



SAGA

**Strategies and
Analysis for
Growth and
Access**

POLICY RELEVANCE SUMMARY



Policy Relevance Summary for "The Work of Women in Uganda: Contributions to the Macroeconomy"

Researcher Linda E. Lucas
October 20, 2004

This project is exploring the contributions of women to the Ugandan macroeconomy and has direct policy relevance for both the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP, 2000) and the PMA, the Plan to Modernize Agriculture. Uganda has achieved impressive rates of economic growth but continues to grapple with over 40% poverty rates. Moving women out of poverty is central to policy.

About 77% of all employed Ugandan women are in agriculture and of those, close to one-third (29%) receive no payment for their work typically on family land. Ninety one percent of all working women are either self employed or employed by a relative. There is no clear evidence of how this segment of the labor force will respond to price signals as an incentive. The female labor force is, in theory, available to either work on modernized farms (PMA) or to work in agricultural processing or other manufacturing industries (PEAP). At least one study, undertaken in Cote d'Ivoire says women's reservation wage is three times that of men and that price changes are not transmitted by the family to women, so their labour supply does not respond to market forces (Horsnell 1990).

A necessary condition for successful adjustment is the mobility of factors of production including labor between sectors. Women may, because of cultural constraints, be constrained in their attempts to respond to changing price signals. (Haddad et al, 1995:887) These constraints reflect domestic duties which include growing and preparing food as well as caring for children and other relatives and cultural expectations about women's behavior. Early results of this project indicate that Ugandan men and women spend on average 27-28 hours on unpaid work. It may be that these hours will be turned easily into paid work and increased economic growth, but this transformation may also be constrained by cultural and food security needs.

There has been a modest but gradual shift in the last 10 years, away from crop based agriculture towards farm and non-farm based enterprises

especially for female heads and men but not women in general. As this shift occurs, there is a need to increase investment to modernize the agricultural sector to increase productivity in that sector for both food production and for the export sector.

There is some evidence that there are differential rates of productivity between food production and export crop production in Uganda. This may indicate a difference in capital and other resources available or it may be a difference in the time constraints of the persons doing the work in each segment of the agricultural industry. One of the serious constraints for women is the expectation that they have several children and for men, is the expectation that they father several children. The child care burden rests almost entirely with women who also do most of the planting and weeding for household food production. There is an opportunity to increase agricultural productivity which may change cultural expectations for the need for many children to work in food production or ensure old age security.

This research continues to explore the relationships between women and labor markets. The function of relationships need to be determined in order to more clearly target PMA and PEAP.