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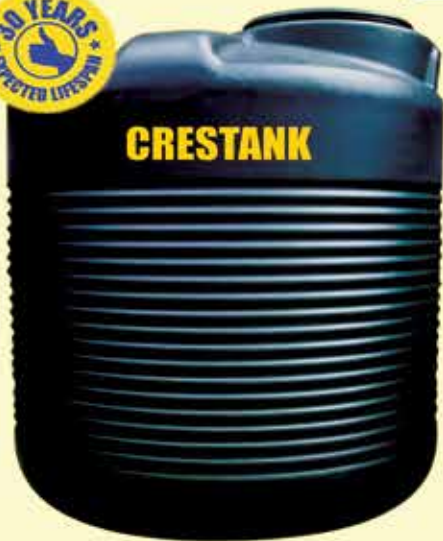
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COVER PHOTO:
A young school girl washes her hands after visiting the toilets

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Ntoroko floods: A ticking time bomb for cholera

By Charles Opolot



It is now over five months since floods burst from the southern part of Lake Albert on the Ntoroko district side and spilled into communities in three sub-counties of Kanara, Bweramule and Kanara Town Council, leaving over 10,000 people have been displaced.

All the affected live in Rwangara, Katunguru, and Kacwankumu camps, where toilets have been submerged, forcing people to practise open defecation in the water they use.

The disaster preparedness state minister, Musa Eweru, who visited the area recently, observed that the standard operating procedures (SOPs) have been so difficult to apply in the camp settings. This, he said, poses a high risk of the community contracting cholera and COVID-19.

“There is a problem here in these camps. The SOPs prescribed by the health ministry are so difficult to implement. Many people are sharing one room, meaning that one person can contaminate the entire place. The COVID-19 risk here is real. There is no functional pit-latrines, which also increases the risk of cholera. We could have a cholera outbreak here any time,” he said.

The minister added: “The Ministry of Health must send water guard tablets immediately. And I have seen water is still flowing towards Rwebisengo, which will also compound the resettlement intervention challenge.”



The cause of the flooding is due to Lake Albert bursting its shores in May, spilling its water, fish and water hyacinth to the communities 15km offshore.

According to the acting district chairperson, Ben Muthahinga, most of Kanara sub-county has been submerged, leaving only Rwangara parish, where flood victims are camping at a health centre because it is on raised ground.

“The people of Kanara sub-county have been surviving on fishing and grazing cattle. Right now all businesses are paralysed. My people need food, shelter, medication and to be relocated to a safer place,” Muthahinga said.

The Ntoroko District Environment Officer, Herbert Kamuhanda, described the situation as ‘a very serious issue’.

“Even if the water stops spilling from Lake Albert and starts receding, it will take about one to two years to resettle on the original shores,” Kamuhanda said.

All roads have been cut off as water has since May slowly spilled onshore, affecting several sub-counties, including four schools.

“The floods have washed away or submerged several facilities. These include a health centre III, four primary schools, roads and latrines. Water schemes and tap stands have

been washed away as well,” said Robert Binta Rwamuhokya, the Senior Planner for Ntoroko District.

“The threat of diseases such as COVID-19, Ebola, cholera and non-communicable diseases that do not have budgets is serious. The central government budgeting process should consider these,” he added.

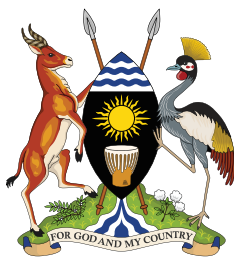
In a bid to solve the sanitation issue, last month, the Government provided some mobile toilets, but they are still lying at the district headquarters at Kibuuku. The reason for their delayed set up is that the authorities have nowhere to put them because of the flood.



The floods have washed away or submerged several facilities. These include a health centre III, four primary schools, roads and latrines.



Commissioning Lirima Phase I GFS at water treatment Plant in Namisindwa District: Commissioner, Rural Water Supply Department, explaining the design to H.E. President Yoweri K. Museveni



MINISTRY
OF
WATER AND ENVIRONMENT

Ministry of Water and Environment

KEY SECTOR ACHIEVEMENTS



Water and Environment is a key sector of the economy because it provides a cushion to all the other sectors by way of providing nearly all inputs in the production processes and human living. Water and Environment sector has the potential to deliver both on growth and socio-economic transformation as envisioned in the Vision 2040 and the National Development Plan.

Broadly speaking, the availability of adequate water resources is a critical catalyst in hydro-power development, agricultural production and productivity, livestock, fisheries, health, industrial development, tourism development and mitigation of climate and climate change effects. Similarly, a healthy, clean and productive environment is essential in boosting wealth creation for social transformation and sustainable development because it reflects the balance between the demand and supply of natural resources on one hand and the absorption and supply of waste products on the other hand in the development process.

In line with the Government commitments (2016-2021), the strategic direction of Water and Environment sector aims at achieving the NRM manifesto aspirations of increasing access to safe and clean water as well as improved sanitation by increasing piped water coverage in both urban and rural areas so that water is brought nearer to the users with at least a source per village. In addition, the sector aims at increasing storage and investment in construction of multipurpose water reservoirs to boost production and productivity in the key sectors of the economy especially agriculture as a dominance source of improved livelihoods, as well as promoting restoration of the degraded ecosystems country-wide through massive tree planting and demarcation of wetlands.

During implementation, the Ministry of Water and Environment worked in collaboration with its stakeholders such as the Local Governments, the regional based deconcentrated structures such as Water and Sanitation Development Facilities (WSDFs) in North, East, Central and South West. The Technical Support Units, the Umbrellas, the Water for Production Regional Centers (North, East, South West), the Environment and Natural Resources coordination centers and Water Management Zones. The following are the key highlights of the registered achievements.

Rural Water Supply and Sanitation

The Government strategy is access to clean and safe water by all the people. In 1986, only 10 percent of the population in the rural areas had access to clean and safe water. The Government set target in 2016 was to increase access to clean and safe water from the 65 percent to 79 percent in rural areas and from 77 percent to 100 percent in urban areas by end of 2021 with the aim of providing a water source in every village. To date, the rural water coverage is estimated at 68 percent while the urban water coverage stands at 70.5 percent. Overall, a total of 38,517 villages representing 66% out of the total 57,974 villages in the country have been served with clean water. So far 41 districts have their water coverage above 80%. In an effort to increase water per village, the government has managed to construct 133,507 various types of water supply facilities comprised of deep boreholes, shallow wells, protected spring, PSP/taps and rain water harvesting tanks serving 28,086,420 people countrywide.

Type of Water Source	Number	Number of Persons Served	Percentage Coverage
Deep Borehole	41,889	12,566,700	44.7%
Shallow wells	21,616	6,484,800	23.1%
Protected Springs	29,214	5,842,800	20.8%
Public Stand Tap (PST)	20,468	3,070,200	10.9%
Rainwater Harvest Tank	20,320	121,920	0.4%
	133,507	28,086,420	100%

An additional delivery of water to 23,910 wards within towns and municipal councils were served in collaboration with National Water and Sewerage Corporation (NWSC) under the SCAP-100 project and Ministry of Water and Environment specific projects.

The government committed itself to drill 5,000 boreholes at a rate of 1,000 boreholes per year in 5 years to be fitted with hand pumps based on their yield. Overall performance has averaged at 846 boreholes per year translating into 84.6% performance. These boreholes have helped serve an extra 253,800 citizens across the country therefore contribution to the realisation of 78 percent rural water coverage countrywide.

In the same commitment, the government pledged to construct 12 Gravity Flow Schemes (GFS). Those already completed include Nyarwodho GFS-Phase II in Nebbi and Pakwach districts, with an estimated production capacity of 4,000 m³/day. The GFS is estimated to serve 85,000 people covering 173 villages in Ndew, Nyaravur, Kucwiny, Alwi, Atego, Panyango and Pakwach sub counties. Others are Bududa-Nabweya GFS

Phase II in Bududa District, Bukwo GFS Phase II in Bukwo District, Rwebisengo Kanara GFS in Ntoroko district, Bukedea Phase I covering Sironko, Kween, Kapchorwa and Bulambuli districts and Bukedea Gravity Flow Scheme Phase II. The Bukedea Gravity system will serve the districts of Kapchorwa, Bulambuli, Sironko, and Bukedea covering 125 villages in total and is expected to connect 2,700 households. Those still under construction include Lirima-Phase II in Manafwa district at 95 percent completion level and Orom in Kitgum district estimated at 60 percent completion level.

There are a number of other on going construction works for piped water supply at different completion levels including Nyabuhikyeye and Kikyenyeye (Ibanda) at 65 percent, Shuuku and Masyoro (Sheema) at 93 percent and Lukalu-Kabasanda (Butambala) at 80 percent, Kahama (Ntungamo) 71.4 percent, Kabuyanda Water Supply system (Isingiro) at 73 percent and rehabilitation of Nyakabingo Gravity Flow Scheme (Rukungiri).

It should be noted that the government through the Ministry of Water and Environment completed the construction of 65 solar powered mini piped schemes across the country while construction 40 solar powered mini piped water schemes is ongoing in various locations across the country.

In addition to the NRM manifesto commitments, the Water and Environment Sector constructed others water supply schemes in the following places (i) Ranch 1 in Kiryandongo designed to serve 16,957 people, (ii) Alere designed for Alere refugee settlement to 5,800 people, (iii) Nyumanzi water supply system in Adjumani district designed for Nyumanzi settlement (iv) Ayilo II Refugee Settlement Piped Water Supply System in Adjumani district designed for a population of 18,339, (v) Rwebisengo-Kanara Gravity Flow Scheme designed to serve 2,500 households and a total of 510 household have been so far connected.

There were also efforts to prepare detailed designs for future construction such as Bwambara-Bugangari (Rukungiri), Nyamugasani (Kasese); Ngoma-Wakyato (Nakaseke), Ogili (Agago) and Potika (Lamwo) and Bitysa water supply scheme in Buhweju district and construction was slated to start in financial year 2020/2021.

Small Towns Water Supply and Sanitation

Government commitment was to increase overall access to safe and affordable water supply in small towns and large towns under National Water and Sewerage Corporation (NWSC) from 77 percent in 2016 to 100 percent by end of 2021. In view of that, Government through the Ministry of Water and Environment continued to invest in construction of piped water supply and sanitation facilities in small towns and rural growth centres based on the regional cluster Water and Sanitation Development Facilities (WSDFs) based in South Western Region, Central Region, Eastern Region and Northern Region. In addition, to the Water Umbrella established in the same areas to ensure equitable access to water in all small towns.

The government also pledged to design and construct 88 piped water supply systems in various towns across the country. By June 2020, designs and construction works for the 30 systems had been undertaken in towns of Bugobya, Bulambuli, Namayingo, Olilim, Kacheri-Lokona, Amudat, Kumi-Nyero-Ngora, Namwendwa, Pabbo, Buyende, Pacego, Pallisa, Rukungiri Municipality, Namagera, Namukora, Nyeihanga, Kambuga, Namwiwa, Bulopa, Kiwoko-Butalangu, Lwemiyaga, Binyiny, Kasagama, Kinuuka, Namagera, Nyahuka, Iziru, Busede-Bugobya, Kayunga-Busana and Kaperabyong to 100 percent completion levels.

In addition, there were additional construction of small towns water supply system in south-western region which include: Kiruhura, Kinoni, Sanga and Kazo (Kiruhura), Kakuuto, Kasensero, Buyamba and Kakyanga (Rakai), Kyempene (Ntungamo), Rutookye (Mitooma), Kinoni & Kashaka-Bubaare (Mbarara), Lyantonde Phase I&II Nyahuka, Kinuuka & Kasagama (Lyantonde), Kabuga & Kahung (Kamwenge), Muhanga (Kabale), Kikagati (Isingiro), Mateete & Ntuusi (Ssembabule), Rwenkobwa (Ibanda), Bugongi (Sheema), Nyeihanga (Mbarara), Gasiiza (Isingiro), Kambuga Phase 1 (Kanungu), Kainja (Kamwenge), Kiko (Kabarole) and Nsiika (Buhweju). While construction for the 5 systems is ongoing and are at different levels of completion.

These include Kagadi (70 percent), Nazigo (65 percent), Kasanda (70 percent, Kagadi (84 percent), Ofua (60 percent). Furthermore, 20 towns have been designed to completion while 29 towns are still under design. Others are: Lwemiyaga (Ssembabule) serving 17 villages with 10,301 people, Buyamba (Rakai) water supply which is designed to serve 7,227 people in Ddwaniro Sub-county. These comprises 5 villages of Buyamba, Dwaniro, Mikoni, Bigando and Kinaawa. All in all 253,399 people have benefited from the water supply out of the 529,871 planned population.

Sanitation

The Government of Uganda has committed to ensuring universal access to sanitation and hygiene services for all Ugandans in rural and urban areas. Efforts have thus been made to increase access to household, public and institutional sanitation and hygiene services. Over the last 5 years, the national sanitation coverage in the rural areas has improved from 77% to 78% while in the urban areas it has increased from 84.6% to 89.9%. Hand washing with soap increased from 34% to 38% in the rural areas and 39% to 61.1% for the urban areas.

Consequently, an additional 1,259,204 people and 1,364,351 people in rural and urban areas respectively have gained access to household sanitation and hygiene services. Relatedly, 2,239 villages have attained Open Defecation Free (ODF) status and an estimated 1,343,400 Ugandans are presumed to be living in Open Defecation Free communities. In order to increase access to institutional and public sanitation, a total of 726 and 1975 latrine/toilet stances have been constructed at schools and public places respectively. This has resulted into an additional 24,000 pupils and 197,500 people gaining access to sanitation services at school and public places respectively.

Relatedly, there has been increased investment in fecal sludge management services through construction of fecal sludge treatment plants based on a fecal sludge clustering approach; and purchase of cesspool emptiers and guppers. This has helped to reduce the haulage distances which cesspool trucks travel between the points of generation to the point of treatment. In the last 5 years, a total of nine fecal sludge management facilities have been constructed by the Ministry in Pallisa, Apac, Kiboga, Nakasongola, and Kamuli, Kasaali, Kayunga, Ishongororo and Dzaipi. On the other hand, national sewerage services have increased to 23%.



National sanitation coverage in the rural areas has improved from 77% to 78% while in the urban areas it has increased from 84.6% to 89.9%.

CSO Performance for the FY 2019/2020

CSO Reporting trends

This report derives its information from submissions made by CSOs on annual investments and activities. 62 submissions were received for input into this FY2019/20 report, equating to 31.1% of total membership reporting. Performance on reporting is much lower than last reporting year, which had 127 submissions¹, the highest number (29) from international NGOs (INGOs). Figure 2-1 presenting a comparative analysis for the two years indicates that there is a significant drop in number of Local NGOs reporting for FY2019/20. This may be attributable to the COVID-19 pandemic that saw a reduction in staff work inputs in some cases and in others, an overwhelming increase in activities to support response requirements.

