

824 UG05



UWASNET

Women and Children actions in Water and Sanitation

Case studies of NGOs and CBOs in Uganda

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report provides some highlights of NGO/ CBO contribution towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals - MDGs that aim at halving the proportion of people without access to safe water and effective sanitation by 2015 in Uganda. Traditionally in Uganda women and children bear the burden of collecting water and attending to household chores including sanitation improvements. Therefore it is of paramount importance that women are actively involved in the water and sanitation developments at all levels. This series of reports will focus on women and children actions/ participation in water and sanitation activities aimed at improving sustainable livelihoods. The report highlights some of the NGO/ CBO best practices, concerns and lessons learnt through the participation of women and children in water and sanitation activities in Uganda. The report aims at opening up debate with development practitioners and policy makers to ensure effective mainstreaming of gender issues in water and sanitation sector.

2.0 ABOUT UWASNET

The water and sanitation sector in Uganda aims at achieving universal access to safe water and improved sanitation by 2015. This is a big challenge that cannot be achieved through government efforts alone, given that national water coverage is estimated at 57% for rural areas and 65% for urban areas and sanitation coverage at 56% (Water and Sanitation Sector Performance Report, 2004). Over the years, the Government of Uganda has shown commitment towards achieving the MDGS through the decentralization system that allows for support and involvement of the various stakeholders namely all tiers of Government, donors, NGOs and the Private Sector. However it was recognized that despite the tremendous efforts, the NGO contribution in the sector was not properly reflected due to the inadequate coordination, networking and collaboration amongst NGOs and with other stakeholders. It is against this background that the need for strengthening NGO coordination and collaboration was proposed in 1997. Therefore, a stakeholder consultation, dialogue and research was carried out with a purpose of generating support and building consensus. A national NGO consultative conference was held in February 2000 during which a Task

Force was elected and mandated to establish the Uganda Water and sanitation NGO Network (UWASNET).

UWASNET was officially launched in November 2000, with support from the Ministry of Water, Lands and Environment through the Directorate of Water Development - DWD, Danida, WaterAid and a National Task Force of NGOs. It was mandated to ensure effective coordination, networking and collaboration of NGOs and CBOs in the Water and Sanitation Sector in Uganda. UWASNET has a membership of 100 NGOs/CBOs.

UWASNET VISION

"To contribute to poverty alleviation by increasing access to safe water and improved sanitation through effective co-ordination of NGOs and CBOs in the water and sanitation sector in Uganda".

UWASNET MISSION

"To work towards achieving universal access to safe water and improved sanitation. The main strategies to be adopted include promoting effective coordination, supporting stronger collaboration and developing strategic partnerships in the sector".

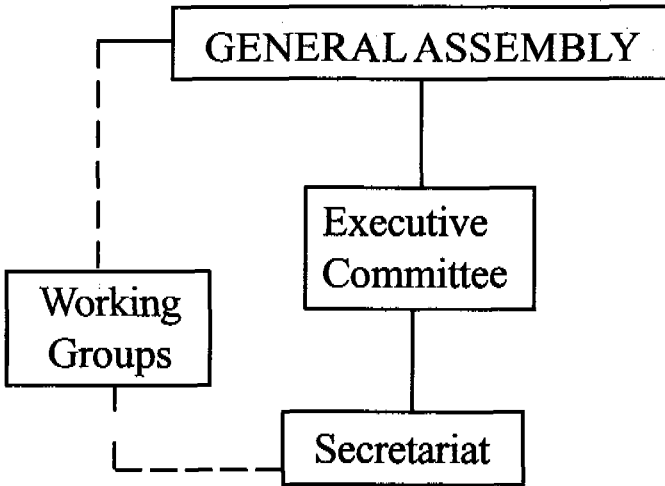
2.1 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- To strengthen the collaboration between NGOs and Government departments
- To promote partnerships between NGOs and other sector stakeholders in the water and sanitation sector in Uganda
- To strengthen the co-ordination and networking among NGOs and CBOs at all levels
- To contribute to the development and implementation of sector policies, strategies, standards and guidelines.

