not included. The respondents expected compensation for their time.

Men controlled the interview space, in some cases insisting on listening to their wife's interviews, interfering with confidentiality and privacy. Women feared answering some questions with their husbands present for the potential consequences. The researchers had to convince the respondents of the value of the information sought, and often they needed the husband's consent to interview the wife.

Obtaining policy documents from most NSAs was difficult as some were unwritten or copying facilities were unavailable. The researchers made notes, borrowed originals or reviewed the documents in the field. Bookkeeping information was not readily available and generally finances were regarded as classified. NGO and CBO management needed executive board approval to be interviewed or to give information on management and finances.

#### 4 NSAs and their services

Some 372 NSAs were mapped in Katakwi and 272 in Kyegegwa, with CBOs as the most prolific, totalling 363 in Katakwi and 254 in Kyegegwa. There were 4 international and 5 national NSAs in Katakwi compared with 7 and 11, respectively in Kyegegwa.

International NSAs included the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), Red Cross, World Food Programme, Windle Trust, Care International, Action Aid Uganda, Water Aid and Lutheran World Federation (LWF). Most informal NSAs were registered at the sub-county or district level but without the legal identity from the NGO Statute, the 2006 Amendment Act and the 2010 national NGO policy. Those with a legal entity are known as formal NSAs. The district authorities require that each group be registered at least in the sub-county. Many NSAs were membership organisations. CBO membership ranged from 15 to 80, skewed slightly towards women.

NSA operations were spread widely in the districts, but sub-counties considered the most vulnerable to poverty had the highest numbers. In Katakwi, for instance, Katakwi sub-county had 53 NSAs; Omodoi, 41; Ongongoja, 37 and Usuk, 34. In Kyegegwa, Mpara sub-county, the main host of refugees, had 52 NSAs; Kakabara, 38 and Ruyonza, 37. Few formal NSAs operated at the sub-county level, so mostly informal NSAs run by the community, especially women, provided social protection services.

##### 4.1 NSA beneficiaries

The target groups were defined by locally assessed need and following geographical parameters. Some 75 per cent of the NSAs in Katakwi and 83 per cent in Kyegegwa had men and women as their target. A few specifically focused on orphans and vulnerable children (OVC), people living with HIV and AIDS, youths, girls or the elderly (Table 2).

Table 3: NSA target groups

District	Children	Girls	OVC	Elderly	Women and men	PWD	Youth	General community
Katakwi	1	0	0	1	75	1	5	18
Kyegegwa	3	2	4	1	83	1	6	0

OVC = orphans and vulnerable children; PWD = people with disabilities

##### 4.2 NSA funding

Information on sources of funding was clearly articulated for State actors but not readily available for NSAs. NSA financing varied by type and level of operation. National and district NSAs had a wider mix of funding sources including donors, the government and global and national partners. Membership fees and contributions were dominant for CBOs (Table 3).

Table 4: Sources of NSA funding

	No. of NSAs funded	
	Katakwi	Kyegegwa
Donor/development partner	40	15
Government	55	12
National/local partner	46	27
Community, including membership fees	250	255
Politicians	2	–
Total	393	309

Both interviews and focus group discussions found that many NSAs solicited funds from their communities, particularly lower-level CBOs that required membership fees among other charges. Other sources of funds included interest on borrowed money and gains from

investments such as group livestock. Only 4.4 per cent of formal NSAs in Kyegegwa and 15 per cent in Katakwi received government funding, and only 10.8 per cent of Katakwi NSAs and 5.5 per cent of Kyegegwa NSAs reported receiving donor support. Membership fees and weekly savings contributions ranged from UGS (Uganda shillings) 500 (USD 0.20) to UGS 50,000 (USD 19.2), with 86 per cent of NSAs in Kyegegwa and 80 per cent in Katakwi receiving between UGS 1,000 and UGS 5,000. Generally, no distinction existed between men's and women's contributions. Payment schedules varied from weekly to annually. Some NSAs also required UGS 250 (USD 0.10) weekly for a social fund for illness or death in a member's family.

