

EVALUATION DEPARTMENT

Report 12 / 2020 **COUNTRY EVALUATION BRIEF**

Uganda



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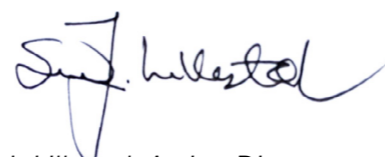
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ABBREVIATIONS

The purpose of this Country Evaluation Brief is to present relevant knowledge about donors' development efforts in Uganda. The brief systematises relevant findings from existing evaluations of development interventions in the country. The idea is to present the findings to the reader in a succinct and easily accessible format.

Readers who want to explore key issues in depth can access the underlying reports through the reference list. At our website, you can also find a set of short "Evaluation Portraits" summarising the key contents of those documents.

The Country Evaluation Brief was researched and produced by Particip GmbH.

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Main Findings

The report draws on findings presented in 26 evaluations and reviews published since 2013 of major donor-funded programmes and projects in Uganda.

- **AGRICULTURE** is the backbone of the Ugandan economy, but characterised by subsistence food production, which is not keeping pace with the high population growth. This problem is further aggravated by climate change. Some success has been achieved in this area, but the evaluations point to the urgency of increased focus on climate change interventions.
- Uganda houses about 1.2 million **REFUGEES**, supported by the international community. The evaluations highlight the huge challenges of deforestation; humanitarian assistance, (which is found to be effective, but suffering from lack of gender mainstreaming); and the need for civil society organisation (CSO), multi-organisation and multi-sector approaches rather than individual CSO projects.
- **CORRUPTION AND FRAUD** have had a big impact on the aid architecture in Uganda. In 2012, this resulted in the partial exit from budget support and the shift primarily towards project interventions and basket funding. This affected ODA to, for example, the Northern region. The evaluations of the selected interventions are largely positive pointing to the majority of the interventions being relevant and aligned with national policies as well as achieving their objectives and generating positive results. At the same time, however, the overall effect of the reprogramming led to decreased donor harmonisation and more “scattered” approaches, thereby posing a risk of less effective aid.
- **HUMAN RIGHTS** are increasingly under threat in the Ugandan society, as seen in the Anti-Homosexuality Act and the civil society legislation. The evaluation of the work of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) at field level is positive, whereas evaluations of bilateral support to civil society reveal a mixed picture of effective and less effective projects.

Key Facts Uganda

Estimated population: 42,723,139

(World Bank 2020; 2018 data)

Population under the age of 15: 47%

(World Bank 2020; 2018 data)

Urban population: 23.8%

(World Bank 2020; 2018 data)

Urban population growth (annual %): 6.2%

(World Bank 2020; 2018 data)

Human Development Index (HDI): 159 (of 189)

(UNDP 2020; 2019 data)

Gender Inequality Index (GII): 127 (of 162)

(UNDP 2020; 2018 data)

Poverty headcount ratio at USD 1.90 a day

(2011 PPP): 41.7%

(World Bank 2020; 2016 data)

Adult literacy rate: 76.5%

(World Bank 2020; 2018 data)

Life expectancy at

birth (male/female): 63 (60/65)

(World Bank 2020; 2017 data)

Child mortality rate

(under 5, per 1000 live births): 46

(World Bank 2020; 2018 data)

Net ODA received (% of GNI): 7.9%

(World Bank 2020; 2017 data)

Corruption Perception Index rank: 137 (of 180)

(Transparency International 2020; 2019 data)

Internally Displaced Persons

(new displacements in 2018 due to disasters):

164,000

(World Bank 2020; 2018 data)

Mean years of schooling: 6.1

(UNDP 2020; 2018 data)

Gross National Income (GNI) per capita, PPP

(current international USD): 1,970

(World Bank 2020; 2018 data)

GNI growth (annual %): 5.8%

(World Bank 2020; 2018 data)

GNI per capita growth (annual %): 1.9%

(World Bank 2020; 2018 data)

GINI index: 42.8

(World Bank 2020; 2016 data)

With a population growth rate of 3.7 per cent (World Bank 2018), Uganda has one of the youngest populations in the world, with 47 per cent of the population under 15 years.

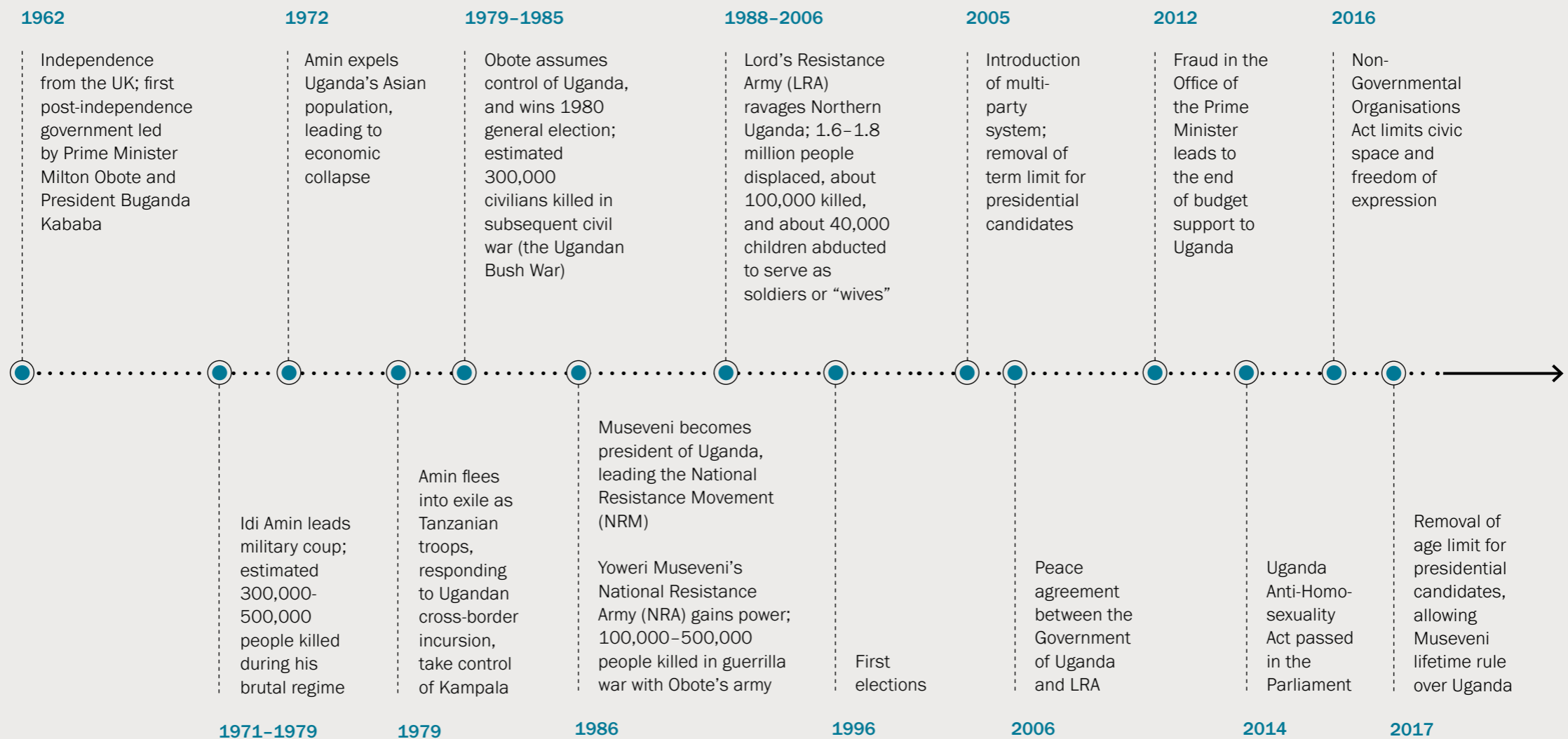
Photo by Espen Røst / Bistandsaktuelt



Uganda



Key Events



Introduction

With an exceptionally high population growth rate, poverty and inequality distribution remain a challenge in Uganda, although the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has increased over the last 10 years. The leadership of President Museveni was previously respected by development partners, but newer cases of corruption and abuses of human rights have affected the relationship with the donors.



