

COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT OF WATER SERVICES

Approaches, Innovations from Lango & Rwenzori regions

June 2012



Uganda



COMPILED BY:

Jane Nabunnya: Country Coordinator, IRC/
Triple-S Uganda

Lydia Mirembe: Communication and Advocacy
Officer, IRC/Triple-S Uganda

Peter Magara: National Learning Facilitator
IRC/Triple-S Uganda

Martin Watsisi: District Learning Facilitator
IRC/Triple-S Uganda, Kabarole

Robert Otim: District Learning Facilitator
IRC/Triple-S Uganda, Lira

TEXT & EDITING: Lydia Mirembe and Jane Nabunnya

PHOTOS: Lydia Mirembe and Martin Watsisi

Contents

7 **M4W: Using mobile phone technology to enhance functionality of rural water sources:** One of the key challenges contributing to non-functionality of rural water sources is the time lag between the identification of faults and the rehabilitation. The Mobile Phone for Improved Water Access (M4W) project is changing the situation very fast.

15 **Changing lives: A water users' loan scheme in Lira district:** Water users in Lira district, Northern Uganda have adopted a new way of ensuring regular payment of user fees and continued functionality of their sources. From the funds collected in monthly fees, they have started a loan scheme for users and this is changing many lives.

21 **Back to our roots: the revival of a traditional community mobilisation approach to address water source management:** Who says traditional African community mobilisation approaches have died out? The application of the Omuhiigo approach to the Community Based Management System (CBMS) of water sources in Kabarole district is a good case of the revival of a seemingly-forgotten traditional community mobilisation strategy.

28 **Strength in Numbers: Lessons from the Lira District Hand Pump Mechanics Association:** When the Ministry of Water and Environment in Uganda undertook to promote the formation of Hand Pump Mechanics Associations to enhance functionality of rural water services, many districts responded accordingly. The Lira district HPMA was formed and is fully operational. What lessons does it provide?

35 **Bylaws are crucial for water source operation and maintenance:** Though not listed among the critical requirements for sustainable management of water facilities, bylaws are crucial to ensure good use and maintenance of sources. One community in Amuca Sub County in Lira district has successfully enforced bylaws for two years. What is their experience like?

ACRONYMS

CBMS:	Community Based Management System
CBO:	Community Based Organisation
CDD:	Community Driven Development
CDO:	Community Development Officer
CRS:	Catholic Relief Services
CSO:	Civil Society Organisation
DWO:	District Water Officer
DWSCC:	District Water and Sanitation Coordination Committee
HA:	Health Assistant
HPM:	Hand Pump Mechanic
HPMA:	Hand Pump Mechanics Association
ILF:	International Lifeline Fund
IRC:	International Water and Sanitation Centre
JESE:	Joint Effort to Save the Environment
LTP:	Link to Progress
M4W:	Mobile Phones for Water
MWE:	Ministry of Water and Environment
NGO:	Non-Government Organisation
O&M:	Operation and Maintenance
Triple-S:	Sustainable Services at Scale
TSU:	Technical Support Unit
WASH:	Water Sanitation and Hygiene
WUC:	Water User Committee
YY:	Yehora Yeguza (strategy)

FOREWORD



Sustainable Services at Scale (Triple-S) is a learning initiative of the International Water and Sanitation Centre (IRC) which seeks to pilot and test new ways of working for the delivery of rural water services in Uganda and to successfully identify and understand the key challenges and bottlenecks that are currently confronting the sector.

Learning is about sharing information and knowledge and is a fundamental prerequisite of performance improvement. Furthermore, learning contributes to better use of resources and this is vital in the current context of static or shrinking sector investments. Learning partly depends on how well experiences and lessons are documented.

As a contribution to sector learning and improvement of service delivery, IRC/ Triple-S Uganda has over the last two years identified outstanding innovations and good practices in Lango and in Rwenzori regions. In this booklet, we document the uniqueness of the selected innovations/practices focusing

on the impact they have had on the beneficiaries; the challenges; the key lessons learnt; prospects for the future... among other aspects.

This collection especially pays tribute to the innovations that enhance community involvement in the management of rural water services. Community members are increasingly assuming the responsibility of managing their sources, particularly operation and maintenance. As a result, there is more self-determination at source-level and water users have a more positive and progressive attitude towards their facilities. The sense of responsibility and ownership is now at a higher level. Community members are now elevated from the state of being “passive recipients of generous donations” to a state of actual involvement in decisions that affect their lives and ensure water services that last. Additionally there is greater cooperation between the people in the communities and water professionals, as well as cooperation between the community members themselves.

Indeed as the experiences in this collection will show, if effectively sensitised, community members exhibit willingness to take up the responsibility of managing their sources. They appreciate the benefits that accrue from well-managed and maintained sources.

It is our hope that not only will this collection of stories make for interesting reading, it will also contribute to generating interest in and scaling up of these innovations.