2.2 UWASNET MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

The management structure comprises of the general assembly - members, Executive Committee - selected regional representatives, Secretariat, Working Groups - membership according to thematic concerns.

UWASNET STRUCTURE



2.3 UWASNET WORKING GROUPS

Working Groups are thematic groups of UWASNET members. They take on specific responsibilities and undertake in depth analysis and studies of identified specific trends and concerns in the water and sanitation sector. The Working Groups are focal points for NGOs/CBOs and other agencies interested in promoting specific issues or addressing concerns identified in the water and sanitation sector.

Through Working Groups, UWASNET seeks to contribute and influence sectoral operations and lobby support from governments and other stakeholders through sharing of best practices by NGOs and CBOs. The diverse membership of the Working Groups also provides an opportunity for generation, analysis and production of a better-informed position on critical issues in the sector.

Working Groups are one way in which UWASNET enables its membership to share and consolidate ideas for advocating as well as representing the membership at national and international fora. In accordance with the general aims of UWASNET, the Working Groups

are involved in the initiation and promotion of activities and issues to enhance the capacity of members in their specific area of interest. It is hoped that the efforts by the different groups will contribute to creating more enabling environment for the operation of NGOs in the sector. The Working Groups debate the current assumptions in the sector, stimulate new thinking and contribute in shaping future ways of working. They also debate best practices, discuss new ideas, drawing and building on NGO practical experiences and lessons on the ground. Thus, the Working Groups are well positioned to inform the sector and influence policy development.

2.4 WATER-SANITATION WOMEN AND CHILDREN WORKING GROUP

In society women and children are greatly affected by poor access to water and sanitation services, yet their involvement in water and sanitation service delivery is still rhetoric. The needs of women and children are often overlooked and the recognition of their legitimate interests in the designing of water and sanitation projects are still minimal. UWASNET Women and children Working group is challenged with raising the voice and promoting participation of marginalised and vulnerable women and children. The group aims at ensuring that the ultimate benefits from the water and sanitation services considers the gender issues which could impact on the roles and responsibilities, designs, and management of the facilities in place. The involvement of women and children needs to go beyond paying lip service, to ensuring that they are fully included in the entire process of universal access to safe water and better sanitation. The Working Group discusses perspectives of involvement of women and children, and debates various concepts including gender. Attempts are made to stimulate new thinking and contribute to the shaping of future strategies and approaches towards effective involving of women and children in water and sanitation service delivery.

About the Women and Children Working Group since its formation in 2002

- *Initiation and orientation for members on government policy guidelines.(Water Sector Gender Strategy and Extension Workers Manual)*
- *Experience sharing of NGO/ CBO best practice*
- *Held seminar on women participation in water and sanitation in Uganda*

3.0 FROM THEORY TO REALITY.....

Women and Children as the principle collectors of water face a lot of challenges in the process. **Kyakulumbye Development Foundation – KDF** based in Mpigi district mentioned that it is rare to find men fetching water unless they are going to water animals. KDF has also learnt that unprotected water sources cause delays in collecting water especially in waiting for water particles to settle and therefore affect progress of other household activities done by women. KDF has learnt that women embrace development so fast and are very inquisitive about how the project will improve their livelihoods. They therefore take a leading role in mobilising other community members. KDF has also learnt that since women are responsible for household hygiene and sanitation they take charge in participating in WES initiatives. The experience of **Kajjansi Water Users Association** was that before the provision of piped water in Kajjansi in 1997, access to water was difficult. Women were sometimes raped on the way to the well and speeding vehicles on the highway frequently knocked down children as they crossed from one end to the other in search of water.

It is such factors that oblige NGOs to consciously involve women and children, in community water and sanitation projects.

