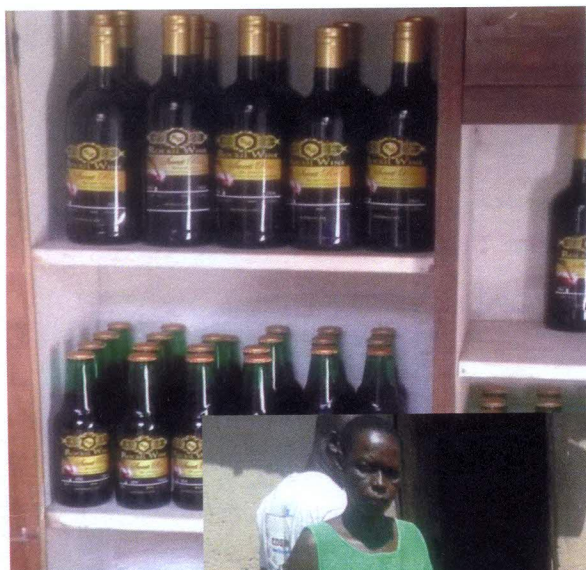


Four Years of Gender and Local Economic Development (GLED) Course Delivery



An Assessment of Course Relevance, Participants' Contributions and Challenges

Compiled by:

The GLED Task Force

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Executive summary

The Gender and Local Economic Development (GLED) course is one-year post-graduate diploma course, offered by the School of Women and Gender Studies, Makerere University. It is a sub-component of the Local Economic Development (LED) model with the aim of strengthening Local Governments' capacities for integrating gender and equity in LED initiatives. The course focuses on introducing and activating Local Government (LG) capacity to work with relevant stakeholders on developing integrated and gender-equitable LED promotion strategies that are grounded in the thorough understanding of the local economy to ensure the achievement of a coherent, sustainable and equitable development outcome. This report presents the findings of an assessment that was conducted to establish the long-term impact of the course and the relevance, effectiveness and sustainability of the interventions by the participating students in the respective local governments. Since the inception of GLED in 2010, the course has attracted a total of 106 participants, with more males (58.3%) than females (41.7%); and has recorded one of the highest completion rates (78%) in the entire university. The participants have mainly been from the Planning, Community Development and Production units of district local governments in 35 districts in Uganda.

The GLED course at Makerere University was designed to deliver a balanced combination of gender issues as they relate to local economic development to impart skills and knowledge in Gender Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation; Gender Mainstreaming and generation of gender disaggregated information to facilitate gender-responsive programming for local economic development. Further, the course has a practicum component that exposes students to hands-on experience on how to integrate gender in projects and programmes for local economic and sustainable development.

While there have been various opportunities to review the GLED course at specific phases during the four years of implementation, a comprehensive review to establish the long-term impact of the course, its relevance, effectiveness and sustainability of the interventions by the participating students in the respective local governments was required. This assessment reveals a number of issues as follows:

Relevance of the GLED course

The assessment shows that GLED participants have attained skills and knowledge to conduct gender analysis, gender-sensitive planning, community mobilization, conducting gender-sensitive M&E and formulating gender-responsive management systems that enable effective utilization of resources at local level. The Alumni testified that the course had changed their analytical lens on development to be more gender-

sensitive, promote the utilization of available resources for sustainable local economic development; good governance; and make people gender-sensitive for the good of everyone. In most instances, GLED was synonymous with the community development functions because of its focus on the social and economic development of local communities. Accordingly, more than half of the Alumni (males and females) reported that the GLED course offered them a unique experience to local economic development that spoke to their work and offered them a deeper understanding of gender relations and how they relate to locality development. The course is an important aspect of capacity building to enhance the implementation of the LED strategy. Local government staff were sent for training because of the desire to have skilled officials to guide the districts in integrating the gender aspects into LED programmes. GLED is interpreted as a means to building a cadre of enthusiastic professionals who are able to envision a new development reality for, especially, the poor people. Further, the course was noted to be highly relevant in the operations of local governance to especially address the gender concerns in current household production systems and dynamics.

At an individual level, the course was hailed for improving the participants' career paths upwards – with about 45.7% of the interviewed alumni having been promoted to senior positions at their workplace – from Community Development Officer to Senior (5) and District (3) Community Development officers; while some were promoted from acting positions to Senior Assistant Secretaries, and others were given more responsibilities. A number have been transferred to new departments. While GLED led to promotion, it was also noted to have potentially brought new opportunities, with some of the Alumni transferring to central government ministries while others found lucrative jobs in the private sector and outside the country.