### 4.3 NSA services

Formal NSAs were involved in mostly promotive services such as building capacity in modern farming methods and providing agricultural inputs (Annex 1), along with psychosocial support and human rights sensitisation, especially against gender-based violence. CBOs provided mainly preventive social protection in the form of savings and credit services, revolving funds, and burial and moral support. Public services such as education, water and health were largely provided by formal organisations, sometimes with on-site implementation partnership of CBOs.

The biggest challenge was that almost all services to help the poor were financed by the poor and therefore were too limited to generate significant strategic activities that could have long-term impact, not the least for the status and self-determination of women. Transformative services were largely provided by international and national NSAs, which were few with limited coverage.

- **Humanitarian relief:** Humanitarian relief agencies advised on local response systems and provided psychosocial support for basic needs such as food, shelter and counselling to stricken communities, refugees and IDPs. The key international and national NSAs were Samaritan's Purse, working in partnership with the World Food Programme, and Toil and Promote Agriculture (TAPA), which kick-starts food growing until the first harvest and regularly provides food supplements. International NSAs such as UNHCR focused on basic rights of refugees and receiving, registering and processing them.

NSAs such as the African Humanitarian Action (AHA), Katakwi District Action for Life, Childcare Development Organization and TAPA supported community health, for example through providing drugs and supplies; training community health workers; giving specialised care for the chronically ill; collecting and distributing food and clothing to the sick; and providing free voluntary counselling and testing. Some CBOs and national and international NGOs provided HIV testing and treatment and nutritional supplements to people living with HIV and AIDS. Organisations including Action Aid International, World Vision Uganda, Strømme Foundation Eastern Africa, Community Integrated Development Initiative, Lutheran World Federation, Rural Health Promotion and Poverty Alleviation Initiative, and Women's Initiative to Support Orphans supported CBOs to provide antiretroviral therapy and psychosocial support.

- **Financial services:** NGOs and CBOs such as the Micro Finance Support Centre, Uganda Women's Effort to Save Orphans, Patience Pays Professional Organisation (PAPRO), Kambara Deaf Development project (KDDP), Kabweza Bataka Tweimukye, Banyakyaka SACCO, Unity of the Deaf, and Kyegegwa District Credit and Savings Association ran savings and credit schemes (SACCOs) for women's, men's and youth groups and provided business and personal development training. Organisations such as Kyegegwa Development Farmers' Association, Bakatawamu Information and Development Empowerment, and Care International Uganda developed skills to form SACCOs and farmers' groups. Increasingly, SACCOs were being formed in the villages, especially by women, and such associations were the largest NSA category in both districts. Unlike loan and credit NGOs with owners or promoters as leaders, in these village associations members participated fully in planning and implementation of decisions.

