



# Women's Economic Empowerment

Serious Citizens Interactive Radio Campaign.













36 Talk Shows 46,293
Total Responses

Shows Total Re

Poll Questions

Radio Stations

134
Districts Covered

§ 27%

73% Male Respondents



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This report presents findings from the Serious Citizens interactive radio campaign undertaken by Trac FM International (Trac FM)

Additional information about the Survey may be obtained from Trac FM International; Email: info@tracfm.org; Website: www.tracfm.org

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### **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

List of Acronyms	01
Acknowledgments	02
Key Findings	03
Foreword	04
Background	05
Poll Findings	06
Poll 1 - Challenges barring women from becoming entrepreneurs	06
Poll 2 - Gender roles in financial decision making	08
Poll 3 - Customary Law - Women and Land Inheritance Rights	11
Poll 4 - Decent work: the vulnerable position of women	14
Respondent Profiles	16
CSO Partners	18
Data-driven Advocacy	19
About Trac FM	20
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### i. List of Acronyms

ACP Advocacy Campaign Plan
CSO Civil Society Organization
FGM Female Genital Mutilation
GBV Gender Based Violence

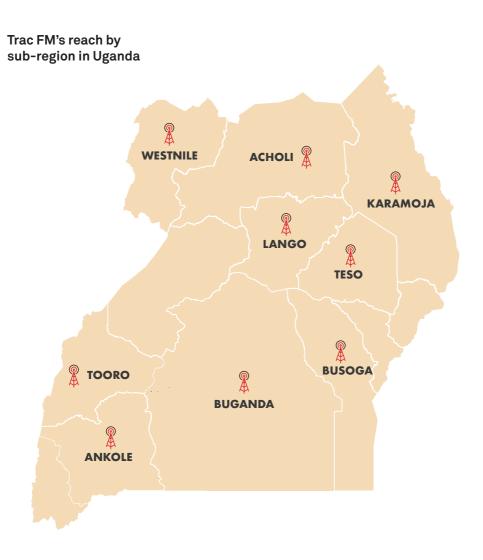
LC Local Council

NGO Non-governmental Organization

SH Sexual Harassment

SRHR Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights

**UBoS** Uganda Bureau of Statistics



### ii. Acknowledgments

First and foremost, we thank the tens of thousands of Ugandan citizens who contributed to this report. Through their answers to radio polls and surveys, we obtained valuable insights into community perspectives on women's economic empowerment. In three months, we received over 46,000 responses to four poll questions aired on 9 radio stations throughout Uganda. These citizens' perspectives are crucial to a more inclusive and informed debate.

This report was prepared by Trac FM and UWONET. The core Trac FM team include Innocent Amanyire, Teddy Atim, Wouter Dijkstra and Maurice van Rooden. UWONET staff members include Hilda Nattyaba, Sarah Agwang and Sheilla Ayot.

Valuable input, thoughts and research papers related to women's economic empowerment in Uganda were provided by Alys Willman and Tanya D'Lima, both (senior) social development specialists at the World Bank. We also thank the Belgian Embassy in Kampala and their colleagues at Enabel for their input into the campaign content. Reach A Hand Uganda (RAHU) helped identify interesting topics and challenges within the theme of women's economic empowerment.

This report drew upon data collected through radio polls that were aired on 9 radio stations across the country. We gratefully acknowledge the support of our radio partners Hits FM in Tooro, Radio

West, Radio Simba, Baba FM, Delta FM, Radio WA, Radio Pacis, Mega FM and Akica FM.