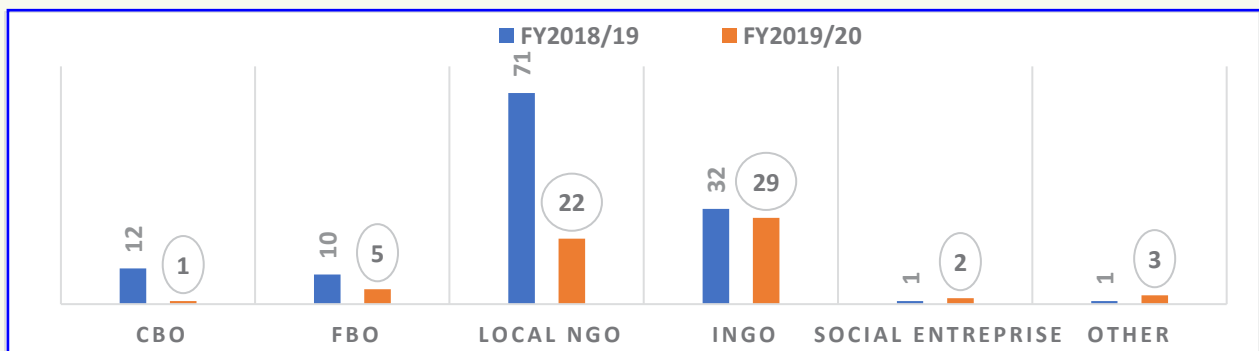


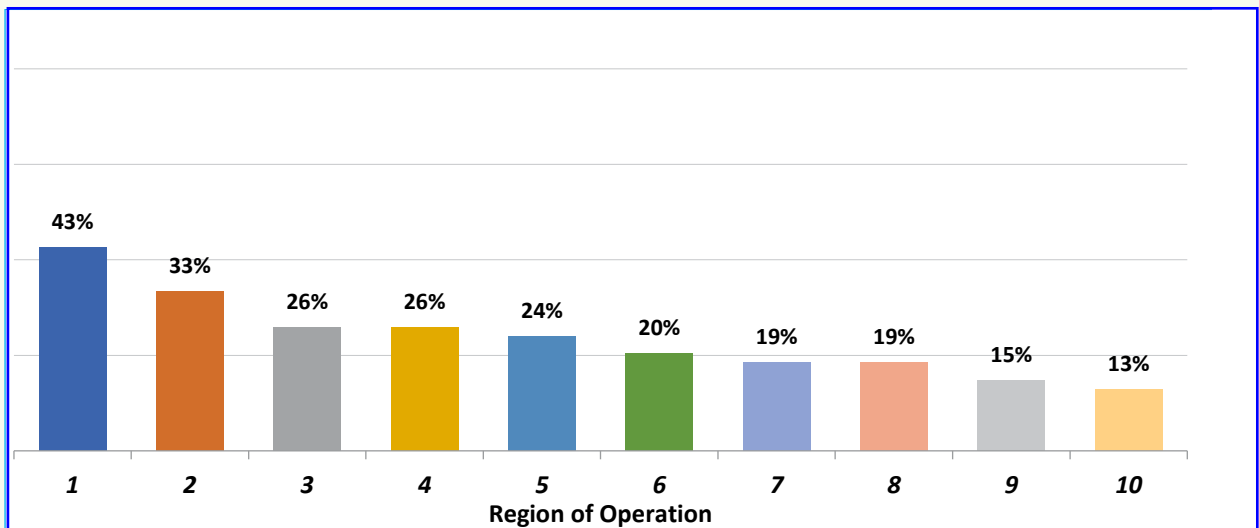
Figure 2-1: CSO reporting trends

CSO Investments in the Water and Sanitation Sub-Sector

Overview of investment in the sector

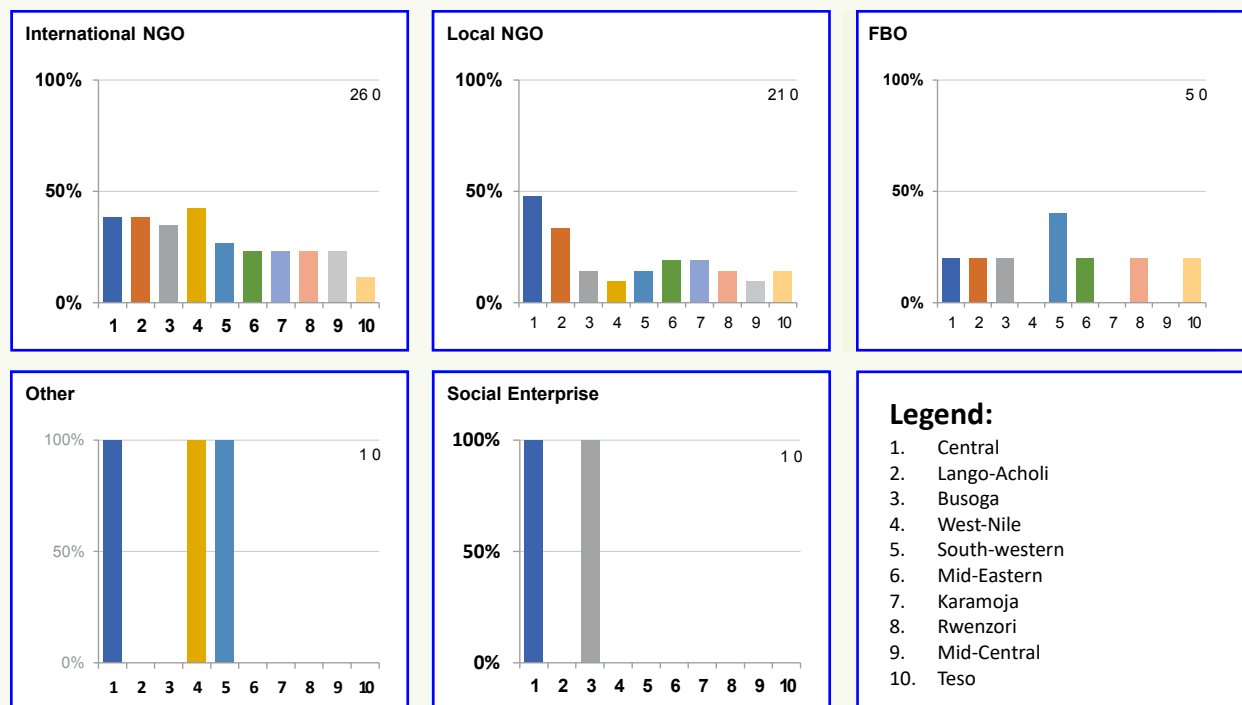
Intervention areas

The reports for this year indicate that CSOs had operations in all the 10 UWASNET regions. The CSO presence is illustrated in geographic distribution of intervention areas, as shown in figure 3-1 indicates that majority of the CSOs had presence in the Central and in the Lango- Acholi regions



¹ This is mainly attributed to the impact of the lock down due to COVID 19. Many CSOs focused on catching up on program work after lock down, and had few staff to undertake the annual reporting. In addition, a new online reporting tool was introduced, it calls for training of CSOs to familiarise themselves with the tool.

Figure 3-1: CSO regional presence – FY 2019/20



A further analysis of the regional presence by CSO category, as presented in the figure above indicates that INGOs and Local NGOs had operations in all the 10 regions. Faith based organizations are operating mainly in the south- western region.

Annual CSO Sector investment

This section presents the investment trends of the annual CSO financing to the Water and sanitation sub-sector as reported by CSOs. Figure 3-2 on the trends of reported investments over the last 5 years indicates a generally upward trend in CSO investment in the sector. Considering that this year fewer CSOs reported (49% of FY2019 submissions), the CSO sector financing has considerably increased. This apparent increase in investment may be attributable to more financing provided to address Covid-19 response requirements.

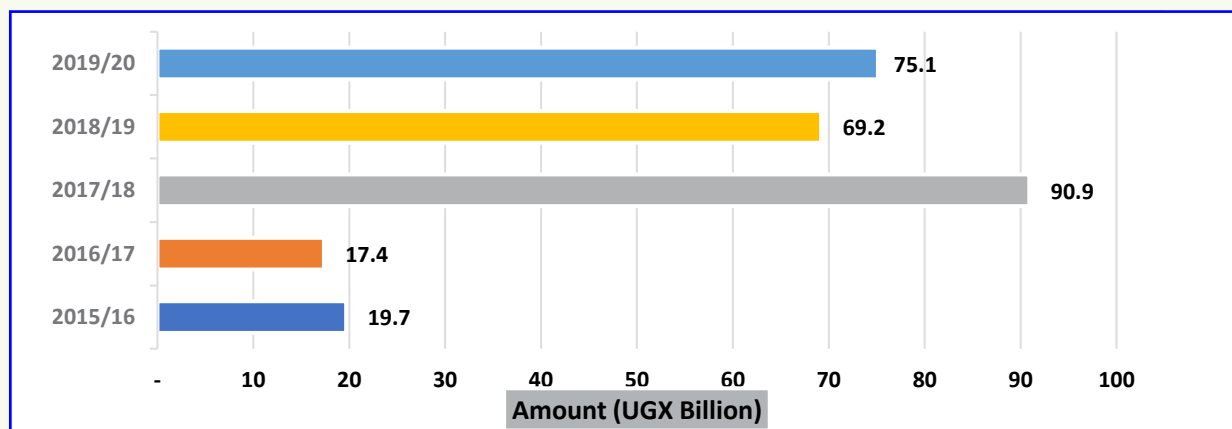


Figure 3-2: CSO total 5-year annual investment trend

Further analysis of the investment across the individual thematic areas, as shown in the figure 3-3 below, indicates that there has been continued investment across the different thematic areas. Water supply and sanitation still account for the largest share of investment by CSOs – this year WASH in emergency is reported as part of the Water supply and sanitation interventions. Overall, there is an increase in investment across the different thematic areas apart from IWRM and research and development (R&D) where a slight decline is reported.



OXFAM

FROM IMPURE RIVER NILE WATER TO SAFE CLEAN TAP WATER: HOW OXFAM PROJECT IS CHANGING LIVES IN MADI-OKOLLO



Zainab Tiperu waits for her jerry cans to fill up at a water kiosk constructed by Oxfam International in Ondiko Trading Centre, Panduku Parish in Madi-Okollo District as part of the Pawor Water System Project.

By Samuel Kamugisha

As a little girl growing up in present-day Madi-Okollo District, Jackline Akongo remembers how her mother used to wake her up at about 4am and send her to fetch water. Her eyes still heavy with sleep, Akongo, her siblings and neighbours' children would walk for about an hour from Lower Parabok in Pawor Sub-County to River Nile to fetch water. "One early morning, I fell off the bridge. I only survived because I knew how to swim; otherwise I would have drowned," she recalls, her mind somewhat distant.

Now aged 35, Akongo returned home from South Sudan to start a food business at Lower Parabok Trading Centre in 2017. And almost three decades since she survived drowning in the Nile, the same water problem that almost cost her life still persisted. "Water was really expensive," she says.

COST OF DOING BUSINESS DOWN

A 20-litre jerrycan of water from the Nile cost Shs700. Akongo needed between 15 and 20 jerry cans per day for her restaurant to enable her to prepare food for her customers. In total, she would part with between Shs10,500 and Shs14,000 to pay commercial motorcyclists (boda bodas) who delivered the water daily.

On days when Jackie was cash strapped, she would send her children to the river, and stay behind, organising the restaurant and praying that none of them veers off the bridge or wades away to the deeper part of the water body in pursuit of clearer water.

Akongo sometimes received complaints from her customers that the water she used exposed them to worm infections. Even when she boiled it, some refused to drink it, insisting it was worm-infested. "They would buy mineral water or go for borehole water," she narrates, as she delivers my order of beef and rice.

But with the UGX:860m Pawor Water Supply System completed in August 2020, Akongo can now breathe a sigh of relief. With funding from the German Government (KFW) channelled through the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), the Pawor Water Supply System was constructed by Oxfam as an alternative source of safer water for the communities in Pawor.

According to Patrick Odong, Oxfam's Public Health Engineering Team Leader in Arua, locals are now assured of a reliable water supply from the 35-cubic-metre capacity system whose borehole is 120m deep. Its 108 cubic-metre tank storage capacity also makes it a dependable water source.

At the pump station, Halima Inzikuru, the attendant, tells me that the system runs on either solar energy or a generator.



Patrick Odong, the Public Health Engineering Team Leader at Oxfam in Arua, at the Pawor Water Supply System pump station.



The Pawor water supply system is the first safe water source to be established in the whole community"



Halima Inzikuru, the Pawor Water Supply System pump station attendant.

SAFE WATER AT AN AFFORDABLE COST

People like Akongo say they have seen a significant change in their lives in the few weeks that tap water has run at the six kiosks scattered across Pawor Sub-County.

Although she had thought the water would be free as is the case in refugee settlements, Akongo says she doesn't mind paying for the safe water. "Even if we are paying for the Oxfam water, the money isn't much," she says.

A 20-litre jerrycan of water goes for Shs50 at each of the water kiosks. Akongo now spends between Shs750 and Shs1,000 for water daily. "They explained to us that they use the money for generator fuel and for maintenance," Akongo recalls.

According to Odong, part of the money also meets wages for pump attendants. These are responsible for opening and closing taps, receiving money from water buyers as well as ensuring safety and cleanliness at the kiosks. Of the total amount earned in the month at the respective kiosk, each attendant gets 15 per cent.

For the project's first six months, Oxfam will pay a token worth Shs250,000 for each of the attendants on a monthly basis, reveals Xavier Odongokara, Pawor Sub-County's Acting Community Development Officer (CDO).

Oxfam and the OPM will then hand over the kiosks to the local authorities, which will start paying attendants. In preparation for that handover, Odongokara says that the Sub-County Water and Sanitation Board will also hire a plumber, a pump station attendant and a meter reader assistant.

Odongokara adds that by the time of handover to the local authorities and partner community organisations, the project will



Xavier Odongokara, Pawor Sub County's Acting Community Development Officer (CDO).

have a manager to oversee it, a bank account for the funds from the water sales and means of transport such as motorcycles for the staff.

These, he hopes, will make it easier to manage the water system and help the community continue to reap the benefits of access to clean and safe water.

Oxfam has assured locals it will connect water to the homes of those who can afford to pay a largely affordable connection fee. But that will not happen until pretests have been done. These will take at least three months, reveals Odongokara. Presently, locals can access clean and safe water at the six kiosks.

Odongokara and other leaders would want more kiosks installed. They are confident the connections would go a long way in promoting the hygiene, sanitation and health of people in the communities.

RELIEF FOR CHILDREN AND WOMEN

Before the taps at the kiosks began flowing with water, the over 13,700 people in Pawor Sub-County either fetched water from the Nile River or scrambled for the same at the three functional boreholes, notes Odongokara.

The three were situated at Pawor Health



Florence Dra-Ecabo, a mother of four, and a hygiene promoter from Payila Village, at Pawor Sub-County Headquarters in Madi-Okollo District.

Centre III, Akavu Primary School and at Mubanda Village. Previously, the sub-county had 17 boreholes but most “got spoilt, some beyond repair,” continues the CDO.

That means that hundreds had to converge at the three functional boreholes for water. For example, three villages shared the borehole at Pawor Health Centre, while the one at Akavu was used by two villages and a school. As a result, most homes opted to use borehole water for drinking and continued trekking kilometres to the Nile to fetch more for domestic use. “The queues at these boreholes would be too long,” Odongokara says.

It was the women and children that braved these long borehole queues and walked miles for the water. “Women go to the river to collect water at dawn, when men are still in bed,” the CDO notes.

He adds that the women then proceed to the fields until after sunset, and most men spend the day away in trading centres playing games and drinking. When they return from the fields, the women are expected to provide bathing water and prepare meals for their husbands. Sometimes, tired from the gardens, women are unable to meet these expectations. The resultant is always quarrels – and other forms of domestic violence.

For example, Florence Dra Ecabo from Payila Village remembers her husband insisting that she first fetches water from the river before heading to the field. But the mother of four says the Oxfam water project has not only significantly reduced the distance she used to trek to a water source from two kilometres to a five-minute walk, “there is now peace in our home.”

For others like Zainab Tiperu, being able to access water a few metres from her home at Ondiko Trading Centre means great relief for her and her 10 children. A seller of food stuffs, Tiperu says she now fetches water



Zainab Tiperu, a mother of 10 children, attends to her food-selling business at Ondiko Trading Centre, Panduku Parish in Madi-Okollo District.

thrice a day instead of the six trips she used to make to the river. “The water is clean and near.”

Odongokara is aware of the woes of women regarding access to water. The sub-county leaders have kept emphasizing the role of men in supporting their families to get clean and safe water.

Mindset change efforts have also been bolstered by Village Health Teams (VHTs) that work closely with Oxfam humanitarian workers. Johnson Thoriek is one of them. He and leaders like Odongokara are guiding and inspiring fellow men to set aside money for water daily. They leave money for daily water collection in their homes, as well as encouraging proper water storage as a measure of improving hygiene at the household.



Washman Innocent Ocama turns on water taps at a kiosk in Ondiko Trading Centre, Panduku Parish in Madi-Okollo District. Waiting to fetch is Zainab Tiperu, a mother of 10 children, who sells food items.



Innocent Thoriek, a hygiene promoter in Pawor Sub-County, Madi-Okollo District.

NOTABLE REDUCTION IN CASES OF VIOLENCE

Akong'o's husband John Bahemuka previously served as a police officer in Pawor. Bahemuka believes there were scores on unreported cases of sexual violence such as rape and defilement at the river.

The country over, reporting of sexual offences remains low due to the stigma victims who come out suffer. He also says some girls and boys would agree to meet at the river in evenings, and the resultant was early pregnancies and marriages.

Odongokara agrees that although the Oxfam water has been flowing for a few weeks now, there has been a significant reduction in gender-based violence related to water issues.

““

Tiperu says she now fetches water thrice a day instead of the six trips she used to make to the river. “The water is clean and near.”



John Bahemuka, a Police Officer who previously served in Pawor Sub-County.

RIVER WATER VERSUS TAP WATER

Odongokara, Thoriek and other leaders and Village Health Teams are still grappling with changing men's attitude. "Some still think that this is a business, and don't see why they should leave free water from the river to pay for tap water," says Thoriek. "We tell them the water at the river is not safe; we encourage them to leave it. We even encourage the fishermen to pack boiled water." Also of concern to sub county leaders, Oxfam health promoters, the water board, user committee and members of Village Health Teams (VHTs) have been the people who live nearer the river bank and "don't see why they should buy water from the kiosk."

A few community members also complain about the saltiness of the tap water but health promoters say their efforts in sensitizing the people that although a bit salty, the water is safer than that drawn from the Nile, are paying off.

Akongo, a restaurant owner in Lower Parabok, says such complaints have reduced since boiling the water lessens saltiness. Odongokara, Thoriek and others continuously emphasize the communities that the moderate saltiness is not harmful to health and that the water is safe for human consumption.

On complaints on the hardness of the water – which means that it leaves stains on clothes – the leaders and health promoters have suggested that community members use detergents like Omo and Nomi to overcome this challenge or fetch water for washing from the river and use the one from the taps for drinking, cooking and bathing.



Akongo serving a customer in her restaurant in lower parabok trading center in pawor sub-county, madi-okollo district

HEALTH IMPROVEMENT

Despite complaints from a few people, those who have consistently used the safe water from the kiosks have reported a change in the health of family members, with water-borne diseases reducing significantly. A father of seven, CDO Odongokara says the river water had exposed his children to water-borne diseases like bilharzia. "I knew tis was happening but we had no alternative source of water, there was noting to do," he recalls.

He has also registered a cut in his family's hospital bill. "Since the Oxfam water water supply system was constructed, my budget for treatment [of water-borne diseases] has reduced," he notes. "A half of my family are now free from infestation, no worm infection, and no scabies."

