



## The Reputation of Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Program (UWEP) In Poverty Alleviation

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### Abstract

*This study explores the impact and reputation of the Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Program (UWEP) in alleviating poverty among women in Uganda. UWEP, as an innovative governmental initiative, aims to empower women economically through the provision of interest-free credit, skill development, and market support, thus addressing the critical issue of gender-based economic disparities in the region. The program has been specifically designed to tackle the various obstacles that women encounter when engaging in economically sustainable ventures. These challenges encompass restricted availability of affordable credit, insufficient technical expertise and skills for business growth, restricted entry to markets, and inadequate information pertaining to business prospects. The primary objective of the program is to enhance the economic development of women in Uganda by promoting their active involvement in commercial activities and to augment their financial resources, secure their livelihoods, and improve their general standard of living.*

*The research methodology involves a mixed approach, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative data obtained through interviews, surveys, and reviews of existing literature and program documentation. Preliminary findings suggest that UWEP has had a substantial positive impact on women's economic empowerment, with beneficiaries reporting increased income, enhanced skills, and improved socio-economic status. However, challenges such as accessibility, awareness, and bureaucratic hurdles are identified as impediments to the program's full potential impact. The paper underscores the necessity of addressing these challenges and recommends strategies for optimizing the reach and effectiveness of UWEP, enhancing its reputation as a cornerstone for women's empowerment and poverty reduction in Uganda. The study concludes by emphasizing the potential replicability of the program as a sustainable model for gender-inclusive economic development in other developing regions.*

**Keywords:** Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme (UWEP), Ugandan Women For Economic Development, Affordable Credit, Women Empowerment, and Poverty Reduction

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## 1. Introduction

Within the foundation of Uganda's socio-economic structure, there exists a significant demographic group, namely women, who have long struggled against institutional and cultural obstacles in order to enhance their economic and social status. The Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Program (UWEP) was implemented as a government project with the aim of addressing poverty among women in Uganda. It has emerged as a symbol of hope and empowerment, working towards the eradication of economic hardships faced by Ugandan women.

The UWEP program was established with the primary objective of promoting women's entrepreneurship and enabling their significant involvement in the economic landscape. It is not just a financial endeavor, but also a strategic catalyst aimed at driving a socio-economic transformation among the female population of Uganda. It clearly notes that UWEP has played a major role in poverty alleviation, women's empowerment, women's literacy programs, capacity and skills development, and mindset change. It however explains the various challenges women face as entrepreneurs which are not limited to limited access

to funds, work-life balance, limited technical knowledge and skills for business, limited access to market, coping with fear of failure, limited access to land, and poor infrastructure (“Coronavirus (COVID-19): SME Policy Responses,” 2020).

The program started in the financial year 2015/2016 in 19 selected districts and was later rolled out to all districts in the next financial year 2016/2017. ‘UWEP, implemented as a Rolling Program under the Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development (MGLSD), is intended to empower Ugandan women for economic development at the district level. However, these districts and municipalities had different budgets for the program. The primary target beneficiaries of the program are women within the age bracket of 18-79 years. These are considered to be an active group and can therefore strongly involve themselves in UWEP activities. It is assumed that those aged 80 years and above benefit from the Social Action Grant for Empowerment (SAGE)’ (“Social Protection and Informality of the Informal Sector Workers in Uganda: A Missing Link,” 2019).

This study aims to comprehensively examine and analyze the reputation of the Uganda Women's Empowerment Program (UWEP), investigating its influence, effectiveness, and ability to bring about positive change in addressing poverty among women in many sectors of Ugandan society. Through an exploration of several aspects including the economic, social, and psychological ramifications of the UWEP initiative, this inquiry sheds light on both the successes and challenges experienced by this program. This analysis focuses on the impact of the Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Program (UWEP) in addressing poverty, specifically examining its success or failure in fostering entrepreneurial attitudes, improving economic conditions, and establishing a positive reputation in the fight against poverty among women in Uganda (Christopher, L.2021). This study aims to explore the trajectory and impact of the UWEP program within a social environment characterized by economic inequalities and gender-based obstacles, using a combination of factual data, personal accounts from program beneficiaries, and analytical commentary.

