Does the Office of the Prime Minister in Uganda conduct Gender Responsive Evaluations?

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Abstract

Gender equality and women's empowerment are possible when development programmes and policies confront unfair power relationships between men and women. Monitoring and evaluation are tools that can enhance gender responsiveness and/or conceal gender inequalities. This paper analyzed whether the 2016 process evaluation of the Universal Primary Education programme (UPE) undertake by Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) was gender responsive. The critical review of the evaluation report show that OPM did not set out to undertake a gender responsive evaluation though the UPE programme by design was gender responsive. This enabled a generic evaluation to highlight findings on some gender indicators embedded in the programme, though the report was silent on other issues like; early pregnancy, absenteeism and school drop out for girls due to gender roles and cultural beliefs. The evaluation used a generic evaluation methodology, the objectives did not require a gender responsive study, there was no requirement of a gender responsive evaluation team and the design did not specify that some of data sources include women and other vulnerable groups. The evaluation process was not necessarily taken to be a social change process for enhancing learning and empowerment of stakeholders. Therefore the evaluation methodology was gender blind, save for the seemingly gender responsive programme that enabled the evaluation to capture and report on some gender specific indicators. To enhance gender responsive evaluations, the OPM needs a deliberate attention to gender and equity in its evaluation methodology.

Key words: Gender Responsive, Monitoring and Evaluation, Gender Empowerment

Introduction to Gender Responsive Development

Gender equality and women' empowerment are priorities among the Sustainable Development Goals and even prior to these goals, several governments including Uganda committed themselves to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment. Gender equality and women's empowerment is possible when development programmes and policies are designed to deal with needs of women, focus on equal access resources/services between men and women and include women in decision making and confront unfair power relationships. Such programmes are seen to be gender responsive. Gender responsiveness will mean that programmes are designed, implemented and evaluated in such way that they recognize the gendered differences for both men and women in participating, benefiting from the programme and their unique risks and factors that perpetuate vulnerability.

Ensuring gender equality and women's empowerment is a desired goal at international and national levels. The recent sustainable development goals emphasizes social inclusion than ever before and highlights goals that are specific to gender equality. Other International treaties and specific National Gender policies and development plans require elimination of discrimination against women in development and set forth a process of closing the gender inequalities and empowering women. Different approaches such as Women in Development, Gender and Development and Women's Empowerment approaches all have been deployed with different levels of intensity to deal with gender and equity issues. GoU has made several commitments towards promoting gender and equity – international and national laws and policies. For instance the Government of Uganda is currently encouraging gender and equity budgeting to ensure that all interventions i.e. policies, plans and projects of government take into consideration the needs, concerns, the potentials of different groups of women and men, urban and rural, disabled, elderly, etc. This is because it is through tools like the budget that Government demonstrates its commitment to fulfill particular goals and priorities. It is in the same vain that evaluations of government interventions ought to be gender responsive so that gender inequalities and inequities can be unfolded. As maintained by UN women, gender responsive evaluations enhance gender equality and the empowerment of women (UN, Women 2015).

Gender Responsive Evaluations

An evaluation is said to be gender responsive if it incorporates 'gender and women's rights dimensions into evaluation approaches, methods, processes and use' (UN Women, 2015:4). Therefore the evaluation examines drivers of gender equality and empowerment of women (ideally it should focus on understanding the degree to which gender and power relationships—including structural and other causes that give rise to inequities, discrimination and unfair power relations are being confronted by a given intervention); and at the same time how these evaluations are conducted (should include a process that is inclusive, participatory and respectful of all stakeholders) can help to promote accountability and social change (ibid).

UN women (2015:5) also emphasizes that gender responsive evaluations 'promote

accountability to gender equality, human rights and women's empowerment commitments by providing information on the way in which development programmes affect women and men differently'. This means that the evaluation process measures the distribution of impact of the programme with an aim of question the inequities.   At the same time gender responsive evaluation is expected to be a social change intervention or process. The results of such evaluation are expected to inform programming in terms of achieving gender equality, women's empowerment and human rights in a sustainable manner. The active participation of stakeholders in an evaluation process should empower individuals and groups, build cohesion among stakeholders, make them appreciate the development interventions and the roles and interest of stakeholders, and develop better capabilities to even participate in broader processes of social change. Therefore what is evaluated and the way it is evaluated is very important in determining whether an evaluation is gender responsive of just generic.

