

**Baseline and Monitoring 2009 on
Perceptions, Attitudes and Practices on
WASH Good Governance and Accountability**

Final Report

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List of Acronyms

CBO	Community Based Organisation
CEFORD	Community Empowerment for Rural Development
DEO	District Education Officer
DHI	District Health Inspector
DWSSC	District Water Source and Sanitation Committee
DWO	District Water Officer
EDF	European Development Fund
EU	European Union
IRC	International Water and Sanitation Centre
LCs	Local Councils
NETWAS	Network for Water and Sanitation
NGO	Non – Governmental Organisation
PDC	Parish Development Committee
PTA	Parents Teachers Association
PWASA	Paidha Water and Sanitation Association Ltd
RDC	Resident District Commissioner
S/C	Sub County
SCWSSC	Sub County Water and Sanitation Coordination Committee
SDP	Support to Decentralization Programme
SMC	School Management Committee
WASH	Water Sanitation and Hygiene
WUC	Water Users Committee

Executive Summary

The *Improved WASH Governance through Dialogue and Concerted Action* Project in the West Nile Region districts of Nebbi, Adjumani and Moyo was launched by IRC International Water and Sanitation Centre in partnership with NETWAS Uganda and CEFORD, in December, 2008. This project is funded through the Government of Uganda Ministry of Local Government from an EDF – SDP grant. This project brings together politicians, technocrats, Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Community Based Organizations (CBOs) at district and sub-county levels in dialogue aimed at improving governance and accountability in the water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) sectors for better health, productivity in communities, school attendance and educational results. The project is implemented in three districts, Nebbi, Moyo and Adjumani, and in each district two sub-counties. This project is expected to enhance dialogue between different stakeholders, improve coordination and harmonization of approaches in WASH and improve responses to complaints and problems of WASH services in the targeted sub-counties. The main methodologies are dialogues at district and sub-county level, and Action Research at district, water service and primary school levels.

The IRC commissioned this baseline and first monitoring study in the districts of Nebbi and Adjumani representing the West Nile region during the period of December 7th - 18th of December 2009, with the aim of collecting baseline information that relates to attitude, perception, appreciation and practice of good governance and accountability.

Specific objectives were:

1. To determine indicators of improvement on perception, attitude, practice and appreciation of accountability and good governance in WASH services that will guide the baseline (before 2009) and the monitoring of present and future situations,
2. To establish the past (before 2009) and present perceptions and attitudes on WASH accountability and good governance of stakeholders in study sample.
3. To establish the past (before year 2009) and present practices and methods on WASH accountability and good governance of stakeholders in selected areas for the study;
4. To establish appreciation of the dialogue processes on accountability and Action Research among stakeholders.

A qualitative approach was adopted in this study. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), Focus Group Discussion (FGDs) and Documentary Review Methods were used to collect baseline and first monitoring information. The researcher interacted with a total of 161 people from the various stakeholder groups in both Nebbi and Adjumani using these participatory methods.

Indicators of change in perception, attitude, practice and appreciation were captured from respondents' expressions and reported behaviours after interacting with the dialogue activities that demystified accountability and good governance. Catch words of change including, "reactivated", "intensified", "now", "increased", "these days", "great" and "significant improvement" were identified and tracked throughout the study. At the district, level roles have been clarified during dialogue sessions and sectors have reverted to implementing projects according to policy. Plans and budgets are shared with colleagues and communities where necessary and information is widely shared through public display on notice boards. The working environment and relationships between the politicians and

technocrats have improved and they easily team up for monitoring activities. NGOs are recognized and they too share their budgets and other related information. The districts are committed to revitalizing the District Water and Sanitation Coordination Committees (DWSCCs) for effectiveness of WASH projects.

The study revealed appreciation and application of best practices shared in dialogue sessions at the sub-county level that will gradually lead to sustainable management of water and sanitation resources in the communities. They are giving special attention to record keeping and accountability from the borehole community users' monthly collections. Water User Committees have been set up and there are efforts to train them in their roles. Relationships with LCs are a major focus for proper coordination and communication of water related problems to the parish and sub county authorities. Latrine coverage has improved in the sub-counties that are participating in dialogue sessions and leaders are taking lead as model examples to their communities.

The project therefore, appears to be taking root and influencing district activities as people get to appreciate the importance of good governance and accountability. Understanding policy procedures and roles of different actors has been enhanced and the work of technocrats has been simplified with regard to explaining their actions to politicians in case of controversy over projects and use of funds. There is growing excitement among stakeholders who have attended dialogue meetings and are envisioning WASH situation in the community if information learnt is applied.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Community water service provision and sanitation have remained a challenge in Uganda. Although there are remarkable achievements, management of operation and maintenance of water service has remained weak. At the national level, the Water and Sanitation sub sector is well organized with a number of working groups, including the National Sanitation Working Group and District Water and Sanitation Committees (DWSCCs) that coordinates the water and sanitation sector at national and local government levels respectively. However there is still poor collaboration between the various stakeholders including: communities, schools, district local governments, and civil society organizations. Water user committees (WUC) have limited access to information related to contract management. Contractors' terms do not include skills development for WUCs that would contribute to sustainability. This coupled with weak or even non-existent government support structures to guide and train water service management entities affects sustainable service provision and community motivation to participation; and for ownership of their water facilities. Besides, private sector water investment and service provision (management) is not effective due to limited profit margins and constrained contractual procedures.

