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UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF STRATEGIC RELIGIOUS ENGAGEMENT IN ENHANCING DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES AND RESILIENCE OF COMMUNITIES IN UGANDA

September 2021

This report was produced with funding from USAID's Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships (CFBNP). It was prepared independently by ResilientAfrica Network (RAN), Makerere University School of Public Health.

Cover Photo credit: Christian Connections for International Health: The Bishop of Rwenzori Diocese receiving Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) on behalf of health facilities in his Diocese; *www.ccih.org/upmb-engages-faith-leaders-and-communities-in-wash-and-covid-education/*

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT 6
ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS 7
OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS 8
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 9
1.0 INTRODUCTION 11
2.0 METHODS 13
2.1 Study Design 13
2.2 Geographical Scope 13
2.3 Study Population 13
2.4 Sample Size 13
2.4.1 Qualitative Sample Size 13
2.4.2 Quantitative Sample Size Determination 13
2.5 Sampling Procedure 14
2.5.1 Sampling for Quantitative Data Collection 14
2.5.2 Sampling for Qualitative Data Collection 14
2.6 Data Collection Approaches 14
2.6.1 Quantitative Data Collection Approaches 14
2.6.2 Qualitative Data Collection Approaches 14
2.6.3 Study Variables 14
2.7 Data Management and Analysis 14
2.7.1 Quantitative Data Management and Analysis 14
2.7.2 Qualitative Data Management and Analysis 14
3.0 RESULTS 15
3.1 Background Characteristics 15
3.2 The Role of FBOs and Religious Institutions in Supporting Development in Communities 15
3.2.1 Education 16
3.2.2 Agriculture and Food Security 20
3.2.3 Health 21
3.2.4 Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) 23
3.2.5 Economic Growth and Trade 24
3.2.6 Gender Equity and Women's Empowerment 25
3.2.7 Crisis Management and Conflict Resolution 25
3.2.8 Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance 26
3.2.9 Environment and Climate Change 26
3.3 Impact of Religious Institutions/FBOs' Programs on Community Resilience 27
3.3.1 Impact on Education 27
3.3.2 Impact on Agriculture and Food Security 28
3.3.3 Impact on the Health Sector 28
3.3.4 Impact on Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) 28
3.3.5 Impact on Economic Growth and Trade 29
3.3.6 Impact on gender equity and women's empowerment 29
3.3.7 Impact on Crisis Management and Conflict Resolution 30

3.3.8 Impact on Democracy, Human rights, and Governance 30
3.3.9 Cross Cutting Issues 30
3.4 Facilitators of and Barriers to the roll out of Development Programs 31
3.4.1 Facilitators of Development Programs Implemented by Religious Institutions/FBOs 31
3.4.2 Barriers to Successful implementation of Development Programs by Religious Institutions/FBOs 31
3.5 Approaches to Collaboration with Religious Institutions/FBOs 34
3.5.1 Who should be engaged 34
3.5.2 How to Engage Religious Institutions/FBOs 36
3.6 Attributes of Resilience Amongst Religious Communities 40
3.6.1 Social Capital 40
3.6.2 Knowledge and Information Exchange 41
3.6.3 Faith and Psychosocial Support 41
3.6.4 Community Cooperation 41
3.6.5 Financial Inclusion 41
3.6.6 Family Structure and Cohesion 42
3.6.7 Equitable Distribution of Support during Disasters 42
3.6.8 Household Assets, Savings, Skills and Education 42
4.0 CONCLUSION 44
APPENDICES 45
Appendix 1: Number of study respondents by category 46

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Sample size distribution for the household survey by district 13
Table 2: Background characteristics of respondents in the household survey 15
Table 3: Type of support provided by religious institutions or FBOs to community members 16

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Primary schools in Uganda disaggregated by founding body and funding source 16
Figure 2: Secondary schools in Uganda disaggregated by founding body 17
Figure 3: Tertiary (post-primary) schools in Uganda disaggregated by founding body 17
Figure 4: Proportion of religious institutions providing scholarships to household members 19
Figure 5: Proportion of religious institutions providing scholarlastic materials to household members 19
Figure 6: Proportion of facilities managed by type religious institution 21
Figure 7: Proportion of religious faiths that were said to provide healthcare services to households that participated in the survey 21
Figure 8: UPMB donating PPE to Kasanga Health Centre III 22
Figure 9: Percentage of religious institutions that provide WASH services in the target communities 23
Figure 10: Percentage of households that had received support from religious institutions or FBOs by district 26
Figure 11: Level of satisfaction with scholarships received from religious institutions/FBOs 28



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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ARLPI	Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative
CDR	Center for Development Research
CFBNP	Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships
CMS	Church Missionary Society
COU	Church of Uganda
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
FBO	Faith Based Organization
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
HHs	Households
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IRCU	Inter-Religious Council of Uganda
KIIs	Key Informant Interviews
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
MoH	Ministry of Health
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
FBO	Faith-Based Organizations
ODK	Open Data Kit
PHC	Primary Health Care
RAN	ResilientAfrica Network
RLs	Religious Leaders
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SMCs	School Management Committees
SRE	Strategic Religious Engagement
UBOS	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
UCMB	Uganda Catholic Medical Bureau
UJCC	Uganda Joint Christian Council
UNEPI	Uganda National Expanded Program for Immunization
UNCS	Uganda National Council for Science and Technology
UMMB	Uganda Muslim Medical Bureau
UMSC	Uganda Muslim Supreme Council
UPMB	Uganda Protestant Medical Bureau
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

Strategic Religious Engagement: The process of collaborating with religious communities and Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs) to improve development and humanitarian outcomes.

Resilience of communities: The ability of communities to grow or resist adversity and disruptions caused by external shocks including sudden or ongoing disruptions associated with social, ecological, economic, and environmental impacts.

Faith-Based Organizations: Religious institutions under the Inter-Religious Council of Uganda (ICRU) – the Seventh-day Adventist Church (SDA), Church of the Province of Uganda, the Uganda Episcopal Conference, Uganda Muslim Supreme Council (UMSC), Uganda Orthodox Church, Born Again Faith (BAF), and the National Alliance of Pentecostal and Evangelical Churches of Uganda.

Religious communities: Gatherings of individuals who have common religious beliefs, habits, and practices, and ideologies about the negotiated order of these gatherings.



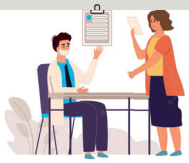
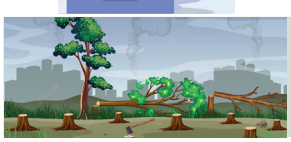
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Religious institutions play a critical role in the development of vulnerable communities, as well as strengthening their resilience. Majority of Uganda's population subscribes to either the Christian or Islamic faith. Overall, 39.3% of Ugandans are Catholics, 32% are Anglicans, 13.7% are Muslims, 11.1% belong to the Born Again Faith, and 1.7% are Seventh-day Adventists. Scholars and practitioners view Strategic Religious Engagement (SRE) as one of the approaches to fostering the development and resilience of communities. This study sought to conduct an in-depth analysis of the role of SRE in enhancing local development outcomes in selected districts of Uganda.

We used a mixed-methods design that employed both qualitative and quantitative approaches of data collection. Qualitative data was collected through key informant interviews and focus group discussions. The former were conducted with religious leaders at national and sub-national levels and Government officials whose duties involve engagement with religious institutions from time to time, while the latter were held with community members. Quantitative data was collected through an assessment conducted in four districts of Uganda, namely: Gulu, Jinja, Masaka and Kabale. We surveyed a total of 1,252 households and conducted 35 key informant interviews and eight (8) focus group discussions.
We found several players with distinct roles, in addition to facilitators of and barriers to implementation of community development programs. It is therefore important to know who to engage, and how to engage with them for successful implementation of such programs.

Role of FBOs/religious institutions in various development sectors

Development Sector	How FBOs/religious institutions support development
 Education	Scholarships Policy formulation Enhancing school enrolment and retention Establishment & management of training institutions
 Agriculture	Provision of agricultural extension services Promoting commercialization of agriculture Community mobilization and distribution of agricultural inputs such as seedlings, trailers and others
 Health	Establishment of health facilities Training of health care providers Provision of psychosocial support and counselling services
 Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)	Establishment and maintenance of clean water sources Community mobilization and capacity building
 Economic growth	Promoting a savings culture through creation and support for Savings and Credit Cooperative Organizations (SACCOs) Establishment of small & medium enterprises (SMEs) Training of communities on activities geared towards improving livelihoods
 Peace building and conflict resolution	Participating in peace-building and consolidation Supporting conflict resolution initiatives, particularly regarding land issues
 Democracy	Supporting governance initiatives Maintaining peace during the electioneering process
 Environment and climate change	Supporting tree planting such as through provision of land to community members that express interest in planting trees

Facilitators of successful implementation for community development programs include:

1. prevailing peaceful environment;
2. collaboration amongst religious institutions through their umbrella organizations;
3. effective community mobilization;
4. an environment characterized by integrity, good governance, leadership, transparency, accountability, and trust;
5. in-depth knowledge of the context and needs of target communities, and their application in planning and implementation of development programs.

Barriers to successful implementation of community development programs included:

1. existence of factions amongst religious groups;
2. corruption;
3. lack of transparency and inadequate accountability mechanisms;
4. discordance between project goals and community needs, priorities, religious beliefs or values of target communities;
5. regressive religious beliefs and doctrines.

Approaches to optimize strategic religious engagement were identified as below:

1. entering into a Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs);
2. working within acceptable religious beliefs, values and norms of target communities;
3. undertaking research to inform project implementation strategies;
4. co-creation and joint monitoring (with target communities and religious leaders) of solutions sensitization of religious communities and FBOs about planned interventions and promotion of religious inclusion and unity.

Emphasis was also put on the need to engage the following persons and entities during the process of SRE: the top leadership of religious institutions/FBOs, existing institutional structures from top to grass-root levels, umbrella organizations of religious institutions/FBOs, as well as local authorities who are expected to work alongside the religious institutions/FBOs to implement planned development initiatives.

Religious institutions/FBOs are able to positively impact development of communities given their in-depth and contextual knowledge of community development needs, borne out of their presence within communities. However, implemented programs face both internal and external barriers which may hinder their success. Actors that ought to be engaged include their top leadership, grassroots stakeholders, existing structures/systems, local administrative units, and the umbrella organizations of religious institutions.



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs) routinely provide services and implement programs targeting poor and marginalized community members with the purpose of improving their socio-economic status. Development partners are increasingly using strategic religious engagement (SRE) as a vehicle to spur the impact of sustainable development initiatives in beneficiary communities. It has been documented that FBOs are, in some regions as development sectors, more effective and active than many government programs or structures. They are also more trusted by beneficiary communities, compared to government agencies (World Council of Churches; UNEP, 2018).

More than 80% of the world's population belongs to a specific religion (Development FMfECa, 2016). While social institutions (community-based, domestic, and economic) influence religious practice, the impact of religion on social institutions cannot be underestimated. The role of religion in the formation of society, its development, and resilience is therefore undeniable.

The majority of Uganda's population subscribes to either the Christian or Islamic faith. Overall, 39.3% of Ugandans are Catholics, 32% are Anglicans, 13.7% are Muslims, 11.1% belong to the Born Again Faith and 1.7% are Seventh-day Adventists (UBOS, 2014). Religious institutions shape the moral character of individuals, strengthen uniformity and solidarity amongst people, and promote the social welfare of underserved communities (Nath & Phil, 2015). Community resilience has been defined by scholars as the ability of communities to anticipate, withstand and bounce back from external pressures and shocks or challenges using their resources (Wijesekara, 2021).

Religious institutions and FBOs play a critical role in strengthening the resilience of communities and reinforcing the local processes through provision of psychosocial support and participation in development initiatives related to agriculture, health, education, economic growth, democracy and peace building (Qasmiyeh et al., 2013).

Religion influences socio-economic development in contemporary Africa in various ways as highlighted below:

- FBOs across the continent are increasingly involved directly in the provision of social services such as health care (estimated to account for over 50% of health facilities in some instances) and a large proportion of education services (Marshall, K. 2005).

- Religious institutions are one of the principal channels linking Africans in the diaspora with the African continent, with economic benefits to communities. The African diaspora plays a crucial role in building the economies of their countries and communities through remittance of funds, some of which are channeled through religious institutions back home.

- Religious institutions are virtually present in every part of Africa, most visibly through their physical infrastructure. Their vast mass media reaches deep into rural areas and underserved urban communities across geographical locations to spread their doctrines, offer spiritual support, address a wide array of social, political, health, and economic challenges, and disseminate information (Marshall, K. 2005).

- Citizenry often hold FBOscin high regard and perceive them as trustworthy and highly networked, with dynamism that enables them to operate efficiently and achieve results where and when needed. In several countries, spiritual beliefs and religious practices are interwoven with cultural values, social principles, societal norms, political engagement, and economic prosperity (UNEP, 2018).

While there are many positive benefits to religious engagement, it can also have negative effects. For instance, some religious communities have been associated with inciting violence and extremism, while others have promoted segregation and discrimination against certain sections of the population (Bush GW, 2002).

Cognizant of the critical role of religion in society, the U.S Government in 2013 adopted the framework of the U.S. National Strategy on Religious Leader and Faith Community Engagement. The framework encourages U.S. diplomats and development professionals to strengthen their relationships with religious leaders and faith communities as they carry out their foreign policy duties (USAID CFOI, 2020).

Within the context of the framework, SRE is defined as the process of engaging religious communities and partnering with FBOs to improve development

[1] *UBOS. (2014). Uganda National Population and Housing Census 2014 Main Report. https://www.ubos.org/wp-content/uploads/publications/03_20182014_National_Census_Main_Report.pdf*

and humanitarian assistance outcomes (USAID CFBNP). SRE is viewed as one of the avenues used in peacebuilding, where political and religious leaders are jointly involved in efforts geared towards the realization of interests and essential human needs of groups involved in conflict with the aim of conflict resolution (Morris, 2000; USAID CFBNP).

SRE fosters enhancement of community resilience in several ways, and has been successful in resolving some of the worst crises in recent history.
The success of SRE stems from the fact that it seeks to promote social inclusion and common security in communities that are culturally, religiously, and linguistically diverse (Halafoff, 2013). It is therefore important to understand the dynamics of belief systems at community level, as well as the role of religious institutions in development initiatives implemented within communities.