Owing to the fact that his family members had to walk a long distance to the river, the family would not have enough water for domestic use. For example, he explains, his wife would use one basin of water to bathe about five children. "If one of them had scabies, the others would be infected."

But nowadays, Odongokara leaves home money to buy enough water for his family, and his children no longer have to share the same bath water.

Even Akongo has seen cases of scabies among her children reduce.

LOOKING AHEAD

As they await water connections to homes, sub-county leaders and health promoters are encouraging vital hygiene and sanitation practices. They have taught community members to establish hand washing facilities, drying racks and latrines.

Dra Ecabo, a Village Heath Team member, says she has noticed at least 18 Payila Village members put up such structures in recent months. The leaders and health teams are also working with the water User Committees and the Sub-County water board to ensure that the kiosks and other water sources are kept clean. They also emphasize the importance of using clean jerrycans to fetch and store water. Those who come with dirty jerrycans are turned away, the health promoters I met at Pawor Sub County told me.

According to Odongokara, leaders in Pawor have undertaken efforts to encourage community members who may not afford paying for connections to collect water from their neighbours who will have managed to secure connections in the coming months. And as the CDO puts it, behavioural change is a gradual process, and with access to clean and safe water, the focus will be on how the community can make use of the water kiosks to promote hygiene and sanitation.

HOW OXFAM IS HELPING FIGHT COVID-19 AMONG REFUGEES, HOST COMMUNITIES

By Samuel Kamugisha

It's a hot afternoon in Block C, Zone I of Village I in Imvepi Refugee settlement in Terego District.

At a water source, a handwashing facility has been set up. Every person coming to fetch water is required to wash their hands with water and soap and observe social distance

This community tap stand is one of several that have been constructed with funding from EU Humanitarian Aid (ECHO), to ensure that refugees can access clean and safe water, the community tapstand serves at least 60 households.

The taps are opened twice a day – 8am and 3pm – for the households to collect water. This means congestion during these hours.

To deal with this challenge in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Water User Committee (WUC) marked points where each person collecting water should stand.

The points are one metre apart. It is in this circular demarcation that one is expected to stand as they wait their turn.

This has been the practice since the community heard about Covid19 over the radio.

“We know Covid-19 is a killer disease; that’s why we are encouraging all the households in this settlement to wash hands and keep a distance,” says a member of the Water User Committee.

Teams from Oxfam have been tirelessly sensitizing such committees and various Hygiene Promoters (HPs) on preventive measures as instituted by the Ministry of Health (MoH) and President Yoweri Museveni.

Water User Committee and Hygiene Promoters work closely in ensuring that the water point is clean and that those who come to Collect water thoroughly wash their hands and observe social distance.

“Some people say they are in a hurry, and so they want to observe no social distance but we insist it is for their own good,” says a female member of the Water User Committee.



A woman fetches water at Block C, Zone I of Village I in Imvepi Settlement Camp in Terego District.



A woman washes her hands before proceeding to fetch water at a source at Block C, Zone I of Village I in Imvepi Settlement Camp in Terego District.



Women practice social distance as a Covid19 preventive measure at a water point in Block C, Zone I of Village I in Imvepi Settlement Camp in Terego District.

PARTNERSHIPS

Oxfam has also worked with Community-based Organisations (CBOs) such as Community Action for Transformation (CAFOT) to extend handwashing facilities.

In July 2020, Oxfam extended \$5,000 (just over UGX:18m) to CAFOT to promote hand washing and sensitise people in refugee settlements and host communities on Covid-19 prevention and control measures, reveals Finance Officer Phionah Nassolo.

CAFOT acquired a rechargeable public address system, including megaphones, to sensitize communities. The organisation also purchased handwashing facilities which were installed in trading centres and liquid soap to help community members wash their hands.

Through their partnership with Oxfam, CAFOT has also carried out home visits within the community, educating the household members about Covid preventive measures.

They have also debunked some some misconception about the corona virus. “Some believed that that Corona virus only kills old white people, and that it doesn’t kill Africans because their blood is hot and kills the virus,” says Godfrey Odyomo, the mobilisation and sensitisation focal person from CAFOT.



Community Action for Transformation (CAFOT) Mobilisation and Sensitisation Focal Person Godfrey Odyomo and Programmes Manager Benson Khemis.

“Others said drinking alcohol prevents Covid-19. But we have told them such is not true,” adds Khemis, a South Sudanese refugee.

Khemis and his team have also taught community members on how to make improvised face masks, and set up tippy taps for handwashing at their homes.

The CBO has noticed behavioural change in observance of guidelines like social distance, face mask wearing and hand washing, with people embracing these preventive measures.

“We continue to encourage community members to use face masks, to avoid hugging and handshakes,” says Odyomo.

Situated in Yinga Village, Lugbari Parish, Odupi Sub County of Terego District, CAFOT has also worked with local artistes to compose songs to sensitize people about Covid-19 prevention measures.

HOUSEHOLDS TAKING UP COVID-19 PREVENTION MESSAGES

To understand what they are doing to prevent the spread of Covid-19, I visit two families under the tanks they lead.

At Omugo IV in Terego District’s Rhino Camp Extension, miles away from Yinga Village, another team of Hygiene Promoters working with Oxfam are tirelessly working to protect refugee communities from Covid-19.

Isaac Bidal, Stephen Ezanga and Rose Sunday head four of the 10 tanks (blocks) in Omugo IV, home to just over 5,700 people.

Soro, 50, is a South Sudanese refugee and a father of six. His family has heard about Covid-19 over the radio and from Hygiene Promoters such as Bidali, Ezanga and Sunday.

The path to Soro’s home leads visitors to a handwashing tippy tap: a jerrycan tied on wooden posts and soap.

He and his wife, Florence Leilah, require their visitors to wash their hands before they can offer them seats.

Soro and Leilah have also emphasized the need for regular handwashing to their children.

“I also don’t allow them to make unnecessary movements to the trading centre,” says Soro.

“I gather my children. I don’t leave them to go far,” adds Leilah.

In another home north of the Hygiene Promoters meeting point is Charity Tabu’s home.

A mother of nine, Tabu says she has learnt of Covid-19 through Oxfam Hygiene Promoters. Her children, Lillian Aate, 16, and Rose Opani, 18, take turns listing Covid-19 symptoms and prevention measures.

Like Soro and Leilah, Tabu discourages her children from making unnecessary movements throughout the settlement, and insists on all her visitors washing their hands.

“I have also emphasized to my children the need to report strangers to the block leader,” adds Tabu, from Tank 38.

At all the six Water Supply System kiosks in Madi-Okollo District’s Pawor Sub-County, wash attendants are leading efforts to shield communities from Covid-19.

Implemented by Oxfam, the water system has not only ensured access to safe water for communities, but has also bolstered efforts for hand-washing, a key preventive measure against Covid-19.

At a kiosk at Ondiko Trading Centre in Panduku Parish, wash man Innocent Ocamo requires all those coming to buy water to first wash their hands with soap. He also ensures social distance.

PAWOR KIOSK SOP’S

As workers on the frontline of the fight against Covid-19 Bidali and fellow Hygiene Promoters, Khemis and his team at CAFOT, and Water User Committee members are utilising Oxfam’s support to shield refugee settlements and refugee communities against Covid-19.

But as Bidali tells me, “We have to constantly and consistently keep reminding and encouraging people to take, Ministry of Health guidelines seriously.”



Zainab Tipuru washes her hands before fetching water at a kiosk constructed by Oxfam International at Ondiko Trading Centre, Panduku Parish, in Madi-Okollo District

EQUIPING REFUGEES WITH SKILLS FOR HYGIENE PROMOTION.

By Samuel Kamugisha



Emily Niringiye, Oxfam Humanitarian Communication officer West Nile, and hygiene promoters interact with Water User Committee members of Block C, Zone I, Village I in Ivempi Settlement Camp in Terego District.

While Richard Aloro, 27, was still pursuing a nursing course at MPA Nursing School in Yei State in South Sudan at the end of 2018, fresh fighting broke out, prompting him and his family to seek refuge in Uganda.

Hard as life in refugee settlements might be, Aloro and fellow refugees chose to make a difference in refugee settlements. Through a partnership with local organisation Community Empowerment for Rural Development (CEFORD), Aloro, fellow refugees and members of the host communities undertook training on promoting healthy water, hygiene and sanitation practices in communities.

They are now hygiene promoters (HPs) in the 10 blocks (tanks) in Omugo IV, home to over 5,700 refugees.

Additionally, Aloro did not also give up on his dreams of becoming a health professional. He enrolled at Lira In-service Nursing School to complete his course, and now runs a drug shop in Omugo IV, Zone VII in Rhino Camp Extension in Terego District.

After working for a Ugandan friend he had met in South Sudan (who returned home when fresh fighting broke out two years ago), Aloro started running a drug shop.

His friend offered him the initial stock of drugs, and frequently checks on his progress and guides him.

It is at Aloro's drug shop that I met his fellow Hygiene Promoters; Isaac Bidal, who leads Tank 53; Rose Sunday of Tank 46; and Stephen Ezanga of Tanks 34 and 39.

They list health awareness creation, sensitisation and education as some of the key activities they are involved in.

They have passed on the knowledge and skills acquired from Oxfam training to empower community members.

The Hygiene Promoters have taught people to dig latrines and rubbish pits, erect drying racks and put up handwashing facilities.

They also work closely with water user committees (WUCs) to ensure that water points are clean and safe, that people use clean jerry cans to fetch water, and that fights at the water points are minimised.

Despite challenges such as inadequate water and water sources, the rocky nature of the land that makes it difficult to dig latrines, the Hygiene Promoters have worked with households to ensure that basic hygiene and sanitation facilities are set up.

A few minutes' walk away from Aloro's drug shop, Steven Soro, 50, and his wife Florence Leilah, tell me the Hygiene Promoters and Oxfam were instrumental in the setting up of their latrine, drying rack and rubbish pits.

Leilah says it would have been difficult for her family to put up these structures had Oxfam not donated poles, doors, nails, and other materials.

"The Hygiene Promoters work with us well. They have encouraged hygiene in our home," she says. "They regularly visit us to monitor what we do and advise us on how to improve."

As a result of health education offered by the Hygiene Promoters and their efforts in ensuring that all homesteads have hygiene

and sanitation facilities, Soro tells me he has seen a reduction in the number of diarrhoea cases among his six children.

Soro and Leilah have emphasized handwashing in their home, and ensure their children regularly clean their hands with water and soap.

"When we don't have soap, we use ash," Leilah says, corroborating what the Hygiene Promoters had earlier said about soap alternatives used in this settlement.

The other challenge remains access to water. With water at the available water points inadequate, and sometimes being switched on late, people like Leilah and her children have to walk to other blocks or trek to rivers such as Enyau.

"But the water there is not clean, and the river is far. There are also snakes along the way," she says.

But when she is able to access the water at a nearby safe source, Leilah is a happy woman. She is also willing to participate in the cleaning of the water point.

Leilah praises the Hygiene Promoters and water user committee members for constantly explaining to people who are not willing to take part in water source sanitation activities – instead of using force.

Consequently, she has seen previously unwilling people join the rest of the community in water source cleaning activities.

Despite the challenges at a personal level, the Hygiene Promoters agree that the most important role they can play is to keep community members safe and healthy.

Some of them, like Aloro and Sunday, head families. And they hope to return home safe and sound to rebuild their lives in South Sudan.

For now, as Bidal says, working with Oxfam and CEFORD is a great opportunity to serve the community and ensure refugees like him return home healthy when it is safe to do so.

HOW OXFAM IS EMPOWERING COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS TO PROMOTE PARTNERSHIPS AND THEIR ROLE IN BETTER COMMUNITY HEALTH AND PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE

By Samuel Kamugisha

In implementation of various projects in refugee settlements and host communities, Oxfam Uganda often partners with community-based organizations (CBOs).

At Pawor Sub-County headquarters in Madi-Okollo District, I find one field officer from one of these organizations: Sally Eyoru from Community Empowerment for Rural Development (CEFORD).

Years ago, Oxfam partnered with CEFORD to mobilize members of Pawor community to embrace health practices such as use of safe water, ensuring hygiene and sanitation.

At Pawor, Eyoru, a Field-based Community Mobiliser (FBCM) at CEFORD, is meeting Hygiene Promoters and members of Village Health Teams (VHTs).

The meeting is on Hygiene Promoters are discussing water, hygiene and sanitation issues. Management of the six water kiosks constructed by Oxfam is top on the agenda.

From cleaning the water sources and ensuring social distance at water points to encouraging community members to establish handwashing facilities, erecting drying racks and digging latrines, Eyoru and the Hygiene Promoters talk of measures to promote health in Pawor.

On some days, Eyoru moves with Hygiene Promoters and VHTs to the communities to monitor whether homes are practising what they have learnt.

Eyoru and the Hygiene Promoters share the challenges they are facing in their campaign to encourage people to shun the dirty River Nile water and embrace the safe water at the kiosks where each 20-litre jerry can goes for Shs50.

She also lauds Oxfam for partnering with CEFORD, adding that the relationship between the two organizations has not only helped communities better understand and embrace wash programs but also empowered the CBO.

“This [the Pawor Water System] is not the first project in which we are partnering with Oxfam. We have grown as a CBO as a result of this partnership,” Eyoru says.

She adds that Oxfam has built the capacity of CEFORD staff, through training of staff like herself.

Besides CEFORD, one of the other CBOs working with Oxfam to implement projects is Community Action for Transformation (CAFOT).

Located in Yinga Village, Lugbari Parish, Odupi Sub-County of Terego District, CAFOT has existed for almost three years.

Its founders sought to mobilize and sensitize refugee settlements and host communities to harmoniously co-exist and live healthy lives.

CAFOT uses cultural galas, peace concerts (like the one held in December 2018), dialogue, drama, songs, and community outreaches to promote good health practices and peaceful co-existence in communities.

The CBO’s Program’s Manager Benson Khemis is grateful for the partnership with Oxfam in Uganda.

“It has given us exposure as an organization. Oxfam opened a way for us. It has been like a mother or parent,” says Khemis.

He also reveals that since Oxfam came on board, CAFOT has benefited in various ways, including regular guidance on running a successful CBO.



Sally Eyoru, a Field based Community Mobiliser (FBCM) at Community Empowerment for Rural Development (CEFORD).



Community Action for Transformation (CAFOT) Programs Manager Benson Khemis.



CAFOT Mobilization and Sensitization Focal Person Godfrey Odyomo, Programs Manager Benson Khemis and Finance Officer Phionah Nassolo at the organization’s office in Yinga, Lugbari Parish, Terego District.

Oxfam’s efforts in improving access to water, sanitation and hygiene as well as promotion of harmony between refugees and host communities are paying off. Months of implementing interventions to improve access to clean water have seen people, particularly those in Pawor Sub County where the Pawor Water Supply System was constructed, breathe a sigh of relief. Women and children no longer have to worry about the dangers in trekking miles to the Rive Nile to collect water early in the mornings or in late evenings.

Families have also registered improvement in the health of members, thanks to access to clean water, and the work of Hygiene Promoters (and VHTs) who have closely worked with Oxfam to promote healthy hygiene and sanitation practices. Additionally, Oxfam’s generosity has led to the empowerment of Community-based Organizations (CBOs) like CAFOT and CEFORD, making it possible to augment implementation of interventions. From extending financial aid to sensitize refugee and host communities on Covid19, facilitate health outreaches and measures to promote peaceful co-existence, Oxfam is steadily changing lives through vital partnerships with other organizations.

Although visits to refugee settlements and host communities, such as those in Madi-Okollo and Terego Districts, indicate changes in areas where Oxfam, other agencies and organizations have implemented projects, consolidation of gains achieved as well as new interventions and innovations could go a long way in improving hygiene, health and harmony.



With funding from agencies like; European Union Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid (ECHO), UNHCR, country governments like Dutch government, Danish government, the German government and different Oxfam affiliates, Oxfam has been able to provide lifesaving support to over 350,000 refugees from South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo in the different refugee settlements in Uganda.



How COVID-19 has transformed slums:

The effects of COVID-19 on the sanitation and hygiene of slums in Kampala.

Slums are known to be densely populated, with thousands of people packed in unplanned houses and make-shift shelters characterised by poor sanitation and hygiene. The water sources are polluted, the channels clogged with rubbish, waste management is poor and the sanitation facilities are wanting. The COVID-19 pandemic has hit mostly the urban areas around the world because of the large number of inhabitants. As the business day closes the cities are dispersed, the city outskirts and slums are filled with the residents.

The last few years have seen a number of interventions and campaigns to improve the sanitation and hygiene of the slums in Kampala. Some water channels had been unclogged through community clean-up exercises by organizations such as Slum Life Survival and the efforts of Kampala Capital City Council Authority and other organizations.

How Covid-19 has affected Sanitation and hygiene?

Sanitation and hygiene is a key element in human life, both at the community and a personal level. Before the outbreak of the COVID-19, stakeholders had managed to put in place measures that ensure that there is improved sanitation.

Village Health Teams (VHTs) were sensitising communities about the dangers of poor sanitation and hygiene in their respective areas. The health systems had been coming to a stable point with sanitation being under control.

Today, however, the situation is very alarming. Because of the lockdown, sanitation has been ignored and in some areas that have no community toilets or where toilet usage is for a fee, residents are paying shs.200 per person which is very difficult for a family of six paying for such amount every time children want to access the toilet.

