Impacts of the Vision 2020 Umurenge Programme (VUP) on Rural Women’s Economic Empowerment

Qualitative Research in a Mixed-Method Approach: FAO/Laterite

The Transfer Project Meeting
Addis Ababa, 7 April 2016
• Background
• Qualitative research approach
  - Hypotheses
  - Sampling
  - Roadmap
• VUP highlights
• Findings
• Recommendations
BACKGROUND

• FAO Protection to Production (PtoP) & Transfer Project
• FAO - SCT linkages to agriculture; rural investments; improve resilience & livelihoods
• FAO RWEE agenda:
  - strengthen access of SP benefits for women & HHs
  - identify good practice in gender-equality in SP design/implementation to strengthen access & impacts
• Bringing useful evidence, messages, recommendations to policymakers
1. Economic advancement: SP programmes that promote economic advancement of women increase their productive resources (e.g. incomes, access to credit) & also can improve their skills & employment opportunities.

2. Power and agency: SP strengthens women’s power & agency by increasing their bargaining power within the household & wider community. This increases self-confidence, ability to engage in social networks & participation in public decision-making.

3. Operations: When SP design & operational features ensure women’s equal access to benefits & build linkages with community-based services & livelihood interventions they promote gender equality & women’s economic empowerment.
VUP can advance women’s economic advancement through:
- Promoting access to cash
- Increasing participation in (decent) wage employment
- Enabling savings and investment
- Skills development
- Minimising detrimental coping strategies

VUP can advance women’s power & agency through:
- Individual ownership of cash/assets & own decision-making on how they are used
- Increasing bargaining power, voice at HH & community-level

Program Operations can support these outcomes through:
- Good performance in implementation - this supports empowerment outcomes
- Gender-sensitive design (e.g. female quotas, address gender-related constraints to participate)
VUP - A FEW HIGHLIGHTS

• Launched 2008 - managed by LODA (MINALOC) - implemented with decentralised gvt. & other ministries

• 3 prongs:
  - DS: up to US$21 /5pHH/monthly for labour-constrained HHs (20% of VUP resources)
  - PW: wage US$1.42/d) (set at local market wage rate) - paid every 15days in bank account (SACCO); cosignatories encrgd; can rotate work; works selected from sector plans...actual delays in payment up to year- coverage March 2015: 130,000HH in 172 of 416 sectors (50% of VUP resources)
  - FS: low-interest loans to anyone (for NONBENs, must be in groups including BEN members) (30% of VUP resources) + sensitization and training in all above

• Targeting community-based - following ubudehe - 1+2 levels eligible- - target HH (head of HH registered as BEN) - rescreen annually

• PW gender parity goal - 50% BENs should be women (unclear if ‘as registered BENs’ or ‘as workers’...actual, much higher (majority) no. workers are women & @30% FHH BENs

• PW target - min. 71 days/yr. (@4 phases/15d each over 3 mo.) - actual @50d/yr. - our data Ndego: 15d/yr. only

• VUP in revision - piloting new ‘ graduation package’ & strengthening for timely payments, days worked, sensitization, linkages
METHODOLOGY: SAMPLING, APPROACH, ROADMAP

- systematic sampling protocol - in each province: 1 district, 1 sector, 2 cells (near/far), 1 village in each cell
- training of local research team (4 days + 1 pilot day)
- 2 weeks fieldwork: 1 week each province
- 4 days village + 1 day comparison community
- nightly **debriefings and end-of-week syntheses**
- **village/district/national feedback**: validation and ownership
- “Roadmap” - systematic FGDs with BENs and NONBENs using participatory tools; KII s; in-depth HH case studies; snowballing interviews
  - 34 FGDs; 19 KII s; 2 case studies; other resource persons

Research Locations: Kayonza & Gisagara
Hyp 1 - Economic Advancement & Time Use

- Women ‘earning’ cash thru PW, but seldom able to retain full or even partial control
- VUP payments thru SACCOs allowing some women to own a financial account for the first time - & providing possibility (for a minority) to access loans
- Women’s own SACCO accounts (when existing) facilitates decision-making & control over credit & their income - but earnings are small
- Women’s lower literacy skills and unequal bargaining power within the household are key constraints to accessing loans
- VSLs & other informal lending (e.g. tontines) are main credit sources for women - VUP has enabled some women to join these for the first time & access loans
- A requisite for married individuals applying for a loan from SACCO is spouse consent; some women expressed fear on misuse of loans by husbands
- For a minority of female BENS, wages from PW serve as a catalyst for small investments (petty trade, brewing beer, renting land) - but most wages used for consumption smoothing
HYPOTHESIS 1 - CONT.

- Despite women being the majority of workers, no changes found in time allocation for domestic activities (e.g. care) - men report 50 - 75% more leisure time than women
- VUP participation increases workload of women & children (women offloading some domestic burden)
- Inability to hire in labor (agriculture or care activities) to make up for less time available
- BENs do learn new skills (e.g. levelling roads, digging ditches, constructing terraces) - but this is mostly ‘on the job’ - women not able to find similar jobs elsewhere due to domestic obligations & few viable opportunities
- Migration (for men & women) continues as a common coping strategy during drought/difficulties - low number of work days and unreliable payments limit improving coping
- But, some indication that VUP helps improve resilience through investments (e.g. livestock as precautionary savings)
HYPOTHESIS 2: WOMEN’S POWER & AGENCY
Hyp 2: Power & Agency

- VUP is contributing to ongoing positive enabling environment for women’s empowerment - positive perception & views on women’s economic role & capacity to engage in income-generating activities.