Key stakeholders including government ministries, multi and bi-lateral agencies have recognized this problem and identified coordination and harmonization of interventions in the decentralization process as a possible solution towards improvement of service provision in this sector. However, transparency has remained low as in many cases; stakeholders continue to work in isolation and to play the blame game. IRC experience has shown that dialogue and partnership building between authorities, service providers and citizens is very supportive towards responsiveness and downward accountability (IRC, 2007). To address these challenge IRC spearheaded in partnership with NETWAS Uganda and CEFORD the Improved WASH Governance through Dialogue and Concerted Action Project in the West Nile Region in Uganda. The project is aimed at promoting responsive WASH service provision to the rural communities, especially the poorest and most vulnerable by strengthening the capacity of local civil society, local leaders and service providers to deliver services that are transparent and responsive to the needs and demands of the rural communities. It is expected that the project will enhance health and productivity in communities; school attendance (especially for girls) and educational results in the region, arising from more accountable and responsive WASH service provision.

The accountability and good governance project, which was launched in December 2008, brings together stakeholders in an innovative multi-stakeholder learning structure around WASH at district and sub-county levels in the West Nile region districts of Moyo, Adjumani and Nebbi. The dialogue sessions involves:

1. Politicians at LCV level; Chairperson LCV, and Health, Education and Social Services Secretaries, and LC3 chairpersons of the selected sub counties.
2. Technocrats; Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), District Water Officer (DWO), District Planner, District Education Officer (DEO), District Health Inspector (DHI) and Community Development Officer (CDO), Sub county Chiefs, and technocrats from selected sub counties
3. Non –Governmental Organizations (NGOs); International, National and Community level, and private sector.

The learning platform through dialogue¹ is aimed at creating synergy between policy and practice, harmonising approaches and facilitating learning from the past faults and current successes. Proposed actions include: strengthening the capacities of communities and their representatives for social accountability, participatory poverty resource monitoring and strengthening downward accountability performance of Local Governments.

This baseline and first monitoring was commissioned by IRC International Water and Sanitation Centre, the implementing agency for the EDF - SDF project, in partnership with NETWAS Uganda and CEFORD. The study was carried out with Local Government during the period December 7th – 18, 2009, in the districts of Nebbi and Adjumani.

This study aimed at collecting baseline information that relates to attitude, perception, appreciation and practice, of the accountability and good governance project in WASH projects of the West Nile region.

1.2 Specific objectives

1. To determine indicators of improvement on perception, attitude, practice and appreciation of accountability and good governance in WASH services that will guide the baseline (before 2009) and the monitoring of present and future situations,
2. To establish the past (before 2009) and present perceptions and attitudes of WASH accountability and good governance of stakeholders in study sample,
3. To establish the past (before year 2009) and present practices and methods on WASH accountability and good governance of stakeholders in selected areas for the study,
4. To establish the appreciation of the dialogue processes on accountability and Action Research among stakeholders.

1.3 Scope of work

This baseline study was conducted in two of the three West Nile districts of the WASH Accountability project, namely Nebbi and Adjumani. Our main focus was the district and sub-county level.

1. In Nebbi at the district level, we met political leaders, district local government technical staff and NGO representatives
2. In Nebbi, Sub-county level, we had discussions with local leaders at Paidha in the Sub-County Chief's office, Agelemu Borehole water users' community, Water User Committee, Jopomwoco Primary School management and pupils.
3. In Adjumani, we met political leaders, district local government staff and NGOs. In this district we had discussions in two (2) sub counties (Dzaipi and Ciforo) to balance the study in establishing whether the good governance and accountability project was yielding results.
4. In Ciforo, discussions were limited to sub county level. It was reported to be a well-performing sub-county in Adjumani district.

¹ These dialogues sessions covered the following topics: (i) sharing the background information to the improves health and productivity in communities and improved school attendance an educational results in West Nile arising from more accountable and responsive WASH services provision through local dialogue; (ii) Objectives of the dialogue sessions, goals and specific objectives; (iii) Definition of key terms: governance, accountability and transparency; (iv) Stakeholder mapping roles and responsibilities; (v) Good practices in local governance, social accountability and transparency, and discussion of emerging issues; (vi) Causes, effects and solutions to bad governance; (vii) Visioning ; (viii) Issues to District Water and Sanitation Coordination Committee (DWSCC); (ix) Issues for the next District dialogue sessions

5. Dzaipi was also visited to represent a sub-county where implementation is lagging even while the leaders have participated in the project. In this sub-county two (2) borehole users’ communities were visited:
6. Bikere Borehole Users’ Community, with a trained Water User Committee that participated in dialogue meetings.
7. Agbwere borehole users’ community, just opposite the sub-county headquarters, which has a recently formed Water User Committee, which has not been trained yet. Agbwere borehole water is shared between the police, Dzaipi School and the community. Agbwere offered a great opportunity for learning about pre – project experiences.

1.4 Stakeholders interviewed at each level

Discussions were held at district level with technocrats in sectoral departments who are directly involved in the WASH project and participated in dialogue activities. The same strategy was applied at the sub county level. Water User Committee members were identified, while at the community level accidental selection of Borehole Community Water Users, as well as school children who turned up for the meeting was done in order to get participants in the discussions. Distribution of participants is given in the following Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of the people met during the study

1. NEBBI District	Paidha Sub-County	Community	School
Seven Technocrats One (1) Political leader Two (2) NGOs	Six (6) people including technocrats, political leaders, CBOs.	Four (4) members Water User Committees (WUC) Nineteen (19) Agalemu Community Borehole Water users	Nine (9) members of School management committees (PTA, Teachers, SMC) Twelve (12) pupils (3 males)
2. ADJUMANI District	Dzaipi and Ciforo Sub Counties	Community	School
Six (6) Technocrats One (1) Political leaders No NGOs	Five (5) people in Ciforo including politician, technocrats, water mechanic Eight (8) people in Dzaipi including politicians, technocrats	Twenty six (26) Agbwere borehole Water users’ community Four (4) members o f the Water User Committee Forty one (41) Bikeri borehole water users Three (3) Bikere members of the Water user committee.	Fourteen (14) pupils One (1) male Teachers No member of the School management committees

1.5 Methodology

The qualitative approach was adopted to generate views on past perceptions, attitudes and practices, and to establish whether there is a noticeable change in these variables in the districts, attributable to the Improved WASH Governance through Dialogue and Concerted Action Project in West Nile Region of Uganda, in reference to accountability and good governance.