People in slums earn hand to mouth with nothing to save, so in the lockdown they are grappling with what to eat for their survival therefore they cannot afford paying for a toilet when they are earning less than shs.6000 a day.

Sanitation facilities and hygiene

Here is Robina, a slum resident living with six children, who has been working as a market vendor at a small market. Right now she cannot work because she has no capital to resume her business. So it becomes impossible for her family to pay for toilet access. Such cases are numerous, which is why there is a considerable number of open defecation cases.

Robina told me that right now, there is an increase in quarrels between landlords and their tenants emanating from the use and maintenance of sanitation facilities. Before the lockdown, children would spend most of their time at school or away from home. Today, everyone is at home, putting a lot of pressure on the few available sanitation facilities.

One slum resident opened up to us on how the landlord called for a meeting with tenants, raising issues of children damaging latrine facilities. "We have many quarrels in the community over the use of sanitation facilities since many are shared among different families. Some people, after using the facilities, leave them dirty," the resident said.

The problems associated with dirty latrines or sanitation facilities are many and are a stumbling block to the government's strategies of keeping the people safe from COVID-19, becoming a direct result of the pandemic.

Recommendations

Closely examining the challenges met during this COVID-19 pandemic in the slum communities, the following measures are recommended;

- Strategies to stop the spread of coronavirus in Uganda need the involvement of community structures such as the KCCA WASH initiative (Weyonje) and Village Health Teams (VHTs). When trained and facilitated, one can carry out house-to-house community mobilization, sensitize the community residents on proper and regular sanitation hygiene, both hand washing with water and soap to prevent the spread of coronavirus.
- If at all a person in the slums is suspected or confirmed to be positive for COVID-19, they should be withdrawn from the community. Attempting to quarantine a patient in the slums is highly risky in preventing the spread because as earlier indicated, slums are congested neighbourhoods. Even in homes, implementing social distancing is highly impossible.
- As part of the measures, the slum communities need to be provided with soap, specifically the bar soap and also detergents like Omo to help in washing hands as well as cleaning the toilets. Toilets need to be cleaned at least twice daily. Further, and consistent with existing guidance, restaurants and public places with toilets need to have them cleaned up thrice a day with disinfectants by workers having a mask, gloves and boots. The boots are later disinfected as well and not worn after to avoid spreading any contamination on the ground.
- The government should have favourable structures on easing the lockdown such that people that earn hand-to-mouth can afford to have the basic necessities. Vigorous sensitization in these communities is important because in the nature of their livelihoods they have a lot of contact.
- The Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA) needs to work closely with the water government agency, National Water and Sewage Corporation (NWSC) to make clean water accessible to the slum communities by extending the existing water systems to reach deep into the slums.
- Water payments need to be deducted by a percentage to enable the communities to be able to pay for the water. Alternatively, as part of the COVID-19 mitigation strategies, the government needs to subsidise to a tune of almost 70 per cent of NWSC current expenditure.

"WE HAVE MANY QUARRELS IN THE COMMUNITY OVER THE USE OF SANITATION FACILITIES SINCE MANY ARE SHARED AMONG DIFFERENT FAMILIES. SOME PEOPLE, AFTER USING THE FACILITIES LEAVE THEM DIRTY," THE RESIDENT SAID.



In conclusion

When you move around Kampala's slums, it is very clear that people are very much aware of COVID-19, and due to government measures put into existence, social distancing and hand washing measure are more effective. In most informal settlements like Kinawataka, Mulago Katanga and Kamwokya, houses are overcrowded, physical space is scarce, and many residents rely on daily wage labour for survival. Stopping them from work has caused more challenges such as domestic violence amplifying more the challenges these communities have faced.

It is just by God's grace that Uganda has not registered too many community deaths, but if the Coronavirus pandemic reaches urban poor settlements of Kampala, the situation can be worse because of too much congestion and lack of proper sanitation and hygiene services. Slum-dwellers need to take more action on curbing the spread of COVID-19.

To deal with the COVID-19 pandemic, we need to have volunteers and VHTs working across the different slum locations and we need to be cognizant that one size does not fit all. Measures that work in affluent communities of the city may not necessarily work the same way in the slums. For the urban poor to weather the COVID-19 pandemic, the government should prioritize the provision of essential needs, including improving access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene sensitization.

Kenneth Kavulu is a Pan-African journalist, a member of CAPOOP Media and a journalist at Buganda Broadcasting services (BBS Terefayina).



EXPLORING NEW TECHNOLOGIES TO INCREASE WATER ACCESS THE DOWHE PIPED WATER SCHEME

GOAL has been working in Uganda since 1979 focusing on three of GOAL's strategic areas: health (including WASH), food security and nutrition, and sustainable livelihoods.



Gloria Berochan, Deputy Director of Programme WASH at GOAL Uganda

“We have been implementing WASH programs in Uganda since 2003. We transitioned from an emergency approach through crisis recovery to a development WASH program, with an increasing focus on achieving sustainable impact using a systems approach. We work directly with communities and through partnerships and collaboration with civil society organisations, UWASNET, the private sector and in close coordination with local district governments (Bugiri, Namayingo, and Kaabong Districts), regional government structures (Technical Support Units and Umbrella Organizations) and the national government of Uganda.” Gloria Berochan, the Deputy Director of Programme-WASH, GOAL Uganda says.

“Geographically, our WASH program has been implemented in Northern Uganda (Agago), Karamoja (Abim, Kaabong), and Eastern Uganda (Bugiri and Namayingo). In the past five years we have increased access to safe and clean water for over 250,000 people. As a result over 500 communities now have access to defecation free water in Bugiri and Namayingo districts,” Gloria adds.



Clean tap water



Rose Ochakara

In 2019, GOAL drilled 127 new boreholes, rehabilitated 32 boreholes and constructed a new piped water scheme in Bugiri and Namayingo districts.

“The situation of access to water in this area before installation of this piped water scheme was bad. You would find a community moving over 2km in search of water,” says Simon Peter Ojoto, the WASH project manager, GOAL Uganda, Namayingo district in Eastern Uganda.

“We realised that if we connected a piped water scheme to these areas, these communities would be served very well,” Ojoto adds.



Rose Akol

Rose Akol, a farmer from Buhemba sub-county, says they had to travel far away to get water from a swamp.

“I had to walk in the swamp with water up to my waist. The water was brown as it was mixed with mud. It was also infested with worms that used to bite us. But now, I get water from a tap in a few minutes,” Akol testifies.



Simon Ojoto

This was what led to the birth of the Dowhe Piped Water Scheme.

Ojoto says GOAL Uganda did not have experience in constructing piped water schemes, so they used Buhemba as the model scheme.

“We went through the entire design process with the water ministry and district management, Then we came up with a desirable design that was approved,” he says.



John Okumu, the WASH technical officer, GOAL Uganda, Namayingo district, Eastern Uganda, says initially, they face challenges of geological constraints in terms of poor ground water retention and salinity.

Okumu says they also did the environmental impact assessment

John Okumu-WASH technical Officer at GOAL

“Construction started on October 15, 2019 and was completed between February 5-10, 2020. This piped water scheme cover around 1.5km and serves a community of about 1,600 people. It also serves institutions like schools as well as trading centres,” he says.



Okumu John inspecting the reservoir tank

Okumu explains that the project has a design life of 20 years

Ojoto says what makes the project unique is that it is serving a community within a scattered area.

“It is also constructed in a typical rural area. So, the lowest person in the community is the one accessing this water,” he says.

Another resident of Buhemba and beneficiary of the project says: “I am very happy now because the children and I can clean ourselves anytime we need to. I can also cook whenever we are hungry using clean and safe water. Our animals too have drinking water.



We went through the entire design process with the water ministry and district management, then we came up with a desirable design that was approved.



“
The vehicles carrying the materials would get stuck on the way and at times take up to three days to reach the site.

Amusugutu Mary

“The project brought such big relief because we had to travel a long distance to get water. I also used to spend a lot of money buying water for my bricks business. But now, for a small fee, I can all the water I need from a nearby tap,” she says.

She adds that to ensure that the taps are well-maintained, the community agreed to pay a small fee whenever one fetches water. The money collected is used to repair any damages to the water system.

Ojoto says to protect the piped water system, they made sure that there are caretakers within the community to look after the facility.

“They report any defects, cases of intrusion, and they inform and advise the management team on what is going on on the ground,” he says.

Challenges faced

Ojoto says they faced quite a number of challenges before setting up the water system.

“For instance, it took us long to convince the local leadership to convince the people to volunteer the places (land) where the facility was to be set up,” he says.

Okumu explains that they worked out a memorandum of standing with the Namayingo District local government.

“Their role was to engage with the community to make sure that they sort out the issue of land. They also had to sensitise the community about the benefits and to accept the water scheme,” he says.

Edgar Onyango, the Buhemba sub-county chief in Namayingo District, says: “My role was to mobilise the community together with the community development officer to accept the water scheme. We also had to ensure we get the land where the project is.”

The team also faced a tough time when setting up the water system because the works were done during a rainy season.

“The vehicles carrying the materials would get stuck on the way and at times take up to three days to reach the site. This also partly delayed the project,” Okumu says.



MENSTRUATION HYGIENE MANAGEMENT:

The Ordeal Of Street Girls And Women

By Kenneth Kavulu

Kampala is filled with thousands of girls and women trying to survive on its streets, pushed to their wits' end by the hardships and poverty in their rural areas. But even in the city, their lives are filled with challenges caused by poor living conditions in which they lack access to proper sanitation and water.



Girl on one of Kampala Streets begging on the roadside

Hygiene management is a challenge to most of these girls and women. Twenty-four hours living on the streets, with some simply urinating on themselves and others looking for a hideout for a long call, simply create a disturbing picture of the life these people live.

In such conditions, it is hard for these women and girls to manage their menstrual hygiene without access to basic WASH services. In their bid to survive, the hygiene of the city is put at risk when they urinate and leave faecal material undisposed off properly.

It is unimaginable how these women and girls deal with their menstrual hygiene every month. As they also narrate that “they cry out for pads and knickers”. Street girls and women are on the streets begging for that daily meal for survival. They hardly get enough for their menstrual hygiene Kits. It is difficult for a street girl to have access to clean water during the menstruation period to keep her body clean and safe. This aside, the girls require guidance on how to manage this monthly, and for a girl who has just started her menstrual cycle, there is no substantive help from anyone to manage it.

Akech is a 16-year-old street girl who has seen it all on the streets in her short life. She says; “It is difficult to access sanitary pads during menstruation periods and where I stay, the area has poor sanitation”.

According to Akech, reproductive tract infections caused by ignorance of personal hygiene are some of the main health challenges that she faces on the streets. She adds; “Sometimes I get infections when I use dirty dark corners or sit on toilets that are not good”.

This kind of situation is a common occurrence to many other girls on the street. To try avoiding infections, they only ease themselves on plastic bags, which they dispose in the night. Also, due to lack of access to clean and safe water to use for proper personal hygiene, they end up with a bad body odour, which results in neglect and isolation in the community because of their poor hygiene.

This simple illustrative story is just a sample of many others within Kampala. According to government estimates, as many as 15,000 children, girls and young women aged seven to 17 live on the streets in Kampala. These girls are either born on the streets or brought here by some relatives.

“

Sometimes I get infections when I use dirty dark corners or sit on toilets that are not good

ESTIMATE

15,000

**CHILDREN, GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN
AGED SEVEN TO 17 LIVE ON THE STREETS**



\\ These girls are either born on the streets or brought here by some relatives.

The COVID pandemic has worsened the situation. Now they cannot get a single coin to help them survive or even get a bottle of water to clean up. It is difficult for street girls and women to have access to safe sanitary products. Many resort to using pieces of cloth and toilet paper, which makes them uncomfortable.

In these conditions, women and girls have to 'try and guard their backs' to avoid cases of violence and that is when if they can. The streets are marred by violence sometimes from other streets children, older boys or men.

The girls also find a challenge of sexual exploitation and abuse. Findings from the recent enumeration of street girls and women by RETRACK Uganda in collaboration with the Gender Ministry and the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) show that more than 1,600 girls are living on streets

aged 7-24 years while 1,410 children aged 7-17 years are estimated to be working on streets.

The site of young girls carrying children or walking about pregnant is what makes up the life of the young girls and women on the streets. Their stories are diverse and sad, tales of despair and misery and occasionally hope. Some of the young girls were trafficked to the city and others abandoned on streets while still toddlers by their parents and have since beaten the odds to make ends meet.

In conclusion, the street girls and women spend most of their time and resources searching for food and less or none at all on accessing sanitary products. Therefore, without any immediate intervention by organisations or government to provide information or Menstrual Hygiene Kits, this will continue to remain a challenge.

Street girl with her kid begging to survive on Kampala streets after lockdown

The Kampala Central Division Mayor, Charles Musoke Sserunjogi says,

"I and my team have resolved to crack down on brothels in the city to mitigate acts of WASH, Menstruation management especially among adolescent girls and young women on streets of Kampala. And also we should find ways to provide waste sanitary products disposal targets on streets and other menstrual kits."

The writer Kenneth Kavulu is a Pan-African journalist, special feature TV producer and humanitarian show presenter showing life in slums. He's a local and international WASH Ton schouten award winner, member of communications, Advocacy and policy opportunities and outreach for poop Media (CAPOOP) and a journalist at Buganda Broadcasting services (BBS Terefayina)

1,600

GIRLS ARE LIVING ON THE STREETS

7-24 YEARS

1,410

CHILDREN

7-17 YEARS

ARE ESTIMATED TO BE WORKING ON STREETS.



PENTECOSTAL ASSEMBLIES
OF GOD - UGANDA

**SOROTI/SERERE:
As safe and clean
water becomes
ever essential in the
fight against the
COVID-19 pandemic,
the Pentecostal
Assemblies of God
(PAG) evangelical
denomination is
helping communities
in the Teso sub-region
to overcome its water
access challenges.**

In spite of their support to ease access to this God-given resource, water remains elusive in most communities, with tales of people trekking for distances in search for it.

For decades, the brunt of that water shortage has been felt by mothers and children, who are almost always assigned to search for water. It is therefore against this background that PAG, through its partners, has intervened to lessen the burden of access to water by constructing water sources close to people. In this era of COVID-19, PAG'S hand of faith is enabling communities to have access to safe and clean water. As a result, locals have managed to adhere to the call by the government to wash hands as one of the preventive measures to curb the spread of Coronavirus in communities.

Mr Patrick Onaga, the acting manager for social development services in PAG's Central Teso Pastorate, said that through their Participatory Evaluation Processes

PAG, CENTRAL TESO PASTORATE INJECT SHS600M INTO NEW, SAFE WATER SOURCES IN RURAL VILLAGES



Locals gather to draw water from Amoru village community borehole, Awalwal parish, Gweri sub county, Soroti district

(PEP), they are moving away from only preaching the word of God to engaging communities in socio-economic development. He said the move is empowering locals through various community-driven projects, including through providing access to safe water sources. For more than a decade, Teso suffered a lag in development due to a series of wars and community

conflicts such as the 1980s Karimojong cattle raids, the Uganda People's Army (UPA) rebellion, and the 2003 Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) incursion. The conflicts affected the water coverage development in the region, a situation Teso is yet to fully recover from.

It is that hold-up which PAG is trying to bridge using funds from Teso Development Trust and the Japanese Embassy in Uganda.

In Amoru village, Awalwal parish, a 30-minute drive Northeast of Soroti town, is one of the water investments that PAG and its partners helped to sink. The borehole is the main source of clean water for more than 400 people.

On our maiden visit to the area, the large number of people at the water source signified how relevant the water point is to the locals. Sights of young children, the elderly and men welcomed us to the Amoru village borehole.

For Mr Onaga, the sight of the buzz in activity at the borehole is a confirmation that they made a worthy choice through their PEP model to sink boreholes for locals.

“
Previously, we had dedicated ourselves much into preaching the word of God and preparing people for the second coming of Jesus Christ. But along the way, it became prudent that we needed to engage our followers in activities that shape their livelihood,”
Mr Onaga told The Wash magazine during a visit to various water point sites.

The acting manager says that so far PAG has injected more than Shs600 million into the water projects, with 16 more water sources earmarked to be drilled this year in Serere, Soroti and Kaberamaido districts respectively.

In Serere, Mr Onaga says, the shallow boreholes that go for Shs6 million each have been welcomed by communities around the lake areas as having tasty and non-salty water compared to boreholes that are sunk deep.

The Central Teso Pastorate project overseer adds that in some cases, their water targets in some years are dealt a blow by the slow contractors awarded the tenders but that is being looked into.

On average, going by the assertion of the area LC1 chairperson, Mr Moses Ereu, the Amoru community borehole serves families with an average of 8-13 members. And during the times when swamps in the area run dry the borehole also serves as a watering point for herds.

Consequences of water shortage

Ereu said PAG intervention in seeking for solutions into their water crisis was timely. He added that prior to this, locals regularly trekked for up to three kilometres to the neighbouring village in search for water. "Things have changed for the better, Water has been brought to our proximity," he noted.

According to Ereu, the water troubles then amplified cases of domestic violence in various homes, as most husbands often beat up their wives on suspicion of over delaying at wells as they searched for water for domestic use.

