

Localising the Millennium Development Goals in Uganda: Opportunities for Local Leaders

This briefing note aims at acquainting government agencies, donors, civil society organisations and community members with the process and approaches of Localising the Millennium Development Goals (LMDG) with special reference to water and sanitation sector. The paper further highlights the need to strengthen District Local Government capacity in delivering water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services that reach the poor and marginalised communities. Drawing from WaterAid in Uganda's experience in LMDG, the paper concludes that, for Uganda to attain her MDGs targets by 2015, area specific (localised) targets and plans should be in place and adequately financed in order to bridge the service delivery gaps. A processes where District Local Governments have a pivotal role to play since they are in the best position to identify the development needs and priorities of communities.

Introduction:

The Millennium Summit held in New York in September 2000 was a landmark event that brought together an unprecedented number of countries and Heads of State to form a global consensus on the challenges facing humanity.

September 8, 2010, was exactly ten years since 189 governments at the United Nations General Assembly signed a historic document – the Millennium Declaration, representing a global commitment to a set of time-bound quantitative targets aiming to "free all men, women, and children from the abject and dehumanizing conditions of extreme poverty." From this emerged a series of eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) with 18 quantifiable targets and 48 indicators to help bridge the poverty gap by 2015.

These development goals provide a platform and opportunity to overcome human development challenges affecting people's lives including; the battle against extreme poverty and hunger, tackling preventable diseases, achieving gender equality and sustainable development. Progress towards these however is mixed, with only five years to go many of the targets may not be achieved by many developing countries including Uganda.

At the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, sanitation was recognized for the first time as a priority area in human development and as a result the sanitation MDG target was added. Here, world leaders highlighted the crucial role of improved access to safe water and adequate sanitation in poverty reduction. It was noted that "people, who live, on an average of less than 10 litres of water a day, can never escape poverty and achieve sustainable development."

This calls for heightened efforts geared towards achieving MDG 7 that ensures environmental sustainability which, among others has a target of reducing by half the percentage of people without access to safe water and sanitation.

Status at a glance: Uganda's progress towards the MDGs

According to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Report for Uganda (2010), the country has undoubtedly made modest progress towards the attainment of MDG targets including; reducing the share of the population living in poverty, reducing the share of the population suffering from hunger, gender equality and empowerment of women. The target of gender parity between boys and girls in primary education has been achieved, and the country is on track to meet the targets for access to HIV/AIDS treatment and access to safe water as shown in the table next page.



WAU has been supporting the LMDG in a number of District Local Governments

Progress on water and sanitation MDG target

In regard to the target of halving the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation, progress on improving access to drinking water has been very strong but progress on sanitation, is still lagging behind yet it is a crucial aspect of poverty reduction.

According to the Ministry of Water and Environment Sector Performance Report 2009/10, rural access safe water within 1 km is 65% while urban (0.2 km) access stands at 67%. Sanitation coverage for urban areas is 77%, up slightly from 74% in 2007. While that of rural areas is currently estimated at 70% from 68% as of 2008/9 financial year.

At the current rate however, many districts (about 47%) are unlikely to meet their WASH target with Karamoja region with access figures below national averages lagging behind the rest of the country. This is mainly due limited availability of cheap technological options, poor sustainability of water and sanitation facilities and coupled with poor governance in resource allocation.

This situation may also be as a result of the large investments gaps towards WASH and the high population growth rate in these areas which does not commensurate with available resources. The total national population (2009 mid year population projection) was 30.7 million persons. Total Fertility Rate (UDHS 2006) was 6.7 births per woman, infant Mortality Rate (UDHS 2006) was 76 Per 1,000 Live births, and the projected 2010 mid-year population stands at 31.8 millions.