Jane Nabunya Mulumba
Country Coordinator





Using Mobile Phones to Enhance Functionality of Water Sources

One of the key challenges contributing to non-functionality of rural water sources is the time lag between the identification of faults and the rehabilitation. This lag, in WASH parlance, is called service downtime, mainly caused by drawbacks in information flow. Information from Water User Committees (WUCs) is hardly received and not well documented; information received from Community Development Officers and Health Assistants is often inaccurate and hard to verify compromising the effectiveness of their monitoring programmes; a lot of information collected by different stakeholders is not shared and is often outdated.

In view of these information gaps IRC/ Triple-S Uganda, Makerere University and SNV Uganda and Water Aid Uganda introduced the Mobile Phone for Improved Water Access (M4W) project in October 2011. Now in its eighth month, the M4W project is reaffirming the fact that indeed with better information flow, service downtime can be reduced significantly.

By its very design, M4W aids the flow of information from the source to the authority responsible for attending to operation and maintenance of the source. It utilises mobile phone technology and web-based information systems to collect, process and provide real time information to all stakeholders. Typically, each water source is allocated an identification number, which is displayed on a sticker. Sources are

clustered according to geographical location, going from sub-county down to village level. Each sub-county is allocated a Hand Pump Mechanic (HPM) who is also provided with a mobile telephone fitted with the M4W software. When a user identifies an issue with the source, he or she sends a text message to SMS Code 8888, indicating the source identification number. Once the system receives the notification, it automatically generates an SMS which is sent to the relevant HPM's phone. Upon receiving the information, the HPM is expected to go to the source to do analysis and to advise the community on the necessary action.

At the very start of the M4W project HPMs and CDOs were selected, trained and provided with mobile phones. To start with, a baseline was conducted not only to establish the location of sources but also to verify their functionality status and the functionality of WUCs. Results coming out of the exercise indicate that the M4W project is set to bring about many positive developments.

M4W fruits already visible

Already, actors involved are positive that in the areas that have been covered there is more reliable data on the location and functionality of sources. In fact it was observed, particularly in Kabarole that many sources which were previously not recorded in the Water Supply Atlas have now been entered in the database. Stephen Baryebuga, the HPM covering Bukuku and Karangura areas





The broken Opelo borehole in Boroboro East parish, Lira

in Kabarole says that while the original list provided by the district captured 86 sources, he has counted 196 since he started carrying out the baseline. All this data can be used to update the Water Supply Atlas. Since the Ministry requires databases to be updated on a quarterly basis, M4W is already filling in that gap.

The other positive outcome of the exercise is that HPMs and their target communities are now known to each other. Previously, community members did not know which HPM was responsible for which area. But since the HPMs have been personally involved in the source mapping exercise, they have been able to introduce themselves to the communities in their areas of jurisdiction.

M4W has also generated a lot of community interest particularly in

knowing the functionality status of their water facilities. When they were sensitised about the M4W initiative, community members in Kabarole were receptive and keen. The Local Council leaders in most areas have also been very supportive. This was especially observed in some sub-counties in Kabarole including Kabonero, Buheesi, Ruteete and Rwimi. Water users in these areas were eager to send text messages about their sources.

On the side of HPMs, M4W has been a key motivating factor and has also strengthened their association. A common bugbear for many newly-formed Hand Pump Mechanics Associations (HPMAs) is their inability to compete for jobs with more established private companies. But with the M4W, HPMs have a common cause and this will eventually reflect that as an association, they are able to deliver. The facilitation in terms of free mobile phone sets and transport refund is also helping to keep their motivation levels high.

Most significantly perhaps, the M4W has so far demonstrated that if everything is in place, M4W sure reduces service down-time. Take the shining example of Telela shallow well in Telela Village, Ngetta sub-county, in Lira district, which serves at least 150 households. When the area HPM Lawrence Angoi received a text message, he immediately visited the source and observed that the well required pipes, rods and bearings. He advised the community to mobilise funds. Although the WUC had been collecting user fees regularly, there wasn't enough

money in the treasurer's bag. Immediately, the users were told to raise UGX3000 (\$1.25) per household. In three days the funds had been collected and the well repaired.

Challenges

In its eight months of implementation, the M4W initiative has shown that information flow may improve the situation but it has to go along with changes in water users' attitude and many other factors. Witness the case of Kullu Akwoyo spring well in Ngetta sub-county, Lira district. In December 2011 the sub-county HPM, Lawrence Angoi, received a text message through his M4W phone and went to analyse the situation at the well. He observed that the well needed repair and told users to mobilise money for two bags of cement and some sand. The residents didn't collect the money saying they were waiting for the area Member of Parliament to provide the materials. With such attitudes interventions like M4W will be met with stiff barriers. This also highlights the role of political leaders.