This study sought to inform USAID policy and practice related to this topic by conducting an in-depth, field-based analysis of the role of SRE in improving local development outcomes (with a focus on enhancing resilience) in Ugandan communities.



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2.0 METHODS

2.1 STUDY DESIGN

A mixed-methods study design that simultaneously uses both quantitative and qualitative data collection approaches was employed to explore field-based perspectives on the role and impact of collaboration with religious communities and FBOs in fostering development and humanitarian outcomes.

2.2 GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE

The study was conducted at both national and sub-national levels in Uganda. At the national level, interviews were conducted in Kampala City where most of the central offices of national organizations are located. Sub-national assessments were conducted in four regions: Central (Masaka District), Western (Kabale District), Northern (Gulu District), and Eastern (Jinja District).

2.3 STUDY POPULATION

This study targeted various populations that included heads of national social welfare offices for the major religious denominations, leaders of FBOs, leaders of inter-religious platforms or associations and representatives of all major religious denominations in Uganda, as subscribed to the Inter-Religious Council of Uganda (ICRU).

We also targeted personnel at the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD), particularly policy makers charged with oversight of development programs in liaison with FBOs or religious institutions.

At the sub-national level, key informant interviews (KIIs) were held with leaders of religious institutions or departments responsible for social mobilization at district or diocesan levels, local church or mosque leaders, and heads of key departments at District Local Governments that work with FBOs or religious institutions during implementation of development initiatives.

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were held with community members involved in social outreach development programs. Adult residents (household heads or the oldest adult resident in a given household) of sampled communities were also interviewed during a household survey.

2.4 SAMPLE SIZE

2.4.1 QUALITATIVE SAMPLE SIZE

To ensure representation from all relevant stakeholders, we generated a representative list of respondents for the qualitative interviews (35 KIIs and 8 FGDs), which are presented in Appendix 1.

2.4.2 QUANTITATIVE SAMPLE SIZE DETERMINATION

We estimated the sample size using Freidman's formula for sample size calculation, considering a margin of error estimated at 5% at normal distribution, a non-response rate of 10% and a design effect of 2.0.
The total computed sample size was 1,272 respondents. In each district, a specific sample size was computed as indicated in Table 1.

TABLE 1: SAMPLE SIZE DISTRIBUTION FOR THE HOUSEHOLD SURVEY BY DISTRICT

District	County	No. of Households (HHs)	Sub County	No. of HHs	Total sample size per District
Jinja	Kagoma	41,339	Butagaya	10,317	320
Gulu	Omoro	32,642	Bobi	6,355	316
Masaka	Bukoto	46,742	Buwunga	9,907	320
Kabale	Ndorwa	40,486	Rubaya	6,050	316

2.5 SAMPLING PROCEDURE

2.5.1 SAMPLING FOR QUANTITATIVE DATA COLLECTION

We used cluster sampling where each village was considered a cluster. In each district, one county and one sub-county were randomly selected with guidance from the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS).

In each sub-county, one parish was randomly selected from which two villages were randomly selected from a list of villages obtained from UBOS. At village level, a list of households was generated in consultation with the Local Council 1 (village) Chairperson. Systematic random sampling was used to determine the households that were interviewed. The head of each household was interviewed. In the absence of the household head, the eldest adult present at the time of the survey was interviewed.

2.5.2 SAMPLING FOR QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTION

Purposive sampling was used. We purposely identified officers at senior management level who were conversant with the operations and decision-making processes of FBOs, religious institutions and departments. At the sub-national level, FGDs and KII participants were selected in consultation with District Community Development Officers and heads of religious institutions. Each FGD had a minimum of 8 participants.

2.6 DATA COLLECTION APPROACHES

2.6.1 QUANTITATIVE DATA COLLECTION APPROACHES

A household survey was used to gather evidence on the impact of development initiatives implemented by FBOs or religious institutions. A semi-structured questionnaire was developed and uploaded onto an Open Data Kit (ODK) Android-based data collection application. The questionnaire collected data on the following variables from each household: demographic characteristics, religious engagements, wealth, agricultural activities, health, infrastructure, human capital, and psychosocial issues. Data were collected from adult respondents aged 18 years and above, after obtaining their consent.

2.6.2 QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTION APPROACHES

KII and FGD guides were used to document respondents' opinions, perceptions, and experiences on the subject of the study. Digital voice recorders were used to collect data during KIIs and FGDs.

2.6.3 STUDY VARIABLES

The main outcome variable was the impact on households of development programs implemented by FBOs. Independent variables included demographic characteristics like age, sex, occupation, religion, place of residence, socio-economic factors, and resilience factors such as livelihoods, and vulnerability to poverty.

2.7 DATA MANAGEMENT AND ANALYSIS

2.7.1 QUANTITATIVE DATA MANAGEMENT AND ANALYSIS

Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, proportions, means, medians, standard deviation, and interquartile range were summarized for key variables like sociodemographic characteristics, district, age group, and religious status of respondents. Principal component analysis was used to estimate the impact of development programs implemented by FBOs on households.

2.7.2 QUALITATIVE DATA MANAGEMENT AND ANALYSIS

Interviews were transcribed verbatim to guard against losing meaning. Interviews were conducted in local languages and translated into English. The resulting transcripts were analyzed using thematic analysis. This involved developing a coding scheme based on the emerging variables of interest from the interviews.

Each meaning unit in the transcripts was allocated a code based on the preset coding scheme. The emerging codes were grouped into sub-themes and themes, which formed the basis for identifying the emerging variables from the data.

The coding scheme and transcripts were uploaded into ATLAS software for analysis.

3.0 RESULTS

We present both qualitative and quantitative findings of our study, which explored the role and impact of initiatives implemented by religious organizations and FBOs on the development and resilience of communities.

3.1 BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS

A total of 1,252 eligible households were sampled with a response rate of 100%. The majority of respondents were female (67%), aged between 18-29 years (29%), married (66%), had primary school as the highest level of education (55%), and belonged to the Catholic faith (48%). Details are shown in the table below.

TABLE 2: BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS IN THE HOUSEHOLD SURVEY

Characteristic	Option	No.	Percentage
 District	Kabale	321	26%
	Masaka	327	26%
	Gulu	320	26%
	Jinja	284	23%
 Sex of respondent	Male	411	32.8%
	Female	841	67.2%
 Religion of respondent	Anglican	419	33.5%
	Catholic	596	47.6%
	Muslim	108	8.6%
	Pentecostal (Born Again Faith)	108	8.6%
	Others	21	1.7%
 Age of respondent	18-29 years	367	29.4%
	30-39 years	306	24.5%
	40-49 years	225	18.0%
	50-59 years	151	12.1%
	60+ years	200	16.0%
 Marital status	Married	820	65.5%
	Never married	189	15.1%
	Widowed	171	13.7%
	Divorced	72	5.8%
 Highest level of education	No schooling	244	19.5%
	Primary	690	55.1%
	Secondary O level	243	19.4%
	Secondary A level	21	1.7%
	Tertiarya	54	4.3%

Respondents in the qualitative interviews are detailed in Section 2.3 of this report.

3.2 THE ROLE OF FBOS AND RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS IN SUPPORTING DEVELOPMENT IN COMMUNITIES

As described below, either independently or in partnership with government entities and/or development partners, religious institutions and FBOs were engaged in community development initiatives in various development sectors such as education; agriculture and food security; health; water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH); economic empowerment and trade; gender equality and women's empowerment; crisis and conflict management; democracy, human rights and governance; environment and climate change as described below.

3.2.1 EDUCATION

Establishment and management of schools

Scholars and practitioners have argued that religious institutions played a significant role in accelerating holistic development within communities and are well-positioned to bring much-needed transformation in a currently tumultuous world (Mbogo, 2015).

Overall, the majority (75% of primary schools and 56% of secondary schools) of the educational institutions in Uganda were either established or are managed by members of the IRCU.

Religious institutions take pride in establishing and managing a big number of educational institutions.

Approximately 3.7 million people enrolled in these educational institutions. It was reported that there were over 6,311 Catholic Church-founded such institutions in Uganda, of which 790 were pre-primary, 4,998 primary, 519 secondary and 4 special needs schools. Similarly, there were over 6,490 COU-founded schools in Uganda, of which 600 were pre-primary, 5,118 primary, 460 secondary, 2 special needs schools and 50 business, technical, vocational and training schools, institutes and college institutions, as well as six university colleges and full universities (Rukundo, 2015).

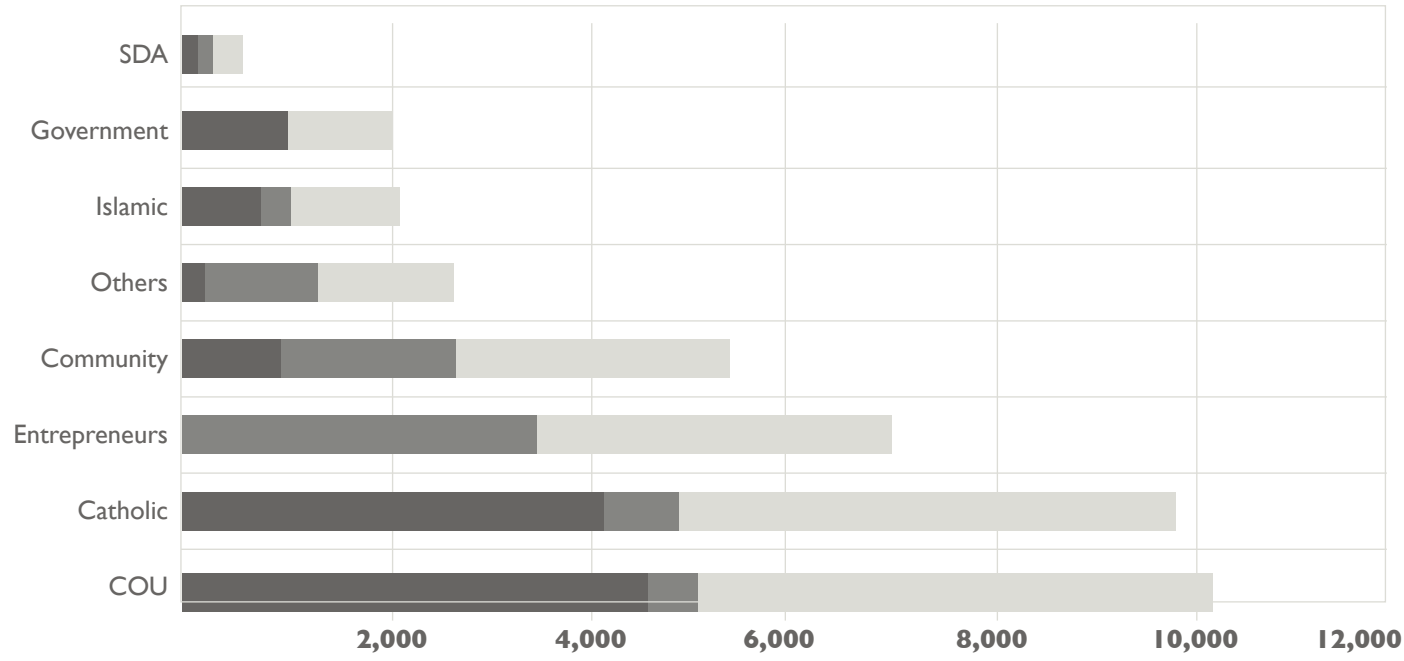
Overall, 64% of the primary schools in Uganda are founded by religious institutions.[4]

Catholic Church-founded institutions	
4,998	Primary
790	Pre-Primary
519	Secondary
4	Special needs
6,311	Total

Church Of Ugnada institutions	
5,118	Primary
600	Pre-Primary
460	Secondary
50	Vocational
2	Special needs
6,490	Total



Source unsplash.com



	COU	Catholic	Entrepreneurs	Community	Others	Islamic	Government	SDA
Government Aided	4,667	4,224	33	947	185	790	1,046	152
Not Government Aided	519	772	3,532	1,805	1,176	306	8	143
Grand Total	5,186	4,996	3,565	2,752	1,361	1,096	1,054	295

Figure 1: Primary schools in Uganda disaggregated by founding body and funding source (Source: UBOS, 2017)
**SDA (Seventh-Day Adventist Church); COU (Church of Uganda)*

[2] https://churchofuganda.org/about/departments/education
[3] https://ugandaschools.guide/find-a-school/foundingbody/[1]

THE OWNERSHIP OF SCHOOLS IN UGANDA FALLS INTO TWO CATEGORIES:

1. Government-aided schools, including Government-founded schools and those founded by religious institutions but are financially supported by the Government to enable them operate as non-profit institutions.

2. Private schools are established by entrepreneurs/investors to provide education services for profit, and community-based schools are founded and run by communities within a given catchment area.

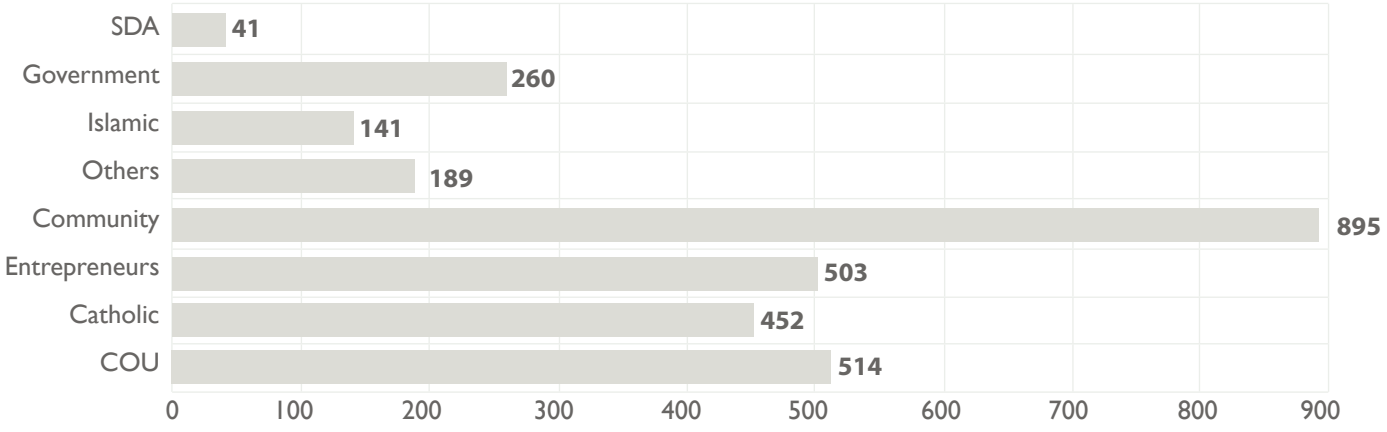


Figure 2: Secondary schools in Uganda disaggregated by founding body (Source: UBOS, 2017)

Forty percent (1,199/2,995) of the secondary schools in the country were founded by religious institutions or had religious affiliations.[4] International/national non-profit agencies, community-based organizations, and other smaller religious institutions also own education institutions in Uganda.