4.0 NGO/CBO IMPLEMENTATION APPROACHES

NGOs / CBOs have applied various approaches in the design, planning, implementation and follow up on water and sanitation projects. The participatory approaches have enabled women and children to actively participate as reflected below.

Development Foundation for Rural Areas – DEFORA based in Kyenjojo district applies an **integrated approach** which handles income generation, promotion of women rights and promotion of safe water, effective hygiene and sanitation practices in a given project area. The **integrated approach** has yielded great benefits towards improved sustainable livelihoods because it enables the women groups to draw the linkages between the poor hygiene, ill health and decreased productivity. Women are supported with seed farms to undertake income-generating activities that they can manage. During the interaction and discussions, DEFORA utilizes this opportunity to sensitise women about their rights as well as promoting sanitation at the household level, an approach that has proven to be effective.

Kyetume Community Based Health Care - CBHC in Mukono district integrates hygiene and sanitation promotion into their Heifer Project. A pilot project is being implemented in Kyetume and Namayiba parish, Mukono district. Women are involved in the overall mobilisation and sensitization of the community members. Hygiene and sanitation sensitization and trainings are entry point to the overall project. Focus is on a clean environment and improved farming methods. It is mandatory for all beneficiaries of the heifer to make the homestead clean and friendly for the good health of the cow. Participatory methods such Focus Group Discussions- FGDs are held and Information Education Communication (IEC) materials are used during hygiene and sanitation promotion.

<p>Consultative and Participatory Approaches</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Demand driven approach ▪ Community sensitisation ▪ Community contributions ▪ Building Partnerships ▪ Women in decision making ▪ Appropriate technology ▪ Children key change agents ▪ Sustainable O&M 	<p>Involving women in the initiation of the project and encouraging them to make community contribution has been realized as a major facilitating factor towards</p>
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women participation. **Uganda Muslim Rural Development Association - UMURDA**, based in Bugiri district protected a spring in

Busimbi village in March 2003. Women were involved in the initiation of the project and they contributed local resources such as stones and bricks especially since their husbands are bricklayers. According to UMURDA, this kind of participation created ownership of the water source because of the involvement and appreciation of the effort into the entire process.

Working through NGO members is an approach applied by **Katosi Women Fishing and Development Association**, which operates at Katosi landing site in Mukono district, is a membership organisation. This association of 56 members- basically women in fishing activities fully participated in the implementation of the Katosi Integrated Community Managed Water and Sanitation project to provide water facilities and sanitation services. The project activities were the provision of domestic Rain Water Harvesting (RWH) tanks, shallow well construction, extension sanitation services and pit latrine construction.

Involving women in **decision-making**, and particularly site selection of water source is key to the successful implementation and management of the project. **Mariam Foundation** based in Kampala district involved women and children in site selection and design of the standpipe in Kisenyi III, Central Division in Kampala. As a result of the effective participation, convenient locations and heights were selected for standpipes. **Voluntary Service Team**, an NGO operating in Myanzi and Bukuya Sub-counties, Mubende district also strongly promotes the participation of women in the selection of the site and monitoring progress of works an approach that has led to better operation and maintenance of the water sources.

Adequate **community mobilisation and sensitisation** is very important. **Mariam Foundation** emphasized that creating rapport with the community, sensitisation and provision of food for lunch during meetings have contributed to the success of the project in Kampala. To obtain a multiplier effect, both members and non-members of Katosi Women Fishing and Development Association attend training and sensitisation meetings and the community leaders choose which non-member is to attend such meetings. Members of the Association thus have helped their neighbours to adopt proper sanitation practices such as



Safe water for life by Caritas MADDO-Masaka



Loss of time while lining up for water in Orungo Camp - Katakwi



Women in Orungo Camp, Katakwi



Unsafe water, a health hazard (River Kirunya- Bundibugyo)

constructing drying racks. UMURDA trained the women in Busimbi Village- Bugiri district how to make drying racks and sensitised them about general cleanliness of homes.