Special thanks go to our talk show guests, who contributed by sharing their knowledge and experience during interesting and lively radio debates: Judith Consy Abuko, Irene Linda, Margaret Kulaba, Norah Laker, Monica Mutabarurah, Alice Munduru, Gloria Aduku, Thomas Odelok, Esther Namboka, Hon. Rose Tino, Emmanuel Twesige, Rosemary Kyemba, Vanessa Anyango, Elizabeth Alinda, Gertrude Ezaru, Fiona Adong, Pheobe Namulindwa, Julius Arugu, Joseph Kato, Joshua Mutengu, Agness Angee, Emmanuel Asiimwe. Bobson Ojede Ziegler, Roselyn Natini, Hon. Agatha Nalubwama, Frances Scovia Alajo, Florence Kamuli, Sarah Awor, Charles Kalule, Catherine Imede, Rosemary Wakesho, William Alloch Akol, Mukonyezi Rodgers Apuuli, Bernard Loum, Counsel Dina Nabungye, Victoria Adiru, CP Okello, George Musisi, Moses Esatu, Richard Clif Mirembe, Jacqueline Piloya, Richard Iziku Adrabo, Claire Akech, Palma, John Magere.

Finally, we would like to thank the Directorate-general for Development Cooperation (DGD), which responds to the priorities of the Belgian Minister for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid for financial support through the Civic Space 2021 program.



# iii. Key Findings



## 1.0 Foreword

As a Cultural Anthropologist, there is nothing more satisfying than uncovering a social phenomenon that could explain a little bit more about why a society behaves the way it does. Like an Archeologist examining an ancient artifact to understand more about its history, so do we at Trac FM anxiously await results of poll questions that run across our network of radio stations.

The Serious Citizens campaign on social norms and the position of women in Uganda has so far been an exceptionally rewarding campaign in this regard. As we explored the highly intimate setting of the household, where most women in Uganda reside, we found a world of traditional cultural norms and practices grappling with a drive for modernization, inclusiveness and equal rights.

The drive for modernization finds institutional support from the Ugandan government, CSO's and foreign development organizations. Culture sharpens its defense through outspoken cultural leaders, religious conservatives and a set of strongly embedded cultural practices. At the same time, the battlefield is drawn between the younger and older generations.

As an objective observer, Trac FM adheres to a Theory of Change where both traditional and modern views should be taken into account to reshape the debate from one based on friction and opposition towards one based on understanding and mutual respect to forge a way forward. This debate should not primarily happen at

government level or in the offices of NGOs, but instead in the households where the two ideologies clash regularly. It is our mission at Trac FM to listen in to this local conversation and report on it to policy makers and researchers. This report does exactly that.

With over 46.000 respondents to the opinion polls that make up this report and over 2 million listeners tuning into the local-language radio debates, the Serious Citizens campaign does more than social research. The conversation directly impacts on Individual Political Agency and active citizenship where those participating in the polls have shown to feel more confident engaging their peers, family and government officials on the topics discussed. At the same time, by publicly announcing the poll results, listeners are able to put their own views into perspective of the views of the wider community.

Trac FM is taking the long road of transformative change where informed and inclusive debate in the public sphere is the driving force behind development and where respect for alternative views allows people to shape their own future instead of projecting sets of (foreign) values as the only path to progress. The forces of culture are way too strong to do otherwise.



**Wouter Dijkstra,** Trac FM Director

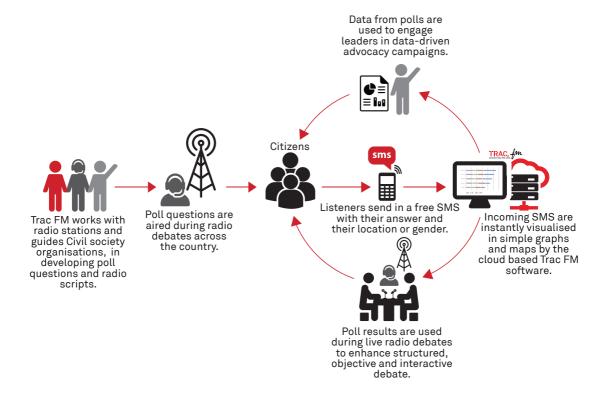
# 2.0 Background

### A. Approach and Methodology

Through live radio talk-shows and SMS polls Trac FM creates a powerful feedback loop between citizens and their leaders, and among citizens in remote communities. Trac FM offers free participation to the polls in all local languages and the rule where each phone number only gets 1 vote in the poll. By working with the the most widely favored local language radio stations at the most popular timeslots, Trac FM polls and talkshows reach the homes of millions of listeners. Respondents to Trac FM polls are randomly picked from our database to sample and get insights into our respondent

base. For a demographic breakdown, please see Respondent profile section on page 16

