

## LeaPPS Uganda

### Learning for Practice and Policy on Household and School Sanitation & Hygiene

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##### **Background**

*Learning for Practice and Policy on Household and School Sanitation & Hygiene*, or LeaPPS, is a joint initiative of IRC International Water and Sanitation Centre, SNV/Netherlands Development Organization and NETWAS Uganda. The overall aim of LeaPPS is to generate more cost-efficient and effective sanitation and hygiene programmes, sustainable facilities and behaviours. The main focus has been on hygiene and sanitation in households and schools. From 2007 to 2009, this initiative was piloted in four districts in Uganda: Koboko and Arua in the West Nile region; and Kyenjojo and Kamwenge in Mid-western Uganda.

Improving access to sanitation and hygiene can make an integral contribution to improving health outcomes, reducing poverty and well being. However, sanitation and hygiene are often not prioritized at district level. While sanitation coverage stood at 68% nationally as at June 2009 up from 62% in FY 2007/08, there is substantial variation across districts, with in some districts stagnant or even declining in latrine coverage and recurrent outbreaks of feces-related diseases including cholera.

##### **Objectives**

The overall aim of LeaPPS is to: generate more cost-efficient and effective sanitation and hygiene programmes, sustainable facilities and behaviours. To reach this overall aim, LeaPPS had the following objectives:

- To raise the political and technical profile of sanitation and hygiene

- To share lessons and innovations
- To agree on common approaches in process steps in household and school sanitation and hygiene
- To enhance capacities and knowledge for more effective sanitation and hygiene improvements
- To enhance district and-sub county harmonization, coordination and collaboration in sanitation & hygiene by linking with the District Waster Sanitation Coordination Committee (DWSCC) and the district HIV/AIDS programme.

##### **Approach**

LeaPPS draws on multi-stakeholder processes called '*Learning Alliances*' and are interlinked multi-stakeholder platforms. Learning Alliances aim at building relationships, sharing information and experiences and planning for solutions to common problems that cannot be solved by a single stakeholder. Each platform should bring together a range of stakeholders who capture diverse roles, interests, skills and experiences.

The learning process has four elements:

- learning sessions,
- capacity building,
- action research,
- documentation and advocacy.

In practice, the elements are not separate, but work together. For instance, capacity building takes place in the learning sessions as a result of sharing of experiences and concepts, analysis of challenges and action

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planning. Action research on software and hardware interventions provides an opportunity to test and promote new approaches and to build capacities as well.

#### Lessons learned:

Create a safe environment for learning. For people to learn, they need the confidence to acknowledge failures or mistakes and to tolerate ambiguities. An important task of the facilitators is therefore the creation of a safe learning environment. Provide encouragement for people to learn, acknowledge shortcomings and share their insights. The tone of the learning sessions should be collaborative, respectful of various perspectives and contributions and encourage listening.

Controlling platform versus a visionary and creative network. This is the paradox of creating a good learning environment while at the same time addressing need to create a mechanism for change and action. We tried to increase learning and honest reporting back, by encouraging reflection and analysis on the reasons behind a failure and understand constraints for better sector performance instead of blaming participants personally.

Link with decision-making structures and platforms but do not become a decision-making body. The facilitators need to make sure that issues discussed in the platform are taken to an official decision making body (the DWSCC) and are being followed up accordingly.

Ownership! As facilitators, we need to be cautious that we do not fall into a didactic mode, acting as teachers in front of a classroom. The local stakeholders should become co-facilitators of the sessions, rather than recipients of knowledge. We need to 'hand over the talking stick' and ask the right questions instead of giving the answers. The plans of the four districts to use their existing budget lines to co-facilitate LeaPPS, is for us an indication that there is a sense of ownership.

Follow up and continues engagement of the learning alliance. For the alliance to reach its' full potential, it is key to have regular interaction of stakeholders in between sessions. This has remained a big challenge as the stakeholders seem to be "waiting" for SNV to drive the process.

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