Uganda's progress towards the MDGs- 2010: Source: Millennium Development Goals Report for Uganda 2010 – Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, September 2010

Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger	
Target 1.A: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day	On track
Target 1.B: Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people	No target
Target 1.C: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger	On track
Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education	
Target 2.A: Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling	Slow
Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women	
Target 3.A: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015	On track
Goal 4: Reduce child mortality	
Target 4.A: Reduce by two thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate	Slow
Goal 5: Improve maternal health	
Target 5.A: Reduce by three quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio	Slow
Target 5.B: Achieve, by 2015, universal access to reproductive health	Slow
Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases and other diseases	
Target 6.A: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS	Reversal
Target 6.B: Achieve, by 2010, universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS for all those who need it	On track
Target 6.C: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases	Slow
Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability	
Target 7.A: Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources	Slow
Target 7.B: Reduce biodiversity loss, achieving, by 2010, a significant reduction in the rate of loss	Slow
Target 7.C: Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation	On track
Target 7.D: By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers	No target
Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development	
Target 8.B: Address the special needs of the least developed countries	Reversal
Target 8.D: Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries through national and international measures in order to make debt sustainable in the long term	Achieved
Target 8.E: In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries	Stagnant
Target 8.F: In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications	On Track

The Millennium Development Goals Report for Uganda 2010 notes that for several MDGs, the progress has been too slow to meet the national and international targets and, for some, there has been outright reversal. In some cases, improvements in national averages do not take account of area inequalities in progress- there are disparities in how the benefits are being shared.

Poverty levels are more than twice as high in rural areas than in urban areas, and poverty levels remain higher in the northern and eastern regions of the country mainly because some of these areas are hard to reach or have been experiencing political instabilities for many years. A case in point is the proportionately growing difference in the poverty gap index between northern region and other regions, by 12% (especially Eastern and Western regions) (UBOS 2010). At the same time, the overall level of inequality in the country has increased compared to the early 1990s.

Move towards Localising the Millennium Development Goals (LMDG)

The above can only be addressed by setting area specific targets with clear funding strategies to address the service delivery gaps through the localisation of the MDG targets. A process referring to disaggregating nationally adjusted global Millennium Development goals at the sub-national and local levels, combined with capacity development for strategic planning, implementation, and monitoring.

It is a powerful tool in addressing sub-national disparities and socio-economic inequalities even when national targets are on track. The processes also helps in addressing social exclusion, enables full public participation and open space for social mobilisation and develops a greater capacity to deliver basic services to those most in need.

This process therefore brings the global MDG targets to the local level, as a basis for positioning local government to move forward to carry out equitable planning and implementation of facilities to meet these goals.

It is at the local level that inequalities between people can be addressed. It is at the local level that safe drinking water, sanitation, health and education among others are provided. MDGs should therefore be adapted to meet this reality. Localisation of the MDGs also provides monitoring and accountability mechanisms that enable citizens to hold local authorities responsible for the services provided and competencies exercised.

Water and Sanitation sub-sector performance against the selected golden indicators

Indicator		Achievement						Target	
		Financial year	2004/5	2005/6	2006/7	2007/8	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11
Access % of people with in 1km (rural) and 0.2km (urban) of an improved water source	Rural	61%	61%	63%	63%	65%	65%	65%	77%
	Urban	-	51%	56%	61%	66%	67%	68%	100%
Functionality % of improved water sources that are functional at the time of spot - check	Rural	82%	83%	83%	82%	83%	80%	83%	90%
	Urban	No data	93%	82%	89%	89%	90%	90%	95%
Per capita investment cost Average cost of per beneficiary of new water sources	Rural	\$31	\$35	\$38	\$44	\$43	\$41	\$42	\$45
	Urban	\$72	\$93	\$58	\$93	\$64	\$46	\$80	\$85
Sanitation % of people with access to improved sanitation household	Rural	57%	58%	59%	62%	68%	70%	72%	77%
	Urban	-	-	-	74%	73%	77%	84%	100%
Hand washing % of people with access to (and using) hand-washing facilities.	Household	-	-	14%	21%	22%	21%	23%	50%
	School	-	-	41%	-	31%	33%	35%	50%

Source: Uganda Water and Environment Sector Performance Report 2010

Pursuing LMDGs through District Local Governments

Under the Uganda's decentralisation policy, district local governments are well placed to deal with the obstacles and challenges of meeting area specific MDGs targets. They have the statutory responsibility by virtue of the legislative and administrative powers enshrined in the Local Government Act Cap 243 of the Republic of Uganda to provide services including water and sanitation services to the people.

