



# Association of Real Estate Agents of Uganda

CASE STUDY FACT SHEET



Photo: Association of Real Estate Agents of Uganda

*Decades of political instability has disrupted Uganda's real estate system considerably. Conflict has stalled real estate investment and led to the displacement of many families. When formerly-displaced persons return home, they often face land and property disputes. The **Association of Real Estate Agents of Uganda (AREA)**, in partnership with the **International Real Property Foundation (IRPF)**, is addressing these issues by providing strategic technical assistance, resources, and training to women. This gender focus has empowered Ugandan women in real estate and strengthened the sector as a whole.*

## BACKGROUND

Volunteers for Economic Growth Alliance (VEGA) member the **International Real Property Foundation (IRPF)** has partnered with AREA of Uganda, to provide strategic planning, management, fund-raising, and technical skill-building to work towards professionalizing the country's real estate sector.

Gender integration has been a fundamental part of the IRPF-AREA approach to professionalizing the real estate industry in Uganda, while meeting women's real estate needs and supporting their professional opportunities. In 2012, AREA-Uganda and IRPF initiated a Women's Real Estate Conference to provide skills training and encouragement for women to become real estate agents. Real estate professional volunteers from the U.S. served as presenters and workshop trainers.

In 2013, AREA-Uganda's second annual Real Estate Conference and Expo in Kampala, Uganda, attracted participants, both women and men, with the theme "Empowering Women's Property Rights and Strengthening the Regulatory Framework." Real estate professionals from the U.S. joined Ugandan private sector and government professionals as volunteer presenters and trainers on women's property rights and on two pieces of real estate legislation currently pending in Uganda.

## FAST FACTS

**Program Name:** Association of Real Estate Agents of Uganda (AREA)

**VEGA Lead Member:** International Real Property Foundation (IRPF)

**Years Implemented:** 2010 - Present

**Country:** Uganda

## IMPACT

The real estate sector has been traditionally viewed as “male,” but with the organizational strengthening of AREA through its partnership with IRPF, and its increased visibility through the Annual Real Estate Conference, women are increasingly seeking membership in AREA as well as training and assistance in forming own businesses. The 2012 conference had 73 participants (70% women); the 2013 conference had 90 participants (50% women). Public awareness and acceptance of women’s roles in the sector has risen, implicitly challenging gender stereotypes. AREA and IRPF are discussing future ways to gather data and create indicators for measuring gender impact.



Photo: Association of Real Estate Agents of Uganda

The IRPF-AREA partnership also exemplifies successful implementation of several USAID goals, such as building the capacity of women to participate in real estate market activities (push factors) while mobilizing support among public and private sector actors for legislation and policy solutions to professionalize these markets, generating opportunities and demand for services (pull factors).

## LOCAL CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

A key result with respect to local capacity development of gender integration was the AREA’s first Annual Real Estate Conference in Uganda, with presentations and training workshops by IRPF’s network of volunteer professionals. In November 2013, AREA’s second Annual Real Estate Conference focused on strengthening real estate policy and expanding women’s property rights, with presentations by U.S. real estate professionals as volunteers, organized and facilitated by IRPF, followed by provocative question-and-answer sessions.



### LESSONS LEARNED

Several factors contributed to the success of the IRPF-AREA partnership for capacity development on gender integration. First, it was initiated and led by the local partner. Second, it was implemented through a high-level collaboration of the AREA-Uganda CEO and the IRPF Managing Director. A third factor is that local capacity development is fundamental to the IRPF model in all of its work, not merely a program design aspect.

## THE VEGA ALLIANCE

The Volunteers for Economic Growth Alliance (VEGA) is the world’s largest member-directed consortium of nonprofit economic growth organizations that designs and delivers high impact programs, incorporating skilled volunteer professionals into its work with donors, philanthropic institutions, private enterprise, and developing country organizations. VEGA was established as a 501(c)3 organization in 2004 through a United States Agency for International Development’s Leader with Associate Award. When it began a decade ago, VEGA was established as a rapid and efficient mechanism that utilized a competitive process to award USAID funding to its member organizations. Now, VEGA continues to champion its model and its alliance members’ breadth of expertise to other partners. VEGA supported the research and publication of this case study as part of its commitment to knowledge management and sharing lessons learned among its member organizations and the international development community.



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