During the live talkshows, The Trac FM software visualizes the responses in real time, making it possible for the talk show host and commentators in the studio to access and discuss live poll results. Nine radio stations took part in the Serious Citizens campaign, each station received an average of 1,000 - 1,500 responses per poll question. The Trac FM platform received a total of 46,293 responses on the 4 poll questions presented in this report.



# 3.0 Poll Findings

### 3.1 POLL 1 - Challenges barring women from becoming entrepreneurs

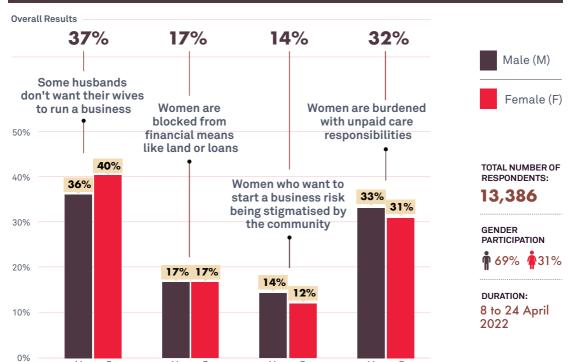
Women's economic empowerment sets a direct path towards gender equality, poverty eradication and inclusive economic growth. Women make enormous contributions to economies, whether in businesses, on farms, as entrepreneurs or employees, or by doing unpaid care work at home. Women entrepreneurship is the first thematic area within the Serious Citizen campaign. It is a key driver to economic growth and a priority in government investment through the ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD).

Identifying social barriers for women who want to become entrepreneurs is key to the design of development programs aiming to promote economic empowerment. In

March 2022, the first poll question looked into the challenges women face to become successful entrepreneurs.' In the week ahead of the live radio talk shows, 9 radio stations started announcing the poll following an agreed script:

"Whether you sell maize at the market, have a hair salon or run a mill, entrepreneurs contribute to the development of Uganda by creating jobs and producing goods. People who start and run business, Small or Large, are called 'Entrepreneurs'. The way men are free to become entrepreneurs should be the same way women are able to start their businesses. This poll week's question askes:

# Which is the most significant social barrier for women to become successful entrepreneurs?









As a woman, I think the reason why women fail to start and maintain their business is because men fear that a woman might accumulate wealth. Men don't like women having their own money, they think that if a woman has like say 3 million in her pocket, a man may not be able to control a loaded woman, forgetting that the money owned by a woman is for the whole family."

#### **Analysis**

A majority of 13,386 respondents say that the willingness of men to allow their partner to start or run a business is the biggest barrier for women to become successful entrepreneurs. A significant number of men would be challenged to accept the risk of their partners becoming recognised or successful. This sentiment is reinforced by cultural and religious expectations of men to be the dominant breadwinner and provide for the families' basic needs.



ABBY NANTALE (Mbarara)



Some religions don't believe in working women. It's a man who's supposed to cater for his family by providing all the home requirements. Others fear that if a woman is exposed, they might elope with some men.



MALE RESPONDENT (Businessman, Lira)



...if a woman is empowered, she becomes big-headed.. if she sees she has more money than the husband, she becomes wild and the home becomes unstable. That is why men don't allow their women to do business.



SHARON (Lira)



Women fear to go into business for fear of the suspicion their husbands have that the business will expose them to other men they will end up having affairs with.



Mistrust and fear of infidelity is a recurring issue in most follow-up interviews. Even to the extent where women avoid to work out of fear that their man will become suspicious of them committing adultery. Interviews indicate a lack of confidence in the stability of the relationship and a belief that whenever a better opportunity will arise, the spouse has limited loyalty to the existing relationship.