Appropriate technology needs to be promoted to enable and facilitate women participation. Pentecostal Assemblies of God (PAG)- Soroti was promoting a Water Filtration Programme in Bugondo Parish, Asiro County in Soroti at the lakeshores. Since this technology is utilised in the household, men advised that women to be trained in the use, operation and management of the facility since they are responsible for collecting water. The area has no protectable water sources and the community uses water directly from the lake. The same technology is being implemented by **The Organization for the Emancipation of the Rural Poor (TOERUP)** in Bundibugyo district and is called a household bio-sand filter.

After establishing that lake water was used for both domestic purposes and watering animals, Katosi Women Fishing and Development Association members identified Rain Water Harvesting as an **appropriate way** of accessing safe water. The **procedure to obtain tanks was defined** by the members of the association and RWH tanks were given to needy members of the association who will pay half the money in future. The initiative started in Katosi central where 1000ltr capacity poly-tanks were provided. The capacity of tanks will be increased in future.

NGOs emphasize that for community WES projects to succeed they have to be **demand driven**. Katosi Women Fishing and Development Association experience during the implementation of the Katosi Integrated Community Managed Water and Sanitation project, was that members out of their needs and initiative, identified unprotected water sources and areas that were most in need were served. Four springs and two shallow wells were protected. Traditional pit latrines were constructed basing on most needy members. These beneficiaries pay back a specific amount of money every month so that other members benefit from the revolving fund.

Long-term sustainable Operation and Maintenance (O&M) of the water sources by the community is a crucial factor. KDF reported that it trains community-based masons, and these are responsible for any repairs. It was learnt that no female mason has ever been selected or trained because they are afraid to undertake heavy manual work involving digging shallow wells or carrying bricks. Pump mechanics for shallow wells are selected during the course of the project and they consist of one man and one woman. KDF has established that a woman pump mechanic often takes charge because men have limited time for community water and sanitation activities because they go out of the villages in search for work. Women have been able to mobilise communities quickly to carry out routine maintenance.

Involving women and children in the point water source **management structures** is also promoted. Some NGOs in Uganda such as KDF have a tradition of setting up two Water and Sanitation Committees (WSCs) i.e. one for adults and one for children. The adult WSC often has four women and two men; while the children WSC has two boys and two girls.

KDF has an approach of **establishing and promoting children's committees**. This is because children fetch water so much and therefore see their peers mishandling the water sources. The role of children committees is to monitor and report such incidents to adults. Children also lead peers in cleaning the well, planting flowers around and mopping the apron.

Women and children speed up the point water source construction and this explains why some NGOs **actively involve** them in their WES projects. Children, like their mothers engage in the collection of water and as such can contribute greatly to the operation of the water facilities. KDF has learnt that **children are very inquisitive** about WES projects and they enjoy the movement of the shallow well hand pump. Therefore during construction KDF encourages children to help in ferrying the sand, stones and other material (after school).

In the urban areas **children are also sensitised** against dumping garbage in drainage channels as they are often sent by their mothers

to take garbage to the skips. Mariam Foundation encourages influential children to stop others from spoiling the works and to do this they are given biscuits and sweets as incentives by the NGO.

When Kajjansi Water User Association was extending the pipe water system in the area with support from the Directorate of Water Development, twenty schools in the area were connected free of charge to benefit children.

4.1 OUTCOMES OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN INVOLVEMENT

All NGOs reported positive outcomes upon involvement of women. For example UMURDA pointed out that as a result of their effective involvement **sanitation** in the Busimbi community was improved. After the protection of the spring, general cleaning and clearing around the protected spring has been done consistently every Saturday. There has been improvement of the safe water chain from the spring to home as boiling of water which was also emphasized to the women has been taken up.

