Photo: Sven Torfinn/Hivos

Gender and energy country briefs

UGANDA

Energy is a critical enabler in reaching development goals. However, the benefits of increased access to modern and cleaner energy services often fail to accrue evenly to men and women. The African Development Bank and ENERGIA recognise the need to prioritise policy action in the field of gender and energy to meet the international Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This country brief on gender and energy in Uganda is one in a series to support equality of access and use of energy by women and men through evidence-based initiatives.

The Uganda Vision 2040 and the Third National Development Plan recognise energy as a critical driver of socio-economic transformation. To ensure universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services, the Government of Uganda is committed to scaling up investments in the requisite human resource capacity, to reduce electricity costs, and to expand rural electrification and the use of renewable energy sources, particularly solar and biogas. Although Ugandans aspire to live in a society where women and men are empowered to participate as equal partners in the country's development, gender gaps continue to exist in all sectors, including in the energy sector.

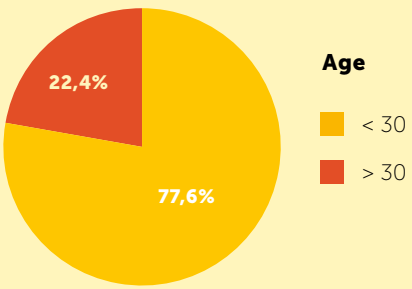
This brief provides insights into the current status of gender and energy in Uganda and a policy analysis. It presents key data, an overview of the institutional set-up and targets on gender and energy, and an analysis of barriers and opportunities based on an expert review of policy documents and consultations with key stakeholders. This leads to a set of recommendations for future gender-sensitive interventions.

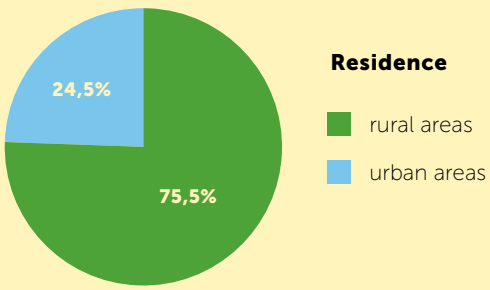
Read further:

I Gender and energy statistics

General country statistics

- The population is 37.7 million and estimated to increase to 60–70 million by 2030.[1]
- The population growth rate is 3.3%.
- Uganda has a high birth rate of 5.4 children per woman.
- 75.5% of the population live in rural areas.
- 77.6% of the population are under the age of 30.
- 30% of the 7.3 million households is female-headed.
- 21.4% of the population live below the national poverty line (USD 1 per day).
- Since 2020, Uganda has been categorised as a low-income country, with a macro-economic growth rate of 6.3%.





Gender equality in Uganda

The Africa Gender Index (AGI) ranks Uganda as above average in terms of progress towards gender equality with a score of 0.613 (1.00 corresponds to gender equality).[2] Although it scores well on social indicators and above average on economic participation, it scores poorly in terms of political representation and empowerment (0.379).

Policies and legal frameworks to support gender equality

- The Constitution of Uganda 1995 (amended in 2005) states that men and women are equal before the law, and that women have the right to affirmative action to redress imbalances created by history, tradition or custom.
- The Equal Opportunities Commission Act (2007) established the Equal Opportunities Commission that assesses cases of discrimination and inequalities in all sectors.
- The Public Finance Management Act (2015) requires compliance of the national budget with gender and equity requirements.

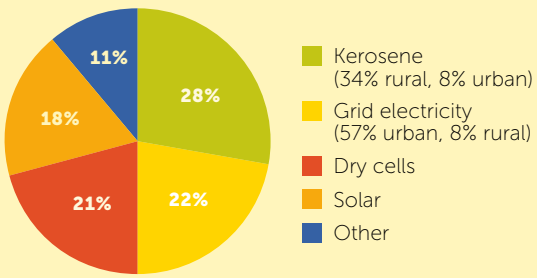
Highlighted gender-related facts[3]:

Energy situation

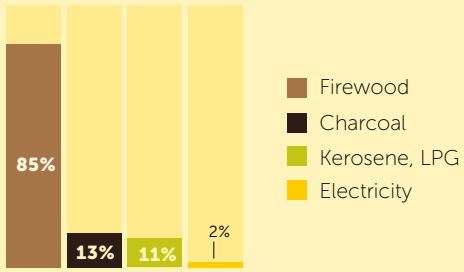
Half of Ugandan households (51%) access at least one form of electricity, with 24% having grid electricity (64% in urban areas). Slightly more (27%) rely on off-grid electricity (33% in rural areas) (UBOS ERT III, 2018). Renewable energy accounts for 90% of the total installed electricity generation capacity. In 2018, this amounted to 984MW. Of the total generated, hydro (large and micro) made up 75.6%, thermal plants 10.3% and solar 4.1% (MoEMD, 2018). Domestic users consume 92% of electricity generated while commercial, industrial and street lighting account for 8% (UBOS ERT III, 2018).