A significant number of development initiatives by the Ugandan Government, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and private institutions in support of women economic empowerment focus on women's ability to get loans, educate women on (soft) business skills or even handing out cash to women. Although these initiatives might assist with overcoming the challenge mentioned in option B: Women are blocked from financial means like land or loans, they might exacerbate the tensions between husband and wife within the household. As an unintended consequence, this approach could further alienate men and cause more severe mistrust and consequent obstruction.

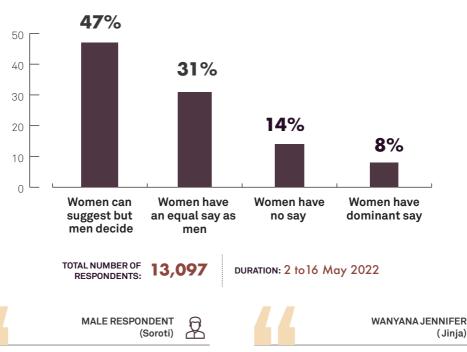
### 3.2 POLL 2 - Gender roles in financial decision making

In most households in Uganda, men are still the main breadwinners. According to UBoS, women contribute more through unpaid work like care for children, elderly, cooking and household work.<sup>2</sup> Women spend more time on unpaid domestic services for the household and family.

Poll 1 of this report shows some husbands are reluctant to support their wives in gaining financial independence. This limits women's ability to affect important finan-

cial household decisions like buying or selling land, cattle or investments in household technology (phones, solar panels, generators etc). Another study suggests that women generally place a higher premium on welfare related goals and are more likely to use their influence and the resources they control to promote the needs of the family, particularly children.<sup>3</sup>

#### How are women involved in critical financial decision making?

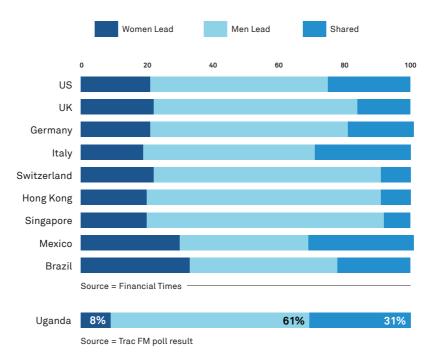


Men make their decision silently without involving women because most times women do not open up to men about their finances so a man has to use tricks to persuade her by bribing her or lying to her in order to make her reveal the money she has. Therefore, men find it hard to trust women with financial decisions.

..if there's no good relationship, the man sees himself as superior but the good thing is the LC will ask whether the husband has agreed with the wife. So he can't decide alone because even if he sells the land, for example, the LC will tell him he sold air because the wife and children also have shares.

<sup>2</sup> Time Use Survey Report 2017-2018 (UBoS)

<sup>3</sup> An Assessment of the Status of Gender Equality in Uganda in 2020 - UWONET - Section 3.2.1



#### **Analysis**

Poll results confirm findings from a recent UWONET report: Customarily, men hold most privileges in the family which includes distribution of resources and financial decision making powers. Compared to global statistics, relatively few women lead in financial decision making. There were no significant differences in responses to the polls between rural and urban respondents.

Interviews suggest both men and women struggle with applying traditional gender roles to modern day situations where





and leave their men.

FEMALE RESPONDENT (Moroto)



The reason why women are not involved much financially is because women will become stubborn



**FEMALE RESPONDENT** (Soroti)



Men fear to include women in financial decisions because the man has personal plans that he wants to keep secret, especially extra - marital affairs that he has to take care of.

money plays a more significant role in day to day lives. Examples include disagreements buying sanitary pads and what should happen when a wife earns more than her husband. Interviews also indicate polygamous relationships complicate financial decision making. On several occasions, the local council (LC) chairman is mentioned as an effective (local) leadership focal person on the sale of land within households. Without written consent by the wife, the sale of family land can be challenged.