These variables are abstract and are difficult to assess since they are not directly observable. Qualitative methods were therefore employed to study expressions and consistent behaviour² to establish the status of the variables among the beneficiaries of the project. Besides, people tend to give what they know as the ideal when asked direct questions. Question guides were designed such as Key Informant interview tool, to generate information on attitudes and the extent to which respondents appreciate the project obligations and demands.

1.5.1 Key Informant Interviews

Both at the district and sub county level, Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) were conducted to get the views of the officials. A total of eighteen (18) KIIs were conducted, nine (9) in Nebbi and Seven (7) in Adjumani. In-depth discussions were done where the researcher was able to meet more than two (2) officials together and for the Water Users' committees.

1.5.2 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

Focus Group Discussions were conducted with the sub county teams in both districts. Three FGDs were conducted in Paidha, Ciforo and Dzaipi sub counties to get consensus from the joint team on the status of the accountability and good governance in the sub counties. At the community level, community borehole users, school management and children were also taken through the same exercise giving a total of seven (7) FGDs (three (3) in Nebbi and four (4) in Adjumani.

1.5.3 Documentary Review

The researcher consulted research textbooks to gain a better understanding of how to proceed with the unique baseline and monitoring study. Documentary search was also applied to field reports on dialogue events and newsletters from the districts to validate the findings.

1.5.4 Limitations

This study was aimed at establishing past perceptions, attitudes and practices in order to determine possible indicators of change in these variables. Reappraisal of these variables with reference to the past 12 months was not easy for some respondents. Respondents tended to give more of their current perceptions of the project with occasional reporting on striking scenarios that prevailed before the dialogue project. Probe questions enabled the researcher to address this to some extent, and to collect quality information.

² Oppenheim A.N. (2000)

2.0 FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

2.1 Presentations of the findings

Stakeholders of WASH projects expressed their views on their experience with the good governance and accountability project. The study focused on planning, monitoring, reporting, relationships and communication aspects of the project. District level respondents are at different levels of perception, appreciation, attitude and practice of good governance and accountability with Nebbi district leading in adopting lessons shared in dialogue meetings, while in Adjumani there are variations at the district level and between sub counties. For instance, while Nebbi has already brought the NGOs and CBOs on board through the district NGOs Forum, in Adjumani the process seems to be taking long. Also in regard to relationships with politicians, Nebbi seemed to have greatly improved apart from reporting, compared to Adjumani. Findings from the study giving information before and after participation in the dialogue sessions by various stakeholders are given in the following Table 2.

Table 2: Findings on before the dialogue and after by stakeholder groups

NEBBI DISTRICT

Before the dialogue project	After
<p>1. Politicians</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The district officials work as a team • Officials gave financial accountability through notice board displays 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is great improvement in relationships among the team. There is harmony and the team is result oriented • Officials give both the financial and physical accountability • Political monitoring
<p>2. District technocrats (compiled views)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities thought the water officer was responsible for all WASH activities • There were no budgets for the users committee • Accountability was about how funds have been utilized with support documents only • Accountability was to superiors and colleagues only • UNICEF, DWD and the Netherlands Embassy supported installation of water harvesting tanks but the challenge was repair and maintenance • Accountability was in form of financial paper work • People were very suspicious of their colleagues • The district follows government strategy of participatory planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities help to do ground work, they collect information and prepare projects • Borehole user committees now have budgets • Technocrats give feed back beyond funds, for instances implementation challenges • There is also accountability to the community • Responsibilities are clearer, there are no cases of mismanagement of resources • The Health department got the opportunity to share information with others • Training has increased the levels of functionality and ownership of water sources. • Demand for water has increased • Accounting to people for the services they are supposed to get both financial and physical • To avoid suspicion you share challenges and improve work

- Technical staff would write reports without impressions of the community members about the services
3. **Paidha Sub-county: politicians, technocrats and CBO (PWASA)**
- There was no emphasis of good governance and accountability before IRC
 - Some areas were not well handled like accountability to the community
 - Record keeping of minutes for the meetings was not priority and was therefore poor
 - LCs were not giving information
 - We reported to the community what we intend to do
4. **Water User Committees**
- No monthly collection for cleaning around the water facility
- Formal demands for services have increased
 - Participation of the community in projects has improved
 - There is on site feedback to the community sharing findings and getting their views during the monitoring visits
 - CSOS communicate what they want to do and share information on the sources of funding
 - People in the community are picking good habits from the LCs
 - Dialogues are promoting a new approach that brings synergy and motivation
 - Water user committees are keeping books for all their records. They raise money at sub county level, monthly fees are demanded from community user members
 - Information flow from the LCs is still inadequate
 - We give feed back to the community about what we intend to do and what we have done
5. **Community Water users**
- They user community was contributing Ug. Shs. 300/=
- Members are consistent in payment of monthly contributions
 - There is good relationship with service providers
 - The committee meets twice a month, they take minutes
 - Borehole Community Water Users are now willing to pay Ug. Shs. 5000/=
 - Money raised is also used as revolving fund for those in need of loans
 - The community members are satisfied with their chair person who is also serving to keep the money contributed
 - The community is in need of another water source in the community through they have not yet communicated to higher authorities
 - Community meetings are held quarterly
6. **School Management Committee, PTA and SMC Chairperson**
- These committees were elected before the dialogue project and are part of the Water and Sanitation Committee
 - Proposals for water tanks are prepared
 - Village work plans are prepared for submission to the parish and other higher levels