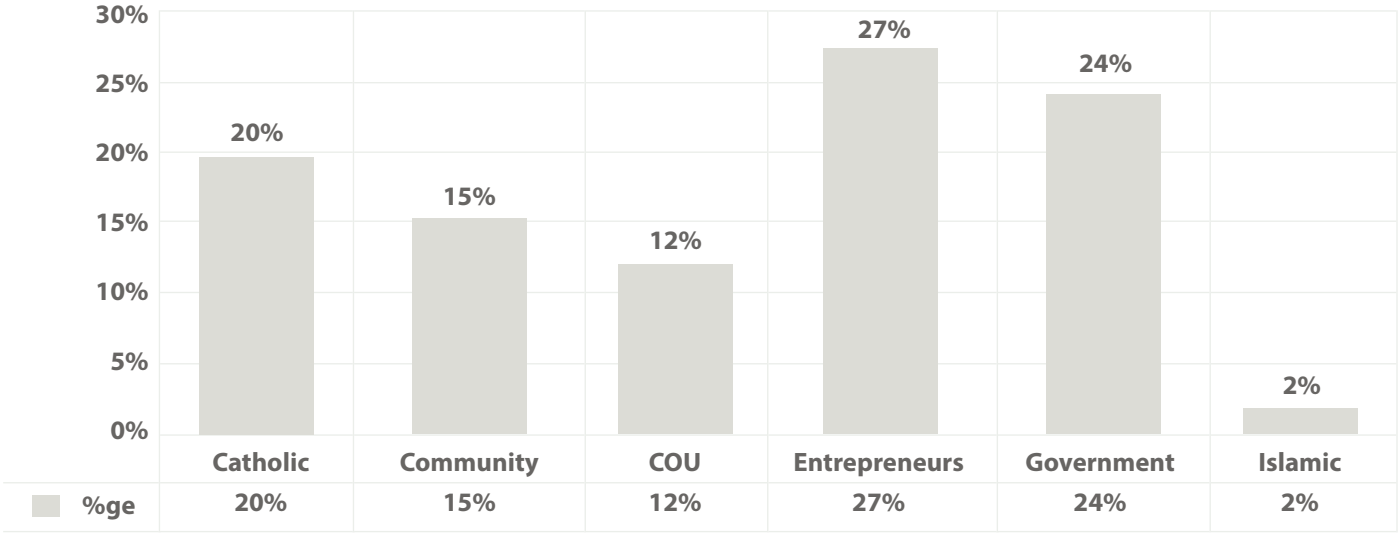


Figure 3:Tertiary (post-primary) schools in Uganda disaggregated by founding body (Source: UBOS, 2017) [4]

Religious institutions are one of the leading providers of education services in Uganda. This is attributed to good resource mobilization and trust built in communities over the years.

Respondents mentioned that religious institutions/ FBOs have supported communities in different ways such as construction of primary, secondary, and tertiary (vocational and university) institutions. It was observed that most of the schools constructed by religious institutions/FBOs targeted under-served or hard-to-reach populations. It was also reported that the religious institutions/FBOs were involved in the management and oversight of the institutions.

[4] https://www.education.go.ug/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Abstract-2017.pdf

Education institutions managed by religious communities were categorized into secular and theological schools. Secular schools provide formal education to students irrespective of their religious affiliation, while theological schools only admitted students for formation in the faith to which the founding religious institution was inclined.

"Uganda Muslim Supreme Council took over many schools that have been built by the Muslim communities all over the country. We have ensured that both the secular and Islamic theological curricula are implemented in these schools. Additionally, we have what we call the Madrasas, which are theological institutions which teach Islamic theology." KII, Muslim, National Level, Kampala

The Muslim faith and its partners operate madrasas, which provide Muslim children with Qur'anic instruction, early formation, and a foundation for theological education where children aged 3-5 years are initiated into Qur'anic studies and Muslim beliefs. This practice is unlike that of other religious faiths which implement theological education much later at tertiary, under- and post-graduate levels of education.

Literature shows that some Muslim communities viewed secular education as haram (unlawful), misleading and bidia (innovated). To date, this affects school enrollment and development of such households and by extension their communities. More conservative Muslim parents had fears/ suspicion that their children would be exposed to Christian values, potentially precipitating conversion from Islam to Christianity (Tugume Hassan, 2015). On the other hand, more liberal Muslim families have a compromising position, which is to expose their children to both secular and Qur'anic education so as to produce practicing Muslims who are considered more useful members of society and can contribute to socio-economic transformation of their households, communities and country at large (Talbani, 1996; Tugume Hassan, 2015).
It is important to note that the composition of school management committees (SMCs) for schools under religious institutions/FBOs was strongly influenced by these institutions. Some positions on SMCs that were strongly influenced by respective religious institutions/FBOs included board chairpersons, secretaries, representatives of the Government and old students, amongst others.

The role of SMCs among others is to coordinate school programs and monitor their progress, prepare and recommend school development plans, monitor utilization of grants received from the Government, religious, local, and other sources, and develop policies to guide operations (Mugabe, 2019).

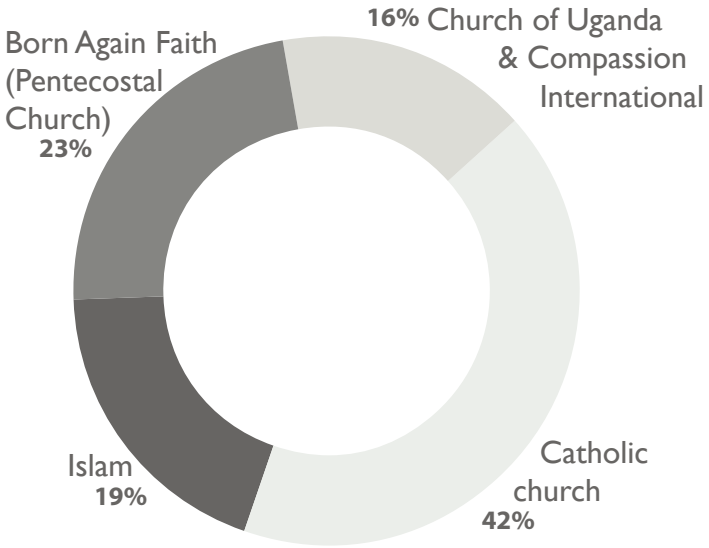
SCHOLARSHIPS

Respondents also mentioned that religious institutions/FBOs provide local and international scholarships to vulnerable learners, especially orphans and those from vulnerable families. An example is Compassion International (an FBO managed under the COU) which provides scholarships and scholastic materials to orphans, and persons with disabilities (PWDs). Some religious institutions indicated that they channel their scholarships through their affiliated training institutions.

"The Uganda Protestant Medical Bureau (UPMB) is offering scholarships to some vulnerable groups like orphans and vulnerable children in its programs. The scholarships for orphans and vulnerable learners are usually channeled through our training institutions like those training health workers across the country." KII, COU, National Level, Kampala

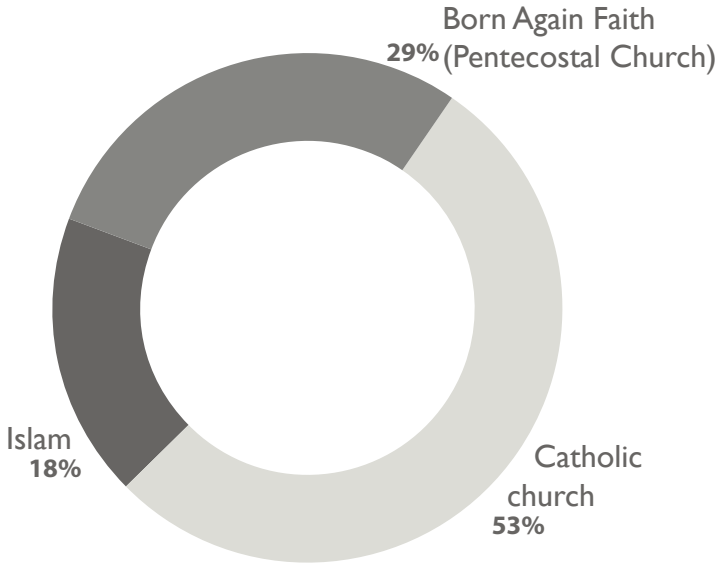


Source unsplash.com



Findings from the household survey indicated that the majority (42%) of the beneficiaries had received scholarships from the Catholic Church, followed by the BAF at 23%, a further 19% from the Islamic faith and 16% from COU. Scholarships were in several forms and at various levels of education (primary, secondary and tertiary), with a goal of providing education opportunities majorly to disadvantaged community members.

Figure 4: Proportion of religious institutions providing scholarships to household members (n=20)



We also noted that surveyed households had benefited from programs that distributed scholastic materials: 53% from the Catholic Church, 29% from the BAF and 18% from the Islamic faith.

Figure 5: Proportion of religious institutions providing scholastic materials to household members

OTHER INTERVENTIONS OF FBOS/ RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS IN THE EDUCATION SECTOR

As part of their education support programs, some religious institutions/FBOs also had initiatives aimed at retaining children in schools, such as provision of sanitary towels to girls.

Other initiatives sought to teach skills, such as knitting, social etiquette, and gardening as a means of improving learners' nutrition, entrepreneurial skills, and other disciplines.

Deliberate efforts were made by religious institutions/FBOs to ensure gender equity with regard to access to the education programs they offered to individuals from vulnerable households and communities.

"We are supporting the education of children in primary schools. We also provided sanitary towels to girls which are very crucial for their retention in schools. However, the boy child is also on our agenda, since the boy child has somehow been given less priority in terms of support and guidance. In our programs, boys access counseling services through chaplains in our schools." KII, COU, National Level, Kampala

[5] *James O'Donoghue, Lee Crawfurd, Jacklyn Makaaru, Polycarp Otieno, & Perakis., 2018; Rukundo, 2015*

[6] *Secular schools offer a standard national level certified education school based curriculum and theological schools are those that offer a religious curriculum to accommodate demands from the respective religious faith (Abdi, 2017; Actalliance, 2016; Tugume Hassan, 2015).*

[7] *The word "madrasa", which is an Arabic word that literally means "to study", specifically focus on teaching basic reading and writing skills to young children through Quranic instruction.*

Religious leaders/FBOs also participate in the formulation of education policies at both national and sub-national levels. FBOs contributed to the content for learners during the formulation of the National Sexuality Education Policy in 2016, and later in 2018 following initial steps by the Ministry of Education and Sports, through the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC), to integrate the National Sexuality Education Policy Framework 2 in the school curricula.

The initiative received tremendous criticism from religious leaders over concerns that the policy sought to erode the core religious and moral fabric of Ugandans.[3] However, sustained engagements between the policy makers and religious leaders have since resulted in corporation of the latter's views and concerns into the National Sexuality Education Policy Framework, which is due to be passed by the Parliament of Uganda.[4]

3.2.2 AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY

In the agricultural sector, religious institutions/ FBOs variously supported communities, through provision of 1). agricultural inputs like seeds, fruit and vegetable seedlings; 2). extension services like teaching modern farming practices such as contour ploughing, terracing, use of fertilizers to increase crop yields, prevention of soil erosion through digging trenches; 3). tractors, oxen, ox ploughs and livestock like goats, cows, pigs, chickens.

FBOs mainly partner with the Government through its National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADs) program which is implemented through the structures of religious institutions.

The provision of coffee seedlings to farmers is one of the activities. Training is also provided to farmers on modern farming methods and better storage practices for produce.

> *"We distributed heifers to Mukono and West Ankole Dioceses, distributed tractors in Ibanda District, Sebei and West Nile regions, while apple trees were distributed in Kasese District. This is a poverty alleviation initiative of the church." KII, COU, National Level, Kampala City*

In 2020, NAADs entered into an MOU with the IRCU with a goal of improving food security amongst the faithful and the general farming population in Uganda.[5]

This is one of the joint initiatives between the Government of Uganda and IRCU to support the former's drive to support agro-industrialization under the National Development Plan (NDP III), an aspiration of the National Vision 2040. Through this partnership, NAADS works through the structures of IRCU to mobilize, equip, and position religious leaders to tackle mindset change towards agro-industrialization.

Religious communities are engaged through their leaders in the production of priority crops with the ultimate goal of improving food security and nutrition as well as household income. Religious institutions have also been involved in the establishment of Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies (SACCOs) whose membership is composed of farmers in specific localities. Through such groups, the religious institutions organize exchange visits that offer opportunities for cross-learning between farming communities.