He confirmed to The Wash Magazine that the reliability of the water source is so perfect that it has often withstood long dry spells, making it one of the best water sources in a sub-county that is more known for having a poor table that has made some boreholes run dry during extreme weather condition when there are no rains.

Ms Christine Akiror, 80, one of the older mothers who has endured the suffering as result of water scarcity



Christine Akiror, and Elizabeth Akiror, residents of Amoru village community borehole harvesting water



With the funds from our funders, we engage communities through our shared values and sink shallow boreholes. This has proved a great success because communities that previously had to trek for kilometres away from their homes in search for water have that burden lessened," Onaga explains.

for most of her life, Praises PAG water interventions. She vividly recollects scenarios when they shared swamp water with animals, how they trekked for long distances, adding that this is no longer the case.

Sharing the same joy like the rest of the members is Samuel Leonard Oluga, the chairperson of the water user committee at Amoru community borehole. He said before the borehole was sunk in their village in 2008, they used to walk for longer distances to Arubela parish where there was a borehole." As part of the water user committee's mandate, Mr Oluga further explained, matters of hygiene are treated with a lot of care. "All water utensils have to be cleaned regularly to avoid scenarios of water contamination using dirty jerrycans," he said.

"Because we don't want to go back to the past, I head a committee that is jealously guarding this borehole from getting spoilt. Each family has to pay a certain amount of money towards the repair of the borehole," Onaga said.



Residents of Amuko village, Okulungo parish in Serere district harvesting water from the borehole that PAG constructed for them in 2018

The water point user chairperson adds that before his village received their borehole, cases of waterborne diseases such as Typhoid, Dysentery and others were much pronounced. But today, the rate diminished, a positive change in circumstances that he attributes to the safe and clean water source.

The same joy is being felt in Okulungo parish, Amuko village, where a similar water source drilled in 2018 through the PEP model has lessened the water burden crisis that once affected residents of the area. The locals are harnessing the benefits of the water source for home and animal use, as well as vegetable cultivation.

Mr Martin Edyagu, the chairperson of Amuko village water user committee, said the borehole serves 600 people, and on average 13 people per family.

“Before we lobbied for this borehole from PAG in 2018, the nearest water source we drew water from was 4 kilometres away from here, Having this borehole here is an advantage to all families that draw water from it,” he adds.

Mr Edyagu said one among the many benefits is that they can raise seedlings and vegetables using spill over water from the borehole. After finding satisfaction in the availability of water for domestic use, another emerging demand seems to be taking centre stage among the beneficiaries; that is the need for water for irrigation.

“
RAINS AT TIMES FAIL
US, SO WE NEED
WATER TO HELP US
MINT CASH FROM
VEGETABLES,” MZEE
EDYAGU SAYS.



Residents of Amuko village, Okulungo parish in Serere district harvesting water from the borehole PAG constructed for them in 2018

Call for water for small scale irrigation

After finding satisfaction in the availability of water for domestic use, another emerging demand seems to be taking centre stage among the beneficiaries; that is the need for water for irrigation.

Ms Akiror, 80, who earlier shared the joy of having a water source nearby, now hopes that the PAG project will also help them overcome water shortages in their gardens.

“Our request to PAG is to factor in an element of water for irrigation in their water plan,” Ms Akiror said in her plea to the acting manager social development services for PAG’s central Teso pastorate.

Buttressing Ms Akiror’s assertion in a separate interview, Mr Joseph Edyagu, also aged 80, told Wash magazine that with changing weather vagaries at play, the need for water to feed vegetable gardens will be an added advantage.

Ms Catherine Adeke, another beneficiary, says as mothers, water for irrigation once provided for, will empower them economically, saying this can be possible when that component for water for irrigation is included in the PEP model by PAG. She says from the vegetables, they can offset certain family demands, instead of waiting for everything to be done by their husbands.

Mr Patrick Onaga, the acting manager for Social development services, Central Teso Pastorate, says the appeal will be looked into. But he added that the decision will be based on the needs of the community, which they are currently studying through community interaction with PAG using the PEP model.



Christine Akiror, and Elizabeth Akiror, residents of Amoru village community borehole harvesting water

Apparently, National Water and Sewerage Corporation (NWSC) is only serving 11,037 households, representing 60% of the coverage.

Equally, only about 65% of Gulu City's households have toilet facilities while handwashing currently stands at 80% from 5% in March.

Ivan Tekakwo, the NWSC public relations officer for Northern Uganda, said by June, only about 8,000 customers had access to clean water.

However, Tekakwo attributes the increase in the accessibility to rolling out of Service Coverage Acceleration Programme (SCAP) targeting 100% of water coverage.

"This programme is intended to cater for the new sub-wards that were recently added to Gulu City and the target is to have two water points in each," he added.

Concern at hand

However, there is an increasing number of households whose toilet sewage lines have been connected to Oitino stream that feeds into Oitino dam.

In the last year's assessment carried out in February from Kasubi Goans subward, Kasubi parish Bardege division by Gulu municipality authorities and NWSC, over 20 homes were found to have their toilets connected to the stream which flows up to Oitino dam.



A rehabilitated water nozzle point at Oitino dam which is the only source of water that supplies Gulu City.



Oitino dam water outlet that was upgraded of recent.

WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE IN GULU STILL WANTING

With the growing number of population in Gulu City, water and sanitation hygiene is steadily picking up though a lot still needs to be done.



Garbage at Gulu main market takes long to be collected causing inconvenience to the dwellers

When this journalist carried out an on-spot check, indeed it was very visible that toilets had been constructed just less than five meters away and faecal pipes were pouring waste into the stream.

Relatedly, it is also evident that all households along the stream do not have garbage pits and the only alternative around is depositing all what they accumulate into the water.

"When our leaders and technocrats came here last year, demolition of all these toilets was supposed to commence immediately, but to date there is no progress," Patrick Onen, a resident, added.

"As NWSC, we cannot take on the policing role of the city. We are doing our part of continuing to sensitize the community on the dangers that come with such an action," Tekakwo said.

He added that when the issue was brought to the attention of the

municipal authority last year before it had been elevated to a city, the leaders said they lacked funding to execute the demolition exercise.

"When our leaders and technocrats came here last year, demolition of all these toilets was supposed to commence immediately, but to date there is no progress," Patrick Onen, a resident

Garbage management plan

In the last financial year, the municipal council, with funding from Fichtner Water and Transportation developed a waste management plan of first coming out with a bylaw.

Peter Okwera, the former Gulu Municipal speaker, said before the municipal had been dissolved, the bylaw had already been presented before the council and forwarded to a committee of social services for scrutiny.

The bylaw intends to address issues of waste segregation, recycling, management and transportation, community engagement and fines and penalties.

So far, through Fichtner, the council has already acquired five acres in Laroo-Pece division, where waste shall be sorted and fermented into manure. The project is expected to cost shs3.5b.

On a daily basis, 4.5 tonnes of waste is generated in Gulu City and it is expected that this shall not be enough for the manure production.

“We have a plan to start buying waste from other districts so that the processing plant can have enough once it’s operational,” Okwera who is going to be part of the interim leadership, noted.

“However, in the whole of this process, we are also encouraging Private Public Partnership where the investors can take the responsibility of collecting the waste and turn it into manure as a business,” he added.

Other waste management initiatives

Before the creation of Gulu City, the then Bardege division council had passed a resolution where households were supposed to pay sh500 every quarter to facilitate garbage collection.

Patrick Yoorac who was the speaker said the resolution was targeting households along Oitino stream that feeds into Oitino dam, the source of water supplied by NWSC in Gulu City.

With about 800 households in Kasubi Goans quarters and Kasubi central sub-wards, Yoorac said the money would be used to fuel the trucks.



Due to lack of proper waste disposal points, locals have resorted to dumping in open spaces

To ensure compliance, the division had given the mandate of collecting the fees to the sub-ward local council chairpersons through a bylaw.

Santa Amarowt, 43, said it was a pity seeing local residents throw garbage into the stream but also faecal matter, a practice that has escalated of recent.

“If the municipal authorities can’t avail us with garbage skips, then we need a dumping site because this situation is very dangerous to us though we’ve not had severe health-related problems in the area,” she added.



Some of the garbage containers along the roads are over filled and city cleaners take long to empty them

“WE HAVE A PLAN TO START BUYING WASTE FROM OTHER DISTRICTS SO THAT THE PROCESSING PLANT CAN HAVE ENOUGH ONCE IT’S OPERATIONAL,” OKWERA

What leaders have in plan



Patrick Okello

Who is contesting as the mayor for Layibi-Bardege division wants to ensure that funds are allocated to procure garbage trucks for effective collection.

Okello notes that all the parishes that were curved out of Omoro and Gulu districts to become part of the City must have dumping sites so that it is easy to manage.



Daniel Soca Ocan

Who is vying for the LC5 councillor's position in Laroo-Pece division, observed that water is much lacking, especially in the dry season when taps sometimes run dry for three days.

Ocan adds that this is the same situation when it comes to the sewage lines that keep on bursting and making the town stink. Being a lower councillor at the division level, Ocan wants to build close collaboration with the NWSC so that such challenges are addressed.



Alfred Okwonga

The City Mayoral contestant under the NRM party, wants to promote public-private partnerships to fill up the gap left by the city authorities.

Okwonga adds that with a lot of waste being generated in the City, it is very expensive to collect the waste. However, if it is to be collected and recycled, the proceeds can be re-ploughed.

While Karuma project will address limited access to water, there is need to encourage the community on embrace rainwater harvesting to supplement tap water. It is cheaper and clean.



Nancy Atimango

Who is contesting for Member of Parliament for Laroo-Pece division said water is very critical in running industries but also for home consumption.

Atimango notes that there are a couple of slums within the City that are facing lack of clean water supply and they only rely on spring wells.

As a former employee of NWSC, she is optimistic that the water supply project being tapped from Karuma will ensure clean, safe and stable supply to the consumers.

"I'm personally working on the protection of open spring wells in some sub-wards to ensure clean water supply, notwithstanding tree planting for environmental conservation," Nancy added.

"Waste collection at the moment is not being done well. You find it is heaped in one place for more than one week, which is not good. I would want to see waste being collected on a daily basis and only being done at night like in the other cities around the world. This is because I want to avoid inconveniencing city dwellers when they are doing their businesses," he added.

Wells of Life registers huge success in transforming lives in rural communities through WASH programs

Celebrating A Decade Of Improving Rural WASH Services



First well drilled by Wells of Life at Aderolongo Primary School in Otengo community, Kwania district in 2010.

"Over the 10 years Wells of Life has extended services to rural communities in over 15 districts including Mityana, Mubende and Kasanda"

Water and sanitation are not only an essential for life and health but they are also indispensable for dignity, empowerment and prosperity; - they are human rights which are fundamental to every child and adult.

In Uganda, over 22 million people are currently living without access to clean water, more than 29 million people are living without access to improved sanitation, and about 2.5 million people are still practicing open defecation.

The most seriously affected are the vulnerable people living in rural, hard to reach places.

Now to aid in the water crisis affecting the East African country, Wells of Life a member organization of the Uganda Water & Sanitation Network (UWASNET) has for the last 10 years been at the forefront of transforming lives of underprivileged Ugandans through providing free Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) services.

Wells of Life's journey started way back in February 2010, when it drilled its first well. The well was setup at Aderolongo Primary School in Otengo community, Kwania district (a former sub county cut off from Apac district).

After a modest beginning of delivering only 12 wells by 2013, drilling began to increase exponentially for their charity and by July 2020, they had drilled in excess of 550 wells thus providing access to clean water to rural communities in 15 districts of Uganda including Mubende, Mityana and Kasanda.

In 2019, Wells of Life's achieved their biggest milestone as they funded their 500th well, initiated their hygiene and sanitation program that reached 22,000 families across 20 villages in Mityana.

The Civil Society Organization also has an operation restoration program that deals with rehabilitating existing non functional wells . So far they have rehabilitated over 100 wells non functional wells in different parts of Uganda.

Wells of Life pilots its Healthy Village Program:

Adrian Laurentiu, Wells of Life Uganda Country Director says they realized that while providing clean water they were performing lifesaving and life altering services, but there was still more they could do for their friends in rural Uganda.

"...So, in 2019 we piloted our WASH program that we have since renamed our Healthy Village Program. The program requires intense education and takes nine months to one year to implement," Mr Laurentiu asserts.

The healthy village program has so far been piloted in 20 villages and 2 schools located in Bulera and Kalangalo Sub Counties of Mityana District.

According to Wells of Life's 2019 evaluation of the pilot healthy village program, over 78 per cent households have access to clean and safe water as opposed to the 37.82 per cent which was recorded before they started the program in Mityana.

With the program, Wells of Life has been able to substantially improve the health and quality of life of more than 20,000 people by ensuring that every household has its own latrine, thus eliminating open defecation; making them ODF Free, for which they received District certification.

“

1,536 new latrines were constructed by communities as a result of the Healthy Village project.

”

20 pilot villages in Mityana District

latrine coverage before and after intervention



Due to the healthy village program, latrine coverage rose up greatly (by 60%) in the project area. Prior to this only 31% of the households had improved sanitation facilities while the endline revealed that 91% well constructed latrines

"Wells of Life has taught 3000 households to build and use hand washing stations to prevent the spread of bacterial illnesses. We have also taught 3000 households to build drying racks for dishes thereby preventing drying dishes on dirty mats. We have as well trained more than 3000 households to construct rubbish pits to burn rubbish and maintain a clean area surrounding their homes," Mr Laurentiu added.

Under the program, Wells of Life has drilled boreholes that serve good quality water in 15 out of the 20 villages.

"The numbers are entirely accurate regarding an increase in access to clean water "sources." However we failed to measure "access to clean water," not just water sources. 25% of the pilot communities suffered from drilling "low yielding wells" where we attempted to drill deep wells. This was alleviated by the introduction of "Sawyer Water Filters" in each household, resulting in an even greater number of households with "access to clean water." In fact, the number would rise from 78% access to safe water to 93% access to safe water through WOL interventions. Therefore, an increase of greater than 60% was attained. A most significant improvement!"

Pascal Olinga - Deputy Country Director - Programs



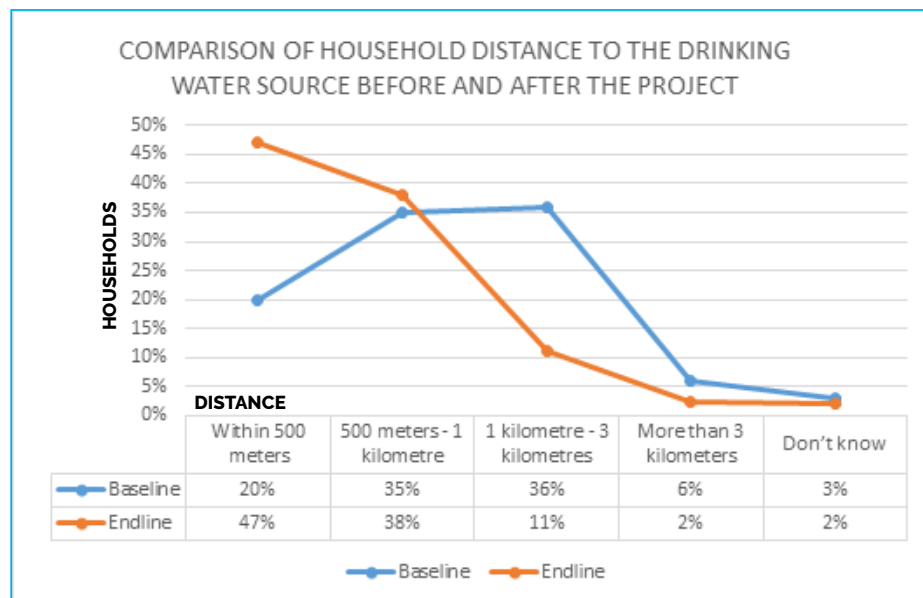
A mother in Kiyoganyi B village, Kalangalo Sub County collects water from a sawyer water filtration unit

Distance to the drinking water source:

Prior, basic accessibility (distance) was defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as having a water source within 0.5 kilometers from a given household, but with the emergence of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), basic accessibility is now defined as an IMPROVED drinking water source which is located on premises.

The indicator was considered for the Healthy Village Project and it has since improved in the project area with 47 per cent households reporting that they are within 500 meters distance to the improved drinking water source in comparison to the baseline of only 20 per cent.

Comparison of distances between households and drinking water sources before and after the healthy village program



There has been a general reduction in distances between households and water sources due to improved location of and construction of wells closer to households in the communities where Wells of Life has been implementing the Healthy Village Program.

In two schools where Wells of Life intervened, the distance to the water source was greatly reduced; in one school the well is located within its premises while in another, the well is located approximately 100 meters from the school premise.

The success has not been achieved overnight; rather it has taken a great deal of time.

Denis Mono, the Senior Health Inspector of Mityana District says that with the help from Wells of Life programs, at least 90 per cent households have been practising improved sanitation and proper hygiene.

He said that Wells of Life used an approach of 'Community Led Total Sanitation', in which they taught communities the benefits of practicing WASH and also engaged people in these activities, thus making it easy for them to practice proper sanitation without feeling forced.



Denis Mono, the Senior Health Inspector of Mityana District

"we the Local Government have the law, but it's pointless to push people into building latrines which they will not use in return, But Wells of Life came in and engaged the communities into sanitation practices which they adopted with ease," Mr Mono said.