- Money collected is kept by the treasurer

7. Pupils

- Water, soap /Omo are provided for washing hands after latrine use.
- There is safe drinking water
- A basin is provided in the girls bath room
- Today, the challenge is that they is not enough and the supplies are irregular
- One basin is not enough
- Villagers also use the same facility and they leave them dirty
- Teachers are always in a group in the staff room, which does not allow access for private issues

8. NGO Forum - two people

- During the district budget conference organizations shared their intentions.
- Teams have outreaches for capacity building
- In the past only civil servants were recognized and therefore attended meetings at the district
- 2002 –Code-of-Conduct for NGOs was formulated, NGOs work is coordinated
- The secretary social services recognizes CBOS and call their plans for integration e.g. PWASA CBO for Paidha, monitoring of the projects at sub county is done alongside Local government stakeholders, the is a working group for CSOS on Sanitation
- Dialogues have improved information sharing with issues generated right from the community, there is coordination and transparency at all levels, dialog value for money in water and sanitation
- The project has motivated people to work and appreciate training
- Issues from the villages are easy to access and to address
- Dialogues have availed a avenue for reporting grievances

ADJUMANI

Before dialogue activities

1. District technocrats

- Shared reports in form of activities
- Monitoring as teams
- Nobody was raising issues regarding accountability and good governance
- Officials were on the defensive. It was a “one mans show”
- Gossip resulting to inadequate information and suspicion
- There were no plans for water and sanitation related national celebrations which provide a platform for advocacy
- Did not know about utilization of funds from different sectors
- There were few stakeholders in WASH
- There was no client support. Communities found it hard to organize meetings through which to share information
- Issues were top down
- Politicians wanted development projects in their area
- People were working without systems
- There was a lot of grumbling and people were not involved in programs
- Parish development committees were involved in supervision and monitoring of schools
- We did not have job security people lived in fear because they hide information
- There was poor governance. People would be paid less facilitation allowance and could not complain because they did not know how much they were entitled
- Accountability was about receipts as evidence of expenditure
- Inflating prices of items for community project was common and communities were not involved and were not aware e.g. local goats purchased at Ug. Shs. 750,000/- when the actual cost is Ug. Shs. 15,000/= to

After

- We get to know what other colleagues are doing though participation in their activities which needs o be consolidated
- The community holds officers accountable and are involved in implementation
- Roles have been clarified and even councillors are put to task
- There is satisfaction that people have taken up their roles according to policy and here are less quarrels
- We now have plans for hand washing campaigns and World water days
- Know about utilization of funds in other sectors through dialogue meetings
- Feedback at community level given on site
- People are pro active in following up water related issues e.g. reporting and getting bore holes repaired
- The number of stakeholders has increased
- Accountability during review meetings and planning
- Consultation is both vertical and horizontal. You can not force people or introduce something without considering their views
- We prioritize and get money basing on the most needy schools which are along the river
- There is appropriate communication to the beneficiaries, they are explained the benefits expected from the project.
- Communication is both vertical and horizontal
- Interaction with lower governments level has improved
- Job security because of improved relationship between the political and technical staff
- Boreholes do not break down for a long time
- District line departments discuss openly and declare actual funding
- Water user committees are involved they are empowered, they describe the items and discuss the amount for each and ghost projects can not succeed
- There is improved relationship at district level, inter departmental financial support redesigning work plans in done on realizations that

20,000/=

6 Sub county level: politicians and technocrats

- Commitment was low among stakeholders
- The villagers /community members were given a deaf ear whenever there were conflicts
- Water users were not paying monthly contribution
- Community members were not involved
- There was no signing or even accounting for repairs, the pump mechanic could go with the old part and use it elsewhere.

7 Bikere Borehole water Users – Dzaipi

- Bore holes were not fenced
- The committee would correct money but they would not disclose how it was used.
- Community members were not very willing to pay

8 Children Dzaipi

Sanitation means good environment and cleanliness

Uncleanliness reported to prefects

departments can not work alone.

- Accountability is proper utilization of resources for their intended purpose. The impact should also be felt by people
- The community members are involved in monitoring projects and there is information sharing
- Planning is now bottom up
- The community members are committed they pay monthly and some committees have opened bank accounts monthly as was advised at the dialogue
- Focus is on water use sustenance and have records
- Every parish has a pump mechanic and has good relationship with the sub county and district
- Sharing information has improved. The committees account to the community. There is signing for money and also physical accountability
- Boreholes are fenced
- Payment of Ug. Shs. 1000/= per month except for the elderly
- Record keeping has been adopted. There are record books and signing on payment by thumbprint.
- People are now willing to pay as they have an account with SACCO
- Information related to use is displayed in public places
- Water user committees report through LC 1

Challenges

Basins not enough for the girls who are in menstruation

Sometimes there is no soap

Privacy inadequate, when the boys see girls washing their bodies they laugh at them

No buckets for drinking water pupils drink from the borehole.

2.2 Perception of good governance and accountability

Among the respondents the common definition of or understating of good governance was, “*working together with the people*”, in the discussion it was more or less equated to popular participation. Accountability was perceived as “*reporting to people you are serving*”. Respondents attested to the novelty of the IRC approach to addressing WASH challenges

“ the IRC dialogue project on accountability and good governance are new emphases.....and it is more focusedyou engage a community to bring it on board at the level that allows free and frequent interaction; for instance, community with sub county, sub county with the district. This allows analysis and better information sharing”. (Quote from district technocrat Nebbi).