> *"We provide seedlings with funding from the Embassies of Denmark, Netherlands, and Holland, and other well-wishers. We organize exchange visits where we bring in our beneficiaries from Pader, Omoro, Agago, Kitgum, Miya to interact with farmers from other districts for knowledge exchange with the aim of improving their agricultural outputs and strengthening resilience." KII, Muslim, Gulu District*

> *"Mainly Caritas MADDO (Masaka Diocesan Development Organization) is known for giving out Friesian cows to the people. Currently, we are talking about almost one thousand (1,000) cows which have been given to people through Caritas MADDO. Caritas MADDO also engages communities in modern and sustainable agriculture, where they give agricultural inputs like seeds or seedlings or suckers and tubers." KII, Catholic, Masaka District*

[8] *Moore, E.V., Hirsch, J. S., Spindler, E., Nalugoda, F., & Santelli, J. S. (2021). Debating Sex and Sovereignty: Uganda's New National Sexuality Education Policy. Sexuality Research and Social Policy, 1-11.*

[9] *https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3.sourceafrica.net/documents/119376/UNFPA-68-090518.pdf*

[10] *Ninsiima, A. B., Coene, G., Michielsen, K., Najjuka, S., Kemigisha, E., Ruzaaza, G. N., ... & Leye, E. (2020). Institutional and contextual obstacles to sexuality education policy implementation in Uganda. Sex education, 20(1), 17-32.*

[11] *UNESCO (2021). The journey towards comprehensive sexuality education- Global status report https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/The%20 journey%20towards%20comprehensive%20sexuality%20education%20-%20Global%20status%20report.pdf*

[12] *https://www.agriculture.go.ug/naads-ircu-mou-to-fight-food-insecurity-and-poverty/*

Religious institutions in Uganda have successfully influenced the mind-sets of several followers and played a pivotal role in community mobilization for development. Despite their great potential to inspire communities, these institutions have been given insufficient platforms or opportunities to engage and effectively support implementation of agricultural projects in more communities across the country.

3.2.3 HEALTH

In the health sector, religious institutions/FBOs have contributed to the development of communities by implementing initiatives aimed at improving access to affordable services at health facilities, especially in underserved communities. This has been done through construction of health facilities; management of health facilities; provision of medicines and other health supplies to healthcare facilities; medical outreaches with a specific focus like immunization; mobilization of communities for health service uptake; provision of screening services for chronic diseases; counseling; and health education and risk communication focusing on various health conditions including COVID-19 and others.

Health facilities that are run under religious institutions/FBOs have to be accredited by the respective affiliated religious medical bureaus that oversee health service delivery. Such accrediting bodies include the Uganda Protestant Medical Bureau (UPMB) for COU, Uganda Catholic Medical Bureau (UCMB) for the Catholic Church, and Uganda Muslim Medical Bureau (UMMB) for the Muslim faith.

The 2017 healthcare facility inventory of the Uganda Ministry of Health (MoH) has a total of 352 health facilities accredited to the medical bureaus of the major religious faiths in Uganda. Of these, 58% are accredited to the Catholic Church, 26% to COU, 5% to SDA and 9% to the Muslim faith.

However, several other health facilities that are run by religious institutions are not yet accredited by the bureaus, and are not captured in the inventory, but provide healthcare services to their catchment communities. Consequently, such facilities may have been captured in the MoH inventory as non-governmental facilities.

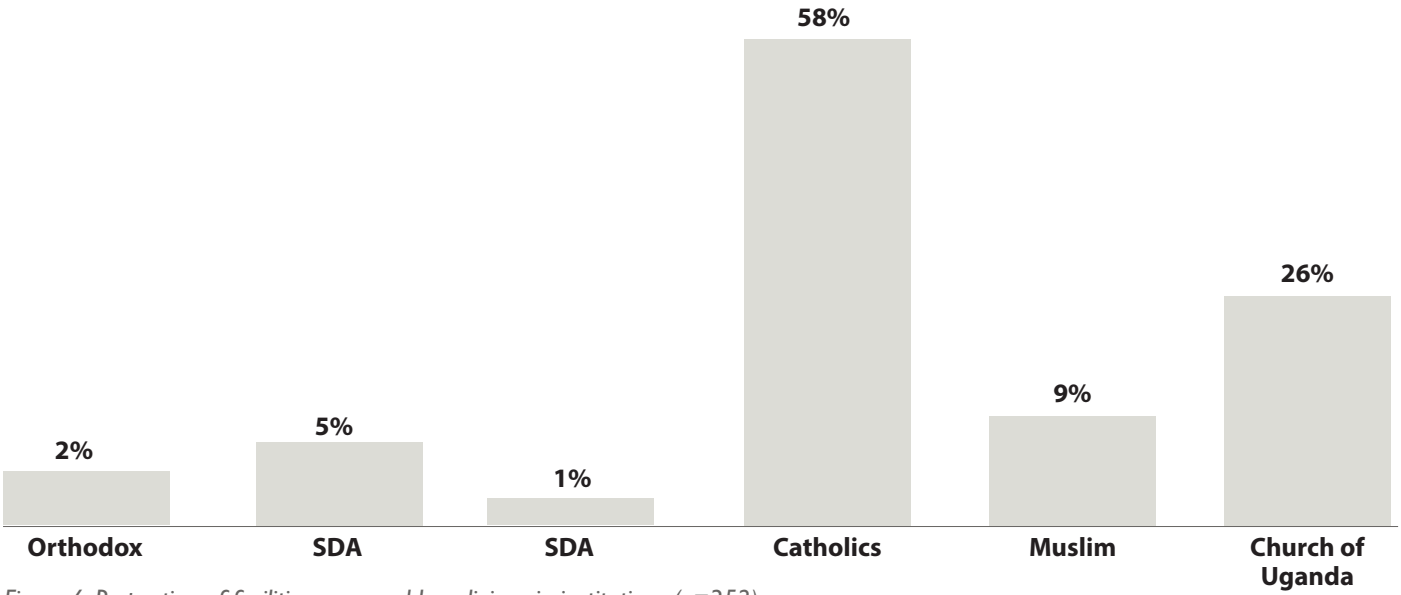


Figure 6: Proportion of facilities managed by religious in institutions (n=352)

> *"In the health sector, we have also established health facilities where our people are treated. By the way, we have one health facility called Kyirigyime Health Center III in Kabale District. In these COVID-19 times, we also take great care of health issues to make sure that people have good health." KII, Muslim, Kabale District*

> *"The church is dealing with all sorts of things. Like in Kigezi Diocese, we are dealing in this curative business. We have now one hospital, Rugarama Hospital; we have 4 Health Centre IIIs, we have 13 Health Centre IIs, all under the Church." KII, COU, Kabale District*

"There are quite a number of them (health facilities), if you go to West Nile, there is Kuluva Hospital, which is a COU hospital. It is doing work in the West Nile handling that part of the country. There are 37 dioceses, and, in each diocese, there is at least one functional health center and helps meet the healthcare needs of the people around those communities." KII, COU, National Level, Kampala City

The wages and welfare of health workers and other human resources employed at these healthcare facilities are met by the respective religious institutions. However, fluctuating cash flows often associated with unpredictable donor financing affects the ability of the institutions to renumerate the workers, with negative effects on service delivery and the ability to retain a skilled health workforce.

It was also reported that the Catholic Church and the COU jointly established a FBO at the Joint Medical Stores (JMS), to provide medicines and other medical supplies to health facilities run by them. The JMS has widened its scope to provide similar services to both private-not-for-profit facilities and private-for-profit health facilities, as well as providing health supply chain solutions and services to the private sector.



Source unsplash.com

This became possible with support from the Government of Uganda and development partners. JMS has two main warehouses in Kampala in addition to regional warehouses spread across the major geographical regions of the country.

FBOs are also involved in providing technical assistance to Government Agencies, health facilities and Local Governments in a bid to improve health service delivery and efficiencies in health systems management. For instance, Caritas Gulu, World Vision, UCMB and UPMB were actively involved during planning for the COVID-19 response in the various districts where they implement activities.



Figure 8: UPMB donating PPE to Kasanga Health Centre III14

Religious leaders are applauded by the Government and development partners for their critical role of community mobilization. As such, they have been involved in major community mobilization drives for uptake of health services such as vaccination, screening and testing programs, and infection control initiatives for conditions such as COVID-19 and HIV, amongst others. Such activities target

days and places of worship for easy access to congregations. Despite the enormous demand for these services by communities, their frequency, scope, reach and intensity are mainly constrained by limited funding.

Respondents also reported that effectiveness in service delivery at faith-based health facilities was limited by funding which has in turn affected both the scope of services delivered and the number of people that can access the services. To meet the costs of routine health facility management, the facilities charge user fees. In rural settings, this further puts at risk the catchment community who can barely afford the user fees, hence introducing additional financial barriers to healthcare in light of limited subsidies.

> *"At that time, we were not getting donations from anybody apart from initial support I got from one donor to buy equipment. So, we were relying on user fees to run that health facility. The health facility staff's salaries were fluctuating; sometimes 40%, 50% or 60% of the respective Government salary but we tried to motivate them to still work, but we reached a point where we were about to close the health facility due to lack of funding to effectively run it." KII, Catholic, National Level, Kampala City*

While the Government of Uganda provides some grants in form of primary health care (PHC) funds, medicines and health supplies to faith-based health facilities, which also receive donations from various sources, challenges still exist such as high costs of running health facilities, exacerbated by rising utility costs, staff turnover (even after undergoing rigorous mentorship, they sometimes decide to move on in search of better employment opportunities), limited subsidies for private not-for-profit healthcare providers, limited use of health facilities due to inability of the target community to afford user fees, and limited funding for quality medicines and supplies, amongst others.

3.2.4 WATER, SANITATION, AND HYGIENE (WASH)

Religious institutions/FBOs run and implement several activities to promote water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH). Such activities include drilling boreholes and installing water tanks to increase access to safe water, garbage management, and provision of toilet facilities. Safe water sources are usually located at religious installations or within communities to ease access. As a result, several communities where religious institutions operate have access to safe and clean water.



Source unsplash.com

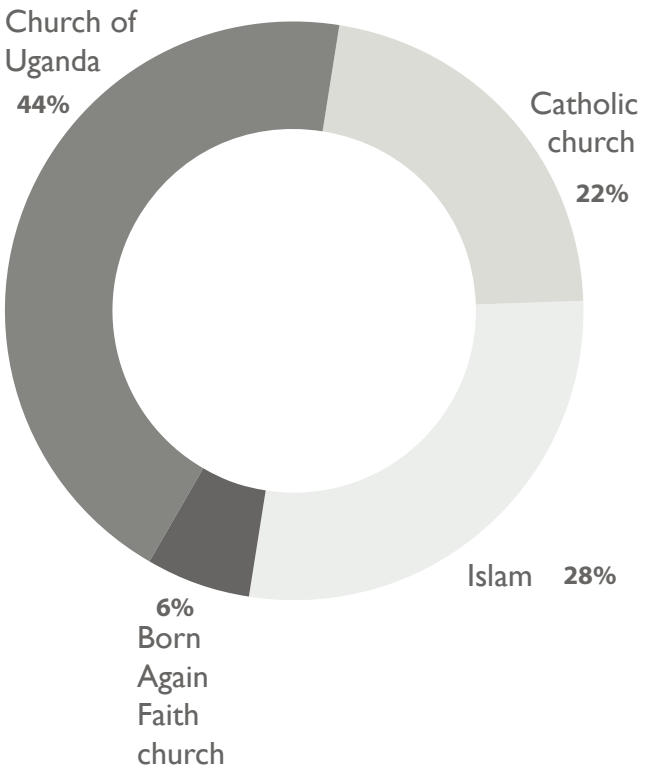


Figure 9: Percentage of religious institutions that provide WASH services in the target communities

The majority of respondents (44%) from the household survey indicated that they had benefited from WASH programs implemented by COU, followed by Islam (28%) and the Catholic Church (22%).

There have been deliberate and substantial investments in WASH programs by the major religious faiths, especially COU and the Islamic faith, with a special focus on communities/households that are disproportionately affected by access to water as well as issues of sanitation and hygiene.

Some Islamic faith-affiliated organizations involved in WASH include Umoja Helping Hearts Uganda, Uganda Muslim Rural Development Association, Awtad Charity Organization, Bugisu Muslim Development Centre, and Turkey-Uganda Foundation (TURUGA Foundation).

Reports also indicated that donations from Turkey are among the leading facilitators for construction of new mosques and boreholes in Uganda.1 Entities from other religious denominations involved in WASH include the Uganda Water Project and the United Methodist Church.

"Muslim FBOs helped construct mosques in Butagaya Sub county. Wherever there is a mosque, they also construct water sources (boreholes) for us, so that everyone can access clean water. This water source does not only benefit us the Muslims, but all other community members." FGD, Muslims, Jinja District

Respondents from the qualitative interviews also emphasized that some communities were trained on the maintenance of installed water sources to optimize function. Some religious communities have programs aimed at promoting sanitation and hygiene through community sensitization during their routine gatherings. An example is a program aimed at promoting handwashing with soap, implemented by Water for People in Kamwenge District.

"Normally, we drill boreholes in areas where accessibility to safe clean water is hard to reach. We also train the users in the communities to ensure that the clean water source areas are well maintained in good condition, as well as ensure that the standard procedures for fetching water to prevent the contamination are adhered to." KII, COU, Gulu District

It was also noted that through their sermons, some religious leaders promoted hand sanitation and hygiene by frequently speaking about disinfection and hand washing, and emphasizing that good health of both body and soul as an essential to the lives of their congregations. The said communication was instrumental in the fight against COVID-19.3

3.2.5 ECONOMIC GROWTH AND TRADE

Religious institutions/FBOs frequently engage communities on matters concerning their economic well-being. Respondents reported that religious institutions/FBOs not only care about the spiritual welfare of communities but also the physical aspects, thus implementing initiatives to lift them out of poverty and improve their livelihoods. Since they reach the grassroots, religious institutions /FBOs are able to identify community needs and implement programs that focus on solving specific challenges, hence fostering economic growth.

Economic empowerment is facilitated through the establishment of cooperative unions and village savings and loans associations; and networking amongst farmers to facilitate cross-learning.

"We have encouraged them to do some savings in groups; people have saved money which they use to buy more agricultural produce, store it and wait for a good time when they can sell it at a better price. We have also supported them to plant the best maize varieties which are supported under the development arm of the diocese." KII, Catholic, Gulu District

The majority (56%) of respondents from the household survey that had benefited from livelihood programs indicated that they had accessed them through institutions affiliated to the Catholic Church, 28% from BAF-affiliated institutions and 17% from COU-affiliated institutions. The support took on a variety of forms including donations of livestock, poultry, and agricultural inputs like ox ploughs and seedlings, business startup funds and soft skills to members of vulnerable groups like women. Several demonstration farms have also been established to enable community members to learn modern farming methods as a way of boosting agricultural outputs, and subsequently livelihoods.