Consequently, UWEP has played a big role in improving the livelihood of people in various aspects in the following ways. Therefore, it recommends that as much as UWEP aims at empowering women economically, a lot is still desired. Much as women participate in UWEP activities, they are still marginalized by men, especially in areas of planning, management, decision-making, and allocation of resources and incomes due to limited financial resources, gender imbalances, and negative cultural ties. Women's socio-economic welfare has been stagnant due to gender imbalances, low levels of education, and cultural aspects in society. The women's inferior complex keeps them silent in public arenas which hinders their concentration and participation in economic activities.

## 2. Empirical Literature

Several empirical studies have been undertaken to evaluate the effects of the Uganda Women's Empowerment Program

(UWEP) on the reduction of poverty in Uganda. The most current study on this topic was carried out by the World Bank in 2019. The present research has determined that the Uganda Women's Empowerment Program (UWEP) has had a favorable outcome in terms of poverty alleviation in Uganda, resulting in an approximate decrease in poverty rates by 9.3 percent over a span of three years. The research further revealed that female entrepreneurs engaged in income-generating endeavors inside UWEP-supported enterprises, indicating that UWEP may contribute to the mitigation of gender disparities.

In 2018, the International Labour Organization (ILO) conducted a research that revealed that firms receiving help from the Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme (UWEP) had a favorable influence on poverty alleviation in Uganda. The research revealed that women Organizations supported by UWEP had a greater propensity for involvement in activities that generate money, as well as experiencing better rates of employment and pay growth compared to enterprises that did not get assistance from UWEP. This program indicates the influence of women-focused efforts on the elimination of poverty and general development with a focus on promoting the economic and social independence of women. The core goal of the program is to expand women's access to financial services, develop their skills and competencies, and encourage their participation in productive and sustainable activities that generate revenue as a means to the abolition of poverty in Uganda (Vieitez et al., 2023).

Significantly, UWEP placed emphasis on providing monetary assistance to female business owners. This assistance is provided to women entrepreneurs in the form of grants, low-interest loans, and other opportunities for capacity-building that make it possible for them to launch and expand their businesses. Many Ugandan women have been able to launch successful businesses because of the aid provided by this financing program as a set of measures both economic and humanitarian that are intended to permanently lift people out of poverty. Based on these facts, Uganda has had various poverty alleviation measures including but not limited to the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) aimed at transforming Uganda into a modern economy in which people in all sectors can participate in economic growth. This was established on four main pillars as follows;

- 1) Creating a framework for economic growth and transformation.
- 2) Ensuring governance and security.
- 3) Directly increasing the ability of the poor to raise their incomes.
- 4) Directly increasing the quality of the life of the poor.

Committed to achieving poverty alleviation strategies, the government of Uganda intends to have proper planning in the education sector through maintaining the Universal Primary Education (UPE) and Universal Secondary Education (USE). With this, supporting and prioritizing the girl child education will be highly recognized through affirmative action and

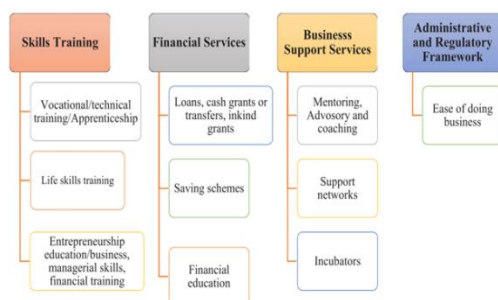
greater concern for improving the health of the people. This majorly looks at having people access to medical services at ease. Women’s access to medical facilities is also a priority in Uganda and sexual reproductive rights are enjoyed by all. This strengthens the health sector as well as gives voice to poor communities and aims at having the communities empowered.

Barugahare, J. (2011) observation highlights the existence of a robust causal link between poverty and health disparity, a relationship that is often overlooked in discussions around quality-adjusted life years (QALYs) and other allocation principles that strive for health fairness. Hence, given the disproportionate negative impact on the impoverished population within the existing system, it is imperative to prioritize the development of a fair and inclusive financial structure for the healthcare system in Uganda that adequately addresses the unique requirements of the underprivileged most especially within the womanhood.