The study observed variations in knowledge and understanding of the good governance and accountability. There was no difference in perception of good governance and accountability between the district level respondents and sub-county. District officials’ both politicians and technical staff who participated revealed that they were also facilitators during the dialogue sessions. One of the officers, confessed to having attended only about two hours when he was facilitating. He justified this partial attendance with his of twelve (12) years of experience in leadership remarking, “*I have been doing these things and I do not have to learn anything about good governance and accountability.*”

However, the attitude at the sub-county level toward the project and dialogues differed from that of district officials. There was evidence that sub-county teams have been empowered through dialogue sessions. The sub county leaders who participated in the Focus Group Discussion (FGD), in both districts, were very knowledgeable and understood the project well. These stakeholders were implementing action plans developed during the dialogue meetings and were looking forward to other opportunities.

2.3 Attitude towards Planning, budgeting, monitoring, reporting, sharing information

Dialogue sessions have impacted the attitude of stakeholders towards planning and budgeting both at the district and sub county. Collaboration and common responsibility were reported. Sectoral departments are willing to share their budgets in meeting and even to share resources.

There is improved relationship at the district level, inter departmental financial support redesigning work plans is done on realizations that departments cannot work alone (Quoted from district technocrat in Adjumani).

NGOs and CBOs also recognized and are transparent about their funding sources. Formal demands for water and sanitation to the district have also increased. Community members

“they write that “ ...we, the community would like to get water services!”(Observed district technocrat Nebbi).

have started to forward their problems through the LC1 to parish level and sub county instead of complaining. In Paidha, the sub county Focus Group Discussion (FGD) meeting had a letter from Golorombo community requesting sub county contribution for repair of their borehole. A district technocrat in Nebbi was also excited about the changes in presentations of WASH needs and especially the formal presentation of requests.

A Case of the Jopomwocho Primary School borehole

This borehole has had a committee responsible that met with the community users to discuss maintenance of their facility. The committee members mobilize people for meetings, collect money with the treasurer and ensure cleanliness at the water facility point. The school PTA also makes a contribution for the school use. Now with the little money they collect, they fenced the water source and agreed to lock the borehole to regulate use and also prevent breakages by children who play with it. The community uses the water very well. Sometimes there are disagreements about rules and control measures from some people. These few people are also changing in support of the system.

Demands for water are also presented in the form of proposals. The School Management Committee of Jopomwocho revealed that they had already written proposals for school water tanks to be submitted to the sub county. Communities are also able to come up with the village work plans, which are required at the parish level.

In both Nebbi and Adjumani, borehole Water User Committees we interviewed had record books with details about the user community and payments made which they learnt from the first dialogue sessions. The committees have learnt a lot from the good governance and accountability project, which has enabled them to improve their operations. For instance in Adjumani, Dzaipi sub county, they opened a bank account with SACCO. As a result of gaining trust and confidence from the community, members are willing to pay a monthly contribution of Ug. Shs 500/= per household and to ensure that it is put to better use. Previously money was used to hire someone to clean around the water source, but now it is used as a loan facility for the community members that are willing and able to borrow.

Stakeholders were interested in information about development projects in the district. Joint monitoring was done on a quarterly basis in Nebbi and has been intensified by participation in dialogue activities. The team is comprised of the technical team together with the political leaders including the RDC. The team shares with the community their findings and also gets their point of view. This was reported to be a result of IRC dialogue meetings. A district technocrat in Adjumani observed that the community and LCs are more involved in activities than before. The Parish Development Committee (PDCs) was reported to be supportive in monitoring and even members of the community are involved.

"..... communities are consulted and informed about projects which are implemented.... before, discussion and implementation of projects was top - down but now it is two way, you can not force people but rather you discuss with them and consider their views" (sub-county technocrat in Adjumani)

2.4 Practice of Accountability and good governance

A district technocrat in Adjumani defined accountability in simple terms as, "making somebody aware of what is happening". He reiterated that everybody wants accountability and is supposed to account. The sub-county FGD in Nebbi understood accountability as a component of good governance. To them *Governance* is about everybody knowing and having a say. Participants in the dialogues endeavour to apply what is discussed as good practice. The Jopomwocho PTA chairperson was able to involve the school in WASH activities after participation in dialogue sessions.

Building relationships with schools to maintain water sources was a challenge reported at sub county level. School authorities in Dzaipi were reluctant to contribute to the repair of the borehole that is shared with the community and it gets more complex when there are no

competent committees to represent the Water Users Community. In Paidha Sub County, stakeholders have achieved good relationship with the school and the community shares the same water source, Jopomwocho primary school borehole. This was attributed to dialogue sessions by committee members and is still a challenge in Adjumani.

...I have changed my approach to the community with health messages after attending dialogue sessions. I was used to moving directly to the community with project initiatives but I have learnt that it is not good to have vertical programs as an individual. It is better to have horizontal collaborations and sharing of ideas and to move to the community as a team.” (Paidha sub county, technocrat)

Exemplary leadership was reported as a result of the dialogues. This was more reported around latrine construction and hand washing practices. Water User committee members and LCs who did not have model WASH facilities in their homes worked hard to have them before the community advocacy campaigns. Leaders also have learnt the benefit of working as teams.

The team expected to have the cooperation of the whole community with continued sensitization. Other members of the group have also adapted exemplary leadership practices in the area of WASH. Those that did not have latrines have realized the need to have the facility with other hygiene facilities like hand washing facilities in their homes as they planned to have home improvement campaigns in the sub county. Paidha sub county team embraced the dialogue project activities and was ready to take the lessons to scale. As a team they admitted that before the project there were areas they did not manage well which had been clarified. Dialogue activities clearly defined roles and responsibilities and had demystified issues. For instance, Paidha sub county FGD revealed that there was no accountability to the community before the IRC project.