Uganda, a landlocked country in the Great Lakes region of East Africa, borders Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan. With a population growth rate of 3.7 per cent (World Bank 2018), Uganda has one of the youngest populations in the world, with 47 per cent of the population under 15 years. Real per capita GDP has increased from USD 607 in 2008/09 to USD 825 in 2018/19. However, average household nominal cash incomes have not followed the same trend. Poverty levels, which decreased from 24.3 per cent in 2009/10 to 19.7 per cent in 2012/13, increased again to 21.4 per cent in 2016/17. Inequality in distribution of resources among Ugandans remains widespread, with regional disparities (Uganda Bureau of Statistics 2017). The COVID-19 pandemic and the lockdown and measures to control the spread of the disease in Uganda might further aggravate the poverty and food security situation.

Historically, Uganda has been known as the “Pearl of Africa”, due to its fertile environment and rich biodiversity, but it is also known for the bloody regimes of Idi Amin (1971-79) and Milton Obote (1980-85). The Ugandan president, Yoweri Museveni, who attained power in 1986 after a protracted guerrilla war, was for many years perceived as part of a generation of new African leaders. In the 1990s, Uganda was in many ways a “donor darling”, and was praised for its handling of the HIV/AIDS crisis. Gradually, in the last two decades, this rosy picture waned due to the elimination of the presidential term limits and the presidential age limit, which permits Museveni to be president for life. Moreover, cases of fraud and corruption, as well as violation of human rights (e.g. the Anti-homosexuality Act), have affected donor support to Uganda, resulting in the freezing or cutting of aid.



Deforestation for agriculture along border of Bwindi Impenetrable Forest, in the southwest of Uganda on the border to D.R.Congo. Photo by Christophe Courteau / Nature Picture Library / NTB

Country Context

Despite the aspirations in Uganda's Vision 2040 development plan, poverty remains deep-rooted in rural areas. The country has been endowed with fertile land, but over-reliance on rain-fed agriculture combined with population pressure on land has triggered rapid ecosystem deterioration. Other challenges include the housing of 1.2–1.3 million refugees, and the rehabilitation of the Northern part of Uganda ravaged by the civil war.



South Sudanese refugees at the Bidibidi settlement in the district of Yumbe, Northern Uganda, May 2017. In just a few months in 2016, Bidibidi became one of the biggest refugee settlements in the world. Photo by Jiro Ose / Redux / NTB

The NRM party led by President Museveni instituted the non-party “movement system” in 1986. In 2005, based on a constitutional referendum, the movement system was replaced by a multi-party system. Despite the introduction of the multi-party system, several cases of arrest of opposition leaders and use of force hindering political gatherings have been reported throughout the years (Amnesty International 2015).

Uganda aspires to transform from a predominantly peasant and low-income country to an upper middle-income country with a GDP per capita of USD 9,500 by 2040 (Vision 2040). The country’s development agenda is now defined in the long-term Comprehensive National Development Planning Framework, which seeks to achieve the Uganda Vision 2040 goals and is operationalised through six five-year National Development Plans (NDPs). Over the years, Uganda has adopted the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and refocused its development approaches to achieve them through targets and interventions in its NDPs. Regardless of the aspiration of becoming a middle-income country, poverty and food security problems

remain deep-rooted in the rural areas. This is especially the case in the north-eastern Karamoja region, which is classified as one of the poorest areas in the world, with 44 per cent of its population being food insecure (UNFPA 2018b, UNICEF/UK Aid/WFP 2018). Rural poverty and food and nutrition problems are further aggravated by the exceptionally high population growth.

Uganda is well endowed with a rich biodiversity of both plant and animal species. However, a combination of over-reliance on rain-fed agriculture and the growing population pressure on land has triggered rapid eco-system deterioration (soil degradation, deforestation, pollution, drainage of wetlands, and loss of biodiversity). The Government recognises the importance of increasing the country’s resilience to the impacts of climate change. For example, the Agricultural Sector Strategic Plan (ASSP) 2015-2020 and the National Agricultural Policy 2013 emphasise the need to increase agricultural production and productivity in a sustainable manner. The agricultural sector contributed 20.6 per cent of GDP in 2018/19, and 46 per cent of Uganda’s total export earnings in 2017. The sector furthermore provides raw materials for the

Regardless of the aspiration of becoming a middle-income country, poverty and food security problems remain deep-rooted in the rural areas.

manufacturing sector and employs the majority of the population, with 69 per cent of households engaged in subsistence agriculture (Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development 2018).

For a period of about 20 years, from 1986 to 2006, the Northern parts of West Nile and Eastern Uganda were engulfed in a bloody and vicious civil war with the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). The war left the region ravaged with poverty and, at its peak, with an estimated 1.6–1.8 million people living in Internally Displaced People's (IDP) camps. The civil war severely affected access to social services and undermined the predominately agriculture-based livelihood strategies. After the war, Uganda formulated the Peace, Recovery and Development Programme for Northern Uganda (PRDP), with its strategic objectives focused on peacebuilding and reconciliation, rebuilding and empowering communities, and revitalisation of the economy.

For several decades, Uganda has hosted refugees who have fled from political instability in neighbouring countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia, Rwanda, South Sudan, and Eritrea. Uganda is one of the largest refugee-hosting nations in the world,

with an estimated 1.2–1.3 million refugees living in 11 refugee settlements in the South West, North West and Northern regions. The refugee laws of Uganda are among the most progressive in the world: refugees are entitled to work, are allocated (small) plots of land, have freedom of movement, and can access Ugandan social services such as education and health. However, massive problems with deforestation occur in the refugee hosting areas, occasionally leading to clashes between refugees and the host communities.

As of May 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic - at least, according to official figures - had not spread widely in Uganda. However, the virus has caused fear, not least due to a poor health system that does not have the capacity to handle critically-ill COVID-19 patients. The Government reacted to the pandemic by introducing one of the toughest lockdowns in the region, but this has dire consequences, particularly for poorer people who live from hand to mouth. At a higher level, Uganda's economic performance has been negatively influenced due to the slowdown of the global economy in trade and investment (China is Uganda's main trading partner), the decline in tourism and related industries, and a decline in tax collections (International University of East Africa 2020).