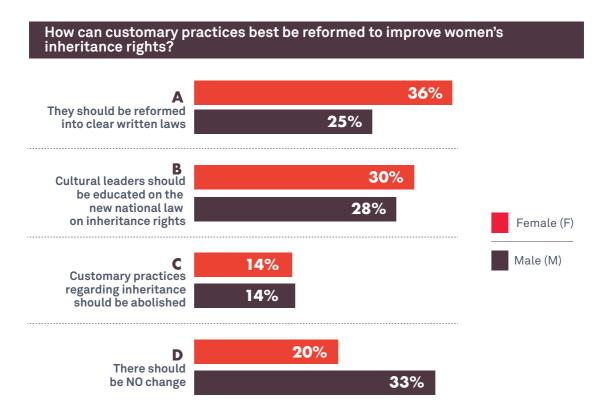
Follow-up interviews reveal a strong sense of mistrust between men and women regarding household finances. Many relationships in rural Uganda are built on a foundation of mutual economic interest and dependence such as bride-price, patrilineal inheritance, unpaid care responsibilities, etc. As gender roles are shifting, a new balance is sought. As women struggle to gain influence in financial decision making, men struggle with their inability to live up to their expected roles and responsibilities.



### 3.3 POLL 3 - Customary Law - Women and Land Inheritance Rights

According to Article 26 of the 1995 Constitution of Uganda, every person has a right to own property either individually or in association with others. This means, women can acquire and own land or any other property in their own right as well as with others. Despite the fact that the Constitution regulates land ownership for both men and women, Ugandan women only own between 7-20% of the lands. 4 To address the existing gap and guarantee women's land ownership and inheritance, recently (April 2022), the President passed the Succession Amendment Bill, now the Succession Amendment Act 2022, which provides for the rights of women to inherit land and ensures equality in the distribution of property or estates. In essence, the Act gives women equal rights with men in inheriting the properties of their parents or spouse.

Despite Ugandan laws supporting equal inheritance rights, cultural inheritance practices related to land benefit men. Patrilineal inheritance is the norm in most Ugandan cultural settings and most women fail to enforce their rights to inheritance following the death of their husband or parents if not explicitly stated in a will. Without change in cultural practices, formal laws will not make significant change in women's land ownership and access to capital.



<sup>4</sup> Uganda: The Fight for Women's Land Rights (Global Policy Forum. Nov, 2012)

#### **Sub-region Results**



MAMA MIRIAM (Lira)



MICHAEL (Lira)



I am not yet aware of the new law [Succession Act 2022]. It should be made clear to the women and how it can enable them to have rights to inheritance.

I don't support giving equal rights of inheriting my property to my wife because it will make her stubborn. When a woman sees that the man is rich, she will do what she can to separate from the man so that she gets part of the wealth.

#### **Analysis**

Looking at the gender difference on answer option D: There should be NO change in inheritance rights, we see significantly more men in support of maintaining the current system compared to women. Although this outcome might be expected, the results should offer advocates clear evidence supporting the notion of gender conflict related to patrilineal inheritance. Women want change, men want to maintain the status quo. The most significant divergence of opinion between Men and Women were found in Ankole (35% Men vs 14% Women) and Westnile (28% men vs 11% women). The least signif-

icant difference was found in Busoga (39% men vs 34% women).

Customary systems of patrilineal inheritance are rigid and often contradic with broader development goals. Women entering the workforce, demand for equal rights and progressive thinking stands in contrast with cultural practices of bride-price, patrilineal inheritance and the traditional roles of women. As Uganda transitions from traditional culture-driven society to a modern state, even the most rigid social customs must be re-evaluated.

# How can we explain the 20% of the women who don't want any change in inheritance rights?

Some women are powerful gatekeepers of patriarchy - the continuation of negative practices such as FGM, GBV, etc have thrived on them being sustained by women, not men. Acceptance of negative practices by these women can often be attributed to socialization during their childhood where they are made to believe that these cultural practices are meant for their own good when in fact it is meant to serve men. A lack of information stands in

the way of interrupting this cycle of acceptance.

