

Integrating gender and nutrition in Ugandan policy: An assessment

Lead:

A recent study on Ugandan climate and food security policies assesses gender and nutrition mainstreaming in national policy.

[This story was originally published on the CCAFS blog.](#)

Most of Uganda's population relies on rain-fed agriculture for their livelihoods. Agriculture is highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change: decreasing soil fertility, rainfall variability, extreme weather events, as well as pests and diseases, are only some of the challenges farmers are facing. Rural women in Uganda are especially vulnerable to these challenges, given their cultural responsibility to provide their families with nutritious food, fuel and safe water—resources that are becoming scarce following weather extremes.

The challenges notwithstanding, Uganda is still considered the “regional food basket” due to its high agricultural production. However, undernourishment has been on the rise, despite recent improvements in child nutrition. Adult obesity has also somewhat increased in the last few years, adding to the issue of malnutrition in the country.

Adequate focus on gender and nutrition in climate change and food security policies could help tackle these challenges. [A recent study](#) carried out by the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture ([IITA](#))* shows that there is evidence of government efforts to include gender and nutrition perspectives in national policies, but that these are not consistently mainstreamed across climate change and food security policy documents.



Read the Policy Brief: [Climate change, food and nutrition policies in Uganda: Are they gender- and nutrition-sensitive?](#)

Recognizing the importance of agriculture, nutrition and gender in national plans

Uganda's [Comprehensive National Development Planning Framework](#) consists of the major national plans and policies, such as their [Vision 2040](#) and five-year national development plans, as well as sectoral policies, among others.

This framework acknowledges the impacts of climate change on the environment and economy, including agricultural production, productivity and incomes. It highlights agriculture as a key sector to be supported to improve access to food, boost income and increase nutrition security. The framework also emphasizes the major role of women in agricultural production and that women should be empowered to participate as equal partners in development.

This shows that gender and nutrition are being considered relevant to national policies. While this is promising, to help the government advance on these commitments, the study looked at how well a number of policy documents integrates gender and nutrition, and made specific recommendations based on the findings.

Taking a closer look at gender and nutrition sensitivity in policy documents

The study examined 26 policy documents across 10 criteria to assess gender and nutrition sensitivity. The policy documents were selected from the vital sectors of water, environment, agriculture, health and education; 10 relate to climate change and 16 documents focus on food security. The 10 criteria were adapted from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations ([FAO](#)) key recommendations for improving nutrition through agriculture and food systems and the UN Network for Scaling up Nutrition ([SUN](#)) criteria and characteristics of “good” national nutrition plans. The criteria used are described in [Table 1](#) of the Policy Brief.

The figures below show how many of the examined documents were gender and/or nutrition sensitive, listed by the 10 criteria.

In climate change policies:

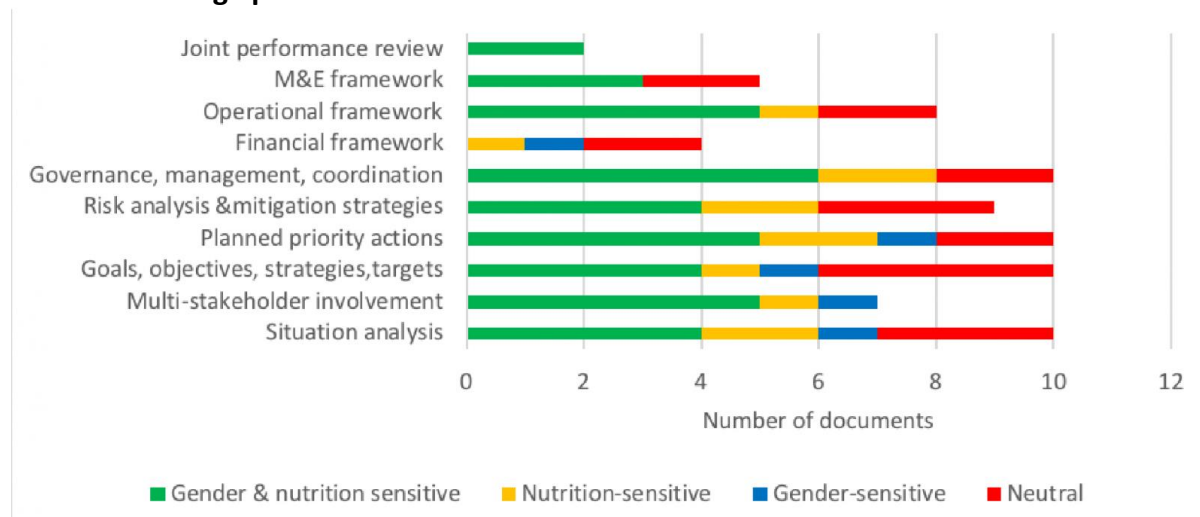


Figure 1. Analysis of gender- and nutrition-sensitivity of climate change policies.