In other situations, the users may be willing to raise funds but it is far beyond their capability as a community. This was seen in the case of Opelo village borehole in Boroboro West Parish, Adekwokok sub-county, Lira district. The borehole, which



Kabarole District Water Officer Pius Mugabi identifies an abandoned borehole in Buheesi sub-county during the M4W Baseline, 2011

was provided by the Ministry of Water and Environment in 2009, broke down in December 2011. Upon receiving an SMS through the M4W phone, the area HPM Okello Henry went straight to the source and did an analysis. He informed the community that they needed to raise money to buy new rods, pipes and valves for the borehole. During a monitoring visit in January 2012, the community had raised only UGX10,000 (\$4) out of the UGX750,000 (\$300) required. In situations like this, the community is expected to place a request for assistance through the sub-county; however, the Opelo borehole WUC had not yet reported their case to the sub-county authorities.

For service down time to be reduced, WUCs must be functional. This means that they should perform such duties as: hold regular meetings with the executive

and with users; keep an updated register of users; collect monthly user fees; formulate and enforce rules for the source, among many other functions. In the case of Opelo borehole and Kullu Akwoyo spring well, the WUCs were in place but were not performing their duties. Since they had not been collecting monthly user fees there was no money even to ensure basic maintenance of the sources.

But there are also situations where information may be available but no immediate solution can be offered. This is especially the case with seasonal sources. M4W may not also help situations where there are unresolved community issues like land disputes. In the case of Opelo borehole, in addition to the funds required, they also needed to raise money to compensate the owner of the land where the borehole is located. Apparently, the landowner had not fully consented to the sinking of a borehole on his land and therefore demanded that the community compensate him. The users were wondering whether to first raise money for source rehabilitation or for the landlord's compensation.

Then there is the time required for HPMs and CDOs to put into the M4W cause. HPMS are often given jobs by private companies and NGOs so they are diverted. On the other hand CDOs have a lot of work on their hands. They serve many other departments in the district and may not be able to allocate sufficient time to the WASH sector, and less so to the M4W project. Additionally, HPMs are experiencing transport challenges. Most of the sources are located in remote, hard-to-reach areas with poor roads. The key actors involved in M4W therefore have to motivate both HPMs and CDOs to pay full attention to the project.

Other challenges are to do with the M4W systems technology. While some users are technology savvy, others are struggling with the system and failing to make good use of it. Some HPMs are still struggling to use the system even after the initial training. Some of them for example don't know how to log in. Others changed SIM cards, which messed up the applications on their phones. Moreover many of them are afraid of asking for help. Meanwhile the architects of the M4W software upgraded it at some point which caused a clash as most HPMs' phones were installed with an older version. Users also say that sometimes the system administrator is too busy and far removed from the field and that they should speed up the process of giving access to the DWO.

Recommendations

All the challenges notwithstanding, M4W will indeed cause some positive changes. HPMs and DWOs recommended some steps that can be taken to ensure the effectiveness of the project.

There is need to secure political buy-in. So far the local council leadership has been very supportive. But the sub-county and district level leadership ought to be involved in this initiative, especially to market the idea to all stakeholders.

On technology-related challenges, IRC/ Triple-S, SNV, Makerere University and Water Aid Uganda should aim to recruit tech-savvy HPMs and CDOs or invest some more in regular training. The training should also target sub-county water boards which monitor the functionality of WUCs and also supervise HPMs.

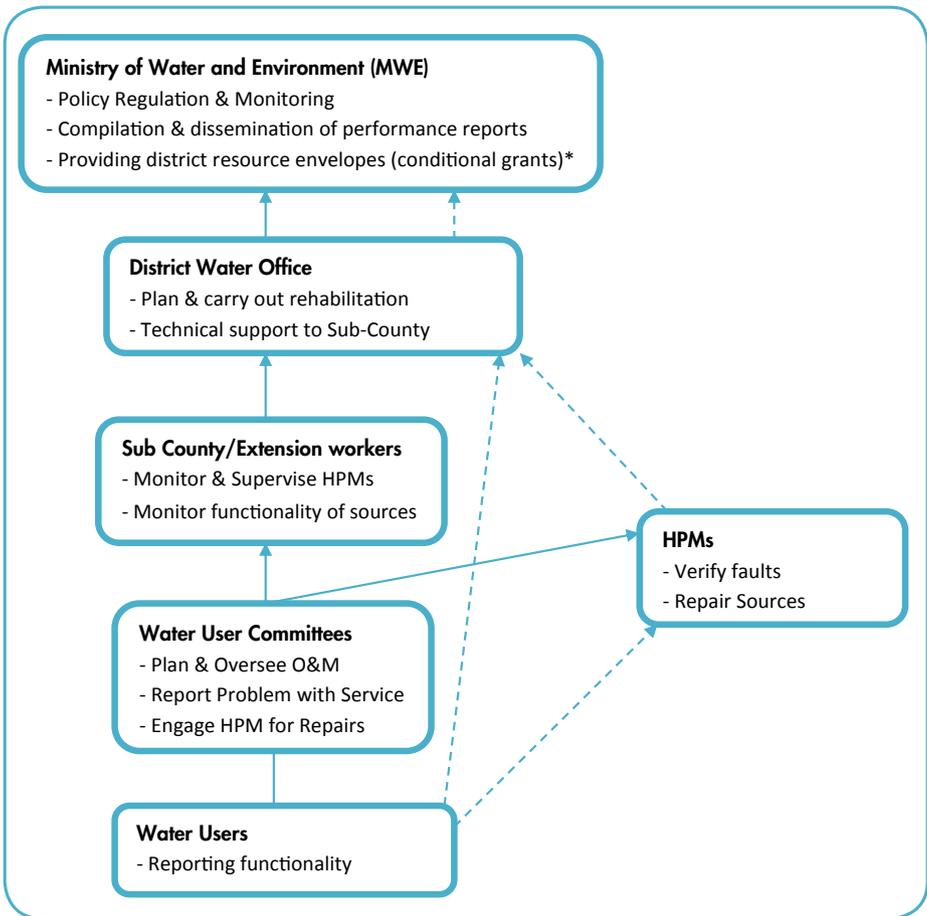
Currently the text message costs ugx220(USD 0.1). This may discourage