To increase energy access, the Uganda Government has set a target of achieving 100% access to clean energy by 2035 (Uganda Vision 2040). In the medium term (2020-2025), Uganda is committed to increasing the proportion of the population with access to grid electricity from 24% to 60%. It also aims to strengthen the supply side to provide stable and reliable electricity with outages reduced to 10%. With increased solar usage, the use of canister-wick lamps (kerosene) has declined from 58% to 28% between 2013 and 2017. Further, Uganda intends to reduce the share of biomass energy in cooking from 85% to 50% and, correspondingly, increase the proportion using clean energy for cooking from 15% to 50%. As part of this, Uganda is promoting the uptake of alternative and efficient cooking technologies including electric cooking, domestic and institutional biogas and Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG).

Proportion of households accessing energy for lighting[4]



Sources of cooking energy (% of households)[5]:



Cost of electricity in 2020 under the Uganda Electricity Regular Authority

- Domestic consumers (240V) pay USD 0.06/kWh as the lifeline tariff up to 15 kWh and USD 0.2/kWh over 15 kWh.
- Commercial consumers (415V) pay USD 0.17/kWh.
- Medium industrial consumer (415V) pay an average rate of USD 0.15/kWh.
- Large and very large industrial consumers (11,000 or 33,000V) pay USD 0.09/kWh and USD 0.08/kWh from 1,500kVA.
- Street lighting is charged at USD 0.1/kWh.

Cost of LPG

Cylinder Capacity	Average Initial Cost	Average Refill Cost
3 Kg	USD 43	USD 8.3
6 Kg	USD 54	USD 15.5
12.5 Kg	USD 89	USD 32
38 Kg	USD 170	USD 72

Grid connection and the cost of Electricity

The initial grid connection fee is about USD 100[6] for urban households. Rural households receive a subsidy allowing them to pay USD 15 less than urban households. The average cost for internally wiring a household is about USD 117. There are also credit facilities for private sector investors in renewable energy and households are allowed to pay in instalments. The tariff structure is designed to encourage industrialisation, and has reduced rates for off-peak consumption for commercial and industrial consumers.

Payment method

56% of grid-connected households pay in arrears based on electricity meter readings, and the rest use a prepaid system. There are various payment methods including:

- A traditional billing system which is being phased out.
- Mobile money, banks and pay-way machines.

The phasing out of the traditional billing system has eased payments, especially for women, reduced disconnections and improved household security.[7]

Cost of LPG

Although the use of LPG is increasing, its use is limited due to the costs involved, specifically the costs for the initial purchase of cylinders, accessories (typically USD 30) and refills. The cost varies according to the size of the gas cylinders.

To encourage the use of LPG, the Government has removed value-added tax from July 2020.

Access to energy for productive uses

Solar devices (35%) and grid electricity (33%) are the most common sources of electricity used by enterprises. 29% of businesses do not have access to energy and the remainder use local grid and rechargeable batteries. However, affordability and power outages affect usage (UBOS ERT III, 2018).

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1 Sources: UBOS UNHS 2016/17; UBOS NPHC 2016; ADB, Uganda Economic Outlook 2019

2 The data used in the construction of the Africa Gender Index (AGI) are largely supplied by National Statistical Offices. While indicators have been defined in a standard manner, the reference periods for a number of indicators vary across countries.

3 Sources: UBOS UNHS 2016/17, African Development Bank and UNECA (2020); Finscope Uganda, 2018; EOC, 2018; UBOS Time use survey, 2017/18; UBOS UDHS, 2018

4 This data point and other data points in this section are from: UBOS ERT III; UBOS UNHS, 2016/17

5 NPA NDP III

6 USD 1 = UGX 3,698

7 Based on consultation with the Ministry of Energy and Minerals Development in the course of preparing this policy brief

II The gender and energy nexus

Access to clean, affordable energy is necessary in achieving development. Energy policies and programmes are crucial to meeting the energy needs of men and women in households and for income generation. The energy sector itself also provides opportunities for quality paid work. By recognising that men and women have differentiated priorities in energy services, by involving women in decision making, and by creating opportunities for women in energy, the sector can contribute towards increasing gender equality.

