Gender data and digital transformation in Uganda

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Introduction

- Gender equality (SDG 5) includes bridging the digital divide.
- Target 5.b: Enhance the use of enabling technologies, esp. ICT, to promote women's empowerment.
- Uganda prioritizes digital transformation under NDP IV, positioning ICT and STI as growth engines.
- The ATMS including ICT sector can boost GDP increase from USD 50B (2023/24) to USD 500B by 2040.

Context and Rationale

Uganda's total population in 2024: **45.9 million** people.

Sex disaggregation

Females – **51.4%** of the population; males – **48.6%**.

Life expectancy at birth:

Women - **70 years**, Men - **67 years**.

Literacy rate among persons aged 10+:

Females - **72%**, Males - **77%**.

Female literacy rose from 62% in 2002 to 72% in 2024.

Current Status of Gender Data in Uganda

- Under the National Priority Gender Equality Indicators (NPGEIs), Uganda (UBOS) now monitors **140 indicators**, up from 106 earlier, aligned to SDGs
- Of these, **57%** (80 of 140) indicators have usable gender data from reprocessed surveys/administrative sources. Data available on education, health and labour
- Major gaps remain in new/emerging domains (e.g. certain ICT/digital access, digital financial services, unpaid care work).
- Gaps hinder women's ability to benefit fully from digital opportunities in health, education, and entrepreneurship.
- Main Sources: Population & Housing Census (2024 provisional), UBOS household surveys, administrative data, NPGEIs.

Digital Transformation in Official Statistics

- Uganda's first-ever **digital Population and Housing Census** was conducted in May 2024.
- UBOS maintains several public data portals: NSO Open Data, Spatial Data Portal, Gender Statistics Portal, GBV Dashboard, etc.
- Integration of gender statistics into national planning: UBOS developed a Strategy for Development of Gender Statistics, integrated into the Extended PNSD.
- Alignment of NPGEIs with SDGs; harmonisation of national standard indicators.
- Use of digital data collection tools at local government level.
- Integration of non-traditional data sources for gender-responsive statistics

Opportunities for Gender & Digital Synergies

- Digital census allows for more timely, disaggregated population data (including by sex, region).
- Expansion of digital/mobile technologies to collect data expands coverage opportunity, especially to reach remote/rural women and girls.
- Potential to use digital financial inclusion data: for example, mobile money and digital services usage shows gender gaps that can be addressed. (See later slide).
- Use of data dashboards (e.g. on gender-based violence, open data portals) for improving access, transparency, and policy responsiveness.
- Development of innovation hubs like Kampala Innovation Village, Outbox Hub, Hive Colab, that tailored programmes for women/youth entrepreneurs.
- Gives rise to partnerships between the Government, NGOs, and the private sector supporting rural women's access to markets & digital literacy.

Emerging Issues

- **Digital divide**: Women trail men in ICT access & internet use.
- **Digital safety**: 2020 VAW Survey – **49% of women** reported online harassment.
- **Policy protection**: Data Protection and Privacy Act (2019) strengthens digital rights.
- **Infrastructure expansion**: National Backbone Infrastructure connects 600+ gov't institutions & districts.
- **Community ICT centres** under RCDF: secure access points for women/youth.

Indicator	Female vs Male
Unemployment (2024)	Females - **14%**, Males - **11%**
Internet usage among individuals aged 10 and above	Females - **8%**, Males - **11%**
Ownership of mobile phones (2024)	Women - **41%**, Men - **46%**
Proportion of total adult population with secure tenure rights to land with legally recognized documentation	Women - **57%**, Men - **59%**.
Labour force participation / Occupation distribution	More women employed in service & sales roles (38%) vs men (20%); men dominate in craft/trades and machine operations

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Way Forward & Recommendations

- **Expand disaggregation**: Ensure all digital/data indicators are disaggregated by sex, age, geography, and disability.
- **Close the digital access gap**: Improve women's access to mobile phones, the internet, and digital education/skills.
- **Strengthen data production systems**: Increase administrative data quality, ensure regular surveys capture digital & ICT variables.
- **Ensure policy coherence and financing**: Budget for gender data in digital transformation strategies; reduce costs/taxes that impede women's digital access.
- **Promote partnerships**: Work with ministries, the private sector (telecoms, fintech), and civil society to design inclusive digital systems and services.
- **Strengthen Policy implementation**: Work to ensure proper documentation and implementation of the broadband policy, develop policies on pricing and affordability, cybersecurity policies, etc
- **Ethical & privacy frameworks**: safeguard data privacy, especially for vulnerable groups; build trust in digital data collection and use.

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