Secondly, there seems to be ongoing propaganda about 'Western influence or recolonisation' through NGO-led advocacy campaigns, especially those about women's rights or children's rights are seen by many as 'un-African'. This could also be some of the underlying reasons why some women voted as they did.



VICTORIA MUKYALA (Busoga)



Girls & women should never think about inheriting property because they can't even develop what they've inherited unless it is done out of their sweat. Because in the end they'll fight over the land and of course a woman can't beat a man because they're stronger & wiser!

# Women favor option A (to write down the laws). Men prefer option B (to educate leaders). Why?

Written laws make it easy to apply and to hold customary leaders to account for their commitments or responsibility, unlike unwritten law that is subject to a different and biased application. The death of elders

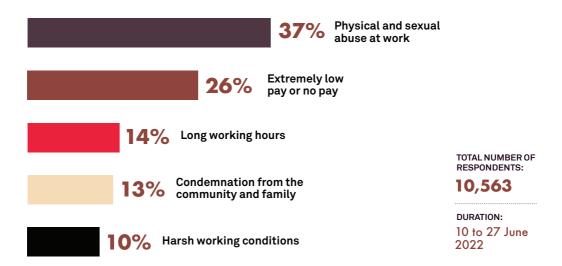
who are the holders of traditional knowledge warrant that customary laws are written down so that the younger generation can know what it is about and how to apply it in the future.

### 3.4 POLL 4 - Decent work: the vulnerable position of women

Women's economic empowerment is central to realizing women's rights and gender equality. Women's economic empowerment includes women's ability to participate equally in existing markets; their access to and control over productive resources, access to decent work, control over their own time, lives and bodies; Women's economic empowerment includes women's ability to participate equally in existing markets, have access to productive resources, control their own time, lives and bodies and increase their agency and voice.. Women's economic equality is good for business. Companies greatly benefit from increasing employment and leadership opportunities for women, which is shown to increase organizational effectiveness and growth. It is estimated that companies with three or more women in senior management functions score higher in all dimensions of organizational performance.<sup>5</sup>

However, not all jobs contribute towards women's economic empowerment. In Uganda, many women work without contracts, in poor and unsafe working conditions with very low or no pay at all. These jobs are not considered 'decent work' and exploit women instead of helping them gain economic empowerment.

#### What is the biggest challenge for women in informal jobs?





AWANIA SCOVIA (Westnile)



What I find extremely painful at work places is the issue of sexual harrasment. Men keep on asking for sex and many times we are torn between continuing to work and giving in to pressures, but because of poverty, we end up giving in.

#### **Analysis**

A significant majority of 37% of respondents voted for option B: Physical or sexual abuse, as the biggest challenge for women in informal jobs. 26% voted for option A (Extremely low pay or no pay). Less people voted for Long working hours (14%), Condemnation from the community and family (13%) and Harsh working conditions (10%). Answers given by male and female respondents are mostly the same.

Given the obvious challenges women face with bad working conditions, low payment and long working hours it is striking to observe a consensus among respondents that the biggest challenge women face at work is option B: Physical and sexual abuse. Based on additional telephone interviews, expert consultation and literature, it is expected that respondents voting for option B mainly refer to sexual instead of physical abuse. Additional data on this sensitive topic should be collected to understand more on the nature of harassment (transactional or hostile).

A 2014 study shows that the high prevalence of sexual abuse at work (both transactional and hostile), has led community and family members to believe that any kind of 'work' outside the traditional household involves sex. Some women note that because sexual abuse against women at workplaces is so pervasive, that even when they are engaged in 'proper' work, their families back home suspect that they are engaged in sex work. This sentiment could have given raise to the challenge mentioned in option C: Condemnation from the community and family (13%).



JUSTINE BIRUNGI (Sells tomatoes in Namungalwe, Iganga):



When you delay to go back home, the man begins to suspect that the wife was committing adultery!