- **Funeral support:** Elaborate funerals are mandatory culturally and are a major and universal burden for the poor, so groups were formed to share the costs and labour. Funeral societies were local and had rules for contributions, meetings and election of leaders. Labour was distributed among women and men and all participated in activities. Burial societies were the largest category of informal NSAs. Most groups had a committee with largely male chairmanship and a few women in the other positions.
- **Family reunion:** The Uganda Red Cross Society provided services to reunite families scattered by war or disaster.
- **Education support and skills building:** NSAs were major players in education, providing scholarships, school fees and school supplies and adult education. Some NSAs including Katakwi Grassroots Women Development Initiative, Katakwi Integrated Development Organization, Oguyai Youth and Women Group, Omodoi Youth, Windle Trust (UK), UNHCR, PAPRO and KDDP were particularly interested in closing the gender gap in education and supported girls to remain in school. KaDDAN, Katakwi Integrated Development Organization, Teso Youth Network, Agency for Integrated Rural Development and Rwentuha Education Vision Trust were involved in capacity building for CBOs, NGOs and communities on agricultural production and income generation. Teaching English was an important transformative service, and many refugees established successful businesses after acquiring the skill.
- **Environmental protection:** National and international NSAs were involved in environmental awareness and natural resource management for its own sake and for income generation. Examples included ECO Uganda, Child Fund, Soroti Catholic Diocese Integrated Development Organisation, KaDDAN, Living Hope Centre, Conserve Uganda, Lake Opeta Conservation and Community Development Association, and Care International. Bakatawamu Information and Development Empowerment in Kyegegwa made energy saving stoves to reduce environmental degradation and the time women spent collecting firewood and cooking.
- **Human rights sensitisation** focused on gender-based violence and promotion of self-reliance, livelihood improvement and gender equality. The communities were mobilised to form self-help groups for sustainable income generation and tackling of issues on health, agriculture and human rights.
- **School feeding programmes:** NSAs, particularly LWF, Action Aid and Uganda Red Cross, were involved in feeding programmes for schools, and used local partners, schools and therapeutic feeding centres to provide daily meals. The impact on school attendance was positive.
- **Agricultural development:** NSAs trained farmers on food production, preservation and storage; provided free improved seed and encouraged farmers to use modern practices.
- **Conflict resolution:** LWF, Living Hope Centre, KaDDAN and Katakwi URAFIKI Foundation are some of the NSAs that provided conflict resolution, peace building, psychosocial support and counselling services to about 2 million people in Katakwi displaced by war.
- **Water and sanitation:** These services promoted the use of safe water, basic sanitation and improved hygiene through cleaning towns, health education, providing water treatment kits, constructing boreholes and protecting springs.
- **Child protection services:** Some NSAs arranged for safe custody for neglected or abused children. In Kyegegwa UNHCR supported placing of orphans with foster parents. The Danish Refugee Council, TAPA, Finnish Refugee Council, Window Trust Uganda, Miryante Orphans Home, Rwentuha Education Vision Trust, and Orphans Development Organisation provided child protection educational programmes for children and adults. The Miryante Orphans Home in Kyegegwa provided human rights services to orphans and vulnerable children and worked to protect their inheritance rights.

- **Self-help groups** were common, particularly those formed by women to support each other in farming. These helped in cultivation and harvesting, since money for farm workers was unavailable, and in networking.

#### 4.4 Beneficiaries of NSA services

Interviews with representatives of selected NSAs revealed that 65,017 people in Katakwi and 7,109 in Kyegegwa had benefitted from NSA services, with children and women as the majority (Table 4).

Table 5: NSA beneficiaries

Categories of beneficiaries	Katakwi		Kyegegwa	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
Adults	6,652	5,466	157	285
Youth	7,979	6,961	150	205
Children	12,796	12,382	3,099	3,079
People with disabilities	448	392	4	78
Elderly	4,730	4,655	10	42
HIV and AIDS	1,357	1,199	–	–
Subtotal	33,962	31,055	3,420	3,689

In the interviews and group discussions, the beneficiaries confirmed the NSA representatives' views on the NSA services (Table 5). Men were happy with being able to provide for their families, improve their household living standards or buy cows and goats. Most women noted that although the local NSAs were small, they helped address their immediate needs and improve their household welfare.

Table 6: NSA benefits from the beneficiaries' perspective

Benefits	Katakwi		Kyegegwa	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Education for my child	7	15	6	7
Built a house	3	2	4	3
Access to free medicine, treatment	4	3	3	3
Access to justice	2	2	1	3
Counselling	7	9	2	2
Economic empowerment	3	11	3	9
Skills	9	18	2	4
A sense of belonging	6	14	7	11
Others	0	1	2	3
Total	41	75	30	45

Other benefits mentioned were improved incomes, knowledge and social networking. Women benefitted more from CBOs than from larger NSAs. International and national NSAs were seen as more accessible to local leaders and their relatives. The services helped the beneficiaries meet many of the practical needs but not fundamentally change lives. Participants believed that there was need to address strategic needs such as power relations and knowledge acquisition, which they felt were causing disharmony, low productivity and poverty.

Some 71.4 per cent of the men and 83.3 per cent of women in Katakwi and 64.7 per cent of the men and 66.7 per cent of women in Kyegegwa regarded the services as generally inadequate. There was concern over corruption in national and international NSAs.



Formal NSAs in Katakwi were regarded as too few and so people depended on local groups, but these had limited resources.