He added that working alongside Wells of Life helped them record fewer cases of sanitation-related diseases, acquire improved quality of water, increased awareness on water and sanitation in the communities, among other benefits.

Mr Mono explained that WASH practices have been done in phases; Phase one covered 20 villages and sanitation improvement on average at about 65 per cent – 68 per cent, hand washing and latrine coverage was as low as 40 per cent before Phase one, but after the 2019 assessment it showed that it had increased to 90 per cent.

This phase targeted over 60,000 people, covering at least two sub-counties of Buleera and Kalangalo; and out of the 53 villages, 20 were fully covered.

"Assessment of Wells of Life Phase one had a great impact, communities were empowered in terms of managing their sanitation. A community to become open defecation free and even sustain it means that a lot was done to change people's mind-set, I would say that it was a major success," he boasted.

Recently, hand washing has been greatly adopted and about 90 per cent of the households in Mityana have hand washing equipment, and also have access to proper sanitation practices. This alone is a sign that the community has been greatly empowered.

The latrine coverage has also greatly improved through frequent sensitization to change mind-set and behaviour change which has limited open defecation hence reducing diseases related to poor sanitation.

Phase two is currently in the pipeline and it's targeting over 50,000 people.

However, Mr. Mono pointed out that one of the challenges they face is poor mind-set as many people value cure more than prevention measures, not forgetting poverty which limits some people from putting up proper sanitation structures.

Joseph Luzige, the Mityana District LC5 Chairperson, said that with the increased access to clean water, they have managed to record a reduction of sanitation-related diseases such as typhoid and dysentery in the district, and believes that in no time such diseases will become history.

Mr Luzige noted that Wells of Life promised to drill over 200 boreholes in this district and so far more than 86 have been put in place, not forgetting the 100+ boreholes they have rehabilitated to improve on water access.

In addition to drilling and rehabilitating boreholes, the district chairperson noted that WOL promised to train local people on how to maintain these water sources in case of any breakages to reduce on the high maintenance expenses.



Betty Tusabe a Comprehensive nurse at Miseebe health center II where WOL rehabilitated a well

At Miseebe Health Centre II, one of the beneficiaries of Wells of Life's rehabilitated boreholes, people used to depend on unclean swamp water because the nearby borehole was about 8km from their community, according to Betty Tusabe, a Comprehensive nurse at the health centre.

Ms. Tusabe noted that aside from rehabilitating their broken borehole which serves about three parishes, Wells of Life has provided soap among other sanitation material to improve people's hygiene and sanitation.

Edith Namayanja, the Chairperson of Miseebe village, also added that they established a system where every family was supposed to pay at least Shs.2000 for borehole maintenance but a few comply.

Joseph Muwanga, the assistant District Health Officer of Mityana said he mainly looks at four aspects when it comes to water and they include; quality, coverage, cost and sustainability and he commended Wells of Life for helping them achieve their targets.

"My people cannot thank Wells of Life enough. The organization has really changed our lives. I have also learnt that they use stainless steel pipes which are safer and longer lasting than the galvanized iron pipes which were known to rust thus spoiling the quality of water," Mr Muwanga disclosed.

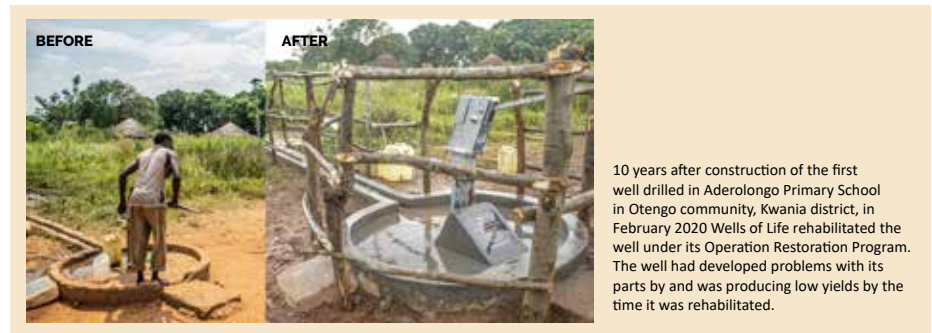
“*Wells of Life has provided soap among other sanitation material to improve people's hygiene and sanitation*”

He also said that they have community-based committees that run the boreholes after they are drilled or rehabilitated by WOL and these committees collect some amount of money amongst the borehole users, which in turn is used in case of any breakages.

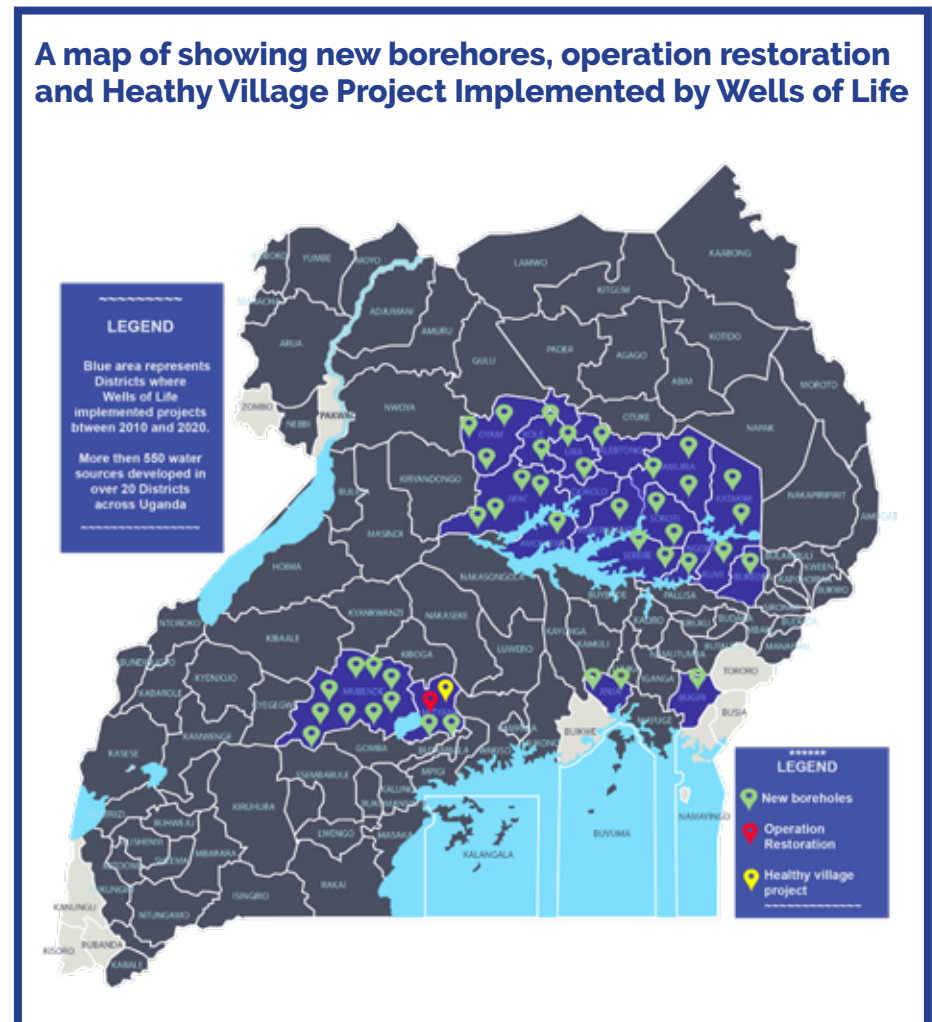
Mr Muwanga however, requested Wells of Life and other NGOs to come on board and help communities with income-generating skills too, because without income generating activities, it is not easy for some people to contribute towards maintaining the water sources or maintain proper sanitation.

She says that some people fail to pay not because they don't want to, but because they can't even afford a daily meal in their homes, This sometimes causes conflicts between people who pay and those who can't afford to contribute.

Ms Namayanja noted that their borehole which was rehabilitated by Wells of Life in 2019 serves more than 50 families in that village, Before Wells of Life's intervention, people used to walk for at least two miles to locate a nearby borehole.



A map of showing new boreholes, operation restoration and Heathy Village Project Implemented by Wells of Life



Wells of Life spearheads Covid-19 fight with WASH facilities



On the right, Adrian hands over soap to Mityana RDC as part of their response Covid-19.

Since the confirmation of the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020, a number of non-state-actors including Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) are contributing to the national efforts to curb the spread of the virus.

As of 3rd October, Uganda had 8,662 cumulative confirmed cases of the corona virus with 79 registered deaths.

Wells of Life is one of the CSOs that have contributed highly in curbing the spread of Covid-19 in the country.

As part of response to the pandemic, Wells of Life donated 740 cartons of bar soap and 240 face shields.

The relief items were donated to Ministry of Health, Mubende Regional Referral Hospital, Mityana District General Hospital, lower level health centers IV, IIIs and II in Mityana and the Catholic Parish in Bukuya Sub-County, Kasanda District

Since hand washing with soap is one of the vital health guidelines in the fight against Covid-19, Wells of Life also received approval from the Resident District Commissioner (RDC) of Mityana Mr. Isa Ntumwa to continue with the rehabilitation of broken boreholes in Mityana district as a way of intensifying access to safe water.



Adrian country director “center” with hat hands over face shields to the medical team of Mityana hospital

“It is of high importance that during this period, rural communities have access to safe water and be provided with the minimum tools such as soap to help them maintain good hygiene. Our small intervention in helping the government and the communities of rural Uganda in their quest to stay healthy and protect themselves in front of this pandemic,” said Mr Laurentiu.

“It is a small donation that Wells of Life made to the Government and people of Uganda but as we always say, every drop matters and every life counts in our quest of elevating the life standard of rural communities of Uganda,” he added.

Why rural Uganda?

Mr. Laurentiu says they chose to work in rural areas because at least 90 per cent of Ugandans living in these communities lack access to safe and clean water, and this increases water borne diseases and infant mortality rates.



Adrian country director of wells of life hands over boxes of soap to the director governance & compliance at the ministry of Health



Father Max on the fight against covid-19 with the elderly and disabled people, providing soap items.



Health Workers at Mityana General Hospital wearing face shields donated by WOL



“Water borne diseases and infant mortality is a common theme for the poorest of the poor’ or as it is known in the Public Health Care community, ‘the bottom billion’.”

Leaders In Fort Portal, Hoima Cities Talk About WASH

By Charles Opolot



A child tries to pump water at a dry borehole in Harugongo near Fort Portal in July

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) is very key in the country, especially in regard to slowing the spread of COVID-19 and many other communicable diseases. However more efforts should be focused more on urban centres than elsewhere because the numbers of people are higher, including crowds.

The WASH journal followed up some of the candidates who are vying for different political positions in the new cities and they gave their views on what they would legislate if elected in 2021 to ensure there are better WASH facilities in their cities.

The key questions were;

- What would you legislate in Parliament or city council about water and sanitation for your city?
- What would you wish the Government to do to improve Water Hygiene and Sanitation (WASH) in your area based on the fact that hand-washing is key in slowing COVID-19?
- How easy is the accessibility of water to your community, especially at the health centres?

HOIMA CITY

Violet Kabasindi Kiberu, NRM flag-bearer for Hoima City Woman MP



Water is life and sanitation is health. Currently, Hoima city has a water coverage of up to 60%, but with a service reliability of about 40%.

Besides, in the recent past, we have seen an influx of people coming to Hoima city and this has put a stress on the already limited water resource. Now with the coming of the city, we are going to realise more and faster urbanisation. This will further stress the limited water resources

and increase sanitation issues. Currently, the only piped sewerage system is in Kahoora division, but it is very small and was intended for a small town.

There is greater need now than ever before to increase access to water and sanitation, both through geographical expansion of the current systems and connectivity to the grid.

There is a need to expand the current infrastructure to cater for the increasing city population. It is important to fast-track the construction of a water treatment plant at Kafu River; this will produce enough water for the growing city. Besides, there is a need for more reservoirs for storage purposes and increase in service reliability.

Water for the poor

Despite Hoima acquiring city status, many of our people cannot afford a yard connection. Many are still going to the wells to fetch water.

This work is left to children and women. It has been one of the causes of early pregnancies in children and a major driver of school dropout. There is a need for public standpipes in the areas of Kyentale, Kigabo, Karongo, Kiduma, Mpaia, Kyabahesi and many others. This will bring water close to the community and reduce some of the issues of water access aforementioned.

Health centres

Water connectivity is low at most health centres in the city. Even those connected have challenges of maintaining the systems. Some have boreholes which have become dysfunctional and have quality issues.

The health centres in the city must all be connected on the national grid, where they will be supplied with enough water and of good quality.

The government-aided schools lack access to water and sanitation services. There should be a deliberate program aimed at connecting all government-aided schools (most of our needy children go to these schools) to the national water grid for good and quality water. There is a need for a revised rate and education ministry to provide some money per child as part of government transfers to cater for water. All schools must be provided with at least a pit-latrines and toilets where possible and where the sewer system allows.

As highlighted above, the city grapples with a small sewer system constructed for the small town at Kahoora. There is a need for a much bigger sewer plant at Ruyanja and expanding the sewer network to reflect the status of the city.

Public toilets should be provided at markets and car parks to improve hygiene and sanitation.

Hand-washing is a major activity in slowing down the spread of Covid-19. Free hand washing facilities should be located at schools, markets, car parks, washing bays and all health centers.



Jonard Akiiki Asimwe is the NRM flag bearer, Hoima East city division

According to my assessment, about 73% of the people in Hoima East division cells (villages) move more than 5km to access a water source and a few who have water access, the sources are in bad conditions. My assessment has also found that about 26.1% of households connected to piped water. However, about 16% do not use water with ease as they face challenges in paying bills. A total of 2% of the people have piped water but do not use it but opt for local water sources. About 1.2% of households go without any toilet facility, the figure seems small but this is a serious issue.

Way forward

In Hoima City, 11.1% of people use borehole water and 26.1% households have access to piped water. The areas with boreholes were elevated to town status. These people cannot afford buying water.

Our proposal is working with the Government together with development partners to sustainably eradicate poverty through different projects so we can be self-reliant. We further intend to help vulnerable families through introducing connection fees loans to those along water lines.

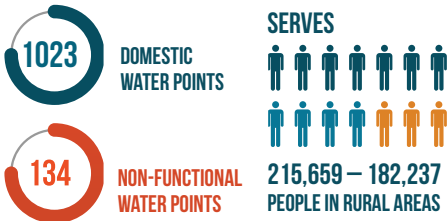
As COVID-19 cases spike, we propose a rain water harvesting approach because there has been less shortage of rain in Hoima, particularly during the two rainy seasons.

Our plan, together with development partner/s (Jonard Development Foundation) is to avail services of offering a water tank in poverty-stricken households, with others we take on a cost-sharing approach.

When the Government takes long, as honourable citizens we have been renovating water sources, and we hope to keep this going. Every village must have safe drinking water.

One of my top roles will be oversight, monitoring and supervision of government progress on water and sanitation in Hoima East.

According to the Water Supply Atlas, by September 19, 2020, the access rates in Hoima district vary from 43 % in Buseruka sub-county to 95 % in Kyabigambire sub-county. Hoima has 1,023 domestic water points which serve a total of 215,659 people – 182,237 in rural areas. A total of 134 water points have been non-functional for over five years and are considered abandoned. Hoima has 2 piped schemes.



FORT PORTAL CITY

Fort Portal is also one of the new 10 cities elevated as a strategic tourism city. To maintain and support services of the tourism industry here there must be safe water at all public and home facilities.



Rev. Kintu Muhanga Ateenyi, the incumbent mayor, who is seeking a second term

Water is life and we cannot survive without water. We shall make sure that people have sufficient water in our schools, hospitals, homes and in all the areas of the city. We shall work hand in hand with the central government to make sure that the price of water is reduced so that people can be in position to have safe water.

Muhanga says sensitisation of the people on drinking and using clean water is going to be paramount and a priority.

At the moment, all our health centres are connected to the national grid. We shall work hand in hand with National Water and Sewerage Corporation and the water ministry to make sure that River Mpanga is well-cleaned and protected because it's our main source of water in the city.

Muhanga proposes that the cost of a 20-litre jerrycan of water be reduced from sh200 now to at least sh50 so that the people are able to have access to clean water.



Burahya County MP Margaret Muhanga Mugisa Abwooli, who holds the NRM flag for Fort Portal City North division

Many places in Fort Portal North have not got clean water or running tap water, so we need the Government to connect as many villages as possible so that we can improve on service delivery, health/hygiene, easing the burden of women looking for sources of clean water, fighting water-borne diseases.

“Cities need street lighting, proper and timely garbage collection because they are densely populated, so services like electricity and water and are a must,” she adds.

We need more gabbage collection trucks and good dumping sites in residential areas. Better road networks and proper planning for the city that separates residencies from commercial areas, industrial parks and cottage industries for the young people are key. Finally, as a tourism city, we have to have the best hotels and resorts. All these need clean, safe and enough water.



Linda Irene Mugisa Amooti, the NRM flag-bearer for Fort Portal City Woman MP

I would legislate for the removal of VAT on water and extension of piped water. The Government too should increase the budget of the water sector so that people can get access to water, more especially budgeting funds for repair of boreholes and shallow wells and construction of new ones.

The Government should allocate funds for construction of gravity water, more especially in the North division and it should train people in rain water harvesting and provide big tanks to large communities to harvest water.

construction of a bigger sewerage treatment plant in Fort Portal city would solve so many sanitation problems.