Furthermore, FBOs/religious institutions provide trainings on livelihood skills such as carpentry, hair dressing, and catering, in addition to providing trainees with seed capital.

"… even if one never went to school, they (FBOs) teach them tailoring, bricklaying, etc. and provide a seed grant. They even rent for you where you will be working." FGD, COU, Jinja District.

"We deal with groups which need knowledge, especially on agro-economic activities whether beehives making, beekeeping or apiary or other modern methods of farming. Once they approach us, we send those extension workers to help and those extension workers should ensure they are in touch with the sub-county extension workers." KII, Catholic, Gulu District.

3.2.6 GENDER EQUITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

Religious institutions have played a big role in empowering women through the provision of soft loans to enable them to participate in economic activities. In addition, donations of ox ploughs are given to women groups to enable them to make money by hiring out the oxen or producing more food by tilling more acreage in a short time. The focus on women, children and youth are driven by the notion that educating women and children means educating a nation, which translates to community development.

"We have women empowerment projects that complement the Government interventions on women's empowerment. We are focusing on increasing productivity at household level but strictly focusing on female-headed households. We give them support for agricultural inputs like oxen, ox ploughs, etc. We also train these women on how to use the oxen and ox ploughs, in the effort of increasing their acreage of land utilized." KII, ARLPI, Gulu District

3.2.7 CRISIS MANAGEMENT AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Being cognizant of the fact that peace is a pre-requisite for any form of development to take place in any community, religious organizations/FBOs have instituted conflict resolution mechanisms as a means of enhancing the resilience of communities. A case in point is Northern Uganda, where religious institutions supported the process to end the civil war and participated in resettlement and re-integration of internally displaced persons.

Some respondents from the public sector acknowledged that it was initially difficult to transform war-ravaged communities, until religious institutions/FBOs supported community members to grow crops and rear animals without fear of land conflicts. One of the approaches used was mediation by religious leaders, with the latter taking on the role of neutral party. There have been deliberate efforts by religious institutions to train clergy on peace-building and conflict resolution to enable them to effectively support affected communities.

It was emphasized that religious institutions implement peace-building activities at both national and community levels including counseling inhabitants of refugee camps, sensitizing communities, and advocating for peace within communities.

"We started supporting development activities championing peace-building. We made progress by maintaining peace-building activities, enhancing livelihoods while supporting reintegration of the affected people to resettle in their communities. Religious institutions also mediate the conflict resolution especially related to land wrangles which is a critical factor of agro-economic production." KII, ARLPI, Gulu District

Respondents further mentioned that communities find solace in religious buildings during times of disaster and conflict. During such times, displaced people are often sheltered in churches and mosques as has previously occurred during the civil war in northern Uganda, and following landslides, floods and family conflicts. Affected communities felt safer and well accommodated within the precincts of religious institutions compared to other places.

"Where there is peace, there is development. Those of us who have lived in this (civil conflict) situation, when families in northern Uganda were driven out of their homes because of the fear that LRA rebels will kill them. Life in the camp was hard: people would wait for weekly food donations like beans, maize flour, salt etc. So, the research you are doing right now is very relevant to know what people really go through, even here at the seminary, the rebels came and abducted 41 seminarians on the night of 11th May 2003. People would come to the seminary in the evening, so it became a place of refuge. So, I said ohh my God this is serious, if we (the seminary) relocate to Kampala, where will all these people go? So, with that, I decided to remain." KII, Catholic, Gulu District

3.2.8 DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND GOVERNANCE

Religious institutions/FBOs provide civic education, which involves training the masses on good governance, peaceful resolution of conflicts, and voter sensitization on the process of choosing leaders through voting. This has been done by encouraging community members to seek leadership positions, and educating them on good governance and accountability in leadership. The institutions also advocate for human rights, enlightening their followers on how they can live peacefully and in harmony while respecting the rights of others. It is common practice during election period for religious institutions to be involved in various activities including supporting and offering blessings to members of their congregations seeking electoral office.

"During the most recent campaigns preceding Uganda's general elections, we have been very key; it has been our role, as religious leaders, to educate people about elections, the election processes, about violence, and reminding people of their rights. These are key activities for us." KII, ARLPI, Gulu District

3.2.9 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Religious institutions/FBOs implement environmental conservation programs. For example, the IRCU has an environmental protection program whose role is to coordinate environmental conservation programs amongst its members.

They sensitize communities on the importance of environmental conservation through tree planting and use of renewable energy. For instance, in October 2019, the Catholic Church and COU, in partnership with the Government of Uganda, launched an institutional tree planting program covering the four major geographical regions of Uganda (western, northern, central, and eastern).[4]

This project was spearheaded by the churches and affiliated education institutions. Through this initiative, communities have been provided with tree seedlings, which has overtime resulted in an increase in the population of trees in these regions, a key contributor to environmental conservation.

Communities have also been introduced to interventions aimed at reducing deforestation, such as the use of green stoves which save on the amount of wood used, coupled with increased use of renewable energy such as solar energy.

"We have talked so much about greening our environment, the use of energy stoves, the use of solar. We are involved in tree planting. We distribute tree seedlings for commercial trees and fruit trees so that we maintain our environment and try to fight the negative effects of climate change." KII, Catholic, Gulu District



Source unsplash.com

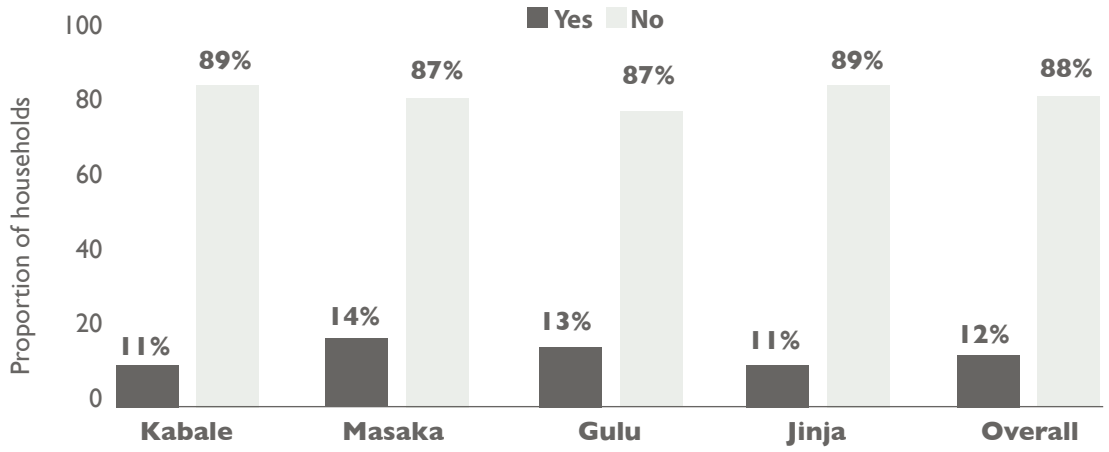


Figure 10: Proportion of households that had received support from religious institutions or FBOs by district

[18] *Ministry of Water and environment (2020) Water and Environment Sector Performance Report. https://mwe.go.ug/sites/default/fileslibrary/Water%20and%20Environment%20Sector%20Perfmance%20Report%202020.pdf*

3.3 IMPACT OF RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS/FBOS' PROGRAMS ON COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

Programs implemented by religious institutions/FBOs across sectors are aimed at improving the lives of the communities they serve. The effects of the interventions have been documented and are also available from anecdotal data.

The unrecorded but observed effects take precedence given the evidence that is available in target communities. Notable positive impacts of religious institutions' interventions include change of community attitudes/perceptions about various issues; economic empowerment; and improved education and healthcare services delivery, food security, and standard of living.

Overall, 12% (153/1,252) of respondents reported that at least one member of their households had received some form of support from a religious institution or FBO over a period of two years preceding the survey date. The distribution of these beneficiaries was similar across the four study districts as illustrated in the figure below.

Religious institutions/FBOs provided scholarships to scholars (18%), implemented WASH projects (13%); provided opportunities to improve livelihoods through distribution of livestock and agricultural inputs (12%); donated scholastic materials such as books, pens and textbooks (12%); and enhanced access to free or subsidized health care (7%). Other services provided by religious institutions to communities included prayers or spiritual and psychosocial support (counselling), and other capital assets like land for farming, amongst others.

3.3.1 IMPACT ON EDUCATION

Religious institutions/FBOs have contributed to the improvement of literacy levels within communities where they have set up educational institutions, as evidenced by the increase in the number of trainees that have successfully completed training from various institutions. It was also reported that women and youth empowerment had been enhanced through literacy and livelihood programs. Accessibility and affordability of education at community level have been improved through construction of low-cost schools and provision of scholarships.

> *"Education was started by the Church. The Church was the first to start formal schools as far back as 1885, and most prominent people in Uganda were educated in schools founded and run by the Church." KII, COU, Kabale District*



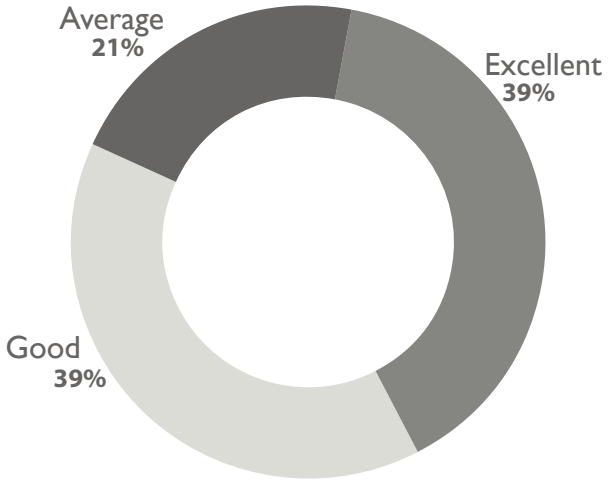
Source unsplash.com

3.3.2 IMPACT ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY

Religious institutions/FBOs measured their impact in this sector based on the extent to which their interventions reached target beneficiaries. Such measures include the number of communities/ individuals reached and uplifted from poverty following interventions of the religious institutions/ FBOs. Community members also provided information from which the impact of interventions was deduced.

Respondents indicated that religious institutions/ FBOs had trained a large number of community members on improved agricultural production, with a resultant improvement in food security, such as in Northern Uganda, which once had limited food supplies. The development programs are now well known and sought after due to their successes and impact on communities.

"The impact is felt by community members. When you talk to them, they simply say; 'Yes in Masaka, Bishop has been giving out cows, Bishop has been doing this and that.' Yes, they talk about the Bishop but it's the organization. That's a success story. That's a very big impact." KII, Catholic, Masaka District



The majority (42%) of household members reported having received scholarships from the Catholic Church-affiliated Kulika Scholarship Program, followed by BAF-affiliated institutions, like Watoto Church (23%). Most respondents (78%) reported above average-level of satisfaction with the scholarships that were received.

Figure 11: Level of satisfaction with scholarships received from religious institutions/FBOs

3.3.3 IMPACT ON THE HEALTH SECTOR

Respondents reported that religious institutions/ FBOs have large coverage of health facilities for treatment of illnesses, and can influence behavior change for improved health of communities in which they operate. Eradication of deadly diseases like leprosy in Uganda has been championed through establishment and management of leprosy treatment centers. Respondents reported high levels of satisfaction with the health facilities that are owned by religious institutions in comparison to those operated by the Government. Uptake of health programs has improved because of the pivotal role of religious institutions/FBOs in mobilization of communities. Other interventions like promoting the establishment of backyard gardens have resulted in improvement of the nutrition status of communities.

"The interventions are felt among the people and they appreciate them because one cannot imagine Masaka District without Kitovu Hospital, without Villa Maria and we have only Masaka Referral Hospital! There would be a lot of outcries from the people. These hospitals and health facilities spread out across the country have really helped a lot with healthcare service delivery: they are doing tremendous work. That's already a very big impact" KII, Catholic, Masaka District

"It was the Church which took the lead in fighting leprosy. So, the Church, when you look at health services, is the Church doing it. So, in that one, I am right to say that we were successful. Like when we talk of immunization programs, you know the G overnment was hitting a dead end, not until we came out and told the people to take their children for immunization." KII, COU, Kabale District

3.3.4 IMPACT ON WATER, SANITATION, AND HYGIENE (WASH)

It was reported that religious institutions/FBOs helped to increase access to clean water, sanitation, and general hygiene. For example, Catholic Relief Services has rehabilitated boreholes in Napak & Nakapiripirit Districts, which were previously under

"water-distress."1 Similarly, the Muslim faith has over the years implemented a policy of constructing at least one mosque with a borehole in each village around the country. These interventions have resulted in improved access to clean and safe water, improved sanitation and hygiene, and reduction in incidence of diarrheal diseases.

Furthermore, these water projects were noted to be managed by target communities, which not only fosters sustainability of the initiatives, but also empowers the communities to effectively maintain the resources available to them.

"The Diocese of Kigezi has helped us by constructing tanks for the public community since we used to fetch water from very far away. This has helped to reduce the time that we used to waste going to fetch water due to the long distances. Now, people collect water from nearby and have more time to do other productive activities/ businesses and this has brought about development and improved the livelihood of this community." FGD, COU, Kabale District

"In some communities, people had to move 5km to look for water, but we have helped take this water to their villages. This has a great positive impact for both Muslims and non-Muslims in the country." KII, Muslim, Jinja District

Though religious institutions supported interventions to improve access to clean water, there are still challenges with adherence to good sanitation and hygiene practices in some communities. For example, there was a reported reluctance of some communities in Northern Uganda to boil drinking water harvested from water sources that had been set up in their communities, due to the perception that bore hole water is safe for drinking without further treatment.

"Unsafe sanitation and hygiene practices in some of the communities where the improved-water sources were created. They stopped boiling the water since they had been told that the water is safe." KII, COU, Gulu District

FBOs that are implementing these initiatives are aware of this spillover effect of the interventions and indicated that they intend to work with affected communities to enhance WASH.

3.3.5 IMPACT ON ECONOMIC GROWTH AND TRADE

The impact of religious institutions/FBOs on economic growth and trade is manifested by improvement in household incomes, for instance through the adoption of a savings culture coupled with transparency and accountability.