community members from sending messages. The initiators should look into subsidising or making it cheaper .

As the M4W heat picks up, it is important for all stakeholders to realise that improved information flow has to be tied in with other systems and factors. The

Community Based Management Systems (CBMS) should be functioning well; WUCs must be performing their duties; users should be paying their monthly fees; the spare parts supply chain should be functioning;and users must have the right attitude especially with regard to ownership of the source.

Roles of stakeholders in monitoring & supporting CBMS



Case Study

Waiting for Uncle Sam.... to fix Akwoyo spring well



At Akwoyo spring well users have to stand in stagnant water as they fill their containers.

The thought of a clean, safe, rural water source brings to mind images of pure water, flowing from a sparkling clean pipe, surrounded by well tended gardens, with users patiently waiting for their turn in straight queues. Thinking about safe water sources, it is hard to imagine pools of stagnant water, or muddy puddles layered with algae and all sorts of litter. But that may be a dreamer's mind at work!

A visit to Akwoyo spring well, paints a different picture altogether. Serving about 400 households, Akwoyo spring well is considered one of the safer

sources in Tebung Anywomorem village, Ngetta sub-county in Lira district. This has been the main source of water in this area since the 1980s. In 2008, Uganda Red Cross Society intervened and turned it into a protected spring. Four years down the road, the well needs a touch up. Huge cracks have developed, the soak pit is filled up, the surroundings are littered with polythene papers, sugarcane husks.....even cow dung.

A visit to the well on the sizzling afternoon of 18th January 2012, provided a scene bustling with activity. No one seemed to be bothered by the state of disrepair.

Children were playing; women were doing laundry and others were washing dirty jerry cans; someone had just washed a pile of kitchen utensils. The outlet pipe was almost fully immersed in stagnant water but a young girl was happily filling her jerry can, with her legs covered in water up to the knees.

But things could be better at Akwoyo well, if the users put a little more effort. In 2011, IRC/Triple-S Uganda in conjunction with SNV, Makerere University and Water Aid Uganda introduced the Mobile Phone for Water (M4W) initiative, through which community members can report a fault using short message services (SMS). During the baseline study, the Hand Pump Mechanic (HPM) of Ngetta reported the deplorable state of Akwoyo spring well and advised community members to raise money for materials to repair the well. The whole job required about UGX400,000 (US\$ 150). That was in November 2011. Three months down the road, not even a shilling had been collected.



Fetching water in dirty containers breaks the safe water chain.

Doing laundry at the water source is unhygienic

And why, one wonders, is it not possible for 400 households to raise four hundred thousand shillings? Some of them argue that the amount is far beyond what the community can manage and so they need the intervention of the district. But no one among the users had reported to the sub county authorities! Moreover, the users never pay their fees, which means the Water User Committee does not have any start up funds in their coffers.

Mzee Okwe Oteng, 57, has a ready answer to all these unanswered questions. "We are waiting for our Member of Parliament Hon. Sam Engola. I am sure if we told him our need he would come to our aid," Oteng says assuredly. The same view is echoed by 23-year old Okello Nyerere. Oteng and Nyerere are brewers, whose business requires drums-full of clean safe water, but they can't be bothered about the untended village well.

One leaves Akwoyo spring well wondering what is the least that the users can do as they wait for Uncle Sam.





Water user fees for improved livelihoods and sustainable water services



Moses Odoo whose collapsing business was saved by a loan acquired through the Bol lcap strategy

Moses Odoo is a happy man. In a matter of months his bricklaying project has grown by leaps and bounds, thanks to a UGX50,000 (US\$21) loan he took from the Water User Committee (WUC) of Omito deep borehole. At the time of taking the loan January 2012, Odoo was faced with a crisis. The casual labourers he had employed to help him with the bricks were threatening to lay down their tools over non-payment. This would have resulted in unimaginable losses for him. He quickly appealed to the WUC,

who accepted his application for a loan, to be paid with a ten percent interest per month. He paid the labourers, sold the bricks, paid back the loan and reinvested the profit. "I will be getting at least a million shillings by end of February (2012)," says a beaming Odoo.

