

# How does LEMU's programme incorporate women's interests?

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# 1. Introduction.

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Over time, gender and development analysis changed from Women in Development (WID) to Gender and Development (GAD), with the WID approach seeking to integrate women into development and the GAD approach seeking to base interventions on the analysis of men's and women's roles and needs in an effort to empower women to improve their position relative to men in ways which will benefit and transform society as a whole<sup>1</sup>. In Uganda, most programmes seem to use the WID approach where the main concern is women's participation and involving women to "empower" them.

Land and Equity Movement in Uganda (LEMU) argues that where GAD is the approach, and the interventions based on a gender analysis, one might not easily see the woman since the strategy for work is not the same as the anticipated impact on women and children as beneficiaries of a programme. In the diagram below, LEMU's research and analysis points to the fact that women and children's Land rights are the most vulnerable for the reasons argued in the Paper entitled "understanding and strengthening women's land rights under customary tenure in Uganda". LEMU's interventions, as explained below in Figure 1 are therefore strategies to improve the woman's land rights. The strategies used do not show the face of the woman because they are targeted to overcome vulnerabilities that women and children face. LEMU's work is based on the following principles:

## 2. Principles of work informing LEMU's work on women.

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- 1) Rural and poor live and relate with others in a family set up; they are not individuals relating to the State. It is therefore important that the interventions are based on understanding of their situation, position restrictions and choices. One cannot understand the individual women's situation without first correctly dissecting the family in order to find out about the woman in the same way that one must carefully cut an apple in order to see the seed inside. Any hurried approach is likely to hurt the woman.
- 2) The situation of women's land rights are so bad that advocating for a perfect situation (equality) is not reasonable. The principle is to secure rights that are not perfect and work progressively to gain more rights. For example accept equity rather than equality.
- 3) There are two categories of women – those who are educated and are more individual and those who are in rural areas with family land rights through marriage and birth. The more individual educated women are more likely to benefit from the rights offered by the State such as acquiring freehold titles. The rural women are more likely to benefit from the rights that women have within the families under customary land tenure.
- 4) Society is at different levels of development. The level of development determines what type of rights. For example, some societies are still struggling with the right to food, shelter, clothing, etc. It is futile to have programmes on the right to vote.
- 5) Families are influenced by information from three governance systems – faith based institutions, state institutions and traditional institutions. It is important to understand how information is distorted by this mix and analyse beyond what is said on the surface. It is also important to understand the differences and contradictions in the systems, and not blame it all on "culture". Because of this, it is important to first establish that the practice that is regarded as "culture" is really culture and not a distortion, an abuse, a bias, hybrid, misunderstanding especially as culture is Oral.

## 3. Why the following interventions?

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LEMU currently carries out the interventions in Figure 1 below. The only addition to the 12 strategies that was added at the last 2013 strategic plan is therefore not reflected here. This is the work to link land rights to development. Below are details on how these strategies are to ensure the impact of LEMU's work improves land tenure security of women and children:

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<sup>1</sup>The Oxfam Gender Training Manual, 1994