Governments all over the world invest in undertaking evaluations intervention to enhance service delivery, accountability, learning and decision making. The office of the Prime Minister in Uganda has often engaged in programme evaluations with an aim of enhancing evidence based policy making which will in turn improve efficiency in service delivery (http://opm.go.ug/ government-evaluations/). Examples of the most recent studies include: the process evaluation of the Universal Primary education and Process Evaluation of the GoU Family Planning programmes. These programmes being social programmes, it can be assumed that they were gender responsive and the methodology of undertaking these evaluations was inclusive, participatory and empowering to both men and women. However, a quick scan of the evaluation design and methodology of these two studies suggested a generic evaluation process seemingly blind of gender equality and women's empowerment issues. If evaluations by government do not take into consideration gender equality and women's empowerment in terms of what the evaluation examines and how it is conducted, then gender inequalities will inherently be undisclosed.

Therefore this study analyzes whether or not the process evaluation of the Universal Primary Education programme by Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) was gender responsive. More study set out to;
• Analyse whether gender equality and women's empowerment considerations were integrated into the programme design and implementation?
• Examine whether the evaluation methodology of the Universal Primary Education took into consideration gender equality and women's empowerment?

Process Evaluation of the Universal Primary Education Programme (UPE)

After two decades of UPE programme a process evaluation of UPE was conducted by the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) in 2016. The OPM maintained that there was still scanty empirical evidence on the relevance, effectiveness, cost-efficiency and sustainability of UPE. They noted that also the programme lacked a well-articulated theory of change to guide M&E institutional framework. Thus a process evaluation was conducted to close these gaps. The process evaluation involve three phases' i.e. inception phase, fieldwork phase, data analysis and report writing phase. The process evaluation report details; in-depth knowledge of the UPE programme and its context; the UPE theory of change; and assessment of program's relevance, effectiveness, cost-efficiency and sustainability.

Methodology

This study set to analyze whether or not the process evaluation of the Universal Primary Education programme by Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) was gender responsive. Data was mainly collected using literature review of the evaluation report as it was not possible to interview the manager and the evaluation team. The following tool on key issues in gender responsive evaluations was developed and used as a check list during the critical review of the evaluation report.

Key Issues in Gender Responsive Evaluation

Stages of Evaluations	Evaluation Issues in Gender Responsive Evaluations	Status of Compliance	
Objectives	**Intervention**		
	Do the objectives of the intervention focus on addressing gender equity and equality issues	Yes	No
	Are the intervention outcomes specific to closing the gender and equity gaps?	Yes	No
	Dos the programme target group specify that it will benefit both men and women, and vulnerable groups	Yes	No
Indicators	Does the programme have gender specific indicators to measure success	Yes	No
Implementation	Does the implementation mechanism specify the participation of men, women and vulnerable groups	Yes	No
	Are the implementers (agencies) gender responsive	Yes	No

Stages of Evaluations	Evaluation Issues in Gender Responsive Evaluations	Status of Compliance	
Implementation	**Methodology**		
Preparation	Did the evaluation manager require gender responsive evaluation	Yes	No
	Did the ToR include gender specific objectives	Yes	No
	Did the evaluation require a gender evaluation expertise	Yes	No
	Were stakeholders consulted during the selection of the evaluation team?	Yes	No
	Was the programme theory of change agreed upon by stakeholders	Yes	No
	Were the programme indicators gender sensitive	Yes	No
Design	Was the stakeholder analysis done?	Yes	No
	Did the evaluation have an inbuilt stakeholder consultation process	Yes	No
	Do the evaluation questions point to outcomes focused on equity and gender specify results	Yes	No
	Did the design specify (implicitly) that some of data sources include women and other vulnerable groups	Yes	No
	Do the evaluation questions construct women and men as actors or women as acted?	Yes	No
Data collection methods and processes	Did the evaluator use mixed methods	Yes	No
	Did the evaluation use methods that facilitate participation and inclusion i.e. participatory methods that allow stakeholders to submit data but actively participate in the definition of what data should be collected and recorded e.g. appreciative inquiry, most significant change	Yes	No
	Did the evaluation collect sex disaggregated data including age, marital status, occupation	Yes	No
	Did the evaluation employee a flexible approach and methods in terms of timing, callbacks, data collection techniques (context and challenges of respondents)	Yes	No
	Did the evaluation include vulnerable populations in data gathering process –include full range of stakeholders	Yes	No
	Did the data collection tools interrogate gender roles in the evaluated programmes	Yes	No
	Were the methods and tools culturally sensitive	Yes	No
	Were the methods and tools sensitive to the rights of girls and women	Yes	No