Overall, the empirical literature on the reputation of UWEP in the field of poverty alleviation is, on the whole, contradictory. According to oral findings and narrations of some research, the program has had a good influence on the decrease of poverty, while the findings of other studies have concluded that the impact has been somewhat more moderate with a high significance of limiting the rise in poverty. In order to assess the UWEP's long-term effects on the reduction of poverty, further study is required.

Anecdotal evidence, in addition to the empirical research, suggests that the Uganda Women Entrepreneurs' Programme (UWEP) has made a positive difference in the lives of a large number of women entrepreneurs in Uganda. For instance, a great number of female business owners have said that the program has assisted them in launching or expanding their business outlets, as well as in raising their earnings and enhancing their standard of living. The following framework reveals the process of empowerment and access to small-scale entrepreneurial programs adopted by UWEP.

Figure 1: A framework of empowerment chart.



Author Sources, 2023

The initiative of UWEP consists of four primary components framework of empowerment above chart are: Skills Training (ST), Financial Services (FS), Business Support Services (BSS), and Administrative and Regulatory Framework (ARF). The Skills Training (ST), component emphasizes enhancing skills development tailored to the specific requirements of

women, aiming to equip them with the necessary abilities to acquire effective and efficient vocational training and life skills for entrepreneurial development and financial education. Women have the opportunity to develop financially through Skills Training (ST), these pieces of training are in order to get practical training and necessary skills for successfully executing their business ventures, as well as to acquire the necessary resources and materials. Local governments equally play a crucial role in identifying suitable persons or organizations to provide training for women in relevant skills hence UWEP was favourably considered. The Financial Services (FS) and Business Support Services (BBS) are both component that offers interest-free finance to support the growth of enterprises, operating on a revolving fund basis. In order to ensure the effective execution of their primary business and the complete payback of the Revolving Fund, it is necessary for women's groups to consist of 10-15 members while the Administrative and Regulatory Framework (ARF) component is responsible for ensuring the effective and efficient administration and coordination of programs at all levels. Within this particular component, recipient groups are provided with fundamental instruction in several areas such as accounting, team building, enterprise planning and execution, entrepreneurship/business skills, and group dynamics. Significantly, part of the success of the mentioned framework programs was addressing the needs and heterogeneities related to the region where the UWEP offices are located.

2.1 Entrepreneurship and Poverty Alleviation

Since its inception, UWEP has had a significant impact on poverty alleviation in Uganda. The program has enabled thousands of women to become entrepreneurs and has created thousands of jobs in the process. This has resulted in an increase in the incomes of the participants and their families, which has had a positive effect on the overall poverty levels in the country. In addition, UWEP has enabled many rural communities to access resources, skills, and knowledge that they would otherwise be unable to access. This has led to an increase in agricultural productivity and the development of new markets for products and services.

As the findings reveal, given the fact that most women are illiterate, designing the right interventions is important. Training materials, particularly the financial component, mentoring, and an early warning system for these entrepreneurs, should be established together with effective group management and leadership. In addition, if financial literacy is not considered, women will get the UWEP loan just to survive and contribute to their families but not to grow their businesses despite having been in the group for two or more years. For growth to ensue, it is important for groups to take out bigger loans as an indication of business expansion growth and poverty abolition. The government needs to resume adult literacy programs within UWEP because the majority of women entrepreneurs are informal, there is a need for UWEP strategies to ensure that the groups that receive funds also get formalized for ease in accessing economic benefits that accrue with formalization. However, compliance is a burden. According to key performance indicators (KPS),

the burden of compliance with tax bodies' requirements puts many people who register formally out of business. There is a need for tax collecting agencies to handle new businesses differently, particularly those of a micro nature. In any case, there should be a central database and/or close coordination and tax holidays for young businesses (Vladlenov, D. 2020).