*A South Sudanese refugee harvests from the backyard of her family home at Rhino refugee settlement. Uganda's policy of giving land to refugees to settle and farm has greatly improved their livelihood and reduced dependence on relief aid.
Photo by Edward Echwalu / EU / ECHO / Flickr*

Donor Engagement

Uganda is still heavily dependent on ODA¹. In 2017, the country was seventh on the list of the 12 main recipients of aid in Africa. Cases of fraud within the Government severely affected the relationship between the development partners and the Government, and led to a restructuring of the aid budget and architecture.

¹ The CEB uses the term ODA in accordance with the official OECD-DAC definition: “ODA flows to countries and territories on the DAC List of ODA Recipients and to multilateral development institutions are: i. Provided by official agencies, including state and local governments, or by their executive agencies; and ii. Concessional (i.e. grants and soft loans) and administered with the promotion of the economic development and welfare of developing countries as the main objective” (OECD 2019b).



President Yoweri Museveni walks during a march against corruption in Kampala in December 2019. The President led thousands of civil servants, ruling party members and police officers on a walk through the capital in a move presented as a fight against corruption but derided by critics as a meaningless gesture. Photo by Nicholas BAMULANZEKI / AFP / NTB

Since the 2012 corruption scandal, a great part of the budget support has been restructured towards project support, pooled (basket) funding, and, to some extent, Results-Based Financing (RBF).

The Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) flow to Uganda is substantial; in 2018, FDI flows accounted for USD 1.3 billion, increasing from USD 803 million in 2017. The FDI mainly goes to the coffee and mining sectors, and the main investors are Kenya, Germany and Belgium (Nordea 2020). Nevertheless, there is still a high level of aid dependency in Uganda, particularly with regard to the social sector. In 2017, Uganda was the seventh largest ODA recipient in Africa (OECD 2019a).

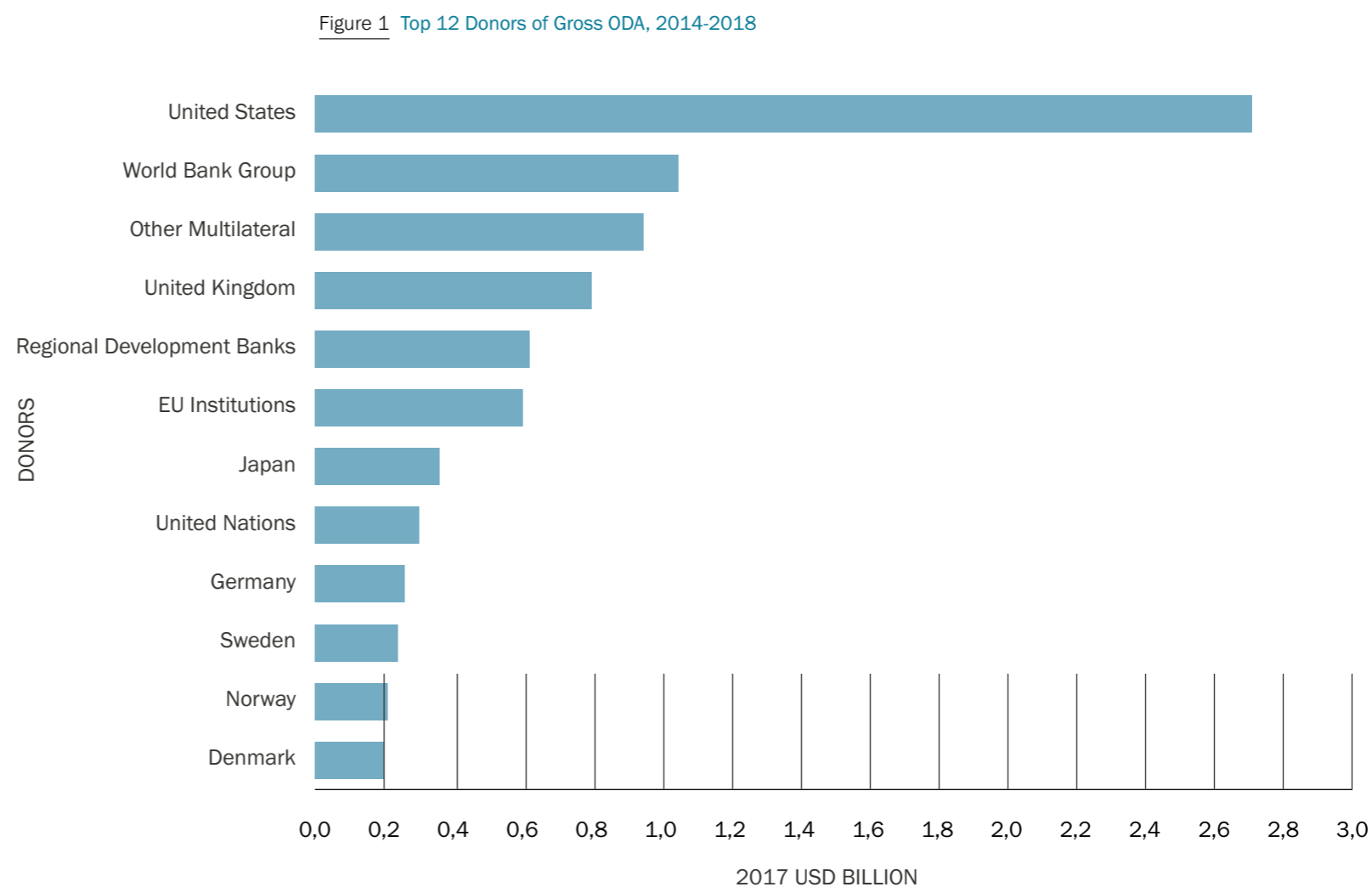
The size and composition of ODA has been affected by cases of fraud, most notably the involvement of the Office of the Prime Minister in a massive corruption scandal in 2012. In this case, USD 15 million had been diverted from a recovery programme in Northern Uganda directly to the Prime Minister's Office. Though this was not the worst corruption scandal in Uganda, donors reacted resolutely as it involved direct misuse of donor funds; they suspended and later terminated the major part of the budget support. Following the corruption scandal, an estimated USD 372.4 million was suspended in budget support and "other aid". The 2012 aid budget was significantly reduced, but once reprogrammed, an estimated 96 per cent of the budget support funds were directly or indirectly reprogrammed

towards project-type interventions. The termination of the major part of the budget support also had negative effects such as reduced government involvement in programmes, less donor involvement in government decisions due to the breakdown of dialogue structures, and a weakening of donor harmonisation (DEval 2018). Since the 2012 corruption scandal, a great part of the budget support has been restructured towards project support, pooled (basket) funding, and, to some extent, Results-Based Financing (RBF). A few donors, including the European Union (EU), continued or resumed the budget support, but at a much lower level.

In other areas, cases of fraud also affected ODA. For instance, during the period 2016–2018, cases of malfeasance and fraud occurred in refugee settlements, leading to some bilateral donors (e.g. the UK and Germany) freezing their aid to UN agencies such as the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (The New Humanitarian 2019).

The five main donors to Uganda are the United States (US), the World Bank (WB) group, the UK, regional development banks, and the EU. The remaining donors on the list of the top-12 donors of gross ODA 2014–

2018 are the UN and various bilateral donors, such as Germany and Scandinavian countries (Sweden, Norway and Denmark). Gross ODA of the US is more than double the size of the second largest donor, the WB group (see Figure 1). Non-traditional donors, such as China, did not play a major role with regard to ODA in Uganda during the reviewed period.



