



THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA



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Gender and Equity Performance for the Uganda National Roads Authority (UNRA); FY2018/19

Overview

Under the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA), 2015; Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) of government are required to comply to Gender and Equity (G&E) planning during the preparation of their Budget Framework Papers and Ministerial Budget Policy Statements. It is in these documents that the MDAs commit to address the G&E issues identified within their realm.

The key G&E issues for UNRA are:

- i) Engineering designs are typically not gender and equity responsive with the needs of women, PWDs, the older persons and children not adequately taken into consideration during construction of infrastructure;
- ii) The needs of the voiceless including women, PWDs, children, the poor and the older persons not given adequate consideration in land acquisition, compensation and resettlement;
- iii) Women and PWDs are underrepresented in the construction of infrastructure; and
- iv) High mobility of labour in construction projects and transport corridors heighten the risk of sexual violence towards women, girls and boys as well as HIV infection in the communities in the vicinity of construction.

This briefing paper highlights the performance of the G&E responsive interventions of UNRA at the institutional and program level during the FY2018/19.

Key Issues

1. Local firms are subcontracted works of low financial gains.
2. Inadequate involvement of females in the implementation of road works.
3. The needs of PWDs and cyclist lanes are not provided for in the road designs.
4. Ferry staff do not have accommodation in close proximity to their work stations.

INTRODUCTION

The Uganda National Roads Authority (UNRA) is one of key implementing agencies in the roads sub-sector. The UNRA aims to develop and maintain a national roads network that is responsive to the economic development needs of Uganda in an environmentally sustainable manner while ensuring road user safety. To do this, the UNRA undertakes implementation of two programmes; the National Roads Construction/Rehabilitation and the National Roads Maintenance programmes.

Important to note is that, the UNRA has no G&E specific budget and so these are mainstreamed in the implementation of the core activities of the Agency. The following sections show the level of responsiveness of UNRA and its programmes to G& E.

Institutional Gender and Equity Responsiveness

The UNRA formulated a number of policies and guidelines to guide the implementation and mainstreaming of gender and equity interventions in the institution's programmes. The UNRA Human Resources Policies Manual (June 2016), sets out the minimum labour standards and employment conditions. For example, the Sexual Harassment Policy spells out the process for investigating and resolving incidents of alleged sexual harassment, clauses on confidentiality, sanctions, protection of victims of subtle sexual harassment, assurance against retaliation, statement on consensual relationships, documentation and application. Other key policies in the manual are: Grievance Handling, Employee Relations, Occupational Health and Safety and HIV/AIDS. In addition, capacity enhancement in gender; of the head office and UNRA stations staff was carried out.

Lactating mothers have a designated room at the head office. There is a policy on the encouragement of females to make up at least 30% of the staffing unit. Separation of the rest rooms for both males and females was adhered to.

The UNRA has a department responsible for all gender and environmental issues on development projects. The department has a system which comprises of procedures, guidelines, policies and checklists on environmental and social (land compensation, STD and HIV/AIDS alleviation, Occupational Health and Safety, site condition) issues. The checklists address thematic areas of Environmental and Social Impact Assessments. UNRA has the following policies: Gender Action Policy, HIV/AIDS Policy, Sexual Harassment Policy, Human Resource Management Policy, Operational Health Management Policy, and Grievance Management Policy.

The National Roads Construction Programme

The National Road Construction (NRC) Programme is solely for construction of paved roads funded by both the government (GoU)

and development partners. In FY 2018/19, the NRC had an annual budget of Ug shs 3,130.414 billion of which Ug shs 2,573.803 (82.22%) was released and Ug shs 2,279.93 (88.58%) was expended.

The performance of this programme was good at 80% and this was partly attributed to improvement in land acquisition due to creation of a single project code for the activity. The gender and equity activities were incorporated in the implementation of UNRA projects as follows;

i) Acquisition of Land: A total of Ug shs 268.01 billion was released and all spent. A total of 12,274 Project Affected Persons (PAPs) were paid. During compensation, special consideration in form of information dissemination and probono services was given to PAPs with special attention to the vulnerable.

ii) Procurement: Enforcement of the reservation scheme of 30% towards local content was instituted to enhance the financial and technical capacity of the local construction industry. The local companies accounted for 28% of the contracts that were signed up in FY 2018/19 with a total monetary value of Ug shs 737 billion. It was however noted that the local companies were subcontracted for the preliminary works such as earthworks and drainage works which attract low financial gains and technical capacity advancement. Similarly, over 90% of the bridge construction projects were being implemented by the local contractors and these were performing well. On the other hand, 80% of the supervision of works contracts on upgrading projects were through joint ventures between international and the local firms. Over 96% of the supervision contracts of rehabilitation projects were under taken by the local companies.

iii) Involvement of Women and PWDs in projects: The female composition of the staff employed on the projects by both the contractors and consultants was about 11% and 20% respectively falling short of the required 30%. The few number of females mainly occupied the position 'support staff'. There were also no PWDs registered on the projects.

iv) Inclusiveness in design: The designs of the roads constructed took care of the needs of

vulnerable road user groups in a number of aspects. These included: pedestrian walkways, waiting sheds, rumble strips, road signage and covered drains in urban areas. However, the needs of PWDs and cyclist lanes were not provided for.

v) Occupational health and safety: Personal protective equipment (PPEs) were issued to the workers and were in use. There were cases of quick damage due to quality issues of the PPEs and no timely replacement which rendered the workers unsafe at sites. The workers traverse long distances to and from work on foot while others are overloaded on trucks which put their lives at risk of accidents. It was also observed that mobile sanitation facilities on sites were provided, however these were shared by both females and male.

vi) Social safe guards: The supervising consultants together with the contractors undertook monthly awareness campaigns such as; women protection against gender based violence; child protection; PWDs, elderly and HIV/AIDS to both staff and communities. This was done through radio talk shows, out-reach programs where free HIV testing services and distribution of condoms were offered to staff and communities.