## 2.2 Women Empowerment

Women's Empowerment is generally acknowledged as a potent mechanism for the mitigation of poverty and has the potential to enable individuals to establish their own enterprises, make revenue, and enhance their overall quality of life. This can be defined as promoting women's sense of self-worth, their ability to determine their own choices, and their right to influence social change for themselves and others. According to Haugh and Talwar (2014); It entails accepting women's viewpoints, making an effort to seek them, and raising the status of women through education, awareness, literacy, and training. By means of Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Program (UWEP) which is a government-funded initiative designed to foster entrepreneurial activities among women in Uganda and provide provision for financial and technical assistance to women entrepreneurs. The aforementioned components include financial assistance in the form of loans, educational programs focused on business acumen, and guidance from experienced individuals in a mentoring capacity. Additionally, the program offers women entrepreneurs the opportunity to access markets and engage in networking activities. Favourably, it has influenced the realms of entrepreneurship and poverty reduction in Uganda. According to research conducted in 2019 by the Economic Policy Research Centre (EPRC), based at Makerere, it was observed that individuals who participated in the Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme (UWEP) exhibited a greater likelihood of employment and reported better income levels compared to those who did not participate in the program. Additionally, the research revealed that the Universal Women's Empowerment Program (UWEP) had a favourable influence on the well-being and educational outcomes of children (Rustad et al., 2021). The UWEP program has also played a significant role in promoting the empowerment of women in Uganda. Through the provision of skills and resources, the UWEP initiative has effectively facilitated the empowerment of women, enabling them to attain heightened economic independence and exert a more influential role within their own communities. The following are significant instances that demonstrate the contribution of the Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Program (UWEP) towards the advancement of entrepreneurship and the reduction of poverty in Uganda:

1. The UWEP initiative has facilitated the establishment of new firms by women entrepreneurs across diverse industries, including agriculture, commerce, and services.
2. The UWEP initiative has facilitated the expansion of female entrepreneurs' established enterprises via the provision of cash and technical assistance.

3. The UWEP initiative has facilitated the market access and networking opportunities for female entrepreneurs.
4. The UWEP program has been important in enhancing the business acumen and managerial proficiency of female entrepreneurs.
5. The UWEP program is considered to be in its nascent stage, although it has already had a favourable influence on the realms of entrepreneurship and poverty reduction inside Uganda. The initiative aims to assist women in establishing self-employment opportunities, generating financial resources, and enhancing their overall quality of life.
6. The UWEP initiative is further facilitating the empowerment of women, therefore enhancing their agency and influence within their own communities.

In general, the Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Program (UWEP) has shown to be a commendable initiative, effectively fostering business and contributing to the amelioration of poverty in Uganda; this initiative is having a beneficial impact on the well-being of several women and their families. Women's empowerment can be achieved by increasing women's access to land, livestock, education, financial services, extension, technology, and rural employment. This would boost their productivity and generate gains in terms of agricultural production, food security, economic growth, and social welfare (FAO, 2011). However, it should be noted that cultural norms significantly affect women empowerment in various aspects for example the gender gaps through income inequalities in the households and limited active involvement of women in profitable labor.

## 2.3 Gaps in Existing Literature

The baseline research and process assessment of the UWEP program revealed that it had favourable effects on financial inclusion and economic outcomes. The program's training encompasses various aspects of enterprise management, with an emphasis on topics such as group dynamics, effective communication, and leadership, planning records management, financial management, community procurement procedures and reporting, accountability in business development, and life skills. The current body of scholarly research pertaining to the Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Program (UWEP) and its impact on poverty reduction is still in its nascent phase of advancement. There exist some research gaps that need attention in order to enhance comprehension of the effects of the Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Program (UWEP) on poverty reduction. A notable lacuna in the existing body of research is to the dearth of longitudinal investigations examining the effects of the UWEP while the majority of previous research has mostly concentrated on the immediate effects of the Third National Development Plan (NDPIII) therefore indicating a need for more investigations to analyse the enduring consequences of the program in terms of reducing poverty.

Another area that requires more investigation is the dearth of research on the effects of the Universal Women's Empowerment Program (UWEP) on various subpopulations of women. For instance, there is a pressing want for more research to examine the effects of the Uganda Women's Entrepreneurship Program (UWEP) on women across various industries, diverse locations within Uganda, and women with varying degrees of educational attainment and professional backgrounds.