Stages of Evaluations	Evaluation Issues in Gender Responsive Evaluations	Status of Compliance	
Data analysis and Reporting	Was the quantitative and qualitative data analyzed in such way to involve stakeholders	Yes	No
	Did the analysis tool require specification of sex disaggregated data	Yes	No
	Does the report give information on gender equality indicators	Yes	No
	Does the report show how the UPE intervention affects men and women differently	Yes	No
	Do recommendations in the report explicitly draw attention to gender gaps and how to close them	Yes	No

Source: Formulated from literature review.

Findings

Integration of Gender Equality in UPE Programme Design and Implementation

The Government of Uganda (GoU) instituted the Universal Primary Education (UPE) policy in January 1997 with an aim of enabling all children of primary school going age have equal access to education and enter and remain in school. UPE provided for "free" education to all children of primary school-going age (6-13 years) in Uganda. GOU abolished all tuition fees and required Parents, Teachers, Associations (PTAs) to be in charge of primary education. The abolition of school fees made education somehow affordable and enabled parents to send all children to school regardless of sex. UPE aimed at making basic education accessible to the learner and relevant to his or her needs. According to the National planning Authority, it is evident that the introduction of UPE led to an increase of pupil enrolment in government-aided primary schools from 2.8 million in 1996 to 8,485,005 in 2014 (NPA, 2015). The gross enrolment ratio stood at 128% in 2012 while the net enrolment ratio stood at 92% compared to less than 20% before UPE in 1992 (OPM, 2016). The universalization of education enabled many children to attend schools and its decentralized governance (e.g. restricted capitation and facility grants to schools, decentralization of teacher recruitment and deployment to district levels, decentralization of school supervision) has enabled government, parents and teachers to actively participate in school management.

The UPE program has been implemented by Uganda's Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Sports (MoESTS) to achieve the following objectives;

• Providing the facilities and resources to enable every child to enter and remain in school until the primary cycle of education is complete;
• Make education equitable in order to eliminate disparities and inequalities;
• Ensure that education is affordable by the majority of Ugandans; and
• Reduce poverty by equipping every individual with basic skills.

Right from the objectives of the programme it is noticed that UPE considered gender equality by desiring equitable education. UPE was meant to meet national goals, make education equitable, and to ensure that education is affordable for the majority of Ugandans (John Paul II Justice & Peace Centre (2014). The OPM process evaluation in 2016 established that UPE had performed well towards achievement of key objectives such as improving equity and access of primary education and expanding physical facilities. The expanded access to primary education has led to gender parity in primary enrollment with Net Enrollment Ratio at 83.2% (UBOS, 2010). The enrolment for boys and girls had increased, and 'by 2006 it had reached 90.4 percent for girls compared to 93 percent for boys before reaching 50-50 parity in 2014'. Completion rates at Primary Seven (7) are low overall, and lower for girls (OPM, 2016) because of absenteeism and dropping out of school. The causes for drop out for girls has been noted to be; early pregnancy; sexual harassment; and lack of sanitation facilities.