Odoo is a user at Omito Borehole in Awire Alem village, Boroboro East, Adekwokok sub-county, Lira district. The borehole, constructed by All Nations Care in 2010 serves at least 150 households each of which pays a monthly user fee of UGX500 (US\$0.2). It is from these monthly collections that the Water User Committee, in August 2011, started advancing soft loans to community members. This system of borrowing, locally referred to as "Bol lcap" is fast taking root in Lira district and changing the lives of many. Bol lcap is Langi for "keep in a box for future use". It is similar to the now widely known "Yehora Yeguza (YY)" strategy which started in Kamwenge district.

Where it all began

Although the WUC loan is an old practice in areas like Rwenzori region, for Lira it is known to have started in 2011. Few communities have so far taken up the strategy, including Omito deep borehole and Okello Amuku shallow well in Akolodong village, Lira sub-county. For Omito borehole, the idea came from the village saving scheme to which many of





Florence Eyim who borrowed money to pay the medical bills of an ailing relative

the WUC executive members subscribe, while the WUC chairman of Okello Amuku got the tip from a church meeting and sold it to his fellow users.

No matter the origin, Bol Icap is a noble idea capable of causing social and economic emancipation. Borrowers have different pressing needs and it is especially gratifying to note that they have a ready place to run to for help. Take for example Ida Akello, whose grandson was about to miss his O-level exams owing to the lack of money to clear school dues; or Florence Eyim who desperately needed money to clear the medical bills of her ailing brother. Both women managed to attend to these crises by taking loans from the water user collections at the Okello Amuku shallow well.

"I appreciate our source and our Water User Committee. I don't know what would have become of my grandson if I had not borrowed the 70,000 shillings (\$30). Although I have not yet cleared the loan, I am at peace because my grandson now has a secondary school certificate," says Ida Akello.

Apart from solving problems of a personal nature, Bol Icap is presenting many more advantages that probably nobody had ever expected. Although this is a new practice in Lira district, it is already showing signs of changing the way users perceive the need to collect water user fees.

Duka Peter, the WUC chairman of Omito borehole says: "Our members pay their fees promptly because they know what it means to be without water in the area. Before we got this borehole, we used to fetch water from unprotected sources in far away villages. The users therefore want this borehole to be functional all the time. Now that they know about Bol Icap, they are even more committed to pay their fees."

In addition to bringing about better appreciation of water user fees, Bol Icap is making it possible for user committees to meet regularly. For the loan scheme to be a success, the WUC must be functional, as it must spearhead the collection of user fees. The WUC must also keep clear records and hold regular meetings to provide community members with feedback. All these eventually lead to enhanced WUC transparency and accountability and good source governance.

Most importantly perhaps, Bol Icap shows the clear connection between functional



Aida Akello who took a loan to pay school fees for her grandson

water sources and other aspects of community and social development. The experiences of Odo the bricklayer and that of Catherine Omara a millet trader, come to mind. Omara borrowed UGX50,000 (\$21) and used it to start up a thriving business, trading in millet flour.

How it works

Whereas the underlying concept of Bol icap is the same everywhere, the actual implementation differs from community to community. At the Okello Amuku well the process of borrowing starts with the prospective borrower informing the WUC chairperson, who then calls a committee meeting. On the two occasions that loans have been taken, the applications have been considered by only four members of the committee including the chairperson,

the vice chairperson, the secretary and the treasurer. Chairman Isaac Okello explains that these are the four critical members on the committee of eight. And although the loan is taken at 10% interest per month, the borrower does not necessarily have to put collateral security. Moreover, borrowing is not restricted to members only, lest would-be borrowers are put off. For now the committee remains open to borrowers who are not necessarily contributing community members.

At Omitto well the process is more stringent and the rules are written. When the committee receives an application, a meeting is called to discuss the merit of the application. A prospective borrower must be a permanent resident of the area. The borrower has to put some collateral, which could be a goat, a cock, or even a bicycle, depending on the amount required. So far they have not registered any defaulters but should there be one, the committee would sit and determine how to deal with the offender, working through the Local Council. For that reason, the chairman of the Local Council is kept in the know of all the borrowings made.

The major similarity between the two sources is that both WUCs remain mindful of the need to retain some money in their coffers in case they have an operation and maintenance issue to attend to. On how much a borrower can take, the Okello Amuku people say that they don't have an upper limit but they are mindful of the need to retain cash in hand. On the other hand the Omito WUC loans do not exceed UGX50,000 (\$21).