Data on the gender and energy nexus

Information on gender inequalities in energy use in Uganda is limited. In terms of electricity access, data are collected at the household level. Furthermore, scattered information is available related to cooking, and data on women engaging in the energy sector are emerging.

In terms of access to electricity, the national household surveys indicate that a slightly higher percentage of male-headed households (52.4%) than of female-headed ones (48.4%) have access to the grid or other sources of electricity, and that differences are more pronounced in rural households. More male-headed households (66%) can access the national grid than female-headed ones (58%).

A gender aspect frequently cited in relation to cooking is the time associated with the collection of firewood. A recent time use study (UBOS, 2019) indicated that, in Uganda, men spend more time on average collecting firewood than women. In rural areas, men spent 1.2 hours per day gathering firewood, which was more than the 0.8 hours women spent on average. In urban areas, however, women spent more time on firewood collection (1.3 hours) than men (0.4 hours) (UBOS, 2019).

Data are lacking on women's participation in the energy value chain as entrepreneurs or as employees. However, throughout the country, women are involved in converting wood into charcoal and making briquettes from domestic and agricultural waste. The Uganda Energy Capitalisation Credit Company encourages financial institutions to reserve 20% of the funds available for women clients.

Gender in energy policy frameworks

The following policy and legal and institutional frameworks guide gender mainstreaming in the energy sector in Uganda.

The energy sector uses the **Energy Gender and Equity Compact (2016)** to identify and allocate financial resources to gender and equity issues in the sector.

The Renewable Energy Policy (2007) recognises the unique role of women in the provision and management of energy sources and the different needs of women and men when designing energy technologies and services. The policy prioritises the following:

- conducting studies on the linkages and mechanisms between poverty eradication, gender and renewable energy;
- sensitising stakeholders on the linkages between gender, poverty and renewable energy;
- implementing a comprehensive, gender-sensitive, integrated renewable energy poverty alleviation plan; and
- reinforcing the gender-related benefits of renewable energy.

Although this policy is being implemented, there has yet to be an assessment to establish progress in the gender actions.

Uganda's National Energy Policy (2002) caters for the various gender-specific energy needs that exist. The Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development is revising the policy, and the draft policy now commits to:

- enhancing the capacity for gender mainstreaming in the energy sector;
- enhancing access to clean reliable, affordable and efficient energy sources to support women's economic empowerment; and
- strengthening gender-responsive planning and budgeting practices.

Gender mainstreaming in the energy sector is undertaken through the following three key stakeholder groups to ensure that gender issues are taken up:

- The **Gender Unit,** a **Gender Focal Point Officer (GFP)** and the **Interdepartmental Gender Mainstreaming Committee (GMC)**. The GMC ensures:

1. the mainstreaming of gender policymaking, planning and the implementation of projects, e.g. electricity construction projects;
2. support for the supervision of projects to track gender equality actions; and
3. the gender sensitisation of ministry staff, project executing companies and communities in the project-affected areas.

- The **Equal Opportunities Commission** assesses the level of allocation of financial resources allocated to gender and equity actions in the energy sector using the **Public Finance Management Act** (2015).
- **Community Stakeholders.** The energy sector is privately led with several private sector companies contracted for the generation, distribution and transportation of hydro, thermal, solar and other types of energy. All contractors abide by the REA construction guidelines on social safeguards including gender and ensure communities participate in the implementation of projects.

Assessment of gender in energy policy

In compiling this country brief, an assessment was carried out based on consultations with key stakeholders.

Financial commitment and monitoring

The commitment to allocate finances for gender issues is in accordance with the Public Finance Management Act of 2015. The energy sector budget framework papers include commissioning of a power generation plant and compensation and resettlement related to energy infrastructure projects as key commitments to gender and equity. The performance assessment shows an increased score on gender and equity for the energy sector from 34% in 2016-17 to 65.8% in 2020-21 (EOC, 2020).

However, subsequent financial tracking is inadequate. While the gender and equity budgeting assessments provide data on the allocation of funds to gender and equity issues, there is inadequate information on the actual releases, expenditure and performance in implementing the gender commitments in the approved budgets.

Inclusion of gender issues in policies

- The energy sector does not have a sector- specific gender policy or strategy to guide gender actions as required by the Uganda Gender Policy (2007).
- The depth of gender integration in the existing sector policies and laws varies. There is often no gender analysis to identify gaps and emerging issues for incorporation.