To further enhance equity and provide better facilities for teaching and learning, the GoU set in place the School Facilities Grant (SFG) in 1998 so as to finance the expansion school facilities. The grants are channeled through Districts. According to OPM (2016), the School Facilities Grant (SFG) was created to assist the populated and neediest communities in acquiring school furniture and building new classrooms, latrines and teachers houses. According to the theory of change of the SFGs (OPM, 2016:23), it was anticipated that the following outcomes will be achieved;
• Increased equitable access to primary education
• Improved efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of primary education.
• Improved quality and relevance of primary education

OPM (2016) indicate that over 80% of participants in the evaluation maintained that SFG has benefited rural schools with limited resources to construct good school facilities. From the stated outcomes above and the findings by OMP process evaluation, it can be stated that equity as a foundation of gender equality was logically anticipated from the results chain of the grants and the UPE programme has contributed to its achievement which is an indication that gender equality was inbuilt into the UPE programme. Although as the OPM (2016) noted, some districts have for a long time not received SFG which has derailed not only construction of new infrastructure but also lack of maintenance of the existing ones which still constrains equity in a sense that it lead to school pupil and teacher absenteeism, and dropout of pupils.

Again GoU through UPE has committed itself to inclusive education by encouraging education of children with special needs (handicapped children and orphans). The Ministry of Education established a department of special needs to promote the interests of children with impairments in hearing, visual, mental, body among other. However, according the OPM process evaluation report (2016) most facilitates to enhance special needs education apart from modified desks and sanitary towels are still scarce or none existent. Among the missing/scarce facilities include; wheel chairs, elbow crutches, white canes, polio boots, sitting Aid, magnifying lens, walking

frames, and Artificial Arms. While inclusive education has been inbuilt in the UPE programme, its implementation in terms of equipping schools with appropriate facilities seem to be having some challenges making inclusive education hard to attain.

In terms of directly addressing specific gender issues such as early pregnancy, absenteeism and school drop out for girls due to gender roles and cultural beliefs, the UPE programme does not seem to have specific interventions. For instance it has been documented that girls drop out of school due to early pregnancy as a result of lack of midday meals and in instances where men entice them with little money for lunch. Yet in rural areas compared to urban areas schools have no private mechanism of providing lunch at school. The UPE policy does not cater for feeding, does require schools or parents to provide lunch to children. This has resulted into poor learning outcomes among learners because when they attend classes on empty stomach, they hardly concentrate in class. The OPM process evaluation report (2016:20) identifies 'unclear regulation or policy on school feeding' as one of the explanations for low learning outcomes. At the same time in rural areas girls compared to boys dropout of school and or are absent from school due to the fact that they provide labor in subsistence household agricultural production and support their mothers to provide labor to undertake the domestic chores. Yet the UPE policy and other policies like those of agriculture hardly provide machinery for subsistence agriculture or domestic chores. In the end some specific gender issues are not addressed by the programme design or implementation to ensure gender equality.

Overall education addresses the strategic gender needs of both girls and boys. It addresses the traditional practices of educating more boys than girls thus addressing the marginalization. According to Moser (1993) education will enhance girl's ability to engage in negotiating decisions that affect their lives and empower them to challenge the inequalities. Although children in UPE programme often are regarded as passive recipients of the development process because they cannot determine the curricula or even methods of teaching and learning, overall education and consciousness raising empowers stakeholders including children. The fact that school management committees and Parents Teachers Associations include parents who participate in planning, budgeting, implementation and monitoring and supervision of school programmes, it shows that the implementation of UPE envisages participatory management processes which are key in empowering stakeholders. However, Namara (2016) concludes that decentralized governance of UPE has strengthened the supply side of governance which is critical to ensure control, enforcement of government standards and policies and the SMCs have increased participation of parents and other stakeholders in implementation of school programs, however, the demand side of governance is still under developed as SMCs are not conversant with their roles and responsibilities and communities including parents and children seem not to prioritize education. Consequently social accountability is not strong and this is one of the reasons why the quality of primary education has been declining.

Was the Evaluation Methodology of UPE Gender Responsive?