2.5 Appreciation of the project through dialogue

There was optimism among stakeholders for better performance across sectors both at the district and Sub County levels as a result of a transparent environment. In Nebbi, water user

“The project has changed the way we communicate to the community.....documents which we thought were ours we learnt that they are for the public.....in the beginning we thought that the assets in WASH were for government but now we have a sense of ownership. We used to talk to communities about what we intend to do not what we have done or what has actually happened” (FGD, Paidha Sub county team)

communities in the district reported some changes in WASH practices. It was also observed that dialogues are more focused and have created new linkages between departments and the sub counties ensuring better coordination.

“Capacity has been built at district and sub county levels and it has reduced conflicts related to management. This change will be sustainable, borehole repairs are prompts, roles and responsibilities are clearer and there is not mismanagement of resources in participatory activities “(district technocrats in Nebbi)

The project was reported to have contributed towards improved participatory planning which the district politicians also termed as physical accountability.

“- in meetings information is shared with the District Executive committee DEC....political monitoring is about observations on behalf of the community and reporting to the technical people on behalf of the community...every well intentioned person should appreciate this project” (district politician).

“ Stakeholders are happy that everybody is now involved,we get to know what other people are doing. Before, it was a “one man show”.... roles have been clarified, those who failed in implementation are doing well through team work Before everybody was working alone, when projects fail the person responsible is put to task to explain... even councillors are put to task.” (KII with district technocrat Adjumani).

The dialogue activities were highly appreciated among stakeholders who met during this baseline study. There was more understanding and application of knowledge imparted during the sessions at the Sub County level than at district level. There was a general appreciation of meetings during which reports were shared, and there was also verification of what has been reported in regard to physical facilities and explanations of the process.

A district technocrat in Nebbi also reported that training has had a positive impact on the WASH services through increased functionality of committees, which has improved ownership of facilities. The good practices and benefits of the dialogue meeting have permeated other committees that have not had opportunity to participate, as was observed in Paidha. Communities that have not attended dialogue meetings are admiring the relationships and changes in the team’s operations and are requesting to be involved in the learning sessions. For instance, Kwigamba borehole community members have never attended but they also introduced a community book.

Furthermore, responses from the two districts revealed that interaction through dialogue activities and the consequent better understanding of the project has enhanced

appreciation of accountability among stakeholders. The general understanding was that accountability is a non-negotiable practice: *“Every body wants accountability and everybody is supposed to account without exceptions.”* This was enforced in review and planning meetings and was expected to ensure better development plan performance. Peer reviews have promoted transparency, which has in turn improved working relationships.

“Dialogue activities have helped to enlighten the people on how the planning is done and why certain areas are selected and not the other. The relationship between the elected leaders and the technical staff has greatly improved giving us a sense of security in the community and on the job” (observed by a district technocrat, Adjumani).

A district technocrat emphasized that if you did not hide information, there would be no fear. Further observed was that dialogue meetings and activities helped to enlighten the people on how planning in the district was done. Politicians appreciated observing policy guideline procedures in implementing projects and financial management as well as basket sharing. Procurement processes were also reported to be transparent as projects were advertised and allocations / offers done on merit.

2.6 Contribution of the project towards good governance and accountability

This qualitative baseline study endeavoured to establish indicators of improvement in perception, attitude, practice and appreciation of good governance and accountability in WASH services in Nebbi and Adjumani. Efforts were made to determine process indicators of change in behaviours among stakeholders and the researcher captured the following terms that suggest changes which are taking place so far, including:

- Reactivated
- Intensified
- Now
- Increased
- Now days /these days
- Great improvement
- Significant improvement.

The following table 3 summarises the situation before the project (2008 and before) and during 2009.

Table 3: Summary of the findings

Nebbi

	Before the project	After
1.	<p>Accountability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The notion of accountability was only about money and paper work. • Accounted only to superiors • Politicians could tell lies • There was no accountability to the community. We used to tell community numbers about what we have done or what has happened, • For 17 years, water committees did not have Bank Accounts • There were no budgets for WASH activities • It was not easy to access NGO budgets even politicians had money for monitoring and audit activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Now there accountability in is trams pf money, paper work but also explanations when work is not done for various reasons. • Account to committees • Political will team work with technocrats, truth and confidence, sharing ideas, politicians sensitize people on WASH issues, • Information is displayed on notice boards • Three (3) water sources in Okworo have bank accounts for WASH. Sub counties have budgets for WASH. • District WASH committees share budgets including those of NGOs • Participation has helped to improve accountability and monitoring, there is teamwork joint monitoring.
2.	<p>Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government has always wanted planning to be participatory but had not taken root. • Water User committees thought that it was a district function. They thought the water officer was supposed to do all the work for them • In the beginning, assets were for the government, people did not know their role in planning and taking care of their facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage lower level local government to come up with their own plans. Formal demand for WASH services has increased stakeholders identify their needs • Committees go to communities to carry out assessment during the initial processes of setting up WASH facilities. • Improved level of functionality, ownership has improved a sense of ownership • Developed a sense of ownership. People are getting involved because they know they asked for water facility and they own it.
3.	<p>Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Horizontal communication only • Had challenges in maintenance of repair communities were not active schools were not taking care of their water facilities. • Reports from technocrats and even politicians did not have impressions from the communities • Talked to communities about what we intended to do not what we have done and what has happened, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No cases of mismanagement of resources, reports are prompt due to improved natural communication to sub counties and communication • Opportunity for the health department to share information • The report on impressions from the community because we give them chance to ask question after our feedback during the monitoring visit • Money is now raised at sub county level, the