Catherin Omara used the loan to start a thriving business

Key Challenges

Although the Bol Icap idea is great and welcomed by community members, it is not without challenges. Firstly, there is the challenge with payment of user fees. Even after seeing the advantages of paying the fees, some users still don't want to take heed. The WUC executive and members still complain of many people who use the sources but do not pay use fees. Borrowers all made the same appeal: all community members should pay up their user fees if Bol Icap is to be taken forward.

In both Omitto and Okello Amuku cases, it was found that the funds collected were not put in the bank. The WUC treasurer keeps the money, which poses many risks. Some members explained that they were afraid of having to pay bank charges while others said the banks were far away from the villages that they would have to spend so much money in transport, not to think of the long processes involved in depositing and withdrawing.

The other challenge is about the unwritten rules concerning the WUC loan scheme. Particularly in Okello Amuku case, the WUC has not yet drafted guidelines or even a constitution governing the borrowing and lending process. This is treading on slippery ground as either the WUC or the owners of the money (users) will soon take an unacceptable decision but there will be no reference point to help with corrective measures.

Going forward

Wherever it has worked, community members are all for Bol Icap. Having tasted its advantages, Florence Eyim of Okello Amuku well says that all community members should try to take advantage of this opportunity. "If one has a burning problem and she is sure that she can pay back the money in the required time, there is nothing to stop her from appealing to the WUC for a loan," she urges. Although her brother passed away, she believes that the loan she got helped to add some days onto his life.

Other members like Aida Akello whose grandson managed to complete his O-Levels, recommend that borrowers should be told the full implications of the 10 percent interest rate per month. Some also contend that three months repayment period is too long and should be reduced.

But looking at a more strategic and long term view, these community members need to expand the fund to be able to provide even bigger loans that people can invest in big income generating activities. While the Omitto group was thinking of appealing to donors for additional funding, the Okello Amuku members were for setting up a joint

project out of which they would generate more funds and keep expanding their financial base. Rose Omala, the Senior Community Development Officer, Lira District advised that the groups should formalise their existence and apply for grants under the Community Driven Development (CDD) initiative in the district local government.

Whatever the case, the success of Bol Icap largely depends on collection of user fees. Obua Nelson assistant secretary of Omito WUC says that they should use one-on-one interactions to convince people to pay user fees. "The collection of fees will depend on us convincing the

users that this is their source and not for the government or the NGO. You need to make people understand that this is their water and then they will pay up," he advises.

For the Omito borehole which attracts users from all neighbouring villages, the campaign has already started. Champions from Awire Alem village are now visiting other sources which have long-ceased to function, telling them about the good things that come out of paying water user fees, not least the constant availability of water plus of course access to soft loans.

Lessons from Bol Icap

- Promotes transparency and accountability.** Duka Peter chair person of Omito WUC noted that with Bol Icap "members always attend WUC meetings because they are keen to know who is borrowing and paying back their monies." The initiative therefore provides for transparency and accountability since it involves fairly large sums of money which is rarely the case in ordinary WUCs.
- Sustainability of rural water systems**-the care taker of Omito borehole informed us that "the WUC agreed to have a minimum of 200,000/= (80 US D) as reserve funds to cater for O&M and unexpected failure of the borehole." The fact that Bol Icap enables the WUC to raise quite large sums of money gives the members impetus to set a reserve fund.
- Promotes Community Participation.** Integration of Bol Icap in O&M has made water user fee contribution a viable activity. "I have to participate in the meetings and cleaning of this borehole because it is ours... If I stopped coming to the meetings, I can easily be ignored by the committee when I need a loan." Says Florence Eyim one of the scheme beneficiaries.
- Coordination**-the case of Omito borehole demonstrated the role of stakeholder coordination and networking in promoting functionality of rural water systems. ANCC was working in close liaison with DWO and Sub County administration-this was depicted in the way they carried out the mobilization steps and eventually handing over the system without jeopardizing CBMS strategy.
- Local Leadership** -The role of local councils cannot be over emphasized. Communities often listen to their leaders more than any other parties. It is imperative that involvement of local leaders is sought in the entire processes of service delivery. Dialogues with local leaders/politicians on CBMS/O&M would be appropriate to elicit their commitment and participation in implementing the strategies.
- Local legal instruments;** unlike Okello Amuku shallow well, the WUC of Omito had a constitution that guided the Bol Icap scheme. The success of the WUC of Omito borehole was largely attributed to having clear and agreed upon guidelines which surely are something that can be done and emulated by other communities.



Back to our roots: Applying the traditional omuhiigo to community management of water sources

Kabarole district local government is grappling with declining functionality of water facilities. In the 2011 Sector Performance Report, The Ministry of Water and Environment indicates that Kabarole functionality rate dropped from 90% in 2010 to 80% in 2011. This is attributable to myriad factors including; poor maintenance of sources; non-functional user committees etc etc. To address the situation, the district has undertaken several approaches including: formation of the Hand Pump Mechanics Association (HPMA), M4W, Yahura Yehoza (YY) strategy, lower level coordination, among many others. Among all the approaches, the “omuhiigo” strategy stands out.