The study on gender labour market participation furthermore found that women in banks, markets and flower farms shared similar experiences of Sexual Harrassment (SH). Across the board, there was deliberate normalization of SH as part of the workplace and there was pressure to conform to the culture of SH. Women who resisted were talked down to by other women who essentially told them to grow up and accept the circumstances. Others were told that they would not advance in their careers if they did not accept sexual propositions thrown their way.

Manifestations of SH reported includes: persistent solicitation for sex through phone messages, physical propositioning, physical touch and verbal harassment. This suggests that social class and status did not particularly mitigate the likelihood of being sexually harassed. Women in banks and markets who engaged with clients the most also reported SH from that group. At flower farms, new recruits, and women who were not well off financially were reported to be more vulnerable to SH.

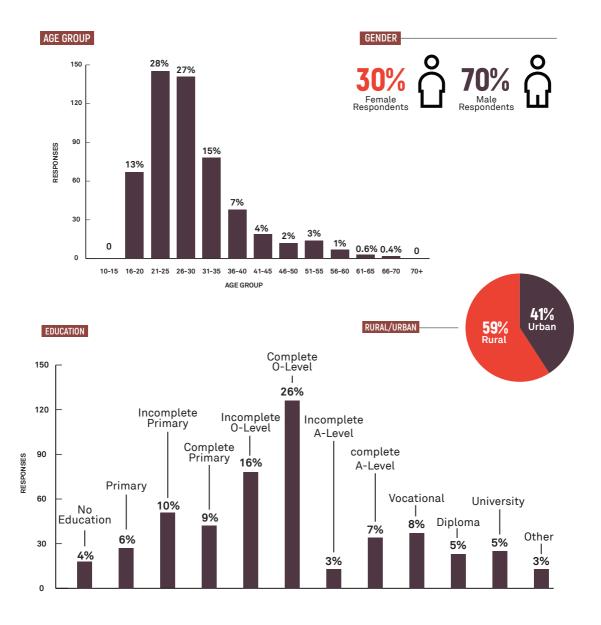
Even in institutions where policies, regulations and/or mechanisms exist to address SH, the practice persists, largely because SH is seen as normal by both men and women; and it is accepted that responsibility of 'dealing with it' lies with the woman. Part 2 of the Serious Citizens interactive radio campaign looks into Gender Based Violence (GBV) and will further address these challenges.

<sup>6</sup> Gender Youth and Urban Labour Market Participation: Evidence from the catering sector in Lira, Northern Uganda (2014)

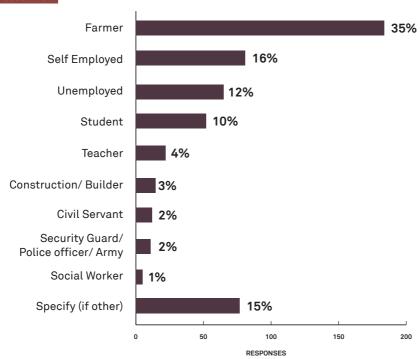
<sup>7</sup> Gender Youth and Urban Labour Market Participation: Evidence from the catering sector in Lira, Northern Uganda (2014)

# **4.0 Respondent Profiles**

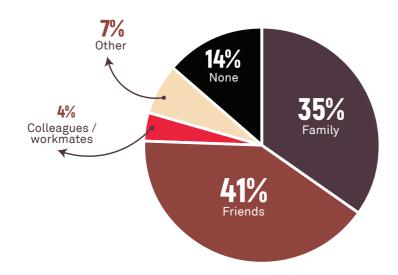
Among all of the participants in the radio polls, over 500 respondents were randomly selected to understand our respondent base and for in-depth follow-up interviews. This time, we wanted to gain a better understanding of whether the radio broadcasts contributed to the discussion of topics between people in the communities. Did the respondents discuss the topics of talk shows with other people? Has it provided them any insights? Did it help them and if so, how? The typical profiles of respondents to the Trac FM radio polls are below.



#### OCCUPATION



#### WHO DID YOU DISCUSS THE POLL RESULTS WITH?



## 5.0 CSO Partners

For the Serious Citizens campaign, Trac FM collaborated with two CSO partners. Together we worked on developing the radio polls and additional context information, clarifying the collected data, sharing the outcomes on social media and selecting the (local) radio guests based on their thematic interests.