	Before the project	After
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community users of water service used to stop animals from grazing close to water source and children from playing and bringing rubbish around the water source, cleaning and sweeping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> monthly contribution and demand from the community, constantly pay Water user Committees meet twice a month, take minutes and share them with the community members and the sub county
Adjumani		
	Before	After
1.	<p>Accountability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No body was raising issues concerning implementation it was a ‘one mans show’ There were loose talks, gossip and rumours. Everyone was on the defensive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We now get to know what everyone is doing. Roles have been clarified and everybody is put to task and therefore people are willing to report both vertically and horizontally Working according to policy has eased things less quarrels, people say that laws should be respected
2.	<p>Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning begin from the lower level No plans for National Hand Washing facilities campaigns, World Water days at sub county level There were few stakeholders Planning was top down Sub counties were not concerned with monitoring Hand washing campaign and World water days that give opportunity for WASH advocacy were not planned and budgeted for. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We now plan and organize as an effective strategy for mobilizing communities for WASH People are more willing to report Community have ownership rights over their own property The project has widened audience has made work easy Now it is two way Sub counties are now involved in monitoring. There is increased awareness of the standards and commitment to provide bathrooms for girls Activities for WASH advocacy are planned and budgeted for and will be organized.
3.	<p>Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools did not care for the facilities There was no accountability Did not know how funds from other sectors were utilized Communities did not know how to demand for services Bikeri WC did not involve communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools take care of their WASH facilities the fence and lock Feedback at community level is given on spot Now know and share all information Communities have learnt and now demand in writing We now have well coordinated dissemination of information and we consult communities

2.7 Mgbwere: A case of a water user community that has not participated in the dialogue activities.

The best illustration of the situation of good governance and accountability before and after the dialogue sessions and after was studied in Adjumani, where the study covered Ciforo, a sub-county that was doing very well in adopting good practices learnt from the dialogue session meetings, and Dzaipi that seemed to be lagging in learning and adoption of the disciplines of good governance and accountability. In Dzaipi the researcher interviewed the Bikere borehole Water Community which has interacted with CEFORD activities and was implementing some of the lessons learnt, including opening a bank account for community water users' contribution; and Mgbwere water community which has not participated in dialogue activities. Mgbwere borehole water community is located across the road, opposite the sub county headquarters, and is neighbouring a "three in one"³ Dzaipi primary school and police station. These stakeholders use water from Mgbwere borehole, but only community women maintain this water source with their meagre resources. The school has been adamant against making any contribution. During the discussion, members expressed that they will physically stop school children from using "their" water source during school time. The experience of this community presents an example of a powerless people due to lack of effective representation to authorities and decision-making institutions. The need for a cordial relationship with school management in order to reach school children and their families with appropriate information and WASH services is highlighted.

³ Dzaipi primary school was reported to be hosting two other primary schools since the time of insurgency.

*The Mgbwere borehole water community gathered at the borehole waiting for the visitor from CEFORD. The women came with their clean jerry can that they arranged in a straight line from the water pump ready to draw water after the meeting. We later learnt that they normally arranged jerry cans in order of seniority, with the police officers in one file and the community members in another. When we asked about their expectation they revealed that they needed help to solve a pressing problem: **“how we are going to settle the problem of police and school regarding contribution for borehole maintenance.”** We learnt that this female dominated community shares the borehole with police and Dzaipi primary school creating pressure on the water facility. The borehole breaks down frequently and the women raised money for maintenance.*

The Mgbwere borehole has no effective water user committee to manage and mediate between users and the relationships between the school administrations, police and the user community was strained. The women reported that they planned to chase the school children from the water source if the school management does not honour their promise to contribute towards borehole maintenance. Also, efforts to get the police community to contribute had been in vain. A few individual households would respond whenever the borehole broke down. The women further revealed that the LC 3 chairperson once tried to intervene but all was in vain since there was no positive response. The Mgbwere community is learning from other borehole communities that have formed a water user committee. This newly formed committee had not participated in the dialogue meeting. They have only mobilized the community for contributions to repair the borehole and are yet to be empowerment to handle other community issues. Other communities fetch water from Mgbwere whenever they have problems with their water source since there was no system yet to apply user fee charges. The borehole was in Dzaipi Primary School compound, and was constructed to serve the school and the neighbouring community. The community feels burdened and has already identified a site for another water source. This has been presented to directly to the sub county and they awaited response.

(Case from the FGD with Mgbwere community).

The IRC good governance and accountability project has made a contribution in the sub counties that have participated in the dialogue activities. Ripple effects of the project have manifested in the districts of Nebbi and Adjumani. Mgbwere presents a good example of a community that is learning from neighbours who are being impacted through dialogue activities and was making progress in establishing a system for water source maintenance. The predicament of the Mgbwere borehole community could represent other communities that have not had good governance and accountability project. This study therefore, observes that ability of the community to identify their WASH challenges and to communicate formally through various levels up to the sub county will mark the success of the project. Effective communication that builds good relationship among stakeholders is a precursor for good governance and accountability that ensures effective service provision to the most vulnerable in the community.

3.0 CONCLUSIONS

The *Improved WASH Governance through Dialogue and Concerted Action* project in the West Nile Region in Uganda is gradually taking root. There are efforts both at district and sub county levels to address the action point agreed upon in these dialogues and accounting to the successive session. For instance, issues that were common to both districts, such as poor coordination, poor relationship between the LC I and the Water User committees, record keeping, local legislation for appropriate sanitary facilities in the community through bye-laws, proper handling and use of the contribution from the borehole community users, revitalizing the District Water Source and Sanitation Committees (DWSSCs), formation of parish Water and Sanitation Coordination Committee (PWSCCs), poor coordination and collaboration among implementing NGOs / CBOs were being addressed. Good will among stakeholders to adopt positive practices in good governance and accountability was evident in the dialogue session reports and news.