Ultimately, there exists a need for more investigation into the underlying processes by which the UWEP mitigates poverty as compared to Uganda Skills Development Project (USDP). The extent to which UWEP effectively mitigates poverty is uncertain since it has still to be determined whether its impact primarily stems from augmenting women's wages, lowering their costs, or a combination of both factors. Further investigation is required in order to have a comprehensive understanding of the precise processes through which the UWEP mitigates poverty as related with National Development Plan (NDP).

The forthcoming study on the function of the Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Program (UWEP) in poverty eradication should focus on addressing the following particular inquiries:

- What are the enduring effects of the Uganda Women's Entrepreneurship Program (UWEP) on the amelioration of poverty?
- What is the influence of the Uganda Women's Entrepreneurship Program (UWEP) on various demographic categories of women?
- What are the processes through which the Uganda Women's Empowerment Program (UWEP) mitigates poverty?
- What strategies may be used to enhance the efficacy of the Universal Work and Employment Program (UWEP) in mitigating poverty?

By addressing these research gaps, a more comprehensive understanding of the effects of the Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Program (UWEP) on poverty reduction may be achieved. Furthermore, this will facilitate the development of more efficient policies and programs aimed at providing assistance to women entrepreneurs in Uganda.

#### 2.4 Challenges and Criticisms

Although the Women Entrepreneurship Program (UWEP) has achieved notable success, it has also encountered several problems and has been subject to criticism. The article at hand pertains to the various obstacles and difficulties that similar programs encountered in Uganda. One of the primary obstacles confronting UWEP is to the insufficiency of financial resources. The program is financially supported by the government; nonetheless, the allocated budget for the UWEP is constrained. This implies that UWEP lacks the capacity to accommodate the whole of aspiring women entrepreneurs seeking to engage in the program. One other obstacle that the UWEP encounters is the insufficiency of

capacity. The program is executed by several governmental entities, and it is often seen that these entities lack the requisite capability to efficiently execute the program. This phenomenon may result in the occurrence of delays during the processing of applications, a deficiency in the provision of assistance for those enrolled in the program, and several other complications.

Hence, the primary critiques directed at the UWEP program is its perceived overemphasis on the provision of loans exclusively to women entrepreneurs. Critics contend that the program should prioritize the provision of requisite skills and expertise to facilitate the establishment and expansion of firms run by women entrepreneurs. The bureaucratic nature of the program is so excessive that critics contend that the application procedure exhibits a high degree of complexity and protracts the duration required to get funds. Ultimately, several detractors have posited the notion that the sustainability of the UWEP may be questionable. Some of the narrations contend that the program exhibits excessive reliance on government money, raising concerns about its sustainability in the event of a reduction in government support. Notwithstanding the aforementioned issues and critiques, the UWEP program continues to have significance as it plays a crucial role in fostering entrepreneurship among women in Uganda. The initiative has proven instrumental in facilitating the initiation and expansion of several female-owned enterprises, hence engendering a favourable influence on the well-being of women and their respective households.

### 3. Methodology

The present study adopted a qualitative methodology within the framework of a post-positivist paradigm (Domecq et al., 2015). Positivism aims to forecast and regulate the nature of reality and is grounded on the notion that pursues objectivity by recognizing the possible effects of biases. It is based on this our understanding of the activities and engagement with UWEP as acquired by researchers means of empirical observations and experiences that enhance the adoption of positivism methodology for this article. The methods that facilitate this phenomenon include the rational and analytical categorization and organization of these experiences. Therefore, the primary emphasis of this study is on the deterministic perspective of cause and effect (causality), which originates from deductive reasoning and observations of UWEP activities and programs. This research has taken cognizance of the uniqueness of this UWEP program as one of the largest benefits and valuable relief welfare for women's households.

The research employed purposive sampling as the primary sampling technique to identify the key informants that were consulted during the collection of the facts about the UWEP program who were mainly the women beneficiaries. Additionally, snowball sampling was utilized to identify subsequent informants, including the UWEP workers, Program coordinators, and the district head. The process of data gathering included conducting in-depth interviews with several informants, as described by Zach, L. (2006).

Subsequently, the outcomes of the interview were documented and converted into written form with the purpose of objectivity by acknowledging the potential influence of biases. The study used an interactive model as the data analysis approach (Ridder, 2014). In order to uphold the research's quality level, the researchers performed validity checks, data comparisons, and data verifications via the method of triangulation (Patton & Patton, 2002).