- But, momentum concerns activities of small amounts of cash (e.g., day-to-day household expenses), issues of less priority.

- Relatively small cash wage amounts & implementation challenges key reasons for VUP shortcomings in promoting more change in women’s power & agency at household level.

- Men have greater asset ownership than women, yet women & men bear similar responsibilities, particularly in agriculture.

- Women reported as continuing to have limited ability to negotiate, voice their opinions & assert their rights in household.
Hypothesis 2: cont

• The use of VUP cash for personal and children’s items and economic investments resulting in heightened feelings of self-esteem, dignity, increased ability to make independent choices

Busasamana: “Now that I have a SACCO account I have some small money that my husband is not aware of so if I want to buy something for the children I can do it without having to ask him.”

• For some, VUP is catalysing social capital - inclusion in social networks for economic collaboration & mutual support (e.g. mothers’ evenings, VSL) with positive spill-over feelings of self-confidence
• Women are forming new friendships, exchanging information, fostering a sense of unity & support - often at worksite
• But this does not result in increased leadership or decision-making in the public arena: mixed findings about speaking up in public, some feel enhanced confidence & self-worth, most feel shy & embarrassed

A woman from Taba: “before I was afraid to go to community meetings including “mothers’ evenings” because I had dirty clothes, but now I am clean, I feel better to attend and sometimes I speak up.”
HYPOTHESIS 3: OPERATIONAL ISSUES/RWEE
Hyp 3: Operational Issues

• Targeting may be risking exclusion of the poorest:
  • In practice - not fully aligned with targeting criteria - inclusion errors from *ubudehe* category 3
  • obstacles for some households to attend targeting meetings (e.g. households with high dependency ratios/FHHs)
  • VUP not attractive for the poorest: short-term status, few days, delays in payments, low pay
• VUP workers tend to be females - males find work unattractive and migrate elsewhere
• Limited number of work days available compromise the potential for improving women’s and men’s economic empowerment

Kigembe: “*VUP is for people who can afford to wait for payment.*”

• Average work sites far from beneficiaries’ dwellings: between 2.5-3 hours
• Distance & work tasks problematic for female-only households with low labor capacity
• Delays in payment continuous (quant. survey data from Southern show 32 percent of total payment not been paid at time of data collection)
• Absence of multi-year monitoring system to track BENs:
  • Cumulative number of days worked in different projects
  • Phases in which individuals have worked and years
  • Identification of household members that worked
HYPOTHESIS 3: cont.

- A majority of BENS had not been reached with sensitization messages - inconsistent delivery
- Little training and skills development (e.g. financial literacy)
- General lack of awareness among beneficiaries of how VUP projects are selected & lack of understanding of the linkage with local development (imihingo) process
- Limited gender sensitivity for addressing specific challenges, needs & priorities of female BENs (e.g. water wells, child care services, labor constraints)
- About 50% of “double households” and 61% of “female-only” households did not know where to file complaints about VUP
- Mixed feelings about the effectiveness of the complaint mechanism (e.g. finding solutions to payment delays)
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<th>Hypotheses</th>
<th>Results</th>
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<td>1. promotes economic empowerment, increasing women’s resources, skills &amp; employment opportunities</td>
<td>partially confirmed supporting financial inclusion - some save &amp; invest; domestic obligations maintained; new employment absent; implementation challenges weaken economic advancement</td>
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<td>2. increases women’s bargaining power, self-confidence, engagement in social networks &amp; public arenas</td>
<td>partially confirmed marginal increase in inter-HH bargaining power (small amounts of cash); catalysed joining social &amp; economic networks; enhanced self-confidence; no change in public arena comportment</td>
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<td>3. design &amp; implementation facilitates equal benefits &amp; opportunities for women - promoting gender equality and economic empowerment</td>
<td>not confirmed low no. working days; delayed payments; weak communication; dysfunctional MIS; design could better address women’s constraints to participate, provide training, skills development (financial literacy), &amp; linkages</td>
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**PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Economic**
1. Ensure wage payments are delivered on time & that VUP PW beneficiaries work a minimum number of days in each financial year (71d)

2. Sensitize females for opening individual accounts with a financial institution to increase their decision-making capacity & control over their own incomes

3. Explore how to best develop synergies between VUP & other programs: rural development promoted with other ministries (e.g. extension services, health/nutrition) & NGOs (e.g. financial literacy)

4. Build capacity in household financial decision-making for men & women to capitalise on opportunity to promote economic empowerment

**Power & agency**
1. Strengthen implementation of sensitization activities concerning intra-household gender relations - systematic use of Sensitization Manual

2. Establish/extend support to local community spaces to enhance participation in social networks & public life by female BENs; promote formation of women’s groups, particularly around economic empowerment
Operational

1. Strengthen VUP monitoring & information system (MIS) to better track beneficiary households & understand & direct pathways to more productive livelihoods and economic empowerment

2. Include specific indicators that measure progress in women & men’s economic empowerment, particularly in intra-household decision-making

3. Strengthen VUP targeting to ensure compliance and consistency in implementation - redirecting households with high dependency ratio/low labor capacity to DS component

4. Expand VUP project portfolio to include projects which can be performed closer to the household & address priorities & interests of both women & men (e.g. child care services, health & educational services, water wells, nutrition clubs, providing labor on fields from labor-constrained households)
Thank you. Murakozi - Any questions?