The findings show that the process evaluation of the UPE was not necessarily a gender specific evaluation but was rather a generic evaluation that set out to establish whether the School Facilities Grant (SFG) has achieved its stated objectives and improved performance. The process evaluation did not require a gender responsive evaluation, although UPE programme and its indicators were largely designed with the gender equality and equity in mind. The objectives of the evaluation as highlighted below did not include gender specific objectives. The study set out to;

- This evaluation was guided by the following specific objectives;
- Demonstrate and discuss in-depth knowledge of the UPE context and policy, including its intended outcomes or objectives;
- Articulate the SFG intervention theory of change, including the key assumptions;
- Discuss SFG intervention relevance by assessing if
  - the SFG objectives are relevant to the priorities of the target group;
  - the inputs and outputs of the SFG are adequate for achieving the intended objectives; and
  - the extent to which the SFG objectives are valid in the context it is being implemented.
- Establish the effectiveness of the SFG by assessing whether the programme has achieved or likely to achieve its outputs and final objectives;
- Explore the cost-efficiency of the SFG as compared to other alternatives.

The evaluation followed the DAC criteria for evaluations. Though the DAC criteria is useful in formulating evaluation objectives, it takes a gender sensitive evaluation team to examine gender issues. It also takes a gender responsive programme for evaluators to examine gender issues and question whether the programme equitably benefited both men and women and may be this is the reason the why findings reflected on gender indicators and bring out gender concerns.

The evaluation report (2016) shows that the inception phase of the evaluation was characterized by consultations with stakeholders including; OPM and Ministry of Education and Sports. This consultations enabled the evaluation team to select the target group, define the scope of the evaluation, generate the evaluation questions, design data collection tools and finalize the evaluation design matrix and the evaluation protocol. It is evident that a one day workshop was held to develop the programme's theory of change involving stakeholders from the Ministry of Education and Sports, Office of the Prime Minister and representatives from 3ie in Uganda. Though not all stakeholders or actors at every stage of results were involved to define the results there is evidence that some consultations were made. Those actors that make results happen such as the contractors of classrooms, latrines and teacher's houses; district education officers, District inspector of schools: teachers and teachers unions; and the parents and or children ought to have been consulted on the results of this intervention. These categories of stakeholders come in later at fieldwork (information gathering) stage, which makes stakeholders more of informants, which is against gender responsive principles that require involvement of most stakeholders in early stage of evaluation design. This enables them to appreciate the design, the protocol and the

approach to the study and are able to participate actively in subsequent stages.

Gender responsive evaluations requires that the evaluation team conducts a stakeholder analysis during the process of determining the sampling frame i.e who to involve and not to involve at different stages of the study. The methodology show that stakeholders were widely consulted from 15 zones of the country and school that were involved were selected based on best performing schools and worst performing schools. However, the sampling was informed by; the degree of precision (reliability) desired for the survey estimates, the cost and operational limitations and efficiency of the design. The sampling used probability sampling methods that do not purposively target certain categories. There were no factors like availability of key stakeholders such as children and parents, vulnerable group's e.g children with special needs which would possibly bring their voices into the research, etc. The evaluation therefore did not recognize diversity in the sampling frame and possibly that is why studies were undertaken during holidays denying a chance to those children and parents who would be active during school term.

An analysis of the evaluation questions shows that some questions pointed to outcomes focused on equity and gender and yet other questions that related for instance to cost efficiency did not. For instance those that were equity and gender specific include;

DAC Criteria	Type of Questions Asked
Relevance	• Whether the programme improved equitable access and made UPE affordable to the poor were asked • Whether there has been an increase in enrolment for girls • Whether UPE brought education closer and empowered remote communities
Effectiveness	• Did the programme lead to equitable access to schooling? What are the trends in NER by gender? • Do people who enroll actually attend? What is the situation in rural areas and by gender?
Sustainability	• Are there innovations that cater for continued service delivery for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups in society

The design of this process evaluation did not necessarily specify that some of data sources include women and other vulnerable groups. This is evidenced by the type of stakeholders that were consulted at the district and school levels. The evaluation did not specify for instance whether the FGDs were for women or men, pupils included boys, girls or children with special needs and whether teachers were men or women.