## 5 Governance and provision of social protection

### 5.1 Governance and administrative structures

All NSAs had some form of governance structure for decision-making and day-to-day operations. There were more males than females in senior decision-making positions but more females in the other roles (Table 6).

Table 7: NSA leadership

NSA leadership	Male (%)	Female (%)
<i>Formal NSAs</i>		
Chairperson	77.8	22.2
Vice chairperson	40.0	60.0
Treasurer	30.2	69.8
Secretary	20.0	80.0
Committee members	47.1	52.9
<i>Informal NSAs</i>		
Chairperson	65.5	34.5
Vice chairperson	43.5	56.5
Treasurer	35.5	64.5
Secretary	20.8	79.2
Committee members	45.7	54.3

CBOs had more women than men members, with women constituting 78 per cent of the membership in Katakwi and 75 per cent in Kyegegwa. Big NSAs had a secretariat with full-time staff of three to seven people, including a director/coordinator, programme officer, and accountant/secretary plus support staff and volunteers. About two of three paid staff were male. Sub-county, parish or village NSAs often had no secretariat or paid staff, but all members met weekly for decision-making and task assignment.

### 5.2 Laws, policies and guidelines

Registration with the NGO Board required an NSA to have a constitution articulating its internal governance structures, financial reporting, work plans and intended services (Ministry of Internal Affairs, 2010). Informal NSAs usually did not have written constitutions but their members “knew” the rules. Only 30 per cent of NSAs claimed to have written policies/rules, and only 11 per cent could show a physical document. In Katakwi, 95 per cent of NSAs stated that they had a constitution, 5 per cent had by-laws, and 26 per cent presented such a copy to the research team.

While 66.7 per cent of the NSA officials claimed to consider gender in their policies, most constitutions were gender blind. Even many of the officials from NSAs with nominal provisions for gender concerns could not give examples of gender responsiveness actions or explain the aims of the concept.

A few organisations addressed specific gender aspects such as social discrimination against women and children. For example, OTUKO pledged to create awareness on issues such as the need for inclusion of both males and females as members and gender equity in elections. The constitutions of Omodoi Parents' Association and Family Life Survival addressed sexual and gender-based violence, gender discrimination and gender mainstreaming, and imposed penalties for sexual harassment. KaDDAN emphasised values such as gender sensitivity, mutual respect, transparency and accountability in its operations and called for gender parity and nondiscriminatory practices, justice, and equity in its member organisations.

Some of the NSAs claiming to be gender sensitive had policies without relevance to the local situation. Only one NSA constitution recognised the role of gender in development

in the preamble, but only very broadly. Issues considered as important by most NSAs were representation in the executive board and staffing, and maternity and paternity leave for staff. Others related to human rights and equal access to credit.

Some 72 per cent of NSAs provided gender-neutral services. The gender-specific services focused on training women in modern farming; provision of mosquito nets to pregnant women and widows; good nutrition for families; human rights awareness; fighting child abuse; provision of school fees and school materials for girls; ensuring women and men's participation in decision-making by representation on executive committees and inclusion in membership; encouraging women to join savings and credit schemes; and fostering equal access to credit, information and employment. About 33 per cent of the NSAs with either a gender-neutral or gender-specific focus were involved in savings and credit initiatives with women's participation, though these were targeting support for purchasing basic necessities for the home.

The gender-neutral services focused on peace and conflict resolution; counselling, testing, homecare and psychosocial support for families affected by HIV and AIDS and war; tree planting; schooling support for OVC; sensitisation on food security; training in modern farming methods and provision of agricultural inputs, especially to OVC and people living with AIDS to improve food security and increase incomes; capacity building for youth through vocational skills; health education; support for funerals; provision of treated water; and credit and savings schemes. Some organisations engaged in advocacy for children's, youth and PWD rights.

NSAs addressing gender power relations and access to and control over productive resources were mostly international and national organisations such as Action Aid Uganda and LWF, but they had limited coverage. CBOs' focus on gender was narrow, probably because the cultural setting gave low status to women.

