

REIMAGING DEBT IN A FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE

INTRODUCTION



The Executive Director Uganda Debt Network Mr. Patrick Tumwebaze endorsing the Maputo Manifesto 2024 that was launched during the African Conference on Debt and Development organized by UDN in partnership with AFRODAD

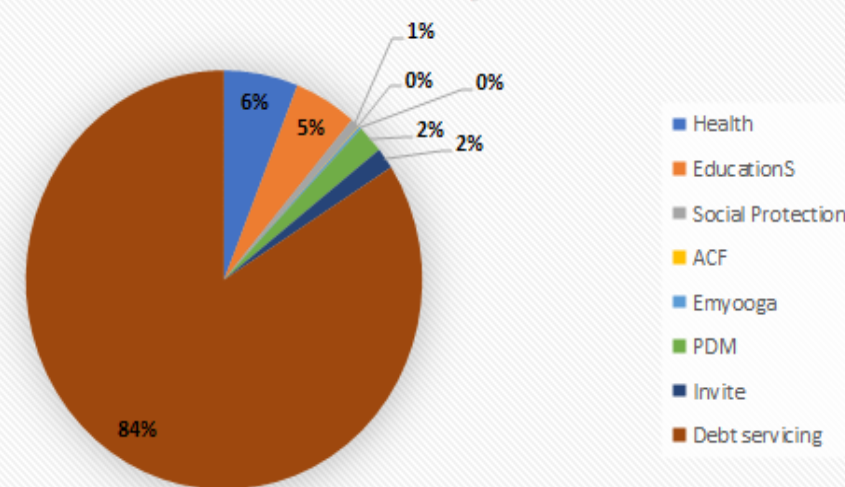
As the global economic landscape continues to shift, it is clear that the feminist movement is reshaping how we understand debt, financial systems, and economic justice. By bringing attention to the gendered impacts of debt and advocating for inclusive reforms. According to MoFPED's Fiscal Risk Statement for the FY 2024/25 Uganda's public debt, mounting to USD 29.1 billion by mid-year 2024/25 has raised alarms among policymakers and citizens alike. While the

economic implications are widely discussed, a critical lens often overlooked is the gendered impact of this debt burden. In a feminist perspective, the current debt architecture not only hampers national development but also exacerbates existing gender inequalities, particularly affecting women and marginalized communities thus challenging the status quo and pushing for a future where the needs of women and the global community as a whole are prioritized.

FEMINIST LENS ON UGANDA'S DEBT

The structure of Uganda's debt heavily reliant on external borrowing for infrastructure projects led to increased debt servicing costs, consuming over 32% of domestic revenue. These financial obligations often result in austerity measures that limit Uganda's social spending and capital investment on critical sectors such as healthcare, education, social welfare and Agriculture. Women, who predominantly rely on these services, bear the brunt of such cuts. The diversion of resources from social services to debt repayment disproportionately affects women, who are more likely to be employed in the informal sector and have limited access to

Share of Investment in women focused sectors vis-a-vis debt servicing in FY2024/25



Credit: UDN Publication

financial resources. This dynamic mirrors concerns raised in the Maputo Manifesto which calls for dismantling neoliberal economic models that deepen gendered and racial inequalities Uganda's debt system is not merely an economic issue but a political one that perpetuates patriarchal structures. The prioritization of debt repayment over social spending reflects a broader global financial system that often neglects the needs and rights of women. This approach fails to consider the unpaid care work predominantly undertaken by women, which is essential for the economy but remains undervalued and unsupported.



Participants Endorsing the Maputo Manifesto 2024 during the African Conference on Debt and Development organized by UDN in partnership with AFRODAD

CALL FOR ACTION

There is need to conduct a gender impact assessments for all borrowing decisions and ensuring that debt servicing does not undermine the realization of women's rights. Moreover, there is a growing call for debt cancellation or restructuring, particularly for loans deemed illegitimate or odious, to free up resources for investment in gender-equitable development.

CONCLUSION

Reimagining Uganda's debt through a feminist lens is not just about addressing financial imbalances but about challenging and transforming the structures that perpetuate gender inequality. It calls for a comprehensive approach that integrates gender justice into economic policies, ensuring that development benefits all citizens, especially women. As Uganda navigates its debt challenges, incorporating feminist perspectives into economic planning and policy-making is essential for building a just and equitable society.

Media links

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X4FMvdyC7c>
- <https://nilepost.co.ug/news/256177/uganda-debt-network-launches-maputo-manifesto-to-amplify-african-women-call-for-economic-justice>
- <https://nilechronicles.com/uganda-hosts-5th-african-conference-on-debt-and-development-launches-maputo-manifesto-for-economic-sovereignty>
- <https://youtu.be/zPD84xQMNI?si=dUQs12hNRJig1dC>
- <https://afrodad.org/afromedi/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Maputo-Manifesto-AfCoDD-IV.pdf> - Maputo Manifesto 2024

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