The evaluation also included key informant interviews but it does not specify whether those interviewed should have been men or women. The key informant interviews focused on offices and it is not surprising that out of 31 stakeholders consulted at national level (as evidenced by a list of interviewees attached on the report), 21were men and only 10were women, because it is men who most likely occupy those offices that were consulted. Even at local government level, key informants included; RDCs, CAOs, Local Authorities (including LCIII, IVs, and sub-county chiefs),

DEOs, DISs, CCTs, Foundation bodies, SMCs, school head teachers, teachers, pupils, parents/ guardians, community and NGOs, respectively but it does not specify that some sources should include women and vulnerable categories.

In terms of data collection methods and processes, the evaluation used mixed methods of data collection. These included; a) literature review, b) Focus Group Discussions using Participatory Appraisal Techniques, and c) Individual in-Depth Interviews. The methods used were participatory in nature and allowed inclusion of people's views. However, the methods did not necessarily allow stakeholders to define what data should be collected and recorded. This is because data collection tools were developed at design level. Tools of data collection were developed for every category of respondents, they were pre-tested and some efforts were made to present sex disaggregated data like on issues of enrolment, literacy, and completion rates and efforts were made to capture rural-urban differentiated data on these issue. The tools were culturally appropriate since they were pretested. However some issues that needed gender lenses like accommodation for teachers and affordability of UPE by parents such as single mothers, parents with special needs children were not captured and presented by gender.

A review of the evaluation report shows that the evaluation employed a flexible approach to some extent. For instance in some cases the evaluation team met drunkard teachers who could not express themselves and in such cases interviews were rescheduled. In some cases, school administrators needed over an hour to trace records on school expenditure due to poor record keeping. However, the evaluation team was patient to wait and accesses the required information. This make the study flexible and took a bit longer than anticipated.

In terms of data analysis, a review of the report shows that the analysis was done by the evaluation team. Quantitative data was compiled and analyzed using the computer Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) and STATA, while qualitative data was analyzed for content. Results were validated through holding a number of workshops which shows that efforts were made to involve many stakeholders. Although the author of this paper did not access the data analysis frameworks, the evaluation report shows that efforts were made to present gender disaggregated data, give information on gender equality indicators and show that the UPE intervention affects boys and girls differently. However, the report does not show the gender equality indicators on other stakeholders like teachers, the aspects of accommodation, and yet the school facility grant that was being evaluated also targeted teachers.

In the recommendations of the study, it is evident that the research endeavored to draw attention to gender and equity gaps and how to close them. Out of the 18 recommendations made, the following recommendations regarding instruction materials, toilet facilities and meals for children are explicit about gender and equity (extracts from the report).

It was widely noted that most schools lack instructional materials for pupils with special learning needs. It is essential that adequate instructional materials are provided to schools and specialist teachers are deployed to attend to such pupils.

Construction of toilet facilities with separate stances for male and female pupils should be effectively implemented among all schools in the country and ensure that they are hygienically user friendly. Besides, teachers need to have sanitary facilities separate from those used by the pupils.

Emphasis should be pressed on parents to provide meals to their pupils if they are to realize better performance outcomes. Providing meals could protect girl children from being misguided by opportunistic men who appear to capitalize on their challenge and end up defiling them in exchange for pancakes for lunch. Government through the district authorities, departments and agencies should carry out sensitization drives on the purpose of feeding pupils.

Conclusions

The process evaluation of the UPE programme in Uganda conducted by OPM in 2016 was partly gender responsive and gender blind at the same time. The evaluation report shows that efforts were made to present gender-disaggregated data, give information on gender equality indicators and show that the UPE intervention affects boys and girls differently. However, the report does not show the gender equality indicators on other stakeholders like teachers. The methodology of undertaking the evaluation was largely gender blind, save for the seemingly gender responsive programme that enabled the evaluation to capture and report on some gender specific indicators. To enhance gender responsive evaluations, the OPM needs a deliberate attention to gender and equity in its evaluation methodology. Among others - gender responsive evaluations require that the evaluation team conduct a stakeholder analysis during the process of determining the sampling frame.

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