The Muslim faith implements zakat (Arabic for 'growth'), a poverty eradication mechanism where each Muslim faithful is mandated to make an annual proportionate contribution from his/her earnings towards a fund for the needy, as a means of improving their livelihood.

It is believed that funds from the zakat pool enable wealthy persons to purify their hearts from greed as they give part of their wealth to the needy. If managed effectively and efficiently, zakat should be able to bridge the gap between the rich and the poor. A zakat management institution (with presence at national and sub-national levels) manages the funds from this pool.

"I see people who give zakat; there are some people it has elevated from poverty. You find one's business was small and is now big because of zakat support. Some people whom we have supported with funds from zakat, have been able to grow from small to a big business." KII, Muslim, Kabale District

"I see that the livelihood has improved, why do I say so? Communities have been given animals to improve on their household income and some have been given pigs which have also enhanced their income." KII, Catholic, Jinja District

3.3.6 IMPACT ON GENDER EQUITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

Religious institutions /FBOs have contributed to improvement of gender equity by implementing development programs that target women. Empowerment of women has made it easier for them to defend their rights resulting in reduction in domestic violence in communities. Religious institutions/FBOs also play a mediation role and provide counselling services to families in dispute.

"The spirited fight against domestic violence; if you go to the different communities the cases are reducing especially in the families that go to pray together compared to families that do not pray together and do not live together. This is because in the churches or the mosque when they preach majorly, they capitalize on unity and co-existence, living together and showing love." KII, Catholic, Gulu District

Empowerment of women has been perceived in a bad light, mainly due to the fact that conflict may arise in households with respect to power play, as

often happens when empowered women's partners insist on controlling the household yet the former resist given that they are now breadwinners. Respondents observed that some men resort to violence as an escape route from the shame of being provided for by their partners. To address this issue, it is critical to include strategies to address gender-based violence in women empowerment programs.

3.3.7 IMPACT ON CRISIS MANAGEMENT AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Where communities have experienced adverse events like war, religious institutions/FBOs have played a vital role in peace-building and conflict resolution, bringing people together during and after civil unrest, and in instances of domestic violence.

> *"Bringing the war in northern Uganda to an end was one of the proactive responses to conflict resolution. If they (religious leaders) had not done it (mediation process) development would not have been possible. That's why we were also asked to get involved in the Juba (South Sudan) peace talks. Other examples where we are involved in conflict resolution include clan conflicts and land conflicts. If mediations are done reconciliation is obtained and development is attained." KII, ARLPI, Gulu District*

> *"Religious leaders under the Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative (ARLPI) and Interreligious Leaders of Uganda dialogued and supported communities regarding the importance of peacefully living together and sharing the little they have as well as conducted mediation between warring parties. To date, there's peace in the community." KII, Muslim, Gulu District*

3.3.8 IMPACT ON DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND GOVERNANCE

On matters of governance, religious institutions/FBOs have contributed positively during electoral processes by promoting peace and discouraging violence as seen during the 2021 elections in Uganda.

In some cases, it was observed that voting was along religious lines, a demonstration of the impact of religious institutions/FBOs. Ethical conduct by members of the religious community has also been enhanced, approaches to mitigate gender-based violence have been enhanced and individuals now have the courage to demand for their rights and freedom.

3.3.9 CROSS CUTTING ISSUES

Respondents also observed that there were positive trickle-down effects of the training programs implemented by religious institutions/FBOs, which manifested as diffusion of concepts at community level as well as peer-to-peer learning.

Respondents also recounted the substantial role of the Government of Uganda in facilitating development initiatives implemented by religious institutions/FBOs by providing a conducive legal framework.

In addition, as needs arise, the Government of Uganda reaches out to religious institutions/FBOs through their umbrella organizations to inform them about opportunities for funding or collaboration, capitalizing on the ease with which religious institutions/FBOs are able to mobilize communities through their existing grass-root structures. One such partnership is geared towards fighting pornography through Family Life Network, an FBO.

Over-dependence on donors was reported, resulting in reluctance by members of several communities to support development projects, hence crippling or failing them.
This phenomenon was more pronounced in Northern Uganda which is also still recovering from the effects of a civil war that lasted more than 20 years.

> *"As my sister said, some parents have become so lazy because there is someone paying school fees for their children. The husband will become a drunkard because there is money he spends on drinking instead of doing productive work." FGD, Anglican, Gulu District*



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3.4 FACILITATORS AND BARRIERS TO ROLL OUT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

3.4.1 FACILITATORS OF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS IMPLEMENTED BY RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS/FBOS

Key enablers for the successful rollout of development programs by religious institutions/FBOs were identified as follows:

1. Teamwork within and across religious institutions/FBOs: Most religious institutions/FBOs subscribe to several umbrella organizations such as IRCU and Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative (ARLPI), which are strong platforms for governance and mobilization of both monetary and non-monetary resources such as human resources for health and medical supplies.

The umbrella organizations also provide structures for the diffusion of development programs down to target communities. This finding resonates with an ongoing trend where most development partners and donors are more willing to fund consortia that bring along a multi-disciplinary approach, with potential for a wider reach.

2. In depth understanding by religious institutions/FBOs of the local context of communities including their challenges and development needs. This gives them an upper hand in developing and implementing appropriate solutions, which enhances uptake by communities.

3. Given that religious institutions/FBOs easily mobilize communities for a common good, this platform is easily leveraged during planning and implementation of interventions at grassroots level and puts these entities in a better position than other partners.

"Religious leaders have the biggest crowd in the world. So, it's easy to influence the people using the religious leaders, first of all they are trusted; even when you have different ideologies (based on political inclinations) when it comes to the issue of religion there is a way it brings you together." KII, ARLPI, Gulu District

4. High level of trust by community members in religious institutions/FBOs, as well as their programs. This facilitates community buy-in, a key ingredient for successful implementation of development programs.

5. Good leadership and governance characterized by accountability, transparency, empathy towards local communities, and staff motivation. The existence of robust systems and procedures within the structures of certain religious institutions/FBOs was reported to increase efficiency and effectiveness in the management of development programs.

"Leadership is paramount in all this. Where there is no good leadership and governance, no progress is made on development. So, I can say that good leadership of the Church rendered by the clergy to our people, has been a very big key role in the success of our programs." KII, COU, Jinja District

"It's because we are a local church that is very passionate about community transformation and of course the other one is leadership, I talked about vision, integrity because people will trust you when you do what you say and say what you do, people will trust you and come alongside you." KII, Born Again Faith, National level, Kampala City.

6. Participation of local leaders in development programs is critical as it helps promote ownership and uptake by communities, and sustainability of initiatives.

3.4.2 Barriers to Successful Implementation of Development Programs by Religious Institutions/FBOs

Religious institutions/FBOs noted that they encounter both internal and external bottlenecks during implementation of development programs, which often hinders progress as well as impact.

INTERNAL BARRIERS

These manifest in the form of divisions and factions amongst religious communities. For instance, within the Muslim community are several factions (Sunni, Shia, and Ahmadi) with conflicting views on many issues, which hinders implementation of development programs as well as their impact. The main source of conflict is the need by each faction to claim leadership of the development programs. In other instances, conflicts exist between different religious communities, as reported in the case of the Catholic Church, COU, and BAF, which often appear to be in competition.

Respondents also observed that differences in religious doctrines and beliefs sometimes hinders development programs, because interventions that

are acceptable to one faith may be unacceptable to others. This has affected inclusion and collaboration efforts, especially where joint implementation of development programs is expected.

"We have had some structural challenges; for example the Catholics have a unique structure that may not allow some of the things that we would love to implement as Uganda Muslim Medical Bureau (UMMB) because of their structural arrangements. Whereas UMMB can trade, sue and be sued, Uganda Catholic Medical Bureau (UCMB) cannot do that, since Catholics have the Episcopal Conference, you have to sue the Episcopal Conference as the head. The same applies to us, there are things that we may not agree on in terms of leadership and governance and then we say because of this structural bottleneck, we cannot go ahead." KII, Muslim, National level, Kampala City

Some practices such as early marriage in Muslim communities under the Nikah law have especially negatively impacted education initiatives, since girls are married off during their teen age, which has detrimental effects on their livelihoods and health.

"The fight for early marriages among Muslim denominations is challenged. For them, they believe that once a girl reaches a certain age, she should be married off. So, we cannot push forward. When you look at such things, they curtail development." KII, Jinja District Local Government

It was also emphasized that development projects that are contrary to religious beliefs of target communities often face resistance and hence have limited impact. Examples of such projects include pig farming amongst Muslim communities, family planning promoting the use of modern contraception amongst Catholic communities, and programs that promote inclusion of LGBTQ+ minority groups in development programs in Uganda.



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The latter have faced fierce resistance and criticism from religious institutions and large sections of the society including political leaders, majority of whom subscribe to the major religious groups.

"They (religious institutions) also have a policy that you should not go with a project that is not in line with what the Church doesn't accept. You have to respect that you cannot take swine farming (piggery) production in the Muslim community, you cannot do that. You cannot do something that is not accepted in a certain faith. You cannot take family planning to the Catholic Church for example they will not accept it." KII, Kulika Uganda, National level, Kampala City

Some respondents raised concerns about discrimination against some religious groups, given the fact that development programs often target the dominant religious groups, making it difficult for members of minority religious groups to access such programs. For example, in Kabale District, FGD respondents raised concerns about financial barriers arising from a need to make out-of-pocket payments in order to access some development programs implemented by the dominant religious denominations in the region.

Such approaches limit the level of participation of individuals from other religious denominations/ faiths, especially when they lack funds to make the payments.

"For us in Church of Uganda, when we have a project in the community there is some little money which they normally ask for from the religious communities. So even if you are a Born Again Faith or Catholic, you are allowed to get involved in the project. However, there are projects that give them water tanks, they distribute seeds, fruits, pigs, goats, sheep, groundnuts. So, if you are not a Catholic you can't benefit from their project." FGD, COU, Kabale District

EXTERNAL BARRIERS

Inadequate community involvement during project design was identified as one of the barriers to the success and impact of development programs, especially where interventions were discordant with community needs. This results in lack of community ownership of such initiatives, causing them to be vandalized or abandoned. An example is a project in Jinja District which constructs boreholes for

communities. In some communities the project failed to either take off or had minimal impact, due to the fact that community members did not need that intervention, but had other priorities.



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"I think some of our partners and especially USAID has played a key role in dividing us. Now, the strategy employed by USAID or even any other partners out there that's focused on working with either individual members or structures of IRCU is a disservice to the country. In dividing us, we mean the concept of not bringing all religious leaders together to address areas of common interest, which is very critical. We are better together than when we implement activities in our individual religious denominations." KII, IRCU, National level, Kampala City

The relatively short duration of projects (0-3 years) was felt to be insufficient to realize the desired impact in communities, since most projects close at a point when community uptake is on the uptick.. In other instances, projects closeout without preparing communities or beneficiaries for the transition, which affects sustainability of development initiatives.

"Usually, it's been hard to sustain projects and programs when Donors or Partners leave, sometimes due to the way projects close out since some of them never prepare them (the beneficiaries) for transition. So, sometimes you find the facilities struggling to keep up with the pace of the project which has existed. And if they are not careful in some instances they just go back to the situation where they previously were." KII, COU, National level, Kampala City

While religious institutions/FBOs were applauded for their good leadership and governance, there were some reports of inadequate accountability, corruption, and embezzlement of project resources by some individuals. It was also reported that some religious institutions lacked dedicated offices and administrative structures to support any other activities such as development programming beyond their religious roles.

Respondents asserted that some religious institutions practice false doctrines which aim at keeping their followers in total submission. For example, some groups preach against enrolling children into formal education, while others prohibit their faithful from utilizing vaccination services.

Members of such religious communities may therefore resist any initiative that is misaligned with their religious beliefs, consequently limiting access to services and development programs and resulting in stagnation as evidenced by development indicators.



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3.5 APPROACHES TO COLLABORATION WITH RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS/FBOS

Depending on the planned interventions, religious institutions/FBOs utilize different approaches to engage communities, with the sole goal of maximizing the impact of their interventions in the target communities.

As such, any development partner that wishes to implement any community development initiative would benefit from the experiences/advice of religious institutions/FBOs at all stages of planning and implementation of projects. We present some insights into how religious institutions/FBOs have collaborated with development partners, as well as written proposals for consideration in future engagements.

3.5.1 WHO SHOULD BE ENGAGED?

Key actors and platforms that should be engaged within and across religious institutions/FBOs for development programming include: top leadership of religious institutions/FBOs, grassroots stakeholders, religious institutions with existing structures/ systems, local administrative units, and umbrella organizations of religious institutions.

ENGAGEMENT OF TOP LEADERSHIP OF RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS/FBOS

Respondents agreed about the need to engage the top leadership of religious institutions/FBOs in the early stages of design and implementation of development programs to obtain buy-in and support for them. This enhances credibility of the programs, effectiveness, transparency, and community buy-in and participation.

> *"In my own thinking, anyone who wishes to give support to anyone must follow the hierarchy of the religious institution and obtain appropriate permission. For instance, in churches, we also have church leaders like the bishop who give directives on particular program areas." FGD, Anglicans, Gulu District*

> *"Those bishops have a lot of influence on us (their followers). They set the vision, and you should not initiate your own. When it comes to project implementation at the lower level, we have to consult them, we implement projects based on their guidance and decisions." KII, COU, Gulu District*

> *"The best way to engage the church is to come up with a project which is church-oriented, the Bishop has to confirm that the project is good for us. If the Bishop doesn't bless it, we don't take it." KII, Catholic, National level, Kampala City*

Engagement of grassroots stakeholders

Some respondents emphasized that most management committees run by religious institutions at grassroots levels should be engaged during program implementation for ownership and sustainability of initiatives.

> *"Our institutions, be it churches, mosques, health facilities, have management committees which run them. We hope that if there is any program or something else that comes on board, it can go through those committees and gets to its destined population." FGD, Muslims, Jinja District*

ENGAGEMENT OF RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS WITH EXISTING STRUCTURE/SYSTEMS

Respondents argued that development partners should engage religious institutions with pre-existing administrative and financial structures, infrastructure and human resources as a means of ensuring early and better results of interventions; easing the process of identification, mobilization, and onboarding of target beneficiaries; and monitoring of programs.