Joselyn Karungi Amooti, contesting as an independent candidate as Woman MP for Fort Portal city

First of all, I will legislate for a national water policy. We all know that water is life, so there should be a reduction in the cost of service delivery so that water is affordable to all. Karungi adds that the Government should consistently continue sensitising the people on water hygiene and how to learn to live in the new normal. I am proud of the government efforts as far as provision of water services at the health centres in almost all the areas is concerned.

Statistics

Regarding the status of water supply, sanitation and hygiene promotion (2018/19), Kabarole District water officer Bruno Basude says water coverage was at 80% while functionality of water sources was at 88%, functionality of water committees 41% and latrine coverage at 81%. In 2018/19, hand-washing facilities at household level were at 28%, hand-washing facilities at schools at 14%, pupil:stance ratio at 65:1, household sanitation at 85%, about 171 (35%) villages without a water source and 323 villages (65%) with a water source.

According to Kabarole District Wash Master Plan 2018-2030, access to water services is low (58%) and is less than the national average estimated at 70%.

The same report indicated that there is a high level of contamination of drinking water sources (64%), especially in rural areas. This compromises the quality of water for domestic use.

The adoption of hand-washing with soap at household level is very low and less than 10% of the households had improved sanitation facilities with hand-washing facilities with water and soap, which makes people vulnerable in this COVID-19 era. Toilets with running water account for only 1% of the facilities.

According to the Water Supply Atlas, the access rates in Kabarole vary from 7% in Kijura Town Council to 95% in Bukuuku sub-county. Kabarole has 1,137 domestic water points which serve a total of 258,053 people – 178,127 in rural areas.

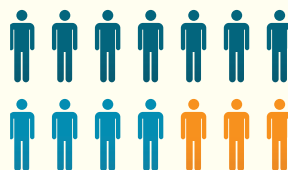
About 207 water points have been non-functional for over 5 years and are considered abandoned. Kabarole has three piped water schemes.



A man draws water from a shallow well in Karago town council in Fort Portal North division in August



SERVES



**258,053 – 178,127
PEOPLE RURAL AREAS**





Permanent Secretary, Mr. Alfred Okidi receiving washing facilities from donations of partners

Sanitation council supports vulnerable groups to curb COVID-19

In a move to increase compliance of vulnerable groups to COVID-19 measures, the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC) has supported vulnerable groups in the Kampala Metropolitan area with handwashing equipment.

The items were handed over to the National Hand Washing Initiative (NHWI) of the Ministry of Water and Environment. Speaking shortly after receiving the equipment from International Water and Sanitation Centre which is the lead organisation for the initiative, the Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Water and Environment, Alfred Okot Okidi, applauded WSSCC for its efforts towards boosting the COVID-19 response of Kampala locals.

“Studies have shown that washing hands with soap and water significantly reduces the incidence of diarrhoea and acute respiratory infections among children under five by 47 per cent and 25 per cent among older people respectively,” he said. He explained that in order to promote hand washing with soap as one of the means of preventing diarrhoea diseases, the National Sanitation Working Group (NSWG) came up with a National Hand washing initiative (NHWI) to spearhead the campaign.

“We should also encourage the population to practise improved sanitation and hygiene not only at their homes but also at the workplace”

The NHWI has got membership from several government ministries, including Water, Health, and Education, as well as development partners such as UNICEF and civil society organisations that implement WASH issues.

Okidi asked the general public to continue spreading the message on the importance of hand washing with soap after engaging in any activity that may have exposed one to faeces like visiting toilets or cleaning children’s bottoms before handling food.

“We should also encourage the population to practise improved sanitation and hygiene not only at their homes but also at the workplace,” he said.



The commissioner for Rural Water, Eng. Joseph Eyatu, asked the public to embrace the handwashing facilities rather than leaving them redundant at a time when they are most needed.

“We don’t want to see these facilities in front of your doors and homes not being used. We have seen them in hospitals when people are just bypassing them. They have to be used in order for them to become effective”, said Eyatu.

In terms of sanitation, Eyatu said rural pit latrines coverage stands at 77 per cent while in urban areas it stands at 80 per cent.

While distributing the items in one of the slums in Bunamwaya, a Kampala suburb, the Public Health Expert at the Water Ministry, Cate Namyalo, said people in slum areas seem to be finding it difficult to comply with COVID-19 measures.

“The majority of them are focusing on what to eat, forgetting about sanitation. This time we want to give them soap, washing containers and face masks to help them comply with government measures,” she said.

The sanitation initiative is being implemented by a sanitation collaborative council, which includes IRC, Unilever-Uganda, and World Vision.

The support that they offer is in form of providing information, educational material and communication through talk shows and radio announcements. They also offer hand washing facilities, soap and masks to high-risk populations within the Kampala Metropolitan area who include traffic officers and other essential workers.

According to Joanita Mukasa, an employee of Unilever-Uganda, the public has responded well to the handwashing initiatives, resulting in the realisation of high consumption habits in hygiene products.

“We have seen a shift of about 50 per cent consumptions in the hygiene products, which has prompted us to be part of the team. So far, we have donated items worth Shs10 million,” she said.



The Disaster Management Manager at World Vision Uganda, Moses Odur, said his organization is currently working with UNICEF to provide psychosocial support to children who are in quarantine with their families.

“We are also working with different districts to provide livelihood support to vulnerable groups through the different taskforces so that such communities are helped to get out of the effects of COVID-19,” he said.

Odur revealed that World Vision Uganda will continue to provide materials such as masks and hand washing facilities in health centres and in vulnerable communities to ensure that everybody can wash their hands and stave off the coronavirus.

“Our appeal is to deliver these materials properly in order to help children grow well. We also want to continue supporting access to information initiatives,” he said.

Odur explained that the organisation is currently working towards ensuring that farmers can access seeds so that other tragedies like hunger can be avoided.

Maria Nakiwala, a resident of the same zone, said masks were not a priority to her but since she received one freely in addition to soap, she can now be compliant to government programs to respond to COVID-19.

However, in spite of the efforts by the government and its partners, locals say there is need to do more to help them overcome their hygiene and sanitation

challenges. The LC1 chairman of Bunamwaya Mirembe zone, John Bosco Tamale, said his residents had decided not to implement government measures due to lack of support.

“As much as they know the danger of COVID-19, they cannot divert money meant for food, masks or handwashing soap,” he said.

“

As much as they know the danger of COVID-19, they cannot divert money meant for food, masks or hand washing soap,” he said.



WATER MISSION STRENGTHENED THE FIGHTING OF COVID-19 IN REFUGEE CAMPS USING WATER

ARUA/MADI-OKOLLO: "Water is life," is a common saying used to emphasize its importance. During the COVID-19 pandemic, that statement could as well have changed to "water is a life-saver."



That is how essential water is, given the need for it to be easily available to enable people wash their hands regularly in order to prevent infection from the deadly coronavirus. With the high number of people in the refugee settlements, where some of the areas do not have adequate water and handwashing containers, the risk of contracting the virus is amplified. This is because the water points and market places in the refugee settlements have an inadequate supply of containers for washing hands.

To help the population in refugee camps out of that predicament, Water Mission Uganda has donated 215 water station containers to Rhino Camp and Imvepi settlements, which are mostly inhabited by refugees from South Sudan.

The refugees are mainly relying on the few water points and with inadequate hand washing facilities from their homes. One of the refugees, Ms Rose Oba of village 16, Zone II in Rhino Camp, said: "We need more sensitization on hand washing because some of my colleagues still have a poor culture of not washing their hands. But some families do not have the money to buy the containers and have constant water. They need more sensitisation because many people still have less knowledge about how the virus is spread."

The Refugee Welfare Committee Secretary, Mr Samuel Bidal, told Wash Magazine: "We still have a challenge of inadequate access to water, and most families do not have proper handwashing taps. This will relieve some of the health centres where they will be stationed and ensure proper hygiene of the patients and attendants."



The Wash Team Leader for Arua and Kiryandongo settlements, Mr Samuel Apire, said: “With the current situation of COVID-19, we need to strengthen handwashing and general hygiene in the communities. So these water taps will be stationed in health centres, at water points, markets, police posts and other areas where people gather, especially for meetings.”

Apire explained that besides the distribution of the water stations, they were also educating both the host communities and refugees to practice social distancing, especially at boreholes.

Imvepi has about 65,000 South Sudanese refugees while Rhino camp has over 125,000 refugees. The distribution will help a portion of the refugees, and the onus remains on each individual at household level to set up handwashing points.

With the high population at the camps, danger still looms, especially at water points where there is crowding. As a result, 200 crowd controllers have been recruited by Water Mission to ensure social distancing at water points in the two settlements.

The Refugee Desk Officer at the Office of Prime Minister in Arua District, Mr Solomon Osakan, said there was need for other partners to compliment the contribution made by Water Mission.

“The number of refugees is big and while these water points will at least help, we need more so that many people can access handwashing points. This is a virus that may stay with us like HIV/Aids So, we need to plan not only for short term but also long term,” he said.

The Resident District Commissioner for Madi Okollo, Ms Alice Akello, said: “Hand washing culture has to change because some people were hesitant to wash their hands always. We should sensitize the communities more on this because it is one of the ways of stopping infections. And we need to put them into proper use and not divert the water stations for personal use.”

Due to the need for water, the Mission also constructed 10,460 Km of pipeline extensions to Omugo VI, Eden 1, Omugo IV and Tika 1 settlements. Water Mission also made a similar distribution of the water stations to refugees in Kiryandongo.



We still have a challenge of inadequate access to water, and most families do not have proper hand washing taps.



BY CHARLES OPOLOT
copolot123@gmail.com



MPs score highly in responding to WASH issues in Uganda

The Parliamentary Forum on Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (UPF-WASH) was set up in 2012 to respond to water, sanitation and hygiene issues in Uganda.

The forum was created basing on the recommendation by WaterAid Uganda in 2012 after its study which looked at the role of Parliament in ensuring that citizens have access to safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene, including policy making, policy regulation, budgeting, ensuring government accountability and citizen representation.

The independent network forum, led by a 10 person elected executive committee, was formed mainly to enable legislators from both political divides to freely interact with each other and with the civil society and development partners around WASH-related issues.

As the 10th Parliament's tenure comes to an end, the current leadership of Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (UPF WASH) has explained that they have achieved quite a number of milestones as far as WASH is concerned.

According to the Ngora Woman legislator, Jacqueline Amongin, the chairperson of UPF WASH, they have managed to influence government policy to remove VAT on domestic water, which was supposed to have been charged 6%.

She says they have legislated at parliamentary level, whereby any loan for the constructing of roads cannot be approved without a clear permit provision of sanitary facilities on highways.

Amongin adds that they have ensured that the Government puts in place private-public partnerships (PPPs) arrangements for highway facilities to reduce on open defecation in communities.

"We have also successfully managed to come up with a motion that was debated in Parliament on the menstrual health and hygiene policy for the Government to provide a holistic approach to menstrual hygiene. The policy has not yet been passed by Cabinet, but it is something in the offing," she says.



Hon. Jacqueline Amongin, Chairperson, UPF WASH
Woman Member of Parliament, Ngora District



Hon Silas Oagon, Member, UPF WASH
Member of Parliament, Kumi Municipality

on the floor of the House. We have also championed issues of increasing the budget on handwashing and primary health care (PHC) generally," he says.

Aogon adds that they have been carrying out sanitation campaigns and in 2017, They were able to move to Oyam and some other districts carrying out hygiene sensitisation.

UPF WASH has also been working with civil societies in western Uganda to make sure they help to revamp River Nyamwamba which was being destroyed. They have registered considerable progress on the issue.

Challenges

According to Benard Atiku, the Ayivu County legislator and a member of the UPF WASH forum, their main challenges have been linked to funding, the national budgeting on water and challenges of enforcement of hygiene and sanitation.

"We need strong support in terms of funding. Parliament cannot fund us because this is a forum and not a committee, so we are not able to access direct funding. Unless we are funded by civil society or someone else, we are not sure of the next day. However, we appreciate Parliament because it always provides transport means (vans). The challenge comes when we have to pay fuel, the drivers and the Police that provide security," Atiku says.

Amongin also shares the same sentiments as she explains that they still have the 'Bulungi bwa'nsi' Bill on the floor of Parliament that needs sponsorship which they have not yet got because it has a financial implication.

"If the Government was not involved, we would have okayed it already. Also, every Parliament comes with new people, so, you have to start afresh with a new team, new champions of UPF WASH," she explains.

The forum has also advocated increase on the budget for water for domestic use. President Yoweri Museveni previously made a pledge of having access to water in all villages which is on the increase and implementation is on track.

Silas Aogon, the Kumi Municipality legislator and a member of the forum, says at the national level, they were able to participate in the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) last year. At AMCEN, Aogon represented the forum and the voice of Uganda was heard in that forum that had African ministers coming together to talk about the blue/ocean economy.

"Besides the meetings we have been holding with civil society to identify the critical needs for attention, we have also been able to champion lobbying through the various committees of Parliament such as the budget committee, natural resources committee and



Hon. Atiku Benard, Member, UPF WASH
Member of Parliament,

The future

When elected back in the 11th Parliament, Amongin says the first thing they will do will be capacity building and recruiting of more MPs to be WASH champions in the House.

"We shall continue pursuing our 'Bulungi bw'ansi' Bill and now that COVID-19 is a serious issue in the country and the world, we have to make sure that we redirect our policy on hand-washing and access to water. This is because you cannot talk about hand-washing when people cannot have access to water," she says.

Atiku also explains that UPF WASH will need to advocate funding and improve on advocacy for a bigger budget.

He says on the issue of enforcement, hygiene and sanitation is one area where there is a lot of laxity and yet most of the diseases that are burdening the population are water-borne.

"We want to strengthen UPF WASH, We want to see that the membership grows, the contributions grow and the number of civil society organisations supporting us grows. We also hope that the budget from foreign sponsors increases and the level of our activities should be able to create impact in the various constituencies that we represent; let people see the difference," Aogon says.

UPF WASH E-conference and COVID-19

Amongin said the COVID-19 pandemic topic was relevant to the conference because they talked about hand-washing, water and poor hygiene.

She emphasised that this was the reason it was very strategic for them to hold the E-conference to share experiences from different partners and countries on how they are handling WASH-related issues in the COVID-19 era.

Amongin says the conference is also geared towards keeping the momentum and to ensuring that the WASH agenda remains relevant despite the COVID-19 pandemic. Atiku too explains that from the beginning, washing hands and cleanliness was emphasised as one of the preventive measures in combating COVID-19. He adds that water has been a challenge in most rural and urban areas as people have to walk for kilometres to access it.



The fact that COVID-19 cases are on the rise means that people are not washing hands. The cost of water is high and we expected the Government in times like this to waive any additional costs that will make the public shun using water. We are going to figure out our status as a country, where we stand as far as water and sanitation are concerned and also the resource allocation for the WASH sector.

UGANDA PARLIAMENTARY FORUM ON WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE (UPF-WASH) INTERNATIONAL e-CONFERENCE ON WASH AND COVID-19:

ADVANCING THE ROLE OF WASH DURING AND AFTER COVID-19 PANDEMIC

HIGHLIGHTS

Introduction

On October 6th, 2020, the Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Water, Sanitation and Hygiene held the second annual conference on WASH. The International e-Conference on WASH and COVID-19 focused on advancing the role of WASH during and in the aftermath of COVID-19.

Because of the on-going movement restrictions, and the still precarious nature of the pandemic, the conference was organized a hybrid-event, with a limited number of participants physically present at the conference venue, and the rest, including other panelists joining via Zoom.

Objectives

The main objective of the conference was to provide platform for stakeholders to discuss and share experiences on the role of WASH in the fight against Covid-19 and beyond.

The conference was opened by the Speaker of Parliament, who is also the patron of the UPF-WASH, the Rt. Hon. Rebecca Alitwala Kadaga. In her remarks, the speaker noted that cost was a still a major barrier to accessing and use of clean and safe water by most Ugandans, especially those in the rural areas.

She said that as much as funding for WASH had improved, there was still a big deficit to meet the need. She called on partners to continue pushing for an increase in budget allocations to the WASH sector.

She committed to always support increase in budget allocations for WASH.

Lastly, she called upon the participants and Ugandans to continue observing the standard operating procedures instituted by Ministry of Health as we try to prevent the spread of Covid-19.

Issues Discussed

The conference comprised a line of informative presentations and panel discussions on a range of issues including.

- a) Funding WASH in times of Covid-19,
- b) Translating the current Covid-19 interventions into long-term solutions in addressing WASH issues,
- c) Enhancing the role of parliament in advancing WASH on the government's development agenda,
- d) Tripling the gains in WASH investments through multisectoral approach. A case study of the housing sector,
- e) The role of the private sector in advancing and promoting WASH in Uganda.

Key Action Points and Recommendations

Policy and Legislation

- UPF-WASH has committed to intensify efforts to achieve its objectives. Specifically, ensure that there is the necessary regulation to enable the fight against COVID 19. We promise that when the amendments to the Water Act and Policy come to parliament, they will get our backing.
- Follow-up the enactment of the Uganda National Works Bill and work stakeholders towards the achievement of this bill (Bulungibwansi bill)

Research and Advocacy

- A lot of advocacy issues have been raised during the conference. These range from funding, empowerment of the communities, and sustaining the current momentum.
- As UPF-WASH, it is our commitment to push for increased allocation of funding to the WASH sector across all ministries, departments, and agencies.
- UPF-WASH has been working with

partners to conduct informative research. This should continue but this time leaning to action oriented research – to inform advocacy and policy formulation.