- Some legal frameworks in the sector are gender-neutral, and do not specifically target or address women's specific needs. These include: The Atomic Energy Act (2008); The Mining Act (2003); The Petroleum Exploration and Production Act (2013); The petroleum Refining, Transportation and Storage Act (2013); The Petroleum Supply Act (2003); The Electricity Act (1999) and The National Local Content Policy for Petroleum Sub-sector (2017)

Availability of gender-disaggregated data

As mandated by the Uganda Bureau of Statistics Act (1998), and using the National Gender Equality Indicators Framework, the Uganda Bureau of Statistics coordinates actors in the national statistical system. It generates data on gender and energy in national household censuses and other surveys. However, collection and compilation of sex- and gender-disaggregated data on gender issues in energy projects is lacking, and gender-impact studies have not been conducted.

Employment of women in the energy sector

Adequate representation of females and males in the workplace is vital for achieving institutional gender equality norms. The Ministry of Energy is male-dominated, with only approximately 30% female staff, and these work mostly in the lower echelons of the ministry's structures and administrative roles (EOC, 2018). However, women are making inroads into the management of the sector:

- 2 of the 3 ministers are women (a minister and a minister of State).
- 2 of the 3 directors are women.
- 3 of the 10 department heads are women.
- 4 of the 11 CEOs of affiliated agencies are women.[1]

Gender-disaggregated data from private companies in the energy sector is not readily available. Women's limited representation in the energy sector is partly attributed to the limited number of women engaging in STEM courses.

Assessment of gender in energy projects

Gender is considered at the inception of all large-scale energy projects in the country.

- The Environmental and Social Framework of the World Bank and the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) tools are used to assess and integrate gender and other social issues in infrastructure development projects.

[1] These companies include: Uganda Electricity Capitalisation Credit Company Limited (UECCCL); Uganda National Oil Company (UNOC); Electricity Regulatory Authority (ERA) and Rural Electrification Agency (REA).

- Contractors must present a Communication Strategy and Community Engagement Plan for each project before entering partnerships with the Ministry or affiliated agencies, and must commit to integrating gender actions among other social issues.
  If there is a need for resettlement, gender-responsive resettlement and community action plans are developed and implemented for livelihood restoration with the participation of project-affected persons (PAP). Examples of gender-responsive actions include specific projects for women and for community infrastructure, such as energy-efficient technologies (cookstoves and bio- latrines) for schools and hospitals. Reporting mechanisms are in place to track and act on occurrences of violence against women and children.

Gender mainstreaming in the Rural Electrification Agency (REA)

The REA has a mandate to plan and implement a rural electrification programme. It sets out to be an equal opportunities employer in order to galvanise gender equality. Currently, 72 of its 150 staff are women (48%) as are 4 of the 7 Board members, including the Executive Officer. Women lead 40% of the 15 REA departments and units. REA has a gender working group which ensures that all projects give attention to gender issues. When undertaking feasibility studies for projects, REA seeks issues that benefit both women and men.

Projects supported include:

- Installation of electricity in rural hospitals, particularly in maternity centres.
- Encouraging the installation of lighting in the kitchens, bathrooms and outdoor areas in communities to ensure the security of women and girls.

Contractors must abide by the guidelines and ensure:

- Job opportunities for women as professionals and service providers in project activities.
- Participation of women in community engagement forums.
- Zero tolerance of violence against women and girls.
- Gender-responsive reporting and response mechanisms to address grievances.
- At least 30% representation of women in project implementation committees.

The agency deliberately ensures that women in the communities participate in the selection of projects sites, take up leadership positions and are members of project committees such as the grievance and reporting mechanism committee.

III Strengthening gender in energy

Uganda has a strong policy and legal framework to guide the energy sector. Although the sector has institutional mechanisms to promote gender in its activities, consultations revealed that gender mainstreaming needs to be strengthened in the sector and this could be achieved as follows:

Mainstreaming gender in policies

- Develop a sector-specific gender policy and strategy to guide sector-wide gender mainstreaming.
- Conduct a gender analysis/audit of the energy sector to establish the extent of gender integration in energy sector policies and institutions, identify the gaps and emerging issues, and review the policies.
- Assess the gender-related capacity needs of the sector and equip key personnel in the energy sector (policymakers, industry representatives, regulators, technicians and independent evaluators) with skills in gender analysis, planning, auditing and monitoring and evaluation.

- Enhance the capacity of gender experts and women's organisations in renewable energy and other energy issues so that they can hold energy sector actors accountable for women's participation in the sector.