The Catholic Church and COU were singled out as having established clear structures including reliable communication and reporting channels between the top and grassroots levels, as well as a legacy of grounded leaders, which places them in a better position to lead development programs.

> *"I would suggest that we use the established structures of the Catholic Church to be able to put in place these interventions because it has the ability to reach the communities due to its established structures right from the top. For example, if we are to come from the diocese, there is a bishop. When we come down to the parish, there is a parish priest, a catechist and ahead of christians, etc. down to the community level. If at the top, they ask how is the progress, we can provide reliable feedback. So, the Catholic Church has the ability to monitor its establishments" FGD, Catholics, Masaka District*

"It is so because the Catholic Church has a very reliable structure. For instance, if one reached the Bishop, he has the capacity to connect one down to any parish priest. While the parish priest can also get down to the catechist, it comes straight down to the roots." FGD, Catholics, Masaka District

Respondents who belong to less established religious institutions proposed that development programs be directly channeled to target beneficiaries at their places of worship, while simultaneously notifying their religious leaders so that they are aware of the interventions.

"If organizations like Caritas MADDO (Masaka Diocesan Development Organization) were to return and come to our area to bring about development, previously they went through Government officials or leaders… Now we request that they go through our religious leaders. If they find us in our places of worship, they will be able to fully engage us, besides we even have more time there to be trained." FGD, Muslims, Masaka District

"We gather more often at our places of worship rather than at the Local Councils (the lowest level of administration at the village) where there is a possibility of some not being in attendance. It would really benefit us more if these programs were to come through our place of worship." FGD, Muslims, Masaka District

Whereas less established religious denominations are more fragmented and have weaker structures, it is still critical to engage them in development programs so as to strengthen their systems and structures with a particular focus on governance and accountability through provision of training, mentorship and any other required support.



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Respondents also expressed concern over approaches and criteria used by development partners to profile and determine the capacity of religious institutions/FBOs to implement development initiatives while their mandates, target communities, and networks are similar.

"So, we have had this big challenge that one facility (bureau) is at 20% and the other one is at 98% so we have found issues to do with the partner perception, how they profile us. We are profiled at different levels yet our mandate and our networks are similar. We are located in the rural settings, and we are serving similar communities but the way they profile us is different, because historically these things have been like that. The UCMB started operation in 1960s, UMMB started operation in 2002 so when someone is profiling us, those are the issues we may face that we are totally different varied levels." KII, UMMB, Kampala City

Engagement of umbrella organizations

It is essential for partners to engage umbrella organizations for religious institutions/FBOs for two reasons: 1) umberella organizations are largely perceived as level platforms for member faiths to equitably contribute to development programs; and 2). umbrella organizations such as IRCU and ARLPI are ideal entry points as well as platforms for obtaining buy-in from the leadership. This approach also promotes religious inclusion and ownership of development programs.

"One entry point is through the Inter-Religious Council of Uganda (IRCU). They organize meetings and discuss development programs, where Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) have been signed by the key religious leaders of every member." KII, Catholic, Gulu District

"The other challenging position is that you have to be a government for all people and so this Memorandum of Understanding, if you signed it with the Catholic Church, the Born Again Faith might question you. You would rather sign it with the IRCU because that one brings them together. There are no specific programs that I know of which are running collaboratively with a certain church but they are rather collaborations and partnerships with religious and faith organizations at that level." KII, Government Official, Kampala City

ENGAGEMENT OF LOCAL ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS

It was noted that Local Government administrative units such as Local Councils at village level need to be engaged to work alongside faith-based structures during implementation of development programs.

This eases identification of beneficiaries and enhances effectiveness and impact of programs at community level. Furthermore, respondents noted that target beneficiaries should be engaged early enough in project implementation to enhance the success of development initiatives and curb corruption and misappropriation of resources.

> *"My humble request is that if a project is to come, they should do as you people have done. Start from the District, then Sub-County, then get in touch with the intended beneficiaries. If such an organization is to come and goes to the District or Sub-County, the Chairperson for the Catholic Church and Committees, and the representatives from the religious faiths, about three people from every Department, which makes it possible to reach out to the target beneficiaries." FGD, Muslims, Jinja District*

3.5.2 HOW TO ENGAGE RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS/FBOS

Several strategies were proposed for engaging with religious institutions/FBOs:

a. Signing of Memoranda of Understanding as a formal way of kick-starting engagements with the religious institutions/FBOs on development programs. MOUs should be flexible and inclusive and clearly state the roles and responsibilities of the different parties, terms and conditions of engagement, as well as duration of the collaboration. Whereas in some instances religious institutions/ FBOs are expected to introduce development projects through their structures, religious leaders preferred joint implementation of projects so as to maximize impact, social transformation and sustainability of efforts within communities.

b. Respect for beliefs, norms and values of religious communities should be ensured to avoid conflict with development programs. For instance, income-generating activities targeting Muslim communities should not include pig farming because it is not permitted by the Muslim faith. Similarly, programs that involve promotion of modern family planning methods will not be supported by Catholic communities.

> *"You can get a donor who comes and tells you we are going to implement this, for example, we had an issue with the USAID some years back when we were implementing issues on HIV and what, the like then the issue of homosexuality came. Then we said no, it's not our value and we cannot implement that and we stopped at that. Finally, they came and said okay give us our vehicles and they stopped at that. But now I think the relationship has now come after understanding the partner and what they stand for (that's respect)." KII, UMSC, National level, Kampala City*

> *"The Uganda Muslim Medical Bureau (UMMB) subscribes to the Islamic doctrines so anything that compromises the doctrines of Islam, we are against it. Any investment that has interest against it (that yield that comes from that investment is what we call 'Riba'), we don't invest in it. So, there are some other don'ts that are to do with social ways of living for example the dressing codes (if an activity requires us to put on weirdly, we wouldn't accept). So, any other intervention that goes against the Islamic doctrines for example you can say we have an intervention of giving out pigs to the communities, brewing of alcohol, etc., we wouldn't endorse it, regardless of its benefits or conditionalities." KII, UMMB, National level, Kampala City*

> *"As for our faith, we stand for our moral teaching; we don't compromise our teaching. Things to do with family planning where they are telling us abortion, for us we shall say no. When you are telling us other things which are not in line with our faith, we shall say no. So, they should come and then fit in our policy of engagements which we follow. Because we must keep our identity, as we are developing, we should not forget our identity. Yeah. It is like a home; someone says I want to assist you but you must be a lesbian. Then you say, yes because you have your money, I must be a lesbian or a homosexual or something. You must keep your identity. So even us that is where we stand as a church." KII, Catholics, Jinja District*

c. Co-creation of development interventions with communities promotes early buy-in, ownership, capacity building of communities and sustainability of initiatives within communities. Stakeholders should consider using bottom-up and participatory approaches that involve religious communities in framing development challenges and prioritizing interventions to be implemented. Furthermore,

respondents noted that it was important to sensitize and mobilize communities to actively participate in development projects.

"I think the best way is to use a bottom-up approach. What do I mean here? The communities that we serve come from at least somewhere and what we need to do this way is to use our structures which help us identify/communicate what we would like to do and wherever we would like to go. For example, in the COU, if you want any message to go to your village, the Archbishop would speak here and then we relayed his message to the church members through our structures in the Diocese." KII, COU, Gulu District

"There are some seeds and seedlings they bring us that we are not interested in. They should first ask before introducing something so that they understand from us which crops do well in this area, and understand the soil in this area. Many of the projects were just imposed on us like they brought us coffee seedlings but many have failed to grow; even the banana suckers they brought have also failed." FGD, Catholics, Gulu District

"So, when you are planning to give cows, you know where you are going to place them, you know who will sell them. One may say "…yah I have given the woman" but do they stay alone? Is she the head of the household? …Those (cows) are things for (usually ascribed to belong to) the head of the household. How about the elder son? So, these are the minor aspects that people who bring money and pump it in projects usually fail to understand. Just one or two dynamics and these things will all go wrong. So yes, there is a better way. Involving them when you are identifying a project." KII, Government Official, Masaka District

d. Undertaking pre-, intra-, and post-implementation research to assist with understanding community needs, identifying the most appropriate interventions and approaches to implementation. For instance, organizations that strive to reduce poverty in communities through agro-economic interventions ought to consider identifying markets for their produce through participatory research. This approach is aligned to the bottom-up approach which is promoted by religious institutions/FBOs, since it focuses on tackling the needs and immediate challenges of communities.

"I want to add that organizations bringing development programs that reduce poverty in the communities need to conduct a market analysis to ascertain which development initiatives/ interventions would best benefit the target population. Market is a very big problem here, there are some crops introduced here and after harvest people keep them for over two years with no market. There is an organization through the Baptist Church that introduced ginger and people grew it, another introduced chillies (Red pepper). People also grew it and failed to get market yet these are crops that can't be eaten. So, if there are crops brought by FBOs, they need to have a market for the produce. They shouldn't leave people at the level of planting only because what you grow you must be able to sell." FGD, Catholics, Gulu District

e. Close monitoring of projects in partnership with religious institutions/FBOs and through their existing structures which extend to the grassroots/ community level enhances success of development initiatives. One approach could involve use of committees within beneficiary communities to closely follow up implementation of project activities.

"In my opinion, if an organization like MADDO (Masaka Diocesan Development Organization) were to come, I would prefer they come and train us on how to undertake the different activities we would desire to undertake. For example, let's take a project for instance, an organization should come and walk us through how to implement that project, thereafter they should help us set up working committees and even after they should come back to follow up on how these committees are working. Unless they follow up on implementation, those leaders on the committee may just take advantage and the project will not benefit others." FGD, Muslims, Masaka District

"What am also saying is that monitoring is good, for example, the Catholic Church set up structures of monitoring households. Such should be set up so that the leader is concerned with ensuring that the services reach out to the targeted people. I think these interventions should have systems set up in the grassroots to be able to monitor their implementation." FGD, Catholics, Masaka District

f. Inclusion of various religious groups in development programs through involvement of religious institutions/FBOs as consortia, as well as representation of all religious communities in development programs. This approach is essential for the success of such programs.

"The best way to engage religious institutions is through the creation of an engagement platform where they all participate. Participation implies that there are meetings to plan who does what, when and where. After that, you train representatives of the religious institutions so that they start working in a consortium. I believe by doing so, we would have sorted out a lot for them to work together for successful project implementation." KII, Catholic, Gulu District

It should be noted that in order to promote and practice inclusivity, the unique identity and values of each religious denomination should be preserved. As such, programs supporting all religious faiths should not take a generic approach. Program approaches need to be adopted to contextually align with a given religious group's values to enhance participation in planned activities. Relatedly, every partner should understand their boundaries and respect each other's views.

"Try to work more on the synergies between us than the would-be weaknesses. Take for example, if we are dealing with SDA faith on an issue, we know you can't arrange for a meeting on a Saturday since it's their obligated core day of worship - they will surely not be there for the program activity on such a day." KII, UPMB, Kampala City

g. Decentralization of religious or faith-based umbrella organizations to regional, district and community levels is critical for boosting the impact and trickle-down effect of policies and programs implemented through the organizations. Currently, these umbrella organizations such as IRCU are mainly present at the national level.

"You know these Faith-Based Organizations, they have what we call inter-religious councils. But unfortunately, they are based at the national level. Those structures should even be created at lower levels where we get representatives of the Church of Uganda, the Catholics, the Muslims, and even some Born Agains. That structure of the inter-religious council should start from down." KII, Government Official, Kabale District

Sub-national and community level offices would spearhead the coordination of religious institutions' strategic engagements on development, including tracking of development partners and their activities. It was suggested that funding for such offices could be pooled from contributions from partners who engage with religious institutions/FBOs in the respective localities. Another option is for these offices to be established and run under the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) framework, a tool for increasing private sector investment, provision of public services and participation in public infrastructure development.

"The extent to which we can collaboratively work together can largely be enhanced through an existing platform for sharing experiences among the different religious institutions/FBOs and actors. Such examples of platforms could be in a form of an NGO forum, a Civil Society forum that has a functional secretariat, among others. Not necessarily that we can have meetings every quarter…one meeting every quarter…. There should be a functional secretariat that runs the day-to-day issues of that platform." KII, Government Official, Masaka District

"Some organizations have money for networking. Even the Government…even the Local Government. The district could also allocate some money to run that secretariat. So, it should be jointly sourced… It should be more of a PPP. The Government could say, we are to give you a fully-fledged office; now like this office, we can share it with someone. Another NGO could propose that they are paying salaries for staff in the secretariat over a two-year period. Then for me, I will say I am assigning you a secretary then I choose among the secretaries that are existing…so somehow you work within. Simple. No magic in it." KII, Government Official, Masaka District

h. Leverage existing resources (staff, finances, infrastructure and land) which are abundantly available within religious institutions/FBOs. Concerning land, a lot of it is owned by religious institutions/FBOs and is under-utilized, yet can be used in partnership to set up development projects to benefit religious communities and the country as a whole. Similarly, development partners could leverage the resources of religious institutions that are available at the grassroots level, such as structures, personnel (accountants, administrators, health workers, community empowerment officers, and others). The latter would assist in monitoring project implementation, but also participate in

planning and implementation of development programs. This approach will go a long way in strengthening the capacity of religious institutions and ensuring the sustainability of investments. The Government of Uganda and religious institutions/FBOs have adopted an approach of cost-sharing in service delivery. For instance, the Government provides Primary Health Care (PHC) grants proportionate to the level of care provided by a facility, to assist health facilities owned by religious institutions/FBOs to meet their operational costs. This approach fosters ownership, accountability, optimization of resources, capacity strengthening and sustainability of development programs.



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3.6 ATTRIBUTES OF RESILIENCE AMONGST RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES

Respondents provided insights into what they perceived as resilience with regard to their institutions, and with respect to development initiatives undertaken in communities. They also mentioned the main attributes of resilience at the individual, household and community levels, and eight distinct and interrelated attributes emerged as highlighted below:

3.6.1 SOCIAL CAPITAL

Social capital, which is commonly understood as the networks of relationships amongst people who live and work in a particular society, enabling that society to function effectively, it was identified as the most prominent contributor to individual and community resilience. An individual's membership and participation in a community or support group is a significant contributor to their resilience.