- UPF-WASH members also resolved to raise issues of WASH and SOPs against COVID 19 at all the campaign meetings and encounters as a way of promoting awareness.
- Continue the advocacy for the reduction in the costs of access and use of water. 11 million is still a big number.
- As part of advocacy, it has also been observed that we need to empower the communities to take charge of WASH – demanding for accountability and meeting some of the related costs.
- We need to work with the media to document and raise awareness of WASH issues.

Strengthening Partnerships

- In all the presentations, it is clear that we need to build partnerships across the board. No one can do it alone. One of the missing yet strategic partner has been the private sector. Therefore, the partnership in WASH should not stop with fighting Covid-19 but continue in the aftermath.

Funding

- UPF-WASH welcomed the commitment from the donor communities who continue to support WASH – through support to government and other implementing partners. But as it has been noted, the gap is still very glaring. It is therefore important that we develop clear funding strategies for WASH, including locally generated funding.
- UPF-WASH also committed to enhance their oversight of the budget implementation, especially the utilization of WASH allocations.

PRESENTATION HIGHLIGHTS



51 percent of ugandans lack access to safe water and 81 percent do not have access to improved sanitation facilities water resources unevenly distributed

<p>Nominal water access is nearly 80%, however 22 million have no access to safe water</p> <p><i>Source: JMP 2017</i></p>	<p>12 districts hosting 1.4 million refugees (3.5% of Uganda population); ~60% refugees hosted in five most remote and least developed districts in the upper West Nile.</p>	<p>5% of children are wasted and 33.5% are stunted due to malnutrition and poor sanitation.</p> <p><i>Source: American Journal of Health Research 2018, 6(2), p 55</i></p>	<p>Uganda has abundant with water Resources; inequality of access and quality of services with water insecurity compounded by climate shocks and fragility</p>

Integrated Water Management and Development Project (IWMDP)

	<p>Amount: US\$313 m (\$280m IDA, incl. \$29m IDA18 Refugees Window) Board Date: June 14, 2018 Closing date: December 2, 2024 Cumulative Disbursement: 4.0 %</p> <p>Beneficiaries: 1,403,000 people (including 99,000 refugees, 173,000 host communities' residents, and 716,000 females) Implementing agencies Ministry of Water and Environment (MWE) and National Water and Sewerage Corporation (NWSC)</p>
<p>(PDO) is to improve access to water supply and sanitation services, integrated water resources management, and operational performance of water and sanitation service providers in Project areas.</p>	
<p>Institutional Structure of the sector</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Water and Environment (MWE) has the legal mandate on developing, managing and regulating water and environmental resources. Water services are provided through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Urban areas/large towns - National water and sewerage corporation (NWSC) provides water for 280 large urban municipalities and towns serving nearly 10.3 million people Small towns / Rural growth centers - Six regional umbrella authorities of MWE (UAs) provide water using gravity schemes and boreholes serving nearly six million people Rural areas - 130 district authorities serving nearly 18 million people in rural areas Refugee settlements – implementing partners and UNHCR provide water to 1.4 million refugees from South Sudan, DRC, Rwanda, and other countries. As part of the transition model and through coordination with the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), MWE/NWSC are working with UNHCR to shift provision of water services from partners to national utilities. 	
<p>Corporate commitments: Gender, Fragility, Climate change, Employment generation</p>	<p>65 contracts (US\$140 million) are programed. Three major contracts will be signed shortly Covid-19 Support: Adjustments made to maximize creation of local job opportunities and income generating activities to mitigate Covid-19 impacts on the local economy</p>

UgIFT AF: water services for rural communities

Amount: US\$50m for the Rural Water Supply Program, under a US\$250m AF
 Board Date: Sept 14, 2020
 Closing date: 2023
 Cumulative Disbursement: 0% (not yet approved)
 Instrument: PforR
 Beneficiaries: 18 million Ugandans and refugees
 Implementing agencies: District Local Governments under supervision from MWE
 PDO: to improve the adequacy, equity and effectiveness of financing and the oversight, management and delivery of local government services in education, health, water and environment, and micro irrigation, including refugees and their host communities



PDO to improve the adequacy, equity and effectiveness of financing and the oversight, management and delivery of LG services in education, health, water and environment, and micro irrigation, including refugees and their host communities

- Direct financial support to ALL district water and environmental departments, incl. salaries and investment funds
- Expansion of water coverage through new boreholes and direct networks
- Support host communities and refugees with better services
- Improved design of new water schemes to be then managed by MWE

Uganda COVID-19 Economic Crisis and Recovery Development Policy Financing, DPO

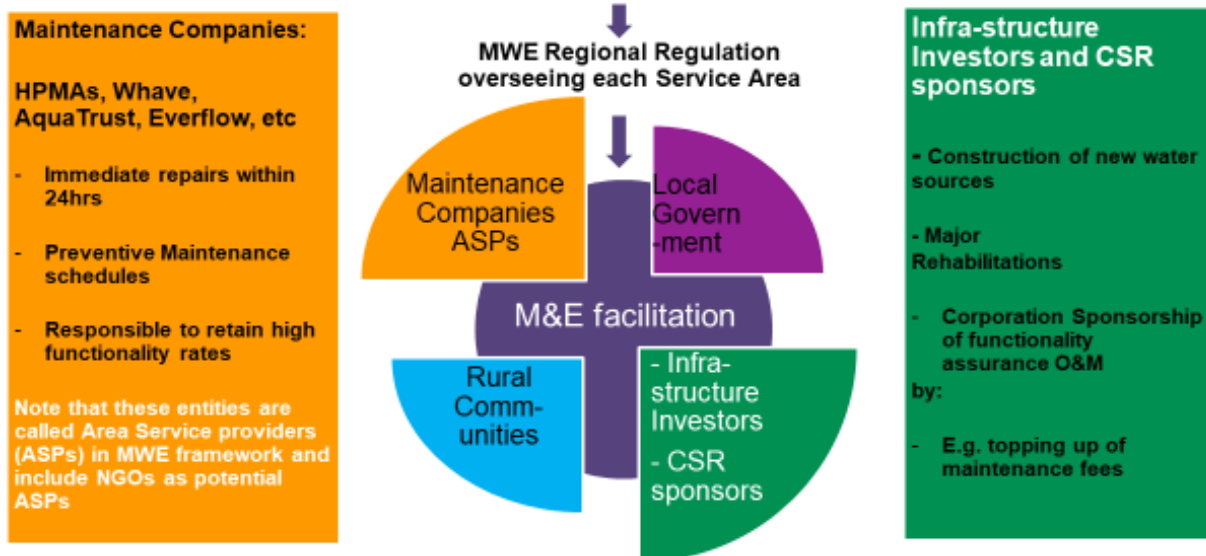
Amount: US\$50m for the Water and Electricity Providers, under a US\$300m DPO
 Board Date: June 30, 2020
 Closing date: September 30, 2020
 Cumulative Disbursement: 100%
 Instrument: DPO
 Beneficiaries: 18 million Ugandans and refugees
 Implementing agencies: MoFPED
 Recipients: NWSC and MWE
 Beneficiaries: Urban population



- PA#2
 To ensure continued access to basic utilities, the Recipient published a list of critical service providers to whom utility services will be guaranteed, and submit a supplementary budget for the approval of funding to the water and electricity companies adversely affected by the Executive's decision not to disconnect vulnerable consumers during the period April to June 2020,
 PA#3
 To provide support to those affected by the floods, the COVID-19 shock and related mobility restrictions and to streamline the social safety nets system

Private Sector Actors in rural water service delivery

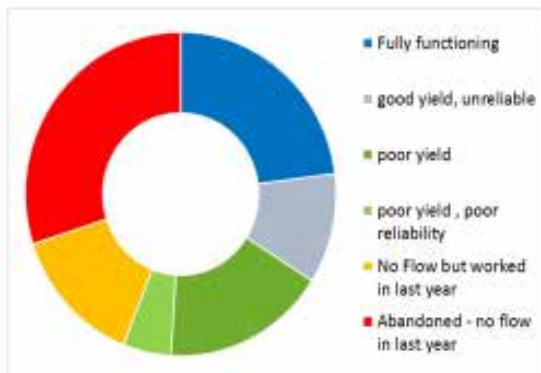
MWE National Framework for O&M



Failed service delivery:

Statistically valid survey found 76% rural sources with prolonged breakdowns or poor yield

UPGro Hidden Crisis Research Consortium



Randomized stratified two stage sampling in 10 Districts of Uganda, UPGro 2017

- Excerpt**
- 55% of HPBs were working on the day of the survey (compared to national figure of 86% for rural water supply)
 - 34% of HPBs passed the design yield of 10 litres per minute
 - 21% passed the design yield and also experienced < 1 month downtime within a year.
 - 18% passed the design yield and reliability criteria and also water quality criteria



76% of rural families with hand-pumps revert to unsafe sources for periods longer than a month

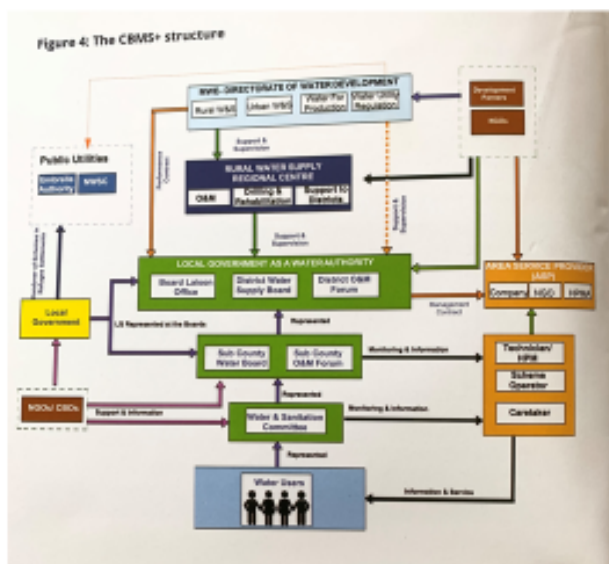
<https://upgro.org>
<http://nora.nerc.ac.uk/id/eprint/518403/1/OR17029.pdf>

Number of people without reliable safe water service delivery

MWE 2020	Total population	33,103,978	100%	Population suffering inequity of lack of coverage and poor functionality		
MWE 2020	Rural population with domestic water points	22,179,665	67%	Population suffering lack of coverage	33%	10,924,313
MWE 2020	Rural population using hand-pumps (deep and shallow boreholes)	15,348,328	69%			
ODI 2017 (Upgro)	% of population with reliable hand-pumps with sufficient yield	3,683,599	24%	Population suffering poor functionality	76%	16,856,545
TOTAL					84%	27,780,858

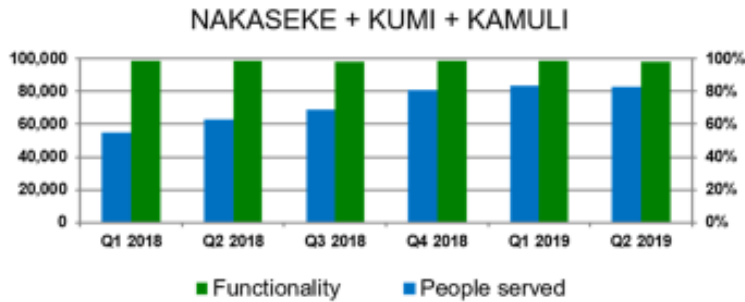
What is the Solution?

Professionalized functionality assurance by Maintenance Companies (Area Service Providers)



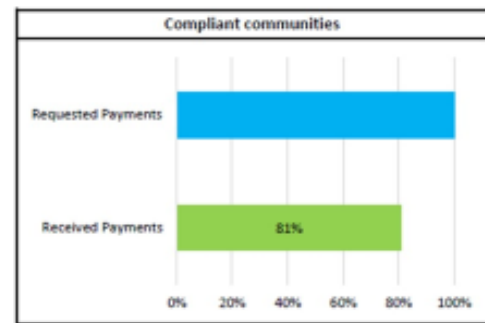
The MWE O&M framework includes the ASP as the entity which is **accountable** for inclusive service delivery

Sustainable financing through service fees



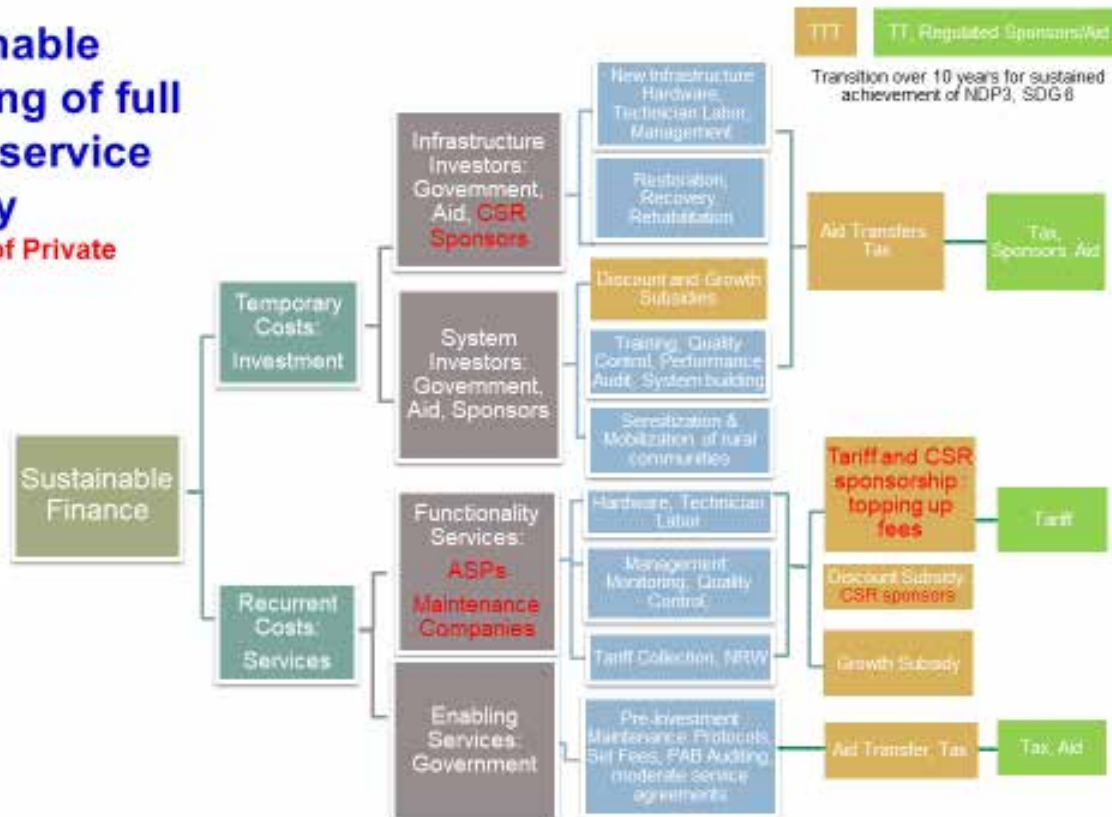
Over 400 Service agreements in 7 districts, more than 100,000 people served

- Since 2014 over 98% functionality consistently.
- Fee discounts decreased in successive years
- Maintenance fee payment compliance is over 80%
- As scale reaches 4000 point-sources per ASP (1 million people in 3-4 district cluster), breakeven economics at 50/= / jerry-can or 4k/hh/month



Sustainable financing of full WASH service delivery

Key roles of Private Sector





Habitant For Humanity

Introduction

Habitat for Humanity is a global nonprofit housing organization working in local communities across all 50 states in the U.S., over 1200 affiliates in the US and Canada, and in approximately 70 countries. Habitat's vision is of a world where everyone has a decent place to live.

Mission: Habitat works toward our vision by building strength, stability and self-reliance in partnership with families in need of decent and affordable housing. Habitat homeowners help build their own homes alongside volunteers and pay an affordable mortgage



Global WASH Background

- About 800 million people lack access to potable water supply.
- Over 2 billion people lack access to adequate sanitation
- About 1 billion live in informal/slum settlement lack access to basic services
- About 4.3% of sub-Saharan Africa's gross domestic product is lost each year due to lack of WASH facilities
- In Uganda, the Housing Ministry reports a housing deficit 2.4 million (12M people do not have places to live in during COVID times and over 20M live in substandard housing)

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

WASH And The SDGs

WASH is crosscutting; together, water and sanitation underpin nearly all 17 SDGs especially



The Link Between WASH And Housing



PICTORIAL



THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON WASH





PARTNERS



SANITATION WEEK 2020

SANITATION WEEK MOMENTS

The National Sanitation Week is an annual event that seeks to highlight the importance of sanitation and hygiene as one of the major positive livelihood practices for communities as a way of enhancing human development.

This activity brings together different stakeholders at the district, regional and national levels to participate in raising awareness about sanitation and hygiene geared towards uplifting the profile of the sanitation sub-sector.

The Ministry of Health, together with sector partners in the National Sanitation Working Group had organized a National Celebration in Bulambuli District before it was postponed because outbreak of COVID-19. WASH Journal captured some moments during the Sanitation Week before the postponement of the national event which happened two days to the planned date.





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