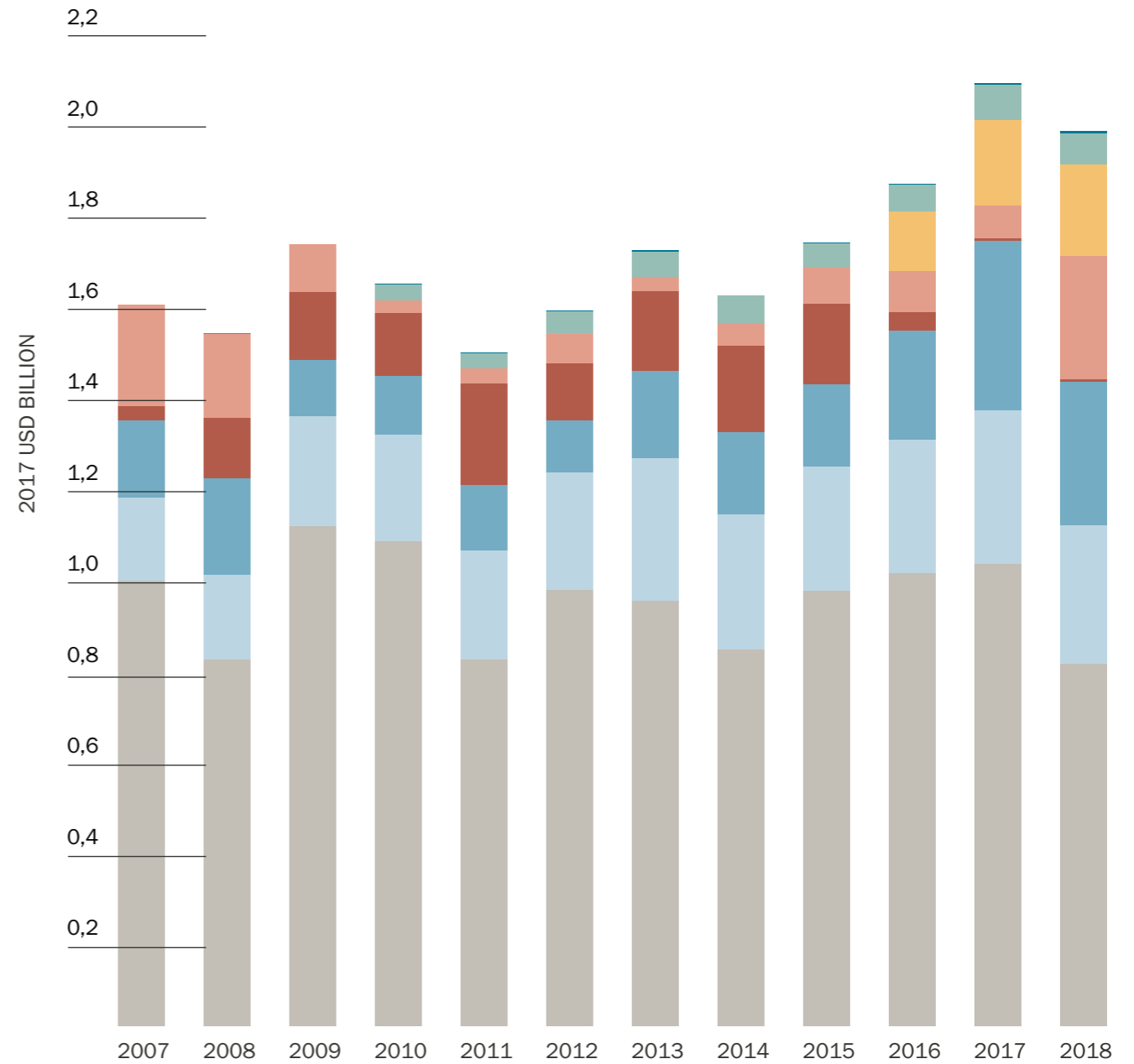
The category "Other Multilateral" includes the Global Fund, the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation (GAVI) and, of lesser financial expression the OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID), the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA). Source: OECD Creditor Reporting System (CRS) Aid Activity database data 2020

Figure 2 presents ODA by channel during the period 2007–2018. The largest channel throughout the period is the public sector, reflecting the extensive ODA to the social infrastructure and services (see Figure 3). ODA to CSOs² and multilateral organisations are the second and third largest type of channel, with some variation over the years. Only since 2016 has ODA been channelled to private sector institutions.

² The report uses the term civil society organisations (CSO) in line with the OECD DAC definition: “CSOs can be defined to include all non-market and non-state organisations outside of the family in which people organise themselves to pursue shared interests in the public domain” (OECD 2011). CSOs thus include non-governmental organisations and international non-governmental organisations.



Figure 2 Total ODA by Channel, 2007–2018



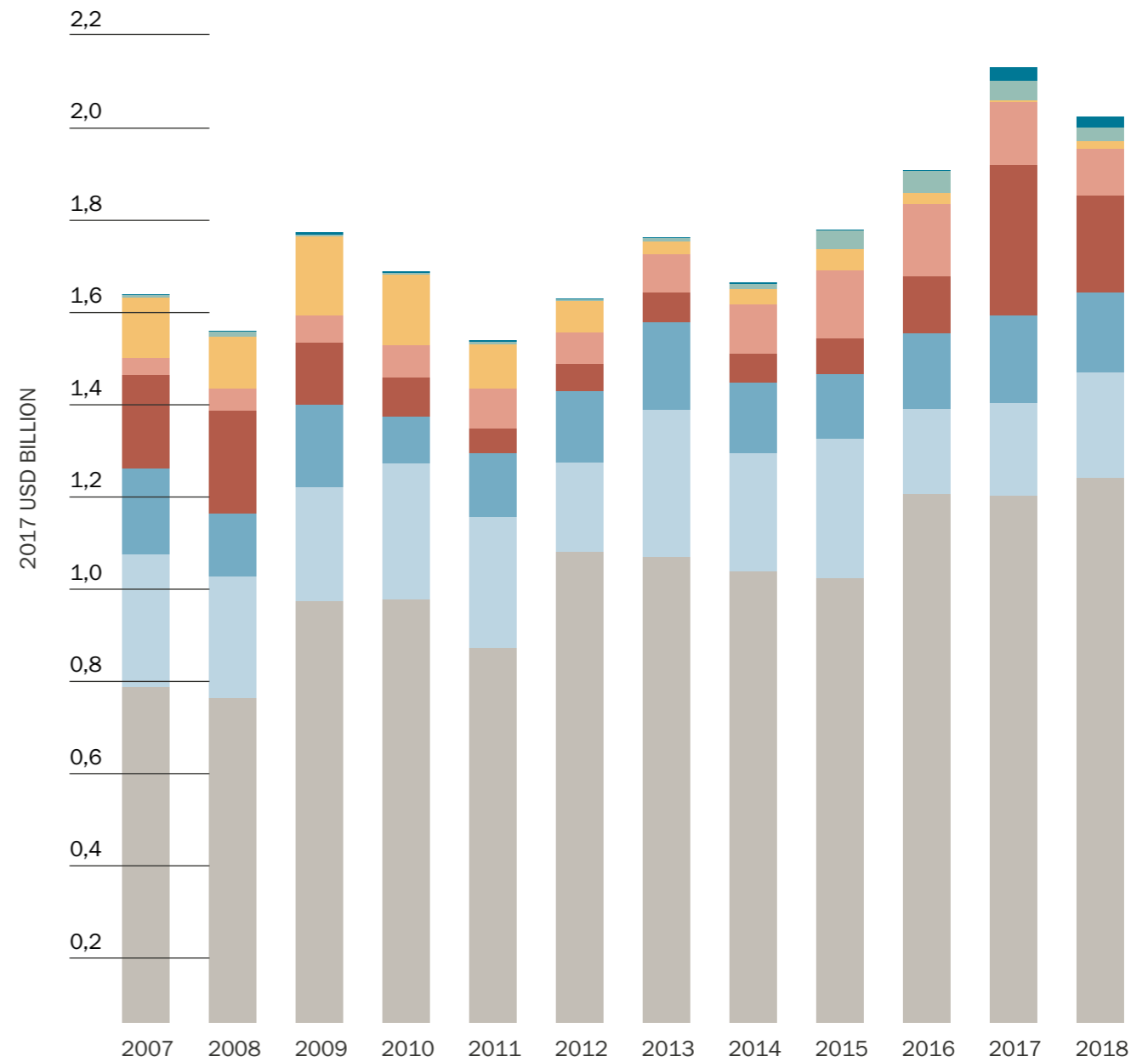
Source: OECD Creditor Reporting System (CRS) Aid Activity database data 2020

