



IN BRIEF

PROMOTING LEADERSHIP, EMPOWERMENT, ACCESS AND PROTECTION OF WOMEN AND GIRLS AFFECTED BY CONFLICT, SEVERE DROUGHT AND FORCED DISPLACEMENT IN UGANDA

Photo: UN Women Uganda

Programme description

The LEAP III project aimed at strengthening emergency protection, leadership, access to services and empowerment for 3,250 (2,750 women, girls and 500 men, and boys) including persons with disabilities) affected by interconnected crisis related to drought and displacement in Uganda.

Funded by the Government of Japan under the Japan Supplementary Budget (JSB), the programme was implemented from March 2023 – February 2024 in Karamoja drought affected districts of Kaabong and Moroto as well in Southwestern Uganda in the refugee hosting districts of Isingiro and Kisoro with a budget of USD 723,530.

Evaluation Overview

The evaluation was conducted to assess the project's achievements against the set objectives, identify and document lessons learnt (including design issues, lessons and best practices that can be up-scaled or replicated), and assess how the project contributed to gender equality and economic empowerment for vulnerable refugees, host communities and drought affected women and girls living in Isingiro (Nakivale), Kisoro (Nyakabande TC), Moroto and Kaabong Districts in Uganda.

Key achievements

- Increased access to integrated skills, services, and infrastructure including ICT services for 500 refugee and drought affected women and women in host communities. The project

managed to equip 2 women safe spaces in Kaabong district and Nakivale with Solar panels, ICT equipment.

- However, the project experienced delays in completing the safe spaces making it difficult to establish how many women and girls managed to access the services during the project period. While safe shelters were in place, their level of use was limited. Awareness about them among beneficiaries remained low.
- The project supported women and girls, access to justice by concluding over 211 cases (with legal aid) and over 260 psychosocial treatments for beneficiaries.

Conclusions

RELEVANCE

- The project was designed to respond to emergency situations and was evaluated as highly relevant in its responsiveness to the identified needs of women, girls in refugee settlements and their host communities in Southwestern Uganda and Karamoja Sub-region.

EFFECTIVENESS

- Overall, although the project was only implemented over a period of one year, it was successful in meeting its goal and exceeded the coverage of 3,250 people (2750 women and girls and 500 men and boys) by strengthening emergency protection, leadership, access to services and empowerment.

EFFICIENCY

- There was a delay in the disbursement of funds, leading to a four-month delay in the start of the project. This caused a rush in implementation of the workplans by the responsible partners. Consequently, time left to complete the planned activities was inadequate.

COHERENCE

- The LEAP III project was coherent to the national development framework on national disaster response under the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM).
- The interventions in Southwestern Uganda were also aligned to the national Comprehensive Refugee Response Plan (CRRP) and the Inter-Agency Uganda Country Refugee Response Plan (UCRRP) 2022-2025. All these are enshrined under Governance and Security, Human Capital Development, as well as Regional Development programmes in Uganda's National Development Plan III (NDP III 2020-2025).

SUSTAINABILITY

- District and subcounty technical officers provided technical expertise in execution of project activities like establishment and training of village savings and loans association and delivery of agriculture trainings. This working partnership enhanced opportunities for the sustainability of project interventions as the district officers would be able to offer the follow up support to the groups after project closure. Sustainability of the refurbished safe spaces was however not clear and required a well elaborated exit and sustainability strategy.

Lessons learned

The evaluation identified the following lessons with significance beyond the program:

1

The use of a **consortium approach proved efficient**. Each concentrated in implementing interventions where they had comparative advantage and expertise. This enhanced the delivery of the project as had been envisioned at design.

2

The project attempt to include aspects of **male involvement** in as much women and girls were the major targets. The trainings provided insights for men to appreciate the need them to be accountable their spouses. This laid a good foundation for males to be part of the broader fight against GBV.

Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION 1:

During the design stage, it is recommended that a **needs assessment prior to the intervention be conducted** with more active involvement of implementing partners and local leadership to enhance relevance and future sustainability.

RECOMMENDATION 2:

As a one-year project it is recommended that there is a **timely disbursement of funds to implementing partners**. This would enable them time to implement activities and generate the desired impact.

RECOMMENDATION 3:

A **consortium delivery model** is highly recommended and worked well under this project and suited an emergency response scenario. In this project, each partner in this case had designated roles that they played (aligned to areas of expertise) that avoided duplication and overlaps and hence creating efficiency in delivery.

RECOMMENDATION 4:

The **GALs (Gender Action Learning System) Tool** should be **more emphasized** in future similar project in an endeavour to mainstreaming gender in local development and in similar settings.

RECOMMENDATION 5:

Documentation and implementation of an exit strategy should commence at the design and start of implementation and should spell out the roles of key stakeholders and associated budget.