There are differences in adoption rate with Nebbi district leading compared to Adjumani; and Akworo Sub County in Nebbi is pioneering in opening accounts in SACCO, formation of PWSCCs and proposing enactment of bye-laws related to latrine coverage. Paidha Sub County is following suite in positive practice (Dialogue Session Reports, 2009). Gradually people at all levels are getting to appreciate the importance of good governance and accountability.

The good governance and accountability project is yielding tremendous results in the West Nile region. Increased latrine coverage and community ownership of boreholes is leading to non-coerced, timely financial contributions for maintenance of the water and sanitation facilities. Accountability and good governance project seemed highly appreciated in Nebbi and Adjumani districts by participants in this baseline study. The project was also perceived in a rights perspective taking managers/ leaders at various levels as duty bearers charged with the welfare of the majority poor who need to be empowered to demonstrate positive practices in good governance and accountability.

It was observed that the bottom – up approach that draws suggestions from the lower levels of administration was reactivated with participation dialogue sessions. There is growing excitement among stakeholders who have attended the dialogue meetings. They are willing to take action and WASH issues that are identified by the community are now stressed in Water User Committees. The project has revived participatory planning and subsequent feedback to the community on action taken on their demands. In both districts, budgetary allocations follow guidelines from central government and this information was shared with all stakeholders. The Water and Sanitation Committees (WUC) have been revived in both Nebbi and Adjumani districts and they are looking into modalities of standardizing charges by water pump mechanics for borehole maintenance.

There are variations in both districts; people at the community level where the project was implemented were able to generate issues that need attention at the next higher level, the parish, through their LC I Chairman. This was more pronounced in Nebbi and in Ciforo Sub County in Adjumani than in Dzaipi, which was identified to participate in the baseline as a sub county that is lagging behind in this project: in attitude, perception, appreciation and practice in the two districts. In Nebbi, both at the district and sub county level, all stakeholders met during the exercise revealing high levels of appreciation of the project. While in Adjumani, the sub county stakeholders were found to be more versed in the project than the district level participants. Stakeholders in Nebbi districts displayed a better and more progressive understanding of the application (exercising) good governance and accountability in their work following participation in the dialogue activities than those from Adjumani. The understanding of government policy procedures and roles among players at

the district level was enhanced as a result of joint participation in dialogue meeting. Good governance and accountability project has eased work at the district level as policy procedures are explained to all stakeholders during the dialogue session activities and subsequent meetings. This was more evident in Nebbi than Adjumani where some department heads had not yet embraced report writing and participation in dialogue activities was characterized by delegation of junior staff members.

In Ciforo Sub County, participation in dialogue meetings empowered technical staff and elected leaders/ politicians to work as a team to demand services on behalf of the community. Poor relationship between the Water and Sanitation User committee and the LCs due to role conflict was salvaged. The two groups were working together and LCs were also attending dialogue meetings according to the third Ciforo dialogue session report, also confirmed during the FGD at the sub county. While in Dzaipi, poor teamwork was evident during the study. At the sub county, the LCs took the lead and the technocrats joined later after being reminded by the chairman LCIII by phone call that was not the case in other places.

In this sub county, the Mgbwere borehole community has a newly elected borehole Water User Committee and was still communicating directly to the sub county for some long standing conflict with the Primary school. This has hindered attention to pupils' WASH needs. Children interviewed revealed challenges in accessing safe water for drinking and hygiene facilities for girls due to inadequate jerry cans and basins in the school.

In both districts, borehole user communities were aware of the communication channels through which issues were presented for attention at the next higher level, the parish, through their LC I Chairman. This was more pronounced in Nebbi and in Ciforo Sub County in Adjumani than in Dzaipi. Identification and prompt reporting to higher levels of WASH related problems was still inadequate. For instance, in Nebbi, the Agelemu water users revealed that when they cook with the borehole water or boil it, it turns yellow. The users had not reported this problem to any other level; instead they were reverting to their original unprotected spring water. Nevertheless, the dialogue sessions promoted harmonious relationship between community members, LCs, the sub county and the district, with regard to planning and resource utilization through improved communication channels.

At the District level, the project has intensified information sharing in terms of targets and levels among those that were practicing before the dialogue interactions, while the quality of the information shared has also improved. Information has assumed the position as a public good to benefit every body without discrimination. Reporting on sectoral activities has improved as departments are communicating both vertically to their superiors and community beneficiaries and horizontally to colleagues. Departments freely share about projects and funds available, there is improved monitoring of activities by district teams, while information displayed on notice boards both at district and lower levels for public viewing has been revived, especially in Nebbi. Everybody knows what is going on and this has reduced suspicion and apportioning of blame whenever there are performance queries. In Nebbi, district accountability to the community about their requests and development issues has improved. A growing interest in "*Baraza*⁴" was reported at the district level as accountability to community members. The district has now adopted joint monitoring of activities and on spot feedback by allowing community members to seek clarification from the monitoring teams during visits.

Bureaucracy and unnecessary formalities in information sharing with the communities has been reduced by transparency and good relationship between elected leaders/politicians and technocrats who now work together as colleagues. Pertinent information is being shared by politicians in all kinds of forum including burials, church gatherings and wedding

⁴ *Baraza* is a day for a meeting between the community members and the district teams. It is Luganda word meaning Monday.

ceremonies when they are called upon to greet their electorate at a community level. Technocrats also formally communicate the same information in writing to affirm and clarify what would otherwise be taken as rumours. Likewise, community members now present their requests to the sub county level in writing instead of simply complaining about poor services.