Figure 3 depicts the total ODA by sector during the period 2007–2018. “Social infrastructure and services” is, by and large, the largest sector, gradually increasing during the reviewed period. Major donors are USAID, WB, DFID, Japan, Australia, Germany, Norway, Sweden, and Danida. Other major recipients of ODA are the production sectors and the economic infrastructure and services. Important donors here are, for instance, the regional

- Social Infrastructure & Services ■ Multi-Sector / Cross-Cutting
- Production Sectors ■ Humanitarian Aid
- Economic Infrastructure & Services
- Administrative Costs of Donors ■ Unallocated / Unspecified
- Commodity Aid / General Programme Assistance
- Action Relating to Debt

“Social Infrastructure & Services” comprise i) Education, ii) Health, iii) Population Policies/Programmes & Reproductive Health, iv) Water Supply & Sanitation, v) Government and civil society. “Economic Infrastructure & Services” comprise i) Transport and storage, ii) Communications, iii) Energy, iv) Banking and financial services, v) Business and other services. “Production Sectors” comprise i) Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing, ii) Industry, Mining and Construction, iii) Trade Policies and regulations, and iv) Tourism.

Figure 3 Total ODA by Sector, 2007-2018



Source: OECD Creditor Reporting System (CRS) Aid Activity database data 2020.

development banks, such as the African Development Bank (ADB), and Japan. After peaks in 2007 and 2008, in which substantial humanitarian aid was still provided to the IDPs in Northern Uganda, humanitarian aid was gradually transformed into development aid, following the Northern peace agreement in 2006. This was in line with the Government's strategy of transiting from humanitarian aid to recovery and development of Northern Uganda. The relatively large increase of humanitarian aid in 2017–2018 reflects the massive influx of primarily South Sudanese refugees. The EU is a major donor of humanitarian aid; since 2017, it has supported humanitarian actions for refugees (implemented by humanitarian organisations) with EUR 136.7 million (European Commission 2020). The Government has likewise adopted a humanitarian-development nexus approach in relation to refugees. This is based on the very progressive Refugee Law and by applying the global objectives of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF): Admission and Rights, Emergency Response and Ongoing Needs, Resilience and Self-Reliance, Expanded Solution, and Voluntary Repatriation (UNHCR 2017).



The EU is a major donor of humanitarian aid; since 2017, it has supported humanitarian actions for refugees (implemented by humanitarian organisations) with EUR 136.7 million. The picture is from a field visit to the Rhino refugee settlement, August 2017. Photo by Edward Echwalu / EU / ECHO / Flickr

Evaluation Findings

The evaluations reveal that despite producing good results in education, health and WASH, the previous budget support suffered from problems of achieving targets and sustainability, whereas the new programmatic support to social sectors led to more “scattered” approaches – for example, in relation to the recovery of Northern Uganda. In several sectors, support has been affected by corruption and/or fraud.



Ugandan women and children walk past submerged homes in an area flooded by heavy rains in Soroti town, northeast of Kampala, September 2007. Torrential rains and floods swept over East and West Africa, destroying homes and schools and washing away crops and livestock. Photo by James Akena / REUTERS / NBT

Budget Support

Of the 12 budget support partners, the WB has been the biggest contributor, followed by the UK and the EU. In recent years, donors reduced their engagement and volumes of budget support, partly because of the 2012 fraud case and partly because of objectives diverging from the Government's objectives. Whereas the Government increasingly emphasised productive sectors and infrastructure investments to support long-term growth and poverty reduction, the donors continued to focus their budget support operations on social sectors. In 2013, after some corrective action by the Government, some donors restarted engagement, but in reduced scope and volume (European Commission, World Bank Group 2015).

The joint evaluation of the budget support to Uganda 2004-2013, commissioned by the European Commission (EC) and the WB, concludes that despite the reduction of volumes over time, budget support funds ensured significant resources to finance development expenditure and, apart from the most recent years, partly "covered" the development expenditure in the three focal sub-sectors: education,

health, and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH). Budget support contributed through funds, policy dialogue and capacity-building, which enhanced sector policy design and implementation. Nevertheless, according to the evaluation, the stagnation in key performance indicators against trends in funding suggests that sector funding was insufficient to reach sector targets, despite improvements in efficiency and maintenance. Moreover, there was a high risk that mixed basic outcomes in education, relatively poor outcomes in health and better outcomes in WASH would not be sustained because of future underfunding due to low revenue mobilisation. This was compounded by a very limited implementation capacity at local level.

Social Sectors

After 2012, and despite some cracks in the donor and government relationship, ODA to social infrastructure and social services continued at a comparable level, but in the form of project interventions. The main donors supporting social sectors are USAID (health sector, education, and strengthening of decentralisation), WB (education), DFID (health), Japan (health and water supply), Australia (WASH), Germany



English class at Kyembogo primary school.
Photo by Ken Opprann / Norad

After 2012, and despite some cracks in the donor and government relationship, ODA to social infrastructure and social services continued at a comparable level, but in the form of project interventions.

(WASH), Norway (health and education), Sweden (health) and Danida (WASH).

Despite improvements in the health sector, diseases such as AIDS, malaria, lower respiratory infections, meningitis and tuberculosis still cause a high number of lives to be lost in Uganda. In the reviewed evaluation reports, support by USAID included projects testing the Chronic Care Model (CCM) for patients with HIV, and prevention and treatment of malaria. The CCM is an approach to provide healthcare to those with chronic diseases; it involves patient self-management support, delivery system design, and decision-support for clinicians and patients to ensure that guidelines are applied in practice. The evaluation of the CCM model finds that, for a modest expenditure, it is possible to improve the quality of care by implementing the CCM. Importantly, a statistical analysis (difference-in-difference) showed that the odds of an increase in the CD4 count (Cluster of Differentiation 4 is used to measure the health of the immune system of HIV-infected people) in the intervention group was 3.2 times higher than in the control group (USAID 2016b).

