



# FEED THE FUTURE

The U.S. Government's Global Hunger & Food Security Initiative

## Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index



### CASE STUDY PROFILE

#### Peace, Uganda

Peace is a 40-year-old mother of four and member of the Parabong Pariiya tribe. After the death of her husband, she returned to her father's home village in the Kole District of northern Uganda and built two thatched huts for herself and her family. She farms two gardens in order to provide for them. While her dwelling is clean, she cooks with firewood, which can severely damage lungs over time.

Peace decided against remarriage after her husband died 15 years ago because she did not want to increase the size of her family and thus the number of mouths to feed. While her husband was alive, the couple worked side-by-side, but Peace never saw any of the money from the sale of their crops. Since his death she has seen a number of improvements to her life, especially in terms of control over spending and asset ownership. "When my husband was around he was a miser," she says. "He never shared any income from our hard work with his family, but now that I am alone I have control and easy access to the assets."

She feels that her most valuable household asset is land for farming. As a single parent, Peace owns all of her household's assets, which is very important to her since this guarantees her rights. She says that in a two-parent household, assets should be owned by both husband and wife.

As a long-time farmer, Peace is focused on growing sufficient food to feed her children and pay school fees. Providing a solid education for her children is a big priority, and she chooses crops that she describes as "very good at bringing enough income to help us survive." She would like to purchase goats to help pay for her children's education and serve as a form of savings. Peace herself completed only the sixth grade and left at the age of 11 because her family had insufficient funds to send both the girls and boys in the household to school.

In terms of time allocation, Peace works every day in the garden, which she enjoys. By the end of the day, she feels tired and hungry, however. In time, she would like to produce additional crops, including groundnuts and *sim sim* (sesame). Peace believes that the most important areas in which she makes deci-

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sions are farming and planting, but she discusses planting choices with other family members. Her children help her with sorting the crops.

During the two decades of conflict in northern Uganda, Peace was forced to temporarily relocate to one of the country's internally displaced persons camps, where she borrowed money and made use of free food and saucepans distributed by aid workers in order to care for her children. Although she is now settled again, she says, "We are still finding our footings because we are just from turbulent times."

In Peace's community, the local council administrator makes the most important decisions. Overall, Peace defines leadership as the ability to work well with people, have confidence, and display both impartiality and honesty. Holding positions in various community groups, Peace sees herself as a leader, interacting with other community members as she shares ideas and works to unite them. Peace would like others to recognize her hard and fruitful work.

Peace's church helps to motivate her in her agricultural work, and one day she hopes to start a petty trade business and to plant rice in order to increase her household's income. In the longer term, she hopes to maintain her health and for her children to pass their exams.

Peace believes that empowerment requires hard work and self-motivation. She describes an empowered individual as someone who can "sustain him- or herself...stand on her own. Such a person should be one who can plan for himself, one with vision." Peace thinks that those empowered in their agricultural activities do not need to borrow from others, having sufficient assets, such as livestock, to sell in times of crisis. She describes her own experience of empowerment: "I started owning my gardens where I would plant sorghum—then I saw my children were now looking good and I could meet their basic needs. You see, the sole responsibility to care for my children is in my hands."

Peace is empowered according to the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index. In the Index diagram, the outer ring identifies the domains. The shaded segments inside represent the indicators in which Peace has adequate achievements.



### Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index

This innovative new tool is composed of two sub-indexes: one measures how empowered women are within five domains, and the other measures gender parity in empowerment within the household. A woman is considered empowered if she has adequate achievements in four of the five domains or in some combination of the weighted indicators that reflect 80 percent total adequacy. Gender parity reflects the percentage of women who are as empowered as the men in their households.