Members of a social group have norms that aim at maintaining coherence in the group as well as supporting members to overcome any challenges they may face. Respondents emphasized that it was important for one to create friendship networks to exchange ideas for development, and craft solutions to overcome challenges.

> *"It is said that 'Agali awamu ge galuma enyama' (intrinsically meaning: 'together we stand, divided we fall') ……. In my opinion, I conclude that, in case of any problems, if one is found in a group of friends, they should be able to enable each other to overcome the circumstance." FGD participant, Muslims, Masaka District*

> *"Any individual's true wealth is the other people: if calamities were to befall me and my household, it's the people that I congregate and live within the community that can enable me to come out of such an issue. It would be almost impossible for me as an individual to pull myself out of the situation" FGD participant, Muslims, Masaka District*

> *"What can help us to get back on our feet, is when you are united as members in the community and when someone gets a problem you can get together and help that person out." FGD, Catholics, Kabale District*

SOCIAL RELATIONS, INTEGRITY AND MORALS

Religious communities emphasized that nurturing and protecting healthy social relations was a fundamental pillar upon which further interpersonal and communal interactions that directly foster resilience were established. Respondents underpinned the need to create and maintain good relations and to amicably live with the people around them. Notably, religious communities also strongly expressed a pre-condition for every individual to nurture specific attributes such as integrity, transparency, honesty, developing a savings culture, and accountability, because they are a center to nurturing healthy relationships which in turn translate into one's social capital and consequently individual and community resilience.

> *"I know that if there was something that could have happened in my group, we would need to sit together, discuss what our problems are and get solutions among ourselves. Another thing is forgiveness. Forgiving one another is very important in that way our problems will have been solved." FGD, COU, Gulu District*

> *"I will point out the "transparency" some people seem to have hinted at. One's transparency in the community where they are living is a very important factor if others are to run to one's aid in case of a problem. Transparency, in that sense, implies that one should be accountable to their community/group members whenever it's necessary, for example, when the group sends them on an errand or when they are tasked to manage any finances, they should not misuse the funds. This way when they find themselves in a problem the community will be sure to run to their aid." FGD participant, Muslims, Masaka District*



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Government officials also confirmed the importance of integrity in the establishment of resilient communities by emphasizing the need for a national guidance plan focused on ethical issues and moral standards.

"The fourth challenge is that like for me who heads the family inclusion in the country and who is bothered about the moral infrastructure of the country. As we have an inter-religious council, together we should now create a harmonized agenda of what we should put forth (in this regard). But we have not yet seen that happen. … Our expectations have not been met in terms of the rebuilding of the moral infrastructure of this country. And this for me, has serious implications on the direction and the resilience that we want to see as the Ugandan society." KII, Government Official, Kampala City

3.6.2 KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION EXCHANGE

Respondents mentioned that being knowledgeable about social, health, economic, cultural and other issues better positions one to withstand shocks and stressors. As such, productive communal interactions in various development engagements/ interventions like community saving groups should be encouraged because they strengthen the resilience of community members.

"If we get a problem like we are here, we, first of all, have to sit and try to understand the issue that has befallen us. Thereafter, we must exchange views and decide on how to sail through the problem." FGD respondents, Muslims, Jinja District

3.6.3 FAITH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT

Faith in God was mentioned as being central to supporting an individual to be more resilient against shocks and stressors, in addition to utilization of support or services offered by religious institutions/ FBOs during conflict. Such support/services could take the form of counselling and/or mediation.

"Secondly, being prayerful. Going back to what Sheik said, for us in Islam we, believe, anything good or bad is God's will. So, for whatever situation arises, I put my mat down and pray, so that Allah can intervene. God decides what someone will be and what will happen to that person before the person is born. So, for whatever, happening, we Muslims easily adjust and believe it is God's making." FGD participant, Muslims, Jinja District

3.6.4 COMMUNITY COOPERATION

Respondents suggested that their personal, family and communal resilience was greatly enhanced whenever they jointly undertook initiatives such as communal agricultural activities to improve their livelihoods.

Furthermore, some religious institutions have supported and/or promoted food security initiatives such as the establishment of communal food reserves especially in Northern Uganda, which has consequently improved their resilience.

"In the past, our parents used to have groups known as 'Clubs'. In such groups, they would designate Tuesdays to weave baskets, and Wednesdays to weaving mats. They would also have a joint garden or plantation for the group in preparation of any unexpected calamities. In instances where the Government and parishes had a lot of unutilized land, the members, say about 30 in number, would request for this land to use it for agriculture and farm land." FGD, Catholics, Masaka District

"When we are affected by soil erosion, we work together as a family and as a group to make Fanya Kiini and Fanya JJu (terraces), in order to reduce soil erosion. We work as a community to reduce soil erosion, and dig trenches in our gardens where water should collect." FGD, Anglican, Kabale District

"If we get a problem like we are here, we are encouraged by our religious leaders to first of all sit and try to understand the problem that has come upon us. Then after that, we brainstorm solutions, exchange views and decide on how to amicably and collectively solve the problem." FGD, Muslim, Jinja District

3.6.5 FINANCIAL INCLUSION

Financial participation through saving groups and other platforms was mentioned as an important contributor to resilience since such avenues enhanced growth and diversification of livelihoods amongst religious communities. Community and individual resilience are achieved through basic financial facilities such as loans, financial literacy and inclusion. For instance, when a member of a group encounters a financial problem, they turn to their SACCO established by religious institutions/FBOs to access credit facilities at little or no interest. Furthermore, members in these groups share ideas about financial investment, management and saving.

"If calamities were to befall me, I would personally run to my group. Personally, I feel it would be the place I would receive help. I have been the one raising my children's tuition, but I have only been able to do so through savings groups." FGD, Muslims, Jinja District

"Since we have saving groups and SACCOs where we save some money in case of sickness and death when you have no money you can borrow from the group to solve the problems." FGD, COU, Kabale District

3.6.6 FAMILY STRUCTURE AND COHESION

Religious communities also expressed that strong relations at family and household levels enhance interpersonal interactions which in turn foster resilience at all levels. Religious institutions have initiatives like family workshops for strengthening family cohesion and facilitating conflict resolution within families and couples. Religious institutions view families as the backbone for growth of communities, congregations and religious faith. Families are seen as a platform where members are able to support and stand with each other when faced with adversity.

"Togetherness and hard work. For you to get out of the challenges or hardships, you must join hands with your family to see that you overcome the problems. For example, you may share ideas and suggestions keep coming on how to deal with the problem, which help a lot. In some cases, the family members assist with garden work, so that at the end of the day, there is enough food for the household." FGD, COU, Gulu District

"The resilience crisis we are facing is that this country seems to be engaged with too much and at the end of the day, we would not have a direction. You can find a level; you have a family that wouldn't have a vision or a direction; then we cannot withstand any shocks that come with life…. And as Martin Luther King said that education without morals is like a ship without direction, no sailor no what. It moves in any direction and can never reach a destination." KII, Government Official, National level, Kampala City

Respondents further recognized the need for stronger and more coherent families, as a building block for resilient communities. Government actors argued that there was a need to revisit the current national development agenda to also include aspects of improving the moral fabric of families or society as one of the core pillars of community resilience. Some Government officials opined that the national development agenda presents culture as negative by emphasizing that it is addressing social norms and negative cultural practices.

They further noted that the concept of resilience should take into account the different cultural dynamics and differences as well as religious institutions.

"We are coming to appreciate that it (the national development agenda) should be rooted in the household, and in this case, or economic unit for planning should be the family. So, when we are talking about resilience, you… (Take for instance) taking on a child's education from the beginning up to university level, but she doesn't have social responsibility, then we are just destroying the resilience in the family." KII, Government Official, National level, Kampala City

3.6.7 EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF SUPPORT DURING DISASTERS

Individuals need to be supported to recover from shocks and stressors by existing Government structures such as the Department of Disaster Preparedness and Management under the Office of the Prime Minister. Religious institutions/FBOs were also noted to provide relief to affected/vulnerable communities during disasters. Caritas, Compassion International, and Chance for Children are examples of FBOs that provided food relief packages to vulnerable households in Kampala, Mityana, and Bukomansimbi Districts during lockdowns necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2013, COU and the Catholic Church under their umbrella organization, Uganda Joint Christian Council (UJCC) in partnership with Act-Alliance (a global FBO) donated relief items including food and household essentials to flood victims in Kasese District. Other FBOs that have been involved in provision of relief and humanitarian aid to disaster-stricken communities include; Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Dan Church Aid (DCA), Lutheran World Foundation (LWF), Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), among others. Disaster early warning information was also provided in addition to direct support.

3.6.8 HOUSEHOLD ASSETS, SAVINGS, SKILLS AND EDUCATION

Respondents expressed the need to own household assets and develop the discipline of saving for oneself as being critical to ensuring personal resilience. Household assets like land, livestock, and poultry are viewed as critical reserves for wealth that could be liquidated in case of pressing

financial needs. Some religious institutions/FBOs have implemented development programs where they distribute livestock like cows to vulnerable households.

The cows provide milk which improves nutrition at household level, but they can also be sold to provide finances to address other household needs. An alternative to liquidating assets is to use savings that accrue over time, due to diligent use of funds. For example, in instances where a substantial harvest is made from crops, with a reliable market, some of the proceeds from the sales could be saved by farmers to help them during drought, and other unforeseen challenges.

"Resilience is the sustainable ability of the community to use the available resources to respond or withstand any adverse situation." KII, Muslim, National level, Kampala City

"I know resilience as the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties. What does it constitute? One, there is an element of capacity building, you must build the capacity of somebody to resist or to know how to recover from any episodic shock; the inability to withstand episodic shocks. So, you must have that element of building capacity as well as supporting the individual financially and creating linkage to the necessary service providers." KII, Government Official, Kabale District

"We endeavor to encourage people not only Muslims but even others in our places of residence to buy that chicken because they grow very fast, so that in case they encounter any issues, the chicken can bail them out of the problem." FGD, Muslims, Jinja District



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4.0 CONCLUSION

Overall, our findings demonstrate that religious institutions/FBOs play a critical role in the development of communities in Uganda. They are uniquely positioned to be great partners in implementation of development programs since they have vast administrative structures from the national level all the way to the grassroots/community level. Furthermore, given their constant presence in communities, they have unique and contextual knowledge about local development needs. Despite this, religious institutions/FBOs sometimes face internal and external barriers to successful implementation of development programs.
Religious institutions/FBOs were engaged in community development initiatives either independently or in partnership with Government entities and/or development partners, and were implementing interventions in a variety of development sectors such as education; agriculture and food security; health; water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH); economic empowerment and trade; gender equity and women's empowerment; crisis and conflict management; democracy; human rights and governance; and environment and climate change.
Programs implemented by religious institutions/FBOs across sectors were mainly aimed at improving the livelihoods and resilience of communities in which their congregations reside. The main positive impacts of religious institutions' initiatives included mindset and behavioral change; economic empowerment; food security; and improved education and healthcare service delivery.

Key actors that should be engaged among religious institutions/FBOs for development programming include their top leadership, grassroots stakeholders, existing structures/systems, local administrative units, and umbrella organizations of religious institutions. These are the key decision bearers, conveners, as well as programs implementers in communities.

Approaches and strategies in engagement of religious institutions/FBOs include signing of MOUs; respect of beliefs, values and norms of religious communities; co-creation of initiatives with communities; undertaking research to guide actions; close monitoring of programs; promotion of religious inclusion; decentralization of umbrella organizations; and leveraging existing resources for development.

The major facilitators of successful implementation of development programs by religious institutions/FBOs include: teamwork; implementation of programs through umbrella organizations of religious organizations/FBOs; having an understanding of the local context; high level of trust in religious institutions by communities; and the ease with which religious institutions are able to successfully mobilize communities since they have grassroots presence.

Internal barriers to successful implementation of development programs by religious institutions/FBOs include: divisions/factions within a religious group and between religious communities; antagonistic and very stringent conditions attached to funding provided to religious institutions; and conflicting doctrines and practices amongst the different religious faiths which affects the uptake of initiatives.

External barriers that affect successful implementation of development programs include: limited involvement of religious communities and institutions during project design, resulting in a lack of ownership of projects by communities, inadequate accountability, corruption, and embezzlement of project resources.

Major contributors to the resilience of individuals and communities included: social capital; knowledge and information exchange; faith and psychosocial support; community cooperation; financial inclusion; family structure and cohesion; equitable distribution of support during disasters; household assets; savings; skills; and education.
Overall, we found that it is critical to actively engage religious institutions/FBOs in the design and implementation of development programs so as to ensure sustainability of interventions as well as enhance the resilience of communities.

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Appendix 1: Number of study respondents by category

Level	Category	Specifications	Number of interviews
National			
KIIs	Heads of offices responsible for social welfare at national offices of major faith denominations	Offices that coordinate social welfare programs and those that coordinate FBOs at the Catholic Secretariat, the COU Provincial Offices and UMSC	5
	Leaders of FBOs	CRS, World Vision, Lutheran World Federation, Watoto Church; Caritas Uganda, Kulika Charitable Trust, UCMB, UPMB, UMMB, UOMB	7
	Leaders of inter-religious platforms	IRCU, leaders of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, COU, Uganda Episcopal Conference, UMSC, Uganda Orthodox Church, BAF, and the National Alliance of Pentecostal and Evangelical Churches of Uganda.	7
	Policy-makers from Government Ministries that work with FBOs	Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development	2
Subnational			
Key Informant interviews	Leaders of religious offices responsible for social mobilization at District or Diocesan levels	Diocesan health, education and social Works offices/desks	4
	Lay leaders		4
	Leaders of community-based FBOs	Clergy (Vicar General, Diocesan Secretary, District Kadhi) that understand the interventions carried out in the Diocese.	4
	Heads of District Departments that work with FBOs	Chief Administrative Officer; District Community Development Officer;	4
FGDs	Communities	Community beneficiaries of FBOs (representatives from different faiths) • Youth male representative • Youth female representative • Woman representative • Representative of the elderly • A teacher • A nurse • 4 lay leaders (like church warden/head of laity at the parish, etc.)	8 (2 per District) of 8-10 people each 117
Total			117

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