In some cases, however, diminishing trust in the Government and its priorities led to the phasing out of ODA to social services. A case in point is the Danish support to the WASH sector. Danida had been a major contributor to the development of WASH in Uganda for nearly 30 years, but decided to phase out the support in 2018 due to the lack of improvement in the government-donor relationship after the 2012 corruption scandal. Moreover, the Government's commitment to the development of the WASH sector was not considered satisfactory - and also coincided with a change of Danish priorities. The evaluation of the Danish support to WASH over a 30-year period finds that Danish aid had contributed to increasing the delivery of safe water to Uganda's rural population, with coverage increasing from 20 per cent in 1990 to 70 per cent in 2017, despite the high population growth rates during the period. However, the evaluation concludes that, in the area of sanitation, Danish support did not deliver satisfactory results (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark 2019).

Governance, Civil Society and Human Rights

Despite major achievements in key areas of development that have contributed to the overall modernisation of Uganda, there are still challenges in the area of political rights, civil liberties, and economic, social and cultural rights. One example of violation of rights is the Anti-Homosexuality Act of 2014, which stipulates lifetime prison for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) persons. Donors such as the US, the WB, Denmark, the Netherlands, Sweden and Norway reacted to the Act by imposing economic sanctions, postponing loans or halting aid.

Another example is the CSO law and registration rules and procedures, which have increasingly become restrictive. This has mainly affected vocal rights advocacy organisations, which have also been under direct or indirect attack from the Government and are often seen as partisan actors or members of the opposition. The authorities typically do not use the Civil Society legislation to close down organisations, but rather refer to more general criminal laws, such as the Public Order Management Act or the Anti-Terrorism

Act. Whereas arrests are frequent, prosecutions and convictions are rare (Norad 2018).

CSOs constitute a relatively important channel for ODA, and important donors in this area are Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Ireland and the UK. Two evaluations of projects supported by Norway and Denmark respectively reveal different results. The evaluation of the Norwegian support to the five largest Norwegian CSOs in Uganda concludes that although some good results were found, there were clear deficiencies in almost all partnerships. This seems to derive from a weak understanding of what constitutes a civil society. Hence, the term “civil society” appeared to be used as an “attractive” or “progressive” term by the project, but operational plans for how to strengthen civil society at various levels had not been worked out. In contrast, the evaluation of Danida-supported CSOs in Uganda finds evidence that the Danish support has contributed to strengthening civil society. In particular, the support to capacity development, advocacy and networking is deemed to be an important pathway to achieving a stronger, more independent, diverse civil society. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark 2013). Fraud has also been an issue in relation to the support to

CSOs. In 2017, for instance, several donors terminated their support to International Alert, a local CSO, following massive financial mismanagement.

In 2005, pursuant to an invitation from the Government, OHCHR established the Uganda Country Office. The initial mandate of the office was to monitor the situation in Northern Uganda and Karamoja, and this was extended in 2009 to cover the entire country (OHCHR 2019). The evaluation of the work of OHCHR in Uganda concludes that the strong and mutually-valued collaboration at field level with the Uganda Human Rights Commission, as well as the effective targeting and interactions with CSOs and the establishment of platforms for discussion and action, have been valuable. The report further establishes that the continued presence of international organisations in post-conflict situations could make a difference for local actors, but that there would be a need for alternatives to the training of Human Rights Defenders. Hence, although some national capacity in promotion and protection of human rights has been developed, there are still serious challenges - for instance, for CSOs and the LGBT community.

Agriculture and Climate Change

National food production does not currently keep pace with the population growth, and this means that Uganda is increasingly becoming a net importer of food. The population forecast, therefore, strongly underlines the urgent need for investment in commercialisation and modernisation of the country’s agricultural sector. The ambition of the Government is by 2040 to have transformed the agriculture sector from subsistence farming to a profitable, competitive and sustainable commercial agriculture, which can provide food, jobs and income security to the Ugandan people (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark 2016).

Multilateral organisations such as the International Fund for Agriculture (IFAD) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), bilateral donors like USAID and Danida, and a high number of international CSOs (e.g. Oxfam, CARE, and DanChurchAid) have supported agriculture and climate change projects in Uganda. Agribusiness and value chain development are important components of commercialisation and modernisation of agriculture in Uganda. As an example, Danida (with other donors) supported value chain

National food production does not currently keep pace with the population growth, and this means that Uganda is increasingly becoming a net importer of food.

development – more specifically, the Agribusiness Initiative Trust (aBi Trust), which targeted farmer organisations, small-medium enterprises (SMEs) and farmers. An evaluation of the support to the Trust finds that it provided a strong platform and continued support to agribusiness development through its combination of financial and technical assistance-supporting mechanism and multi-donor set-up. Short-term increases in production levels, employment and income within the targeted value chains were significant, and food security was improved. There were, however, strong indications of negative impacts on agricultural production from climate change (rain patterns and intensity) and from a declining natural resource base (soil quality, forest, water), which underlined the urgency for developing systemic “green growth” solutions to the agricultural value chains (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark 2016).

One example of a successful climate change project was the multi-donor project “Global Climate Change Alliance (GCCA) – Uganda: Agricultural Adaptation to Climate Change”, funded by the EU, Ireland and Belgium. The final evaluation finds that the project has been successful in increasing awareness and

engagement in climate change mitigation, as well as in developing and implementing a key institutional framework to sustain climate change processes at international and national levels. Moreover, the project has contributed to an important move towards resilience of agricultural production systems (FAO 2017).

Recovery of Northern Uganda

ODA to the recovery of Northern Uganda was re-programmed after the 2012 fraud, from budget support to project interventions, pooled (basket) funding and, to some extent, Results based financing (RBF). Two examples of the re-programmed interventions in the North are presented in a youth project and an RBF programme, both funded by DFID.

Youth employment is a major challenge in the Northern region. The recovery and rehabilitation of the region following the 20-year civil war is compromised by the high population growth rate. DFID commissioned an evaluation of two youth programmes: the Youth Development Programme (YDP), managed by Voluntary Service Overseas, and the Northern Uganda Youth Entrepreneurship Programme (NUYEP), implemented by

Enterprise Uganda and Youth Business International. The purpose of the evaluation was to identify the most effective approach to youth employment. The Youth Development Programme targeted youth with upskilling programmes to increase their ability to qualify for employment opportunities and to reduce the high reliance on subsistence agriculture. The Entrepreneurship Programme focused on building capacity of entrepreneurs, targeting anyone interested, but self-selecting for “high-flyers” willing to invest their time and money to improve their skills. The evaluation concludes that the best possible solution with the highest return on investment would be to create synergies - that is, creating a synergised programme whereby the young people who graduated from the Youth Development Programme vocational institutions then enrolled in the Entrepreneurship Programme to expand their entrepreneurial skills-base (DFID 2016).