Utilization of the skills and knowledge acquired

Application of the GLED theory at institutional and community level was particularly apparent. At district level, the Alumni were reportedly instrumental in facilitating the human resource functions, in particular provision of technical support to gender analysis and mainstreaming the District Development Plan (DDP). The course participants have served as gender technical persons at several levels including in the planning committees. This involved gender awareness creation among the district staff, influencing the processes of project formulation, and planning and budgeting to ensure the implementation of gender-sensitive LED initiatives. At the community level, GLED Alumni were associated with the creation of a foundation for steady improvement in livelihoods and gender relations among the poor and marginalized groups and communities. The work performed by the alumni as technical in-put through local government structures have offered great opportunity to local dwellers to turn their lives around for the better. The communities are reached through community mobilization and sensitization.

Achievements notwithstanding, a number of challenges were highlighted, pointing to a curriculum design that is skewed towards gender; course overload; and participants'

irregular attendance. Other challenges relate to the meaning and interpretation of LED as a new concept that has not yet been well conceptualized; resource constraints; existing structures that hinder innovations; the unstable link between GLED and the district human resource functions; and persistent negative attitude towards gender equality and women issues. At community level, the major challenges were noted to include an overly ambitious national agenda of providing a decent life for all by 2020. There existed a gap between the desired development goals as they are articulated by government through local governance structures and the desires and aspirations of most poor people.

Future Directions for GLED Programme

- Review of the GLED curriculum
- Build knowledgebase on GLED
- Refresher course for GLED resource persons/lecturers
- Enrich course delivery through use of resource persons from partner institutions and including more practical sessions
- Consider modular mode of delivery
- Broaden partnerships/initiate inter-university linkages and increased resource mobilisation
- Build gender knowledge for all district technical staff and communities
- Big-time publicity and dissemination.

6. Synthesis of the findings, Conclusions and Future Directions

6.1 Summary of the findings

Since the inception of GLED in 2010, the course has attracted a total of 106 participants, with more males (58.3%) than females (41.7%) and one of the highest completion rates (78%) in the entire university. The participants are mainly from the Planning, Community Development and Production units of district local governments in a total of 35 districts in Uganda.

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While there have been various opportunities to review the GLED course at specific phases during the four years of implementation, a comprehensive review to establish the long-term impact of the course, its relevance, effectiveness and the sustainability its interventions to the local governments by the participating students was required. This assessment reveals a number of issues as follows:

Relevance of the GLED course

The assessment shows that GLED participants have attained skills and knowledge to conduct gender analysis, gender-sensitive planning, community mobilization, conducting gender-sensitive M&E and formulating gender-responsive management systems that enable effective utilization of resources at local level. The Alumni testified that the course had changed their analytical lens on development to be more gender-sensitive, promote utilization of available resources for sustainable local economic development; good governance; and make people gender-sensitive for the good of everyone. In most instances, GLED was synonymous with the community development functions because of its focus on social economic development of local communities. Accordingly, more than half of the Alumni (males and females) reported that GLED

course offered them a unique experience to local economic development that speaks to their work and offered them a deeper understanding of gender relations and how it relates to locality development. The course is an important aspect of capacity building to enhance the implementation of the LED strategy – staff were sent for training because of the desire to have skilled officials to guide the districts in integrating the gender aspects into LED programmes. GLED is interpreted as a means to building a cadre of enthusiastic professionals who are able to envision a new development reality for especially the poor people. Further, the course was noted to be highly relevant in the operations of local governance to especially address the gender concerns in current household production systems and dynamics.

At an individual level, the course was hailed for improving the participants' career paths upwards – with about 45.7% of the interviewed alumni having been promoted to senior positions at their workplace – from Community Development Officer to Senior (5) and District (3) Community Development officers; while others moved from the acting positions to Senior Assistant Secretaries and others were given more responsibilities. A number had been transferred to new departments. While GLED led to promotion, it was also noted to have potentially brought new opportunities, with some of the Alumni transferring to the ministries, while others found lucrative jobs in the private sector and outside the country.

Utilization of the skills and knowledge acquired

Application of the GLED theory at institutional and community level were particularly apparent. At institutional level, the Alumni were reportedly instrumental in facilitating the human resource functions at the district level, in particular provision of technical support to gender analysis and mainstreaming the DDP. The course participants have served as gender technical persons at several levels including in the planning committees. This involved gender awareness creation among the district staff, influencing the processes of project formulation and budgeting to ensure gender-sensitive planning and implementation of LED initiatives. At the community level, GLED Alumni were associated with the creation of a foundation for steady improvement in livelihoods and gender relations among the poor and marginalized groups and communities. The work performed by the alumni as technical input through local government structures have offered great opportunity to local dwellers to turn their lives around for the better. The communities are reached through community mobilization and sensitization.