Most organisations lacked gender capacity in terms of skills to conduct gender analysis or use it in designing and delivering interventions. A few and mainly international, national and district NSAs had staff with gender training and gender policies to guide operations. The gender training covered gender concepts, gender planning, M&E and budgeting. Lack of capacity for gender planning is a big challenge in attempts to integrate gender in NSA operations.

### **5.3 Accountability mechanisms**

The key dimensions of accountability as defined by Blagescu et al. (2005) include transparency, participation, evaluation, complaint and response mechanisms, and responsiveness to people's needs and concerns.

#### *Transparency*

Transparency is concerned with whether the NSA beneficiaries receive adequate information on policies, procedures, structures and activities. Most NSAs had no opportunities for sharing information with members or beneficiaries. The main channels were meetings. In both districts, a large proportion of mostly informal NSAs met weekly (Table 7), especially savings and credit institutions. Annual meetings were common with national and formal NSAs. International NSAs had no meetings for local people, except internal staff meetings for M&E.

Table 8: Frequency of NSA meetings

District	Meeting frequency (% of NSAs)				
	Weekly	Monthly	Quarterly	Annually	No meeting
Katakwi	66	7	5	20	2
Kyegegwa	78	5	7	10	

Meetings were a forum for sharing information on programmes and feedback on beneficiaries' views. Field staff of international, national and formal NSAs commonly organised community consultative meetings, sensitisation and training workshops and M&E visits.

CBOs required members to attend meetings, fostering a sense of ownership, responsibility and accountability. Women struggled to attend owing to restrictions on their mobility and time constraints associated with their heavy housework and farming. Credit and savings NSA meetings reviewed contributions and decided how savings would be spent and how defaulters would be handled, and on attendance of training programmes. All members participated in leaders' selection.

#### *Participation in activity planning and implementation*

NSAs mostly involved beneficiaries in activity design and implementation (Table 8), especially CBOs. Staff involvement in activities was mainly through meetings (78.4 per cent). International and national NSAs used mainly consultants for planning.

Table 9: Decision-makers on NSA activities

Activity	Involvement in decision-making (% of NSAs)				
	Executive committee	Staff	Volunteers	Beneficiaries	Local leaders
Design	28	6	0	67	0
Implementation	18	18	5	61	0
Monitoring	41	26	0	26	7
Evaluation	29	29	0	36	7

While NSA officials indicated that there was high involvement of beneficiaries in the programme cycle, the beneficiaries' view was that participation in decision-making was limited in formal NSAs but strong at the sub-county and district levels. Formal NSAs left out the community, especially women, in decision-making and programme implementation, excluded some vulnerable groups, made loan repayment difficult, had limited services for health care and were poorly organised. Consequently, self-help groups were increasingly being set up.

Formal NSAs had field staff to implement activities but involved beneficiaries in consultative meetings, often organised at the sub-county level, which made them hard to attend especially by women. Programme implementation for informal NSAs was the responsibility of the members. Women's lack of control over productive resources, especially land, affected their productivity and engagement in NSAs.

Other governance challenges included wrangles over leadership and division of funds, corruption, delays in programme implementation, and limited capacity for report writing and feedback processing.

#### *Evaluation*

More than 60 per cent of NSA officials said they had an M&E system, but only 11.1 per cent provided evidence of this. About 28 per cent of the NSAs had no M&E system. Field staff in international, national and formal NSAs reviewed the activities and provided feedback to the beneficiaries.

Formal NSAs shared monthly and quarterly reports with a few stakeholders—mostly funders, district officials and their executive board. Some 4.9 per cent of international and 4.5 per cent of national NSAs reported to beneficiaries. Only CBOs registered in the districts reported to the district and to their funders, but all CBOs regularly shared financial, activity and annual reports with their beneficiaries. International and national NSAs were more accountable to donors and government than to their beneficiaries.

*Interaction among NSAs and with other stakeholders*

Seventy per cent of NSAs were aware of other organisations providing similar services. Some NSAs had joint implementation partnerships or financial support links, or shared information and knowledge through capacity building workshops. Well-established CBOs and NGOs had relationships with government agencies. Informal CBOs had poor and limited interaction with the government.