### 3.1 Results and Discussion

The results examined the reputation of UWEP programs in poverty alleviation among women's household in Uganda. Concisely, the literature presents a diverse spectrum of perspectives about reputation, including both structured interpretational approaches and more informal perspectives. Broadly speaking, the consensus among these perspectives is that reputation, when seen as an organizational asset, is very susceptible to vulnerability. Simultaneously, we are faced with the assertion that UWEP's reputation is a ubiquitous attribute that every similar organization must possess, without exception.

The reputation of the Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Program (UWEP) varies. There exists a prevailing belief among some individuals that the program in question has achieved notable success in its endeavours to foster business and mitigate poverty among women in Uganda. There exists an alternative perspective positing that the program in question had inherent deficiencies, hence compromising its overall efficacy. The typology of UWEP hereby presented below;

- I. There are many factors that contribute to the perception of UWEP as a successful program. The UWEP program has shown to be instrumental in facilitating the establishment and expansion of several enterprises owned by women.
- II. The UWEP program has been significant in augmenting the financial resources of women and mitigating the prevalence of poverty and initiative has effectively facilitated the empowerment of women, enabling them to exert a more influential role and assert their voices within their own communities.

**3.2** On the other side, there are many rationales for the reputation that the UWEP program is inherently flawed:

- I. The UWEP is now experiencing a lack of adequate funding from the Government and it has bureaucratic tendencies, and the intricacies of its application procedure are excessively convoluted.
- II. The UWEP program exhibits a disproportionate emphasis on the provision of loans to women entrepreneurs while neglecting the imperative aspect of equipping them with the requisite skills and knowledge necessary for the initiation and expansion of their firms.

III. The sustainability of UWEP is questionable due to its significant reliance on government financing and the limited technical knowledge and business skills of women's households as most women fail to maintain their businesses due to a lack of managerial skills and seldom operate their businesses as family affairs. Managing income generated and employees' problems are among the most difficult challenges to women and because of this, women business ventures usually have high number of employee turnover in relation to men enterprises.

IV. **Coping with fear of failure:** Failure is a very real possibility in every business venture and so women need to have this planned for. One should not let insecurities keep them from dreaming big. In most cases, women fear loses and failure. They think of imperfection more than anything else. Thus, this reduces their morale for business.

V. **Lack of support:** Women are challenged by limited support in business ventures. Men tend to ignore women in many aspects. This is a big challenge in that in areas where women cannot handle all the business needs, it becomes too difficult to handle and succeed. Women are usually supported by family in decision-making and also guidance therefore in areas where women can get that support, all becomes dark solution. Limited access to land ownership especially in rural areas. It therefore becomes hard for women to make investments on the land they have no authority to. Some enterprises in UWEP need land ownership for example livestock rearing, this leads to withdraw of interest, especially for women whose spouses and families are not supportive.

VI. Poor infrastructure in terms of roads which makes transportation of the products difficulty, especially to the marketplaces. It increases the costs of production which may not be friendly to the women thus kills their interests.

In general, the reputation of UWEP is characterized by a combination of positive and negative evaluations. There exists a prevailing belief among some individuals that the program in question has achieved notable success in fostering business and mitigating poverty among women in Uganda. There are some who hold the viewpoint that the program in question has inherent flaws, hence diminishing its overall effectiveness.

## 4. Conclusion and Recommendations

The Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Program (UWEP) has emerged as a significant force for positive transformation in the lives of Ugandan women, particularly those burdened by the profound constraints of poverty. After conducting a comprehensive review of empirical studies and anecdotal data, it becomes evident that the UWEP program has emerged as a crucial initiative in promoting entrepreneurship among women. Furthermore, it has had a substantial influence on the

reduction of poverty. The UWEP has garnered recognition and achievements that are reflected in multiple narratives of empowered women and improved communities. However, it also presents a complex array of obstacles, critiques, and places in need of further development and support. The reoccurring themes of gaps in access, structural obstacles, and the need for more comprehensive and adaptable funding and training models have been seen in both grassroots feedback and academic analyses.