Achievements notwithstanding, a number of challenges were highlighted pointing to: a curriculum designed skewed towards gender; poor course coordination between the university; and its partners and with the course participants and participant's irregular attendance. Other challenges relate to the translation of LED being a new concept and not yet well conceptualised; resource constraints; political interference, existing structures that hinder innovations' the unstable link between GLED and the district human resource functions; and persistent negative attitude towards gender equality and women's issues. At community level, the major challenges were noted to include an

overly ambitious national agenda of providing a decent life for all where there is increased sustained household incomes and far improved services provided by local governments by 2020. There exist a gap between the desired development goals as they are articulated by government through local governance structures and the desires and aspirations of most poor people. This is in many ways complicates the terrain in which the GLED course can be maintained both in scope and relevance.

6.2 Conclusions

The assessment shows the extent to which post-training skills have led to improvement of the work of the alumni at the individual, institutional and community levels. At the individual level, the assessment findings point to gender skills and knowledge enhancement that has contributed to increased opportunities for career development in terms of promotions and getting better jobs. At the institutional level, there is improved gender awareness and inclusive planning and implementation of gender-sensitive local economic development initiatives. At community level, the connection between GLED and community action is an important one – where GLED alumni provide technical support through community mobilisations and training in enterprise development, use of local resources and income generation – which has translated to community members' improved livelihoods and wellbeing. Uganda, through its LED policy framework, seeks to provide a decent life for all where there is increased sustained household incomes and far improved services provided by local governments. However, in this particular case, it is noted that the process of getting communities to appreciate and to be empowered to move at the same pace with the national vision is far from being real. There exists a gap between the desired development goals as they are articulated by government through local governance structures and the desires and aspirations of most poor people. LED mostly creates pockets of elites within communities of overwhelmingly poor people.

Furthermore, for the GLED course there is need for continued evaluation of impact to ensure relevance for gainful stimulation of local enterprise that feeds properly into local revenue growth and eventual development into a sustainable local environment that supports a decent life for every community. This means therefore that as GLED continues to train graduates who seek ways to sustainably harness people's innovations and ingenuity, future assessments need to pay special attention to being keen in measuring output and not input. Inputs such as formation of agricultural cooperatives, shelters for abused women and children, mobilizing orchid farmers, the various youth and women empowerment projects etc, are not in themselves a measure of returns on investment. That means therefore that a strategy to measure long-term impact of these inputs should be put in place if the GLED course impact assessment is to make sure sense to LGs in empowering communities.

6.3 Future Directions for GLED programme

Drawing on the findings of the assessment as well other mid-term evaluations and the workshops that have been undertaken since the course started, a number of suggestions have been made. The suggestions relate to both course implementation and application of the knowledge and skills at the district and community levels. Box 7 gives the highlights of the suggestions from GLED Alumni.

Box 7: Alumni suggestions on how the course could be improved

- Encourage individual presentations in class
- Expose students to more field practice – conduct more field visits
- Increase follow-ups
- Include weekend and evening programmes
- Make LED compulsory through public service
- Simplify LED issues
- Extend course period
- Increase human resources
- Intensify on one-on-one interactions
- Repackage LED properly
- Conduct refresher trainings
- Increase LED funding
- Carry out awareness programmes
- Create course awareness to the central government
- Continuously train more people
- Introduce e-learning
- Extend the course to Master's level
- Advocate for more resource persons

Review of the GLED curriculum

As a matter of urgency, the findings from the assessment and other reviews undertaken point to the need for a comprehensive review of the GLED curriculum to take into account issues of relevance and scalability. This should entail balancing of gender and LED issues; updating the reference materials as well as inclusion of more practical illustrations to include use of more local examples (case studies). More field visits to relevant enterprises should be included to provide students with more hands-on experience.

Inclusion of a discussion on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the course is necessary to boost its linkage with contemporary development needs; in particular the National Development Plan's focus on wealth creation and employment is critical for the programme to remain relevant to national development goals. Efforts should be made to make the course more relevant and attractive to central government managers as well as civil society organisations – by taking into account civil society agenda of gender and advocacy. A number of stakeholders suggested inclusion of the following topics:

- Gender and Equity Budgeting
- Un-paid work, gender and economics
- Gender and ICT
- E-governance and e-commerce
- Gender and energy - Oil and gas
- Gender and justice
- Climate change
- Gender and politics
- Gender and advocacy
- Gender sensitive reporting and writing
- Group formation, dynamics and sustainability
- Public administration
- Community mobilization and advocacy
- Commercial enterprises and entrepreneurship
- Law and human rights for community mobilisation
- Wealth creation
- The regeneration concept
- Gender Responsive Economic Policy Management-GEPM
- A practical approach to utilizing ICT in GLED.