Uganda Women's Network (UWONET) is an advocacy organization that exists to coordinate collective action among women's rights and gender equality stakeholders for the attainment of gender equality and equity in Uganda. It is an umbrella organization of national women's NGOs and individuals operating in East Africa.





Reach A Hand Uganda (RAHU) Reach A Hand Uganda (RAHU) is a non-profit youth-led organization focused on youth empowerment programs with an emphasis on Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention.

RAHU focus on changing social norms and values that limit access to SRHR services and information through designing effective communication strategies and campaigns to create awareness and mitigate sexual health risks among the young people today.

# 6.0 Data-driven Advocacy

The serious citizens campaign does not only engage citizens in public debate, it also advocates for the consideration of popular opinion by people in positions of power. For this, Trac FM and partners set up a data-driven advocacy campaign plan (ACP) where strategic dissemination of data towards relevant change-makers is the main objective. The design of the ACP happened at the initial stages of development of the Serious Citizens campaign. Clear advocacy objectives and recipients were identified before the radio content was produced.

	Partners	Role
Civil Society Organisations	Uganda's Womens network (UWONET) - Main partner for Women's Economic Empowerment	Several UWONET programs linked to women's economic empowerment formed the basis of the partnership. UWONET provided CSO representatives for all talk shows, co-developed poll questions, provided research and took lead in further dissemination and uptake of collected data in policy briefs.
	Reach A Hand Uganda (RAHU)	For theme 1, RAHU provided input in the ACP development
Policy advocacy	Ministry of Gender & World Bank	Informed thematic content and shared research and future planned activities within the planned national program on Generating Livelihoods and Opportunities for Women (GLOW)
	Enabel	Informed thematic content and shared research and future planned activities within the planned bilateral program with a strong component of inclusive development and youth employment
Academic	University of Amsterdam (UvA), University College London (UCL),	Provided feedback on poll formulation and additional research papers on one or more of the Serious Citizens thematic areas.
	International University of East Africa (IUEA)	Starting in 2023, qualitative research will be conducted with IUEA and UvA Master students collecting data at community level through field-visits, in-depth interviews and listening groups.

Through involving partners from the onset of the campaign, collected data speaks to existing or planned programs related to thematic areas. Key recipients of the reports will be invited for data analysis sessions to identify findings for entry into policy briefs and papers. A meeting with policy makers at the Ugandan Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development (MGLSD) is planned for October 2022.

Social media is an important outlet for the dissemination of poll findings towards affiliated organizations and individuals. Trac FM designs clear infographics and social media messages to stand out from busy information streams. Through a concerted social media strategy with CSO partners, data is shared with relevant audiences on Twitter and LinkedIn.

# 7.0 About Trac FM

Trac FM transforms radio audiences from passive listeners to active participants. Through SMS polls and radio talk shows citizens of Uganda and other East African countries take part in inclusive and well-informed public debate on social development, public policy and governance. Through its network of partner stations, Trac FM reaches out to the most remote and excluded citizens through the use of basic mobile phones, free SMS and interactive FM radio talk-shows, all broadcasted in local languages.

Trac collects real-time data through radio and SMS to identify cultural, socio-economic and political trends from a citizen perspective. Local language programming, respondent anonymity, long-standing partnerships with radio stations and the involvement and training of local radio journalists

enables Trac FM to build a unique relationship with a large sample of the population and discuss intimate and sensitive topics with them at a national scale. The collected feedback is analyzed, packaged and disseminated to assist policymakers and practitioners on the ground to integrate unmediated citizen opinions in the development of their policies and programs.

Trac FM International is an NGO registered in the Netherlands and Uganda with programs throughout East-Africa. Would you like to efficiently and effectively interact with the local communities you serve?

For interactive radio campaigns, Monitoring Evaluation and Learning partnerships and other questions, please contact us at info@tracfm.org.