Safety: A pedestrian foot bridge on Kampala Northern Bypass



Female Involvement: A flag girl controlling traffic flow on Musita-Lumino road construction project

Testing of water sources for quality of water at sources used by the projects and provision of health services in clinics at the contractors' camps for both the workers was routinely done.

National Roads Maintenance (NRM) Program

The programme has two components: Maintenance of National Roads Infrastructure; and Oper

ations and Maintenance of Ferries. The UNRA has put in place measures to mainstream gender during the maintenance of national roads as follows;

a) Maintenance of National Roads

This was undertaken by the 23 UNRA stations either by Force Account or mechanized contracts. The Force Account activities involve routine manual (labour based contracts) and routine mechanised maintenance. The mechanised contracts were either term maintenance, periodic or framework contracts. The following were undertaken;

i) Routine Manual Maintenance: This was executed through labour based contracts (LBCs) involving the local communities along the road. The main objective of LBCs is alleviation of poverty in the rural communities and to create a sense of ownership for the residents. The UNRA has an affirmative action in their selection criteria of LBCs to encourage participation of the vulnerable groups.

In order to encourage the youth, disabled and women to get engaged in road maintenance activities; additional scores were awarded to each category for participation as follows: Youth -1%; Disabled- 2%; Women -3%. An assessment of the gender distribution of the labour force at the monitored UNRA stations in FY 2018/19 revealed approximately 41% were females.

ii) Routine Mechanised Maintenance by Force Account: This intervention was implemented by UNRA stations using their own equipment and labour force (Force Account). The gender distribution of the staff was assessed to establish the level of women involvement. The participation of women in Force Account activities was very low at 6%. This was attributed to the failure to attract female personnel with the requisite qualifications and experience despite the existence of a policy to encourage them to take up the advertised positions.

iii) Routine Mechanised Maintenance by contracts: There were a total of 126 contracts across the 23 UNRA stations during the FY2018/19. All these contracts were executed by the local contractors. This was in line with the reservation scheme to promote local content.

There was no participation of women contractors and this was due to several barriers including among others inaccessibility to credit by women contractors due to lack of collateral. Additionally, all contractors are required to ensure gender mainstreaming (including women's participation), prevent sexual harassment and promote child protection during execution of works. Consequently, some contractors have ring-fenced some tasks, such as flags persons, for women

b) Operation and Maintenance of Ferries

The UNRA operated a total of nine (9) ferry crossings linking a total of 16 districts. The performance of the operation and maintenance of ferries was good. The annual budget for the ferries operation was Ug shs 12 billion of which Ug shs 10.853 billion (90.4%) was released and expended.

Despite the good performance, cases of overloading rendered the ferries unsafe. The ferries lacked special or gazetted seats for vulnerable groups such as the PWDs, elderly, children, expectant and nursing mothers. Additionally there was no separation between pedestrians and motorized traffic at the ferry approach roads which poses a risk of accidents. The staff did not have accommodation in close proximity of the work stations.

On the positive note, there were provisions of waiting areas for passengers before boarding on some of the ferries; sanitation facilities with separate stances for both females and males; and life jackets for passengers without discrimination, firefighting equipment and standby rescue boats and crew.

Implementation Challenges

- i) Lack of disaggregated data on the vulnerable groups especially in land acquisition.
- ii) Inadequate involvement of females in the implementation of road works.
- iii) The ferries lack special or gazetted seats for vulnerable groups.
- iv) Inadequate number of staff on the ferries which stretches those available.

Conclusion

The UNRA has well documented gender policies and guidelines guiding the gender and equity interventions during the implementation of road works. There is affirmative action to encourage females to take up the advertised positions and contracts in UNRA. However, the turn up of the female staff was low due to the nature of activities involved. Implementation of the reservation scheme to empower local firms was enforced but not yet effective. The ferries had a good performance despite cases of overloading which rendered the vessels unsafe.

Recommendations

- i) The UNRA should establish a database for land acquisition so that annual data can be easily accessible.
- ii) The designs of roads should incorporate provisions for the PWDs and cyclist especially in the urban areas.
- iii) The UNRA should provide the ferry staff with accommodation facilities in close proximity to the landing sites.
- iv) The UNRA should gazette seats for vulnerable groups on the ferries.
- v) The GoU should provide incentives for females who take on construction jobs.

References

1. MoWT (2019); Annual Sector Performance Report FY2018/19.
2. Uganda National Roads Authority – Human Resources Policies Manual, 2016 Equal Opportunities.
3. Commission - Gender and Equity Compact for the Works and Transport Sector 2016/2017 – 2019/2020, 2017.

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