Katosi Women Fishing and Development Association established that as a result of implementing Katosi Integrated Community Managed Water and Sanitation project, there was **significant reduction of water and sanitation related diseases** at Katosi landing site. Diseases such as typhoid cholera, diarrhea and malaria reduced by 39 % thus reducing on the infant and maternal mortality rates.

In the urban areas managing point water sources is a **source of income** especially to women. Mariam Foundation reported that standpipe operators who are mainly women obtain income, which has helped them look after their families. This was also a case with Kajjansi Water Users Association. All employees of Kajjansi Water Users Association except two are residents of the area which has created local employment. Of the eleven kiosk attendants, ten are women because men used to divert the collections. Mariam Foundation reported that standpipes close at 9:30pm so that people who leave work late can also be served with water.

According to UMURDA, women's involvement in the entire project cycle has **empowered** them to talk freely to the community about the water project.

KDF pointed out that the outcome of women's involvement in the projects has been the **speeding up of water source construction**. The general **household hygiene also noticeably improved**. However one or two years after handover of the water facility to the community there is often deterioration. WSC structures and water source become run down since there is no follow up from the NGO. Children committees formed in 1997 outgrew childhood and members married. Unfortunately KDF has no mechanism of reactivating of committees every year. Usually after two years, the treasurer of the WSC is the only existent member. This is often a woman because women don't migrate to the extent that men do. Lack of follow up by the NGO is a constraint to sustainability.

According to Katosi Women Fishing and Development Association, working with women creates a **multiplier effect** because members sensitise their neighbours who have now adopted better sanitation facilities such as tippy taps and drying rack with soak pit among others.

5.0 CHALLENGES AND WAY FORWARD

Low turn up in meetings especially in the rainy season when women had to go to their gardens.

- *Need to follow the community seasonal calendar*

Voluntarism is increasingly becoming difficult in most areas.

- *Need for proper sensitization at the beginning of the project to ensure a community based monitoring system is established that allows rotation in roles and responsibilities.*

Composition of the WSC is a challenge to some NGOs. Men still believe water is a women's responsibility.

- *Need for increased gender role analysis to ensure both men and women appreciate shared responsibilities.*

Women in some areas shun joining the WSC because they are illiterate and say that their literate peers should represent them.

- *Awareness raising on the WSC roles and responsibilities should be cleared communicated. Illiteracy should not be an inhibiting factor to WSC as long as they can use their mother tongue. Trustworthiness has should be a pre requisite to election of the treasurer.*

Men in some areas prevent women from working voluntarily and this affects the progress of the projects.

- *Sensitisation on the accrued benefits of participation such as sense of ownership, confidence in managing the facilities for the water and sanitation projects need to be well defined so that men appreciate the role of women in the entire process.*

6.0 LESSONS LEARNT

Involvement of women and men in influential roles and responsibilities at all levels can hasten the achievement of sustainability in the management of water and sanitation programmes.

Women effectively influence their community members towards behaviour change. Husbands too can be supportive to their wives and even contributed to paying back the water and sanitation loans.

It is assumed that constructing water sources nearer to homes would benefit women by saving time and energy. However, some women preferred a distant point water source as this would give them an opportunity to have a walk and socialize with other women.

Women are more responsive at the household level and therefore projects aiming at the effective participation of women should target that level.

Interventions should preserve the dignity of men and women in society.

Focus on children as key change agents and future leaders of tomorrow
There is need to develop user friendly designs for the structures put in place

7.0 CONCLUSION

The case studies were a tip of the iceberg on women and children involvement in water and sanitation programmes. The experience sharing enabled NGOs/CBOs to learn new approaches and methodologies of involving women and children in water and sanitation programmes. The rhetoric about women involvement and participation can be clearly demystified if development practitioners consider the best innovative approaches reflected in this series. The challenge is how to scale up and replicate such best practices to ensure increased contribution to the national water and sanitation goals. The scope for in-depth analysis and enhancement of women participation is enormous and requires concerted efforts by all development actors and donors to make it a reality.