District local councils also have powers to make development plans based on locally determined priorities; raise revenue and execute own budgets. This is done through formulating and implementing integrated and comprehensive medium term development plans which incorporate priorities of lower level local governments. In respect to this, district local governments are in a better position in setting localised (area specific) MDG targets by identifying development needs of the communities in which they operate.

If locally adjusted MDGs targets are achieved at Sub County, County and district levels country wide then the whole country would have achieved its national MDG targets.

The main objectives for pursuing LMDG through Local Governments (LG) are:

- To improve efficient and equitable resources allocation by establishing functional Management of Information Systems (MIS)
- To develop clear and transparent criteria for determining LG priorities that can help in bridging identified local MDG gaps thereby promote pro-poor service delivery.
- Build the capacity of LG staff through improving their planning, monitoring and analysis in line with the LG Capacity Building Framework.

Steps of LMDG for District Local Governments

Localisation of MDGs requires coordination, coherence and capacity building of all stakeholders at different levels of local governance. This should go hand in hand with availing district local governments with financial and human resources necessary to bridge the locally adjusted MDG gap.

Sensitization and awareness Creation: With only five years to go, a number of policy makers and beneficially communities in many Ugandan districts are not very familiar with MDG planning

and strategising – this calls for massive sensitisation and awareness about achieving local MDG targets.

This should be done by involving government officials, line ministries (that is Ministry of Health, Local Government, Education, and Water & Environment) and beneficially communities thereby gaining ownership of the process by all stakeholders.

The stage of popularising the LMDGs is very helpful in putting community WASH issues onto the political and public agenda. It also makes the identified issues visible and credible in policy debate. At this level a communication strategy for the LMDG should also be developed to meet the information needs of the different audiences.

Stakeholder capability assessment at district level: This helps in identifying the potentials or capacity gaps among the different stakeholders that contribute or hinder the delivery of water and sanitation for all in a particular area. At this stage, it is also important to examine the capacity of the existing institutional frameworks and their mandate to deliver on the localised MDG targets.

Collection of baseline information on the status of MDGs at district level: This involves water and sanitation point mapping, collating physical and socio economic data on access to WASH, functionality of WASH facilities and distribution of resources within a specific district. WaterAid is advocating for WASH point mapping because this process helps to establish realistic baseline information, helps to prioritise interventions and also monitor progress in different areas.

Strengthening local capacities for integrated planning for local development: After the analysis and sharing of the baseline information among stakeholders, to jointly come up with localised MDG targets as well as drawing up an estimation of the financial and human resource requirements. Capacity development plans to enhance joint planning and community participation in integrated planning approaches must be put in place. It is also very crucial to strengthen procedures, institutional arrangements and incentive mechanisms for district local governments and non-government actor's engagement in the local and national MDG poverty reduction exercises and budgeting processes.

This stage entails the development of local plans where key local authorities and personnel come together to formulate long-term investment plans as well as discussing avenues for resource mobilization and monitoring their area plans. Dialogue meetings are held between policy makers, service providers and beneficially communities.

Translating the disaggregating nationally adjusted plan into action – this involves the process of Districts Local Government to mobilise for resources [technical, material and financial] within their local government sources or market their MDG investment plans among the different funding agencies or donor community. This level also requires having in place coordination mechanisms and harmonisation of efforts among the different stakeholders. In all this the district local government should play the lead role in among other things to provide proper monitoring and oversight of local procurement and service delivery.

Codifying local knowledge, promoting learning and experience sharing at local level: As districts are implementing their localised MDG targets, they have to put emphasis on documentation of not only the processes but the change brought about in realising the locally adjusted targets for wider learning and sharing with other stakeholders. District Local Governments should be facilitated to develop functional Management Information Systems (MIS) to help in tracking change. Community members should as well be empowerment through the promotion of peer-to-peer learning and knowledge exchanges.