Another challenge in the post-conflict Northern region is the health situation, both in terms of the poor health status of the population and in the low capacity of the local government to provide health services. Following the partial exit from budget support in 2012, DFID funded an RBF programme, where financing was based

on achieving pre-agreed quantitative targets of service provision. An evaluation aimed at identifying the most efficient financing mechanism compared RBF with a more traditional finance mechanism (Input-Based Financing). On the basis of the scorecard methodology and testing quality of care, use of services, affordability of services, and disease burden, the evaluation finds that the RBF approach has been more effective (DFID 2015).

Resilience, Food & Nutrition Security

ODA in the area of resilience, food and nutrition security primarily targets two groups of beneficiaries: 1) Agro-pastoralist and pastoralists in Karamoja; and 2) refugees in refugee settlements and host populations in the South West, North West and Northern regions.

The Karamoja sub-region in north-eastern Uganda has been one of the world’s poorest areas, with a population depending on food aid for over 50 years. The major ongoing challenges are recurrent droughts, floods, and prolonged dry spells undermining the already limited resources and vulnerable pastoral livelihoods. A high number of bilateral and multilateral

The Karamoja sub-region in north-eastern Uganda has been one of the world’s poorest areas, with a population depending on food aid for over 50 years.



Food distribution by World Food Programme in Karamoja.
Photo by Waine Conradi / Picturingafrica.com

donors (e.g. FAO, World Food Programme (WFP), DFID, USAID), as well as CSOs (e.g. Concern, DanChurchAid) have provided support to Karamoja through interventions such as emergency humanitarian aid (e.g. food aid/cash transfer), livelihood programmes, food security and nutrition programmes, and school feeding. DFID, for instance, funded a resilience programme implemented by WFP. The evaluation of the programme found that land had been successfully rehabilitated for productive use, thereby enhancing resilience to drought, creating livelihood opportunities through provision of water for crop production, and successfully addressing gender equality issues. Nevertheless, sustainability was an issue due to the short nature of the project (3 years) and lack of resources of the sub-county organs (WFP 2016).

ODA to the 1.2 to 1.3 million refugees in refugee settlements in the South West, the North West and the Northern regions primarily included food and nutrition interventions in the form of food or cash aid (WFP) and nutrition interventions (UN Children Fund, UNICEF/WFP) targeting mothers and malnourished children. The WB has also provided significant support (USD 150 million) to refugees and host communities in order

to improve access to basic social services, expand economic opportunities, and enhance environmental management. Other (smaller) ODA interventions include WASH, child protection, livelihoods and cash-based interventions, environment and energy management, market development, and financial services. As an example, the evaluation of the interventions of an CSO consortium led by Mercy Corps in three settlements in north-western Uganda finds positive results in terms of access to adequate WASH services and increased income through agriculture and income-generating activities of refugees and host communities. The creation of synergies between the organisations within the consortium (Save the Children, CARE, Oxfam, and DanChurchAid) is mentioned as one of the factors contributing to the achievement of the targets (Mercy Corps 2019). In a refugee settlement in south-western Uganda, the evaluation of Action Africa Help interventions finds substantial bottlenecks (e.g. access to agricultural input) that required a multi-sector and multi-organisational response. Moreover, despite a growing momentum of interventions by partners in environmental management and energy-saving technologies, the main energy sources in the refugee settlements remained firewood and charcoal,

which depleted the existing natural resource base within and outside the settlements (Action Africa Help, UNHCR 2017). Japan played a role in enhancing the administrative capacity of local governments in the communities hosting refugees in Northern Uganda, which benefited the local residents and contributed to stabilisation (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 2017).

The refugee settlements have also been affected by fraud. For instance, DFID and Germany froze their support to UNHCR as an audit report concluded that the UN agency had mismanaged donor funds in 2016/2017. In 2018, fraud was also observed in relation to exaggeration of the number of refugees, involving government officials, WFP and UNHCR. This led to the introduction of the biometric system in all refugee settlements to prevent fraud through the creation of fake names.

Gender as a Cross-Cutting Issue

The main cross-cutting issue covered by the sampled evaluations is gender. Hence, in spite of efforts by the Government and other stakeholders towards improvement of the status of women and the promotion

of gender equality, most women in Uganda still face a wide range of challenges, including discrimination, low social status, lack of economic self-sufficiency, high illiteracy levels, and greater risk of HIV/AIDS infection. Nevertheless, although the majority of the projects and programmes included mainstreaming of gender (as presented by the evaluations), in many cases this appeared to be an add-on, rather than truly integrated/mainstreamed gender activities/components. At the same time, the evaluations rarely present a thorough analysis of the gender aspect; in most cases, just a few lines had been dedicated to this aspect.

In a few cases, however, gender was fully or partially mainstreamed into the projects/programmes. One example is the DFID-funded “Enhancing Resilience in Karamoja Programme”, implemented by WFP. According to the evaluation, gender equality issues were addressed, and gender was mainstreamed through a livelihood-based approach recognising gender differences in roles, access to and control of assets. Women were empowered by being involved in the decision-making process at community level (WFP 2016). This project thus represented an almost ideal mainstreaming of gender. Moreover, the evaluation

of the entire WFP country portfolio finds that, in several areas, WFP succeeded in targeting women as beneficiaries of various activities. However, these mainly focused on women’s participation and not on gender-based roles, division of labour and decision-making regarding access to and control of resources (WFP 2014).

In the case of two evaluations selected in the field of agriculture and climate change, both find gender to have been partially mainstreamed (integrated). Thus, the multi-donor project “GCCA – Uganda: Agricultural Adaptation to Climate Change” showed positive gender results, which were not initially designed; this was reflected in a more equitable distribution of tasks (FAO 2017). In the case of Danida support to value chain development, the support to the Agribusiness Initiative Trust included a cross-cutting “gender for growth” sub-component. This was aimed at integrating gender equality in each of the sub-components, and included a fund that piloted an innovative gender-equality approach in agriculture. The evaluation generally finds the gender growth sub-component to have been successful (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark 2016).

Lessons

The reviewed ODA has been found to be relevant and well-aligned with national policies/strategies and has, in most cases, been effective in delivering the expected results. On the downside, the evaluations point to the need for more focus on climate change, strengthening sustainability, improving gender mainstreaming, enhancing coverage of civil society interventions, and achieving adequate monitoring.



Young mother on her way to school through a UNICEF project designed to get young mothers back into education. Photo by Ken Opprann / Norad

STRENGTHS

The reviewed evaluation reports show projects and programmes that are relevant and have been well-aligned with the national policy framework (e.g. the 2040 Vision and the National Development Plans), as well as with sector policies and strategies, and beneficiary needs. Moreover, the majority of projects and programmes evaluated are found to have been effective in achieving the objectives and delivering the expected results as defined in their monitoring frameworks.

In terms of specific project approaches, CSO interventions in refugee settlements should be highlighted. The “Multi-sector Assistance to South Sudanese Refugees and Uganda host communities in Bidibidi, Palorinya and Rhino camps” project proved particularly effective due to its multi-organisation and multi-sector approach - including livelihood, WASH, and child protection interventions (Mercy Corps 2019).

Lastly, the prompt and united response of the donor community to the case of fraud within the Office of the Prime Minister in 2012 deserves to be emphasised, as it showed a high level of donor collaboration and coordination.