Boosting women's employment and decision-making in the energy sector

- In collaboration with the Ministry of Education, encourage girls to take up STEM subjects and courses.
- Explore the possibilities of encouraging qualified women to seek employment in the energy sector by instituting affirmative action.

Collecting data on women as users of energy

- Assessments of electricity connections should go beyond data on households. Information on use and factors influencing use of clean energy for men and women will guide interventions to support meeting women's energy needs.

Collecting data on women as suppliers in the energy sector

- Compile a database of women suppliers/ entrepreneurs in the sector.
- Prioritise public education and the flow of information to the public so that women can register in the national supply database.

Assessing project impacts

- In the short-term, develop a gender assessment tool and guidelines to supplement the current Environment and Social Framework.
- Ensure that the existing impact assessment frameworks incorporate explicit gender dimensions.
- Conduct gender impact assessments of all projects.

Monitoring and evaluation

To gauge the extent of gender interventions in the energy sector, it is important:

- To collect, analyse and present sex- and gender-disaggregated data on services and gender representation separately for different groups of actors in the sector.
- To strengthen gender indicators in the monitoring and evaluation checklists and systems of all actors in the sector with an emphasis on the private sector companies.

Other recommendations

- Private sector agencies should be held accountable for implementing gender equality actions.
- Create and implement gender scorecards for utility companies as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

COVID-19

The global COVID-19 pandemic is influencing the lives of men and women around the world. Energy access is a crucial part of the immediate response and recovery of COVID-19. With people spending more time at home, energy is needed to ensure that people have clean cooking energy, refrigeration to keep food longer, water for sanitation, cooling for vaccination, electrification for health centres and lighting to support studying and leisure activities. The economic downfall and the lockdown measures have a severe impact on low-income households, informal workers, with women over-represented in the most hard-hit sectors (ILO, 2020).

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Key readings

- ENERGIA (2019) *Women's Energy Entrepreneurship: A guiding framework and systematic literature review*
- Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) (2018). *Energy for Rural Transformation (ERT III) Survey -Uganda Report*
- USAID and IUCN (2014) *Women at the Forefront of the Clean Energy Future*.

Consulted stakeholders

- Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development: Under Secretary, Environmental and Social Safeguards Officer, Principal Human Resource Officer, Human resource Officer, Planning Officer and Renewable Energy Officer
- SREP: Principal Energy Officer-Physical Renewable Energy, Principal Energy officer-BioEnergy and Commissioner Renewable Energy
- Electrical Regulatory Authority: Executive Director
- Rural Electrification Agency: Chairperson Gender Working Group
- Uganda Bureau of Statistics: Senior Statistics Officer Gender Statistics

Reference for this document

Mpagi, J., Kooijman, A. (2020). *Gender and energy country briefs – Uganda*, ENERGIA

African Development Bank

The overarching objective of the African Development Bank Group is to spur sustainable economic development and social progress in its regional member countries, thereby contributing to poverty reduction. The Bank achieves this objective by mobilising and allocating resources for investment in its member countries and providing policy advice and technical assistance to support development efforts. Light up and Power Africa is one of the five development priorities of the institution and constitutes an enabler for the other four: Feed Africa; Industrialize Africa; Integrate Africa; and Improve the Quality of Life for the People of Africa. It anchors the essential areas transforming the lives of the African people, consistent with the Sustainable Development Goals. Reducing gender gaps and accelerating women's empowerment are core objectives of the African Development Bank's strategy to ensure sustainable and inclusive development in its regional member countries. As the leading development institution on the continent, the African Development Bank is championing the production of sex-disaggregated data to adequately address the gender gaps and develop responses that leave no one behind.

Climate Investment Funds (CIF)

The USD 8 billion Climate Investment Funds (CIF) accelerates climate action by empowering transformations in clean technology , energy access, climate resilience, and sustainable forests in developing and middle income countries. The CIF's large-scale, low-cost, long-term financing lowers the risk and costs of climate finance. It tests new business models, builds track records in unproven markets, and boosts investor confidence to unlock additional sources of finance. Under CIF, the Scaling Up Renewable Energy Program in Low Income Countries (SREP) aims to demonstrate the economic, social, and environmental viability of low-carbon development pathways in the energy sector by creating new economic opportunities and increasing energy access through the use of renewable energy. The SREP program has 27 member countries and total resources of approximately USD 700 million.

ENERGIA

ENERGIA is an international network of like-minded organisations and professionals, active in Africa and Asia. Our vision is that women and men have equal and equitable access to and control over sustainable energy services as an essential human right to development. ENERGIA is hosted by Hivos, an international organization that seeks new solutions to persistent global issues.

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