Build knowledge-base on GLED and in-built mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating impact

To address the limited literature gap, there is need to build the knowledge base on GLED through conducting research in the area. The need to establish a research committee – charged with developing a Research agenda in the field of gender and LED is critical. Investing money in electronic resource use could add to existing reference materials for the course.

It was noted that assessments have often ended up measuring in-puts and not out-puts. Inputs such as formation of agricultural cooperatives, shelters for abused women and children, mobilizing orchid farmers, the various youth and women empowerment projects etc are not in themselves a measure of returns on investment. Therefore, there need for a strategy to measure the long-term impact of these inputs ot be put in place if GLED course impact assessment is to make sense to LGs in empowering communities.

Refresher course for GLED resource persons and lecturers

It is apparent that although the School of Women and Gender Studies has adequate capacity in gender training, there is need for training in some thematic areas of relevance to the GLED programme. Conducting a refresher course for the resource persons and lecturers (practitioners and academicians) to boost their knowledge base in LED for those whose strength is in gender; and gender for those whose strength is in LED, will be of great benefit to address issues of unbalanced coverage of gender and LED issues.

Course delivery

To vary and enrich the delivery process of the course, there is need to identify and invite resource persons from partner institutions working on certain thematic areas such as ministries including: MoLG, MoGLSD, MoFPED, Districts and NGOs.

Consider modular mode of delivery

The GLED course attracts the working group – both from the local governments and civil society organizations. A modular format of delivery that entails flexibility in executing the course to suit the working (district and civil society) staff schedules should be considered. This will accommodate busy administrators like the CAOs and others to participate in the course as was suggested by some of the district officials:

"if it was not for my busy administrative schedule, I would go for the course. My request is that Makerere breaks down the course into 1-2 weeks training or even 2-3 days to the district. In that way all of us who need the course we would benefit" (KII with District Official in Pallisa, 2015)

The modular format will enable many busy officials to attend the course and at the same time perform their work responsibilities. This would also address the issue of capacity gaps arising from staff engagement on the course. The recommendation is in line with a suggestion made at the review workshop held in June 2015 – that the course should be shortened to eight weeks using the modular system to accommodate the busy schedules of working participants. Other suggestions point to shortening the course to 2-8 weeks.

Other suggestions include designing the course as an out-reach package for interested institutions and districts – to be conducted for a short period of time.

Course management and Coordination

On course management and coordination, a task force was put in place and is supported by an administrative assistant (a non-academic manager), charged with programming/timetabling, marketing, communication and general office administration. It is hoped that issues of information flow and follow up of non-academic concerns on the course will be dealt with.

Resource mobilization

Resource mobilization is critical to support both the running of the course as well as tuition for course participants. This requires developing and implementing a resource mobilization strategy.

Broadening partnerships/initiate inter-university linkages

When GLED was started, it was meant to target technical staff from lower local governments (district level). It has become apparent that there is need to widen scope/target to move beyond the local focus – to include those in the management positions of LGs, central government and other stakeholders. Efforts should be made to broaden partnerships to include Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) across all sectors of development as well as civil society and private sector participants. This would help to leverage support for GLED initiatives as well as enrolment for the course – thereby contributing to greater impact in respective communities.

Build gender knowledge for all district technical staff and communities

There is need to conduct massive gender sensitization to create awareness among local governments and communities to appreciate gender in local economic development. The study participants expressed the need for all staff irrespective of their professional backgrounds to undertake GLED training.

Big-time publicity and dissemination

Previous reviews, in particular the stakeholders' workshop conducted in June 2015, noted the low enrolment levels on the course. They expressed the need for extensive marketing of the programme to attract more participants. A number of suggestions were made as highlighted in Box 8 below:

Box 8: Marketing strategies for the GLED course

- Extensive use of the electronic and print media to advertize both the course and course products;
- Organize talk shows demonstrating GLED's potential and output involving graduates, sponsors, donors, district officials and central government agencies;
- Send out adverts to potential participants including districts, NGOs and the private sector;
- Engage with Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) to support dissemination of the programme and show how it can be used for wealth creation;
- Conduct a needs assessment to map out potential users and boost course content to fully cater for gender and LED issues;
- Conduct an impact assessment to document how the course has impacted on the beneficiaries;
- Influence the negotiation between the Ministry of Local Government, Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development and Ministry of Public Service to advocate for the promotion requirement that all civil service employees should train in LED;
- Expand the task force to include other members from other units in Makerere University, the Ministry of Public Service, Ministry of Local Government, Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development, National Planning Authority, Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Industry;
- Establish an alumni forum and breakfast meetings with partners.

Source: SWGS (2015)A One-Day Course Review Workshop for the Post-Graduate Diploma in Gender and Local Economic Development (GLED), Kampala