The trajectory of UWEP in the fields of entrepreneurship and empowerment has resulted in a noticeable effect. However, the diverse experiences of its beneficiaries highlight the need for a model that is more inclusive, adaptive, and scalable. The experiences of women participating in the entrepreneurial journey under the guidance of UWEP have shown a wide range of outcomes, ranging from notable achievements to challenging obstacles.

Within the realm of policy implications, it is imperative to direct attention towards strengthening the fundamental aspects of the program, eliminating institutional and operational obstacles, and guaranteeing that the benefits of the Uganda Women's Empowerment Program (UWEP) extend to the most disadvantaged and isolated women in the country. There is a clear and unambiguous need for strengthening the methods of the program in a way that takes into account the diverse socio-economic contexts, cultural subtleties, and individual capabilities of women in Uganda.

By prioritizing a participatory approach, whereby the perspectives and lived experiences of the women involved in these entrepreneurial endeavors play a central role in designing and improving the program, there is potential for UWEP to significantly enhance its effectiveness and expand its impact. The adoption of strategies that shift towards a model that prioritizes individualization and community involvement, while effectively integrating with the distinct cultural and social contexts, will enhance the long-term viability and influence of the program.

UWEP has played a significant role in empowering women however, women's socio-economic welfare has been stagnant due to gender imbalances, low levels of education, and cultural aspects in society. The women's inferior complex keeps them silent in public arenas which hinders their concentration and participation in economic activities. A lot has to be done to support women, especially in the rural setting. Consequently, Women who have engaged in UWEP have been financially empowered and this has led to income sustainability, especially among the rural women. This has been spearheaded by savings and credit schemes amongst the group members. It should also be noted that these women have had access to information that keeps them sustaining their businesses. However, there is still a need to note that much as UWEP aims at empowering women economically, a lot is still desired. Much as women participate in UWEP activities, they are still marginalized by men, especially in areas of planning, management, decision-making, and allocation of resources and incomes due to limited financial

resources, gender imbalances, and negative cultural ties. It is noteworthy to acknowledge that the UWEP program is of recent origin, and it remains premature to conclusively determine its efficacy or lack thereof. Further investigation is required in order to ascertain the enduring effects of the Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Program (UWEP) on the domains of entrepreneurship, poverty reduction, and the empowerment of women in Uganda.

The following recommendations are proposed to effectively tackle the issues and concerns associated with the Uganda Women's Empowerment Program (UWEP):

- I. It is recommended that the government consider increasing the financial allocation for the Uganda Women's Entrepreneurship Program (UWEP). This would enable the organization to enhance its support for women entrepreneurs and provide them more efficient assistance.
- II. It is recommended that the government enhance the operational capabilities of the entities tasked with executing the Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Program (UWEP). One potential solution to address this issue might be the implementation of enhanced staff training programs and the recruitment of more personnel.
- III. The UWEP should consider redirecting its emphasis from the provision of loans to women entrepreneurs towards equipping them with the requisite skills and knowledge necessary for the initiation and expansion of their firms.
- IV. The UWEP should implement measures to optimize the application procedure, therefore facilitating the accessibility of funds for women entrepreneurs.
- V. It is essential for the government to formulate a comprehensive strategy aimed at enhancing the sustainability of the UWEP. This may include exploring strategies to get supplementary financial resources from sources beyond the purview of governmental entities.

By effectively resolving these issues and critiques, the government has the potential to enhance the efficacy of the Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Program (UWEP). This program serves as a catalyst for women entrepreneurs, facilitating the establishment and expansion of their firms, therefore fostering improvements in their personal and familial circumstances. The reputation and influence of UWEP may be seen as a dynamic entity, shown via a canvas that showcases both vivid colors of empowerment, success, and positive change, as well as subtler shades of obstacles, discrepancies, and places that need more attention and understanding. An entity that not only breathes life into business goals but also perpetually changes, adapting and interweaving with the multi-faceted realities, aspirations, and problems of Ugandan women. Therefore, the pursuit of enhancing the agency, business acumen, and resilience of women in Uganda necessitates a delicate balance between

acknowledging the achievements and acknowledging the obstacles. This endeavor aims to shape a future that is characterized by comprehensive enrichment, equitable empowerment, and sustainable upliftment.

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