Omuhiigo is a traditional practice among the people of Tooro kingdom (which includes Kabarole district), whereby community members were mobilised to address a common challenge. Variants of the Omuhiigo existed in other parts of Uganda – in Buganda it was “bulungi bwansi” while in Acholi it was “berbedo”.

Over the centuries, a typical omuhiigo started with the sound of a drum at the crack of dawn, made by a community leader (omuhiigi). Community members would pick up their tools and converge



A child fetches water from an unkempt source. Omuhiigo strategy mobilises communities to clean up sources

at an agreed point where the action would start. Through omuhiigo bridges were built; roads were maintained; water sources were cleaned; marauding wild animals were hunted down; and thieves were nabbed. In modern times, increasing individualism, the plummeting sense of community and politicisation of common challenges have seen such traditional practices like omuhiigo die away.

But in 2011, the Kabarole WASH actors took a step to revive the age-old omuhiigo and apply it to community management of water sources. These included the District Local Government, Sub-county



A protected spring in Kabarole, badly in need of a cleanup

Local Governments, District Water Office, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Joint Effort to Save the Environment (JESE) and IRC/Triple-S Uganda. They wanted an approach that would compel community members to be involved in matters affecting their water sources.

Senior Community Development Officer David Mugisha says, “many strategies have been engaged but we have realised that the most efficient strategy is that which is community-driven. When we started there were proposals to arrest people who were not participating in source maintenance but we realised that wasn’t going to work. We needed a strategy that was going to make people participate.”

The original idea was for WASH actors including Community Development Officers (CDOs) and Health Assistants (HAs) to meet with WUCs and water

users at the source and discuss issues depending on the prevailing situation. The purpose was to mentor WUCs on the job. But this idea metamorphosed into the omuhiigo where activities go beyond just mentoring. Water users are mobilised to clean up the source; extension workers and WUC members make spot checks on household sanitation facilities; water user registers are updated and monthly fees collected; user meetings are held during which the WUC gives accountability.

The pioneers of the WASH Omuhiigo first tried the approach on selected sources in all the sub counties in Kabarole district. This was done in consultation with sub-county leaders. The target was to reach 20 parishes per sub-county.

The trials showed positive results and this prompted the pioneers to write a proposal suggesting that the omuhiigo be adopted by the district, where the local council leaders at the different levels would be the chief mobilisers – the district chairman, the sub-county chairman and the village council chairman. The sub-county and district-level technical team would do the monitoring. They proposed that the district-wide omuhiigo be conducted every last Friday of the month.

The district council in December 2011 passed a resolution adopting the omuhiigo as a strategy for water source maintenance. What remains now is the operationalisation of that resolution. Preparations for an official launch are underway, while the pioneers are also looking at persuading sub-county councils to pass the same resolution. They also continue to market the idea in

different forums like the DWSCC and the inter-sub county advocacy meeting.

So what is the catch with omuhiigo?

Perhaps the best thing about the omuhiigo is that it is people-centred. Grace Kanwari of CRS says the omuhiigo helps local people to address local problems because it is based on the premise that issues vary from community to community. "Each source has its unique issues. The HAs and the CDOs can only advise. But it is the local people who can best identify their issues," she says.

Executed systematically, the omuhiigo approach would bring about many positive changes. It would improve harmonisation especially if the district council resolution is operationalised so that all communities follow the same guidelines. The strategy could even make mobilisation of water users easier since it compels all community members to be involved in maintenance of sources, with the full support of the local leaders.

The Omuhiigo can also improve accountability and raise community confidence in the WUC. Perhaps more importantly, this approach can improve community ownership of sources and reduce the burden of monitoring on the technical team.

"Extension staff traverse the district monitoring the functionality of sources and they are overstretched. But once omuhiigo is accepted it becomes incumbent upon the local leadership to mobilise their people. It becomes a collective responsibility not a burden of the technical teams," says Taddeo Balisanga, the Head of Community Development Department Kabarole District Local Government.

"The mindset of many actors is that you need massive resources to take these initiatives forward. Yet all that is required is sensitisation and facilitation of the sub-counties who can then take things up on their own,"

Especially with the involvement of leaders, Omuhiigo will ensure that at least every once a month issues of source operation and maintenance will be addressed. Community members will clean up their wells, especially in the spirit of impressing visiting leaders. "People tend to clean up when a visitor is due to come. If the political leaders visit sources regularly, as is the plan, it means the cleaning of sources will be more regular," says Balisanga. And therein lies the key challenge – attitude.

Challenges

One of the key challenges facing omuhiigo is the community attitude towards water sources. As in many rural areas, water users in Kabarole do not look at these sources as their own. Rather they see them as belonging to the

government or to the NGO that puts them in place. Even when they participated in the trial omuhiigo, some water users thought they were doing it for the CDOs and HAs. For some two sources visited during a follow up visit in February 2012, the users had not met again since the first omuhiigo in November 2011. The wells had fallen back to their state of dirt and disrepair. Asked why they had not met again, they explained that they had waited for the CDO to call the meeting and she hadn't!

