

## ABSTRACT

### The Work of Women in Uganda: Contributions to the Macroeconomy

by

Dr. Linda Lucas<sup>1</sup>

In recent years, 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 the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) (Uganda, 2000) and the National Gender Policy authorizes that all policies, both macro and micro be gender responsive and that gender disaggregated data be collected and analyzed...and that the economic development of the country be articulated through a gender lens. (Uganda, 1997) New sources of data on women's work are available but there has been little or no analysis of the data with attention to women's contribution to the macroeconomy. (eg. the 2002 Census of the Population; the Uganda National Household Surveys, (1995/96 - 2001/2002); Informal Sector Surveys; 1997 Workforce Survey.) UNIFEM concluded in 2001 that although barriers and challenges to women's paid employment are increasing in various parts of the world while quality of jobs is decreasing, there was no research to analyze paid employment of women in Uganda. (UNIFEM, 2001:83)

Most of the workforce in Uganda is engaged in subsistence agriculture. About eight percent are employed in manufacturing or service industries but there is no data on how many of those are women or which industries/sectors they may be working in. (UIA, 2001; UNDP, 2001). About 77 percent of all employed Ugandan women are in agriculture and of those, 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 are wage gaps between women and men workers in both agricultural and non-agricultural sectors. Overall, Ugandan women have an unemployment rate one-half that of men and regardless of numbers of children or marital status. (Uganda, 2001)

Although these simple statistics are available, there has been no analysis from a gender perspective of the consequences of these facts for the continued growth of the economy and eradication of poverty. This project proposes to collect and analyze national workforce data on women from various sources and to build capacity by involving young researchers from the Economic Policy Research Centre and the Department of Women's and Gender Studies, Makerere University.

---

<sup>1</sup>**University:** Eckerd College, Department of Economics.  
**Hosting Institution:** Economic Policy Research Center (EPRC), *Uganda*.  
**Current Status:** Field work not complete.