In food security policies:

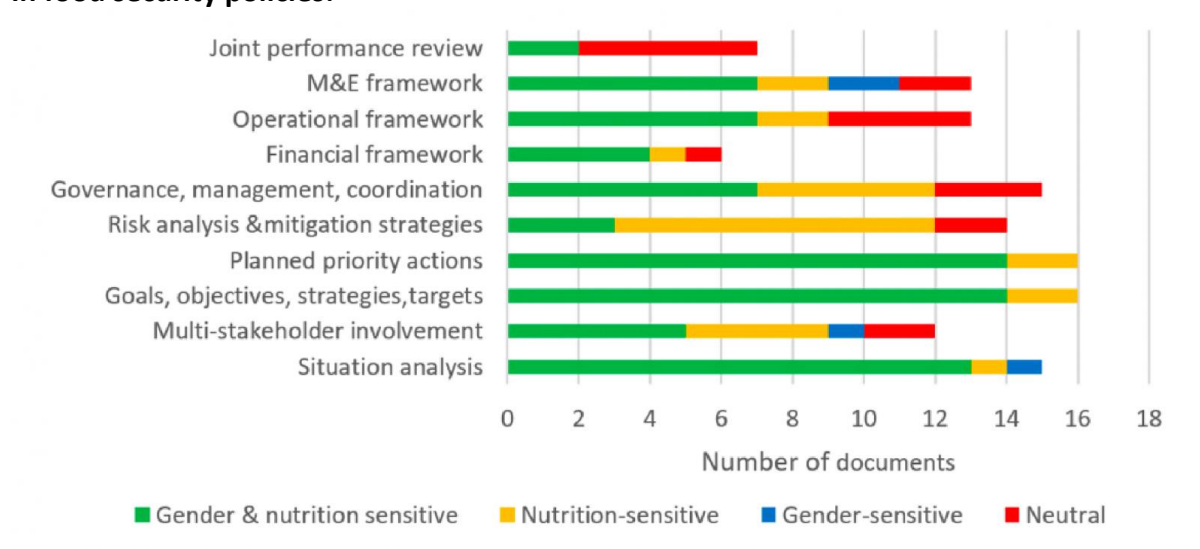


Figure 2. Analysis of gender- and nutrition-sensitivity of food and nutrition policies.

Signs of ambition but still room for improvement

There is evidence of efforts to mainstream gender and nutrition in national policies. However, the study finds that gender and nutrition aspects are integrated unsystematically in both climate change and food security policies.

While effective policy implementation will require a systematic and coherent development of guiding documents (policies, implementation strategies, implementation guidelines, action plans and budgets), the study reveals the absence of some important documents along the hierarchy of guiding documents in both sectors. Other key documents, such as the

Uganda Nutrition Action Plan 2018-2025 and the National Nutrition Policy are still in draft form.

There is also a lack of financial frameworks in more than half of the documents, which makes it difficult to track explicit sector allocations on gender and nutrition. Lastly, gender, climate change and nutrition are cross-cutting responsibilities of multiple sectors, however, very few policy documents provide for joint sector performance reviews.

Recommendations for policy-makers

The study makes some recommendations for policy-makers to consider:

1. Sectors should systematically develop policies and guiding documents and align their provisions for gender, climate change and nutrition with the national targets set by the Comprehensive National Development Plan Framework.
2. Sectors should systematically mainstream gender and nutrition throughout sections of the national guiding documents by stating explicit commitments. This should be informed by sector-specific gender analyses.
3. Joint performance reviews involving various stakeholders should be held regularly to evaluate progress and alignment with national vision as well as reduce the duplication of efforts.

Implementing these recommendations will advance Uganda's efforts to improve gender, climate change, food, and nutrition outcomes, and thereby contribute to a more food-secure, resilient and equal world.

Read the Policy Brief: [Climate change, food and nutrition policies in Uganda: Are they gender- and nutrition-sensitive?](#)

* The study was done as part of the [CCAFS Policy action for nutrition-sensitive climate-smart agriculture in Uganda and Ethiopia project](#), led by the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture ([IITA](#)).

Authors:

Written by Lili Szilagyi ([CCAFS](#)) and Patricia Bamanyaki ([IITA](#))

Lili Szilagyi is the Communications Consultant for the CCAFS Priorities and Policies for CSA Flagship. Patricia Bamanyaki is the Project Leader for the Policy action for nutrition-sensitive climate-smart agriculture in Uganda and Ethiopia project in Uganda and Ethiopia, based at the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) in Uganda. Edited by Leanne Zeppenfeld, Communications Student Assistant for the CCAFS Program Management Unit.

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