**5.4 Effectiveness of governance mechanisms and accountability**

This study measured the extent to which NSA policies, regulations and accountability mechanisms recognised beneficiaries' needs and the gender situation and whether their services reflected this.

From their objectives, most NSAs aimed at encouraging credit and savings and modern farming; providing income generation skills and education; preventing and treating HIV/AIDS; fostering access to health care; promoting gender and human rights; sensitising and creating awareness on peace and reconciliation; and advocating for the rights of vulnerable groups. This agreed with beneficiaries' needs (Table 9).

Table 10: Beneficiaries' most pressing needs

	Katakwi		Kyegegwa	
	Male (N = 31)	Female (N = 48)	Male (N = 33)	Female (N = 42)
Education, school fees	15	36	21	19
Food	20	37	12	11
Household necessities	0	1	9	9
Clothing	19	22	14	12
Health care, treatment	22	29	15	20
Water	11	22	5	5
Building	1	2	6	6
Improving agriculture	13	14	3	5
Life skills training e.g. brick laying, tailoring	1	1	0	1
Animal farming	9	13	4	3
Shelter and beddings	13	19	10	8
Buying land	0	3	7	6
Others	7	14	7	13

### 5.5 Respondents' suggestions for improved NSA performance

Suggestions on the improvement of social protection services are summarised in Table 10. For Katakwi District, specific focus on climate change adaptation and mitigation was prominent.

Table 11: Beneficiaries' suggestions to improve social protection services

Suggestions	Katakwi		Kyegegwa		Total (%)	
	Male (%)	Female (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)	Male	Female
More community involvement in planning	25.8	22.4	29.4	23.9	27.7	23.2
Sensitisation, coordination	22.6	14.3	38.2	19.6	30.8	16.8
Improved feedback process	16.1	12.2	14.7	13.0	15.4	12.6
Co-ownership of services	16.1	14.3	17.6	0.0	16.9	7.4
Sustainability of the whole community and reaching villages	29.0	28.6	14.7	13.0	21.5	21.1
Enhanced M&E	16.1	12.2	14.7	0.0	10	15.4
Women's rights advocacy and education	22.6	16.0	17.6	21.7	20.0	18.9
Focus on climate change and agriculture	41.9	26.5	14.7	13.0	27.7	20.0
Provide safe water	19.4	16.3	23.5	17.4	21.5	16.8
Provide needy villagers with funds	25.8	16.3	32.4	26.1	29.2	21.1
Support families not groups	16.1	16.3	17.6	13.0	16.9	14.7
Improve sanitation	16.1	16.3	0.0	15.2	7.7	15.8
Allow citizens to attend meetings so they can give their views	25.8	12.2	17.6	10.9	21.5	11.6
Avoid corruption and improve technical know-how	19.4	14.3	0.0	10.9	9.2	12.6
Training in income generating activities and savings	35.5	12.2	20.6	23.9	27.7	17.9
Form more projects, organisations/NGOs	22.6	22.4	29.4	21.7	26.2	22.1

## **6 Conclusions**

A rapidly expanding number of NSAs are offering social protection services in Uganda to address vulnerabilities associated with poverty. The needs are great and the resources limited, so only the immediate, practical and usually economic problems are dealt with not long-term needs, which is essential for ultimate reduction of poverty. While promotive and protective services are necessary safety nets, for gender issues they provide only symptomatic treatment. Social exclusion and discrimination of women are common. Preventive and transformative interventions can deliver sustained reduction in gendered vulnerability and unlock the social and economic potential of women and men but they are not given much attention by the NSAs. Large and formal NSAs depend on donor support, and CBOs on contributions, neither of which assures sustainability: donor support can be whimsical, and the destitute cannot pay membership fees.

The NSAs have governance instruments whether written or unwritten, with the constitution as the main policy document for formal NSAs. The better-established NSAs have policies for finances, human resources and asset management. These instruments generally are gender blind in design and activity implementation and are based on broad national and district assumptions on vulnerability. Only organisations with gender considerations in their policies offer gender-specific services. Where gender focus does exist, often it is only in the programme design not every aspect of governance and interventions. Most formal NSAs do not have community input in initiative design. Formal governance systems may be more businesslike but often fail to address real community needs. Informal, community-based initiatives are more participatory and offer beneficiaries more opportunities for development and voice in decision-making on design and implementation of activities. But neither system adequately integrates gender concerns. The challenge is to correct their weaknesses without sacrificing their strengths.