Meanwhile, there is a general lack of commitment especially from the more able-bodied members of each community. Clearing up bushes, digging soak pits, constructing fences are activities that require some youthful energies. But most of the youth are busy riding boda bodas (motorcycles for hire), unwilling to spend time tending water sources. For most households, water is fetched by women and children below 14 who may not be fit enough to take on the highly-physical tasks as well as deliberate on issues concerning the water source. Some community members do not want to be bothered and they will not respond to the omuhiigo call. In fact, for many, a good leader is one who does not nag.

So much for community attitude, but there are challenges on the side of sector actors too. While there is agreement as to the potential of the omuhiigo approach, key actors are not following up effectively on the communities where the approach was introduced. "Someone has to take the lead. There are resources involved in implementing the omuhiigo strategy," Grace Kanweri contends. Senior CDO David Mugisha couldn't agree more, he says, "effective operationalisation of omuhiigo requires financial and human

resources which may not be readily available."

But then again, Grace argues that the exercise does not necessarily require earth-moving budgets. "The mindset of many actors is that you need massive resources to take these initiatives forward. Yet all that is required is sensitisation and facilitation of the sub-counties who can then take things up on their own," she says. Still, those small budgets must be funded. Someone must pick the bill.

Presented with the omuhiigo strategy, members of the DWSCC were sceptical and wondered if it would be possible to revive a practice that had been long killed by politics and whether the politicians wouldn't hijack the initiative. They were doubtful if it would work given the weak Local Council system; or whether it would address household sanitation and hygiene. They even suggested that there might be too little work to be done if the whole group of users descends upon a single source every month. More questions were raised about the issue of non-compliance: If people don't get water from the source regularly, how do you persuade them to come and clear it? How is it going to address such problems as seasonal dry out?

David Mugisha explains that this is more of a back to the roots strategy, and it fits well within the CBMS framework. The sources are community facilities and the people must take good care of them. The omuhiigo worked traditionally, it can work even today. It is therefore important to explore the different ways of using that approach to address some of the key challenges facing sustainability of rural water services.

There are proposals including: bringing all WASH actors on board; documenting and sharing all experiences in different forums; imposing fines on non-compliant users; and asking households to take turns at the maintenance of sources. For now, the omuhiigo pioneers are keen on securing the commitment of political leaders at all levels and that of the technical team. The passing of a District Council resolution is a step in the right direction. Rubona sub-county has already set every last Thursday of the month for omuhiigo.

As a first step, meetings are going to be held at county level, attracting

representatives from the village level (Local Council one), parish level (Local Council two) and sub-county level (Local Council three). At this meeting, the omuhiigo for WASH will be launched. To promote it effectively, CDO is also considering wide publicity on local radio stations.

But most importantly all actors should know that for the strategy to work well, there must be political will at all levels, WUCs as well as Village Health Teams (VHTs) must be functional and above all, community members must be willing to heed the omuhiigo call.



With the Omuhiigo strategy, Sipatala source in Nyamiseke Parish - Buheesi has greatly improved in terms of management

Efforts to scale up Omuhiigo strategy

The Omuhiigo strategy was adopted by the Kabarole District Council in December 2011 after being piloted in at least one parish from the 15 rural sub counties of Kabarole district. The strategy has been documented at district, regional and national levels and was also presented as an innovative approach to improving good governance in WASH in the second Rwenzori regional learning forum. It was expected that the strategy would be launched and implemented district wide but this is yet to happen. To ensure that this approach does not die out in its infancy, IRC/Triple S supported Kabarole district local government to follow up on the implementation of the strategy in two sub counties of Kisomoro and Buheesi.

Objectives:

- To keep the Omuhiigo strategy alive among the district, sub county and community level stakeholders so that it can be embraced by the district.
- To review progress that was attained in the sub counties and communities in implementation of the commitments made for implementation of the Omuhiigo.
- To document evidence of this approach so as to guide the district in the implementation of the Omuhiigo as strategy for improving operation and maintenance of sources.

Follow Up activities:

Strategic partners were identified and mobilized to participate in the follow up activities. These included the political leadership especially councillors in charge of water and sanitation at both district and subcounty levels; local WASH NGO, CBOs; technical staff at both district and sub county level and Hand Pump Mechanics.

The team visited eight water sources in Kisomoro and Buheesi sub counties where Omuhiigo was piloted. Discussions were held with the water user committees and some community members. A check list of physical improvement on the water sources as well as assessment on the improvement in the management of the water sources was used to guide the discussion.

The visiting team was tasked to observe the hygiene and sanitation situation around the water sources and in surrounding households; the management aspects involved in the collection of user fees; the functioning of the WUC in terms of holding regular executive and water user meetings; an updated register of water users; enforcement of by laws; and plans to undertake routine and preventive maintenance.

Key observations by the team:

Implementation of the Omuhiigo: The strategy so far is too