WEAKNESSES

Whereas some weaknesses were related to deficiencies in the design and implementation of projects and programmes, others were largely outside the control of development partners. The main negative factor beyond their control was the case of fraud within the Office of the Prime Minister in 2012. Apart from leading to the partial exit from budget support and a change of the aid architecture and budget, it also led to a breakdown of the donor-government dialogue structure, reduced government involvement in donor programmes, and a weakening of donor harmonisation.

Weaknesses in the design and/or implementation of the sampled projects/programmes include, for example, gender mainstreaming. Furthermore, sustainability was an issue for several projects and programmes due to the short-term nature of the interventions, lack of clear exit strategies, lack of resources at government level, and/or frequent changes in leadership at local government level. The latter two points were outside the control of the development partners. Cases in point are WASH, livelihood, and child protection projects in the refugee settlements and Karamoja (WFP 2016, Mercy Corps 2019).

Sustainability was an issue for several projects and programmes due to the short-term nature of the interventions, lack of clear exit strategies, lack of resources at government level, and/or frequent changes in leadership at local government level.



A local savings and lending group composed of both South Sudanese refugees and their host community hold a weekly meeting inside the Rhino Refugee Settlement in the West Nile region, August 2017. Photo by Edward Echwalu / EU / ECHO / Flickr

Shortcomings also surfaced with regard to the support to civil society interventions due to the limited scope and coverage of interventions and weak or missing wider effects. Some country programmes were also deemed to be thinly spread (or lacking in quantity) and inadequately linked with other relevant development programming. Lastly, monitoring is found to be inadequate in several cases (primarily, the tracking of the outcome-level progress), while output monitoring is regarded as being more satisfactory.

GAPS

Gaps occur in relation to the overall development co-operation with Uganda. The need for rethinking the humanitarian assistance to refugee settlements is urgent. WFP provides food aid and, more recently, cash to all refugees in the settlements, but with no or limited consideration of the economic status of the refugee household. Some of the oldest refugee settlements have developed into small townships, with shops, restaurants, tailors, barbers and other types of business run by the refugees. One example is the Nakivale refugee settlement established about 20 years ago in South West Uganda. In this settlement in particular, the Somali and Congolese refugees have been successful in

developing various types of business, and some refugees have become quite affluent (also, as compared to the Ugandan host community). This is in sharp contrast to, for instance, the deprived South Sudanese refugees who arrived more recently into settlements in North West Uganda. Nevertheless, there is limited/no distinction between the different groups of refugees with regard to the food aid/cash provided. There is thus a need for a more differentiated approach to humanitarian assistance (food aid/cash) to refugees depending on their economic situation in order to ensure better and just use of resources, and also in relation to the host community.

In Uganda, the fast-growing population is one of the main challenges for economic development and the persistent problem of poverty and food and nutrition security. Nevertheless, family planning has received limited attention from the international donor community. This is despite the fact that the Ministry of Health in 2014 launched the Family Planning Costed Implementation Plan (CIP) with the aim of increasing the use of modern family planning methods, from 26% of married women in 2011 to 50% by 2020. The health sector in Uganda is, to a large extent, dependent on donor funding, and hence family planning is an area

where the international community could play an important role.

LOOKING AHEAD

While Uganda is aspiring to become a middle-income country by 2040, the need for international assistance is still immense, not least in the social sectors and in the refugee settlements. The need for international assistance is likely to grow due to reduced economic growth in Uganda as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, donor countries have also been affected by the global recession, and thus it is not very likely that ODA will increase. Supported interventions have already been suspended or postponed during the corona virus crisis.

In addition, the relationship and collaboration between donors and the Government are still suffering from the 2012 fraud and the human rights situation. Apart from dealing with the consequences of the pandemic, the challenge for the Government in the coming years will be to “repair” its relationship with donors and to regain their trust. To a large extent, this will depend on the Government’s actions in relation to human rights (for instance, with regard to LGBT persons and, probably

more importantly, whether new cases of fraud within the Government will occur.

The review of the evaluations reveals the strengths and weaknesses of specific interventions and sectors and points to numerous challenges to be tackled. The massive use of wood and charcoal has caused deforestation and deterioration of the natural resource base in the refugee settlements and in the areas of the host communities. This is further aggravated by the fact that the settlements are located in the most environmentally vulnerable areas. High priority should thus be given to project interventions in this area. Other evaluations (e.g. in the agricultural sector) also highlight the need for increased focus on environment in the form of “green growth” solutions in agricultural value chains, due to the strong indications of the negative impact of climate change on agricultural production. Humanitarian assistance to refugees (food aid/cash) also requires in-depth assessment of their needs, depending on the socio-economic position, in order to adopt a more differentiated approach.

The need for international assistance is likely to grow due to reduced economic growth in Uganda as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Methodology

This evaluation brief presents the synthesised main findings of 26 evaluations and reviews published since 2013 of major donor-funded programmes and large projects in Uganda.



Vendors uphold physical distance from one another at the Nakasero market in Kampala due to COVID-19, April 2020. Photo by Badru KATUMBA / AFP / NTB



Mukono Highway Motorgarage, UNIDO. Student on her way to get her Diploma in mechanics, Mukono 2009. Photo by Ken Opprann / Norad

The evaluations reviewed for the brief were identified through a systematic search of global development co-operation databases, websites and report databases of individual multilateral and bilateral donors and CSOs. Through this search, a total of 62 evaluations were found, and subsequently narrowed down to 26 with the help of certain selection criteria. The selection of the 26 reports was made to ensure that: a) the main sectors and areas for development co-operation are covered; b) a good balance between different sources and channels of ODA exists; c) the evaluations are of a high scientific quality, and d)

a good mix of evaluations commissioned by large bilateral donors, multinational organisations and major international CSOs is achieved. While this approach resulted in a balanced sample, the fact that the evaluation briefs are, by definition, based on evaluations constitutes a degree of limitation, as the available reports do not always cover all crucial areas of development co-operation and development challenges. To mitigate these limitations, the evaluation brief also draws on a small number of relevant policy studies, government publications, and other types of assessment.

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Abbreviations

ADB	African Development Bank	OECD CRS	OECD Creditor Reporting System
AIDS	Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome	OHCHR	Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights
CCM	Chronic Care Model	PPP	Purchasing Power Parity
CSO	Civil Society Organisation	RBF	Results-Based Financing
DFID	K Department for International Development	UK	United Kingdom
EU	European Union	UN	United Nations
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization	UNDP	UN Development Programme
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment	UNFPA	UN Population Fund
GCCA	Global Climate Change Alliance	UNHCR	UN High Commissioner for Refugees
GDP	Gross Domestic Product	UNICEF	UN Children's Fund
GNI	Gross National Income	US	United States (of America)
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus	USAID	United States Agency for International Development
IDP	Internally Displaced Person	USD	US Dollar
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army	WASH	Water, sanitation and hygiene
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender	WB	World Bank
ODA	Official Development Assistance	WFP	World Food Programme
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development		

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Cover photo Walter Astrada / AFP / NTB

Ugandan women work a plot of land in the hills surrounding the Rwenzori mountains near Bundibugyo in western Uganda on May 22, 2009. In 1906, Mount Speke, one of the highest peaks on the range was covered with 217 hectares of ice, according to the Climate Change Unit at Uganda's ministry of water and environment. In 2006, only 18.5 hectares remained. For the people of Bundibugyo who rely on agriculture to survive, temperature increases have changed their lives dramatically.

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