Formal NSAs are robustly accountable to the government and donors but not transparent or participatory with their clientele communities. But informal NSAs, which have little or no formal accountability mechanisms, are wholly participatory and transparent with the vulnerable communities. The pressure for CBOs to be more accountable upwards should be matched with pressure on formal NGOs to be more accountable downwards.

## **7 Governance and policy implications**

- National policy needs to support NSAs for their effective engagement and delivery of services. Policy and regulation are needed but space for local contexts and grassroots practicalities should be allowed. The policy should allow autonomy, ownership and local coordination of NSAs. Regulation should be concerned with enabling NSAs not restricting them.
- NSAs need facilitation to offer interventions for not just economic but also social risks. Policies for this could include increased focus on long-term transformative and preventive interventions that address the strategic needs of the communities. This will enable transformation of lives and sustained reduction in gendered vulnerability to poverty.
- NSAs need a policy and programme plan to guide their interventions and to have complete understanding of the scope of social protection and of gender responsiveness as a guiding principle as stipulated in the draft Social Protection Policy, to ensure their interventions are in line with the policy.
- A policy requiring NSAs to effectively engage local communities in needs identification and strategy development should be encouraged. Social protection initiatives should be guided by clear assessment of the gender related needs and vulnerabilities, with community involvement. International NSAs with global designs should accommodate locally prioritised needs, conditions and vulnerabilities.
- Gender considerations should be integral to all policy and programming, supported by gender training at all levels of the entire social protection system.



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## Annex 1: NSA social protection services in Katakwi and Kyegegwa Districts

<i>Interventions / Service</i>	Kyegegwa				Katakwi				
	International	National	CBOs	Total	International	National	CBOs	Self help	Total
<i>Protective</i>									
Family support services	4	5		5					
Provision of food	2	2	180	184					
Financial support – cash transfers	0	6	205	211					
Humanitarian relief including temporary shelter	3	4		7					
Education materials	0	4		4					
Managing climate change impacts/disaster management – floods	0	5		5	1	1	1	1	4
Psychosocial support to families with chronically ill, widows, orphans	0	3	225	228	0	4	11	99	114
<i>Preventive</i>									
Savings and credit schemes	1	4	240	245	0	2	1	170	173
Funeral/burial support – social and financial support	0	0	240	240	0	0	0	234	234
Health care/medical care	2	3	24	29					
Reunion of lost persons/refugees	2	1	73	76					
<i>Promotive</i>									
Entrepreneurship and business management training	2	2	24	28	0	1	1	0	2
Provision of means of production (such as land, agricultural inputs, high quality planting material), equipment, animal stock, modern farming skills and technologies	5	8	78	91	8	2	22	134	166
Community literacy	3	1		4	0	1	1	6	8
Environmental protection	1	3		4	2		1	1	4
Material support such as clothes, shelter			40	40					

Safe water, sanitation and hygiene	2	3	60	65	4	0	5	0	9
Asset transfer management		1		1					
School feeding programme		1		1					
Specialised health care support for chronically ill		1		1					
Microfinance – credit and other financial services		4	240	244					
Promoting self-reliance through capacity building and sensitisation for livelihood improvement	195			195					
Mediation and conflict resolution					3	3	6	77	89
Health services	3	2		5	2	4	4	2	12
Rehabilitation and resettlement of vulnerable children							2		2
<i>Transformative</i>									
Sensitisation on human rights – GBV and children rights	5	3	154	162	8	11	28	24	71
Social communication for behaviour change	1	2		3					
Advocacy for strengthening legal system for protecting vulnerable groups like widows, women and children	2	3		5					
Legal aid services	2	4		6		1		2	3
Promotion of Gender equality			40	40					
Prevention of HIV & AIDS through awareness and sensitisation			230	230					