Popularisation of the LMDG: Lessons from WaterAid in Uganda

Way back in 2006, WaterAid in Uganda (WAU) carried out a study on water point mapping in the districts of; Wakiso, Mukono, Kumi, Katakwi, Soroti and Masindi. Key finding of the study showed lack of reliable planning information at district lower levels in the country leading to inequitable allocation of available resources. The study further found out that coordination effort between development partners at various levels in the districts is weak sometimes resulting into duplication and inequitable distribution of resources.

Between 2007- 2009 WAU worked with the Local Governments of Mpigi and Amuria districts to popularise the LMDG initiative. This process involved mobilisation district, sub county and parish level technical staff, awareness creation and community mobilisation through music, dance and drama and radios talk shows. All this was aimed at improving WASH service delivery that reaches the poor and marginalised communities.

Currently, WAU is supporting Uganda Water and Sanitation NGO Network (UWASNET) regional coordinators of CIDI in central region, HEWASA in Rwenzori and ACORD in western regions of the country to implement a WASH Governance and Transparency Fund (GTF). The programme main goal is to empower local NGOs and communities to take action in demanding for good governance (transparency and accountability) through sector performance monitoring. This initiative has stimulated citizens' engagement with local governments to demand water and sanitation facilities; improving data collection through water point mapping, development of management information system and research.

Currently, WAU partners involved in popularising LMDG are carrying out the following activities; water point mapping, development of management information systems at district local government levels, research, training sub county staff in aligning WASH local targets in area planning, community sensitisation and awareness through use of community based radio broadcasting, music, dance and drama. Local politicians and district technocrats

are also sensitised in the LMDG localisation processes and procedures.

Results

There is increased citizens' empowerment and engagement with their local governments and service providers in planning for WASH services that reach the poor. Local NGOs and community members also able to raise voices for action geared towards influencing decision making processes by demanding for good governance in WASH service delivery.

In the districts where GTF programme is implemented, the processes of district water point mapping has taken off. This is aimed at contributing to the availability of realistic data on WASH access, functionality, affordability and distribution of water points necessary for planning in these particular districts. There is increased participatory planning at different levels, community members are actively participating in service delivery monitoring (as a result Community Based Monitoring Structures have been established in a number of sub counties) these emphasise value for money.

On the other hand, there is better understanding of the relationship between WASH and the other MDGs. District Water Office staff, politicians and a number of local leaders involved in district planning have a high understanding of the MDGs and are able to articulate what they have to do in order to achieve the locally adjusted MDG targets.

Low funding however remains the main challenge as to why the districts cannot implement their MDG investment plans. Poor coordination of stakeholders at different levels is another major issue which must be worked upon in order to meet the MDG targets.

Specific Recommendations for LMDG targets by 2015

- The government should remain with the responsibility of protecting and provision of the right to water and sanitation all the time. This calls for increased investment in the sector especially at district local government levels to finance the district specific MDG specific investment plans year 2015.
- All local governments in the country should prepare long term WASH investment plans among others to meet the MDG gaps by year 2015. The three year district development plans can give an indication of what is needed but long term investment plans are needed to clearly articulate the funding gap.
- Government, donors and beneficially communities should always demand for value for money in this sector.
- Need for data reconciliation: The definition of access to safe water supply should be changed from 1.0km to 0.5Km which is realistic. The former gives an impression that the sector is about to meet targets whereas the latter is more realistic. Data reconciliation will ensure proper documentation and communication of statistics.
- The functionality should be easily tracked and reported as it significantly affects the water coverage and the MDG targets. The Operation and maintenance of the systems is paramount if we are to reduce investment in rehabilitation and repairs.
- Scale up cross sector advocacy and lobbying in regulating population growth in order to match MDG target investments. The rapid population growth rates significantly affect the water and sanitation coverage in Uganda.
- Link MDGs to the policy cycle and district localised MDG indicators: The district local governments should endeavour to capture all their water and sanitation data in the districts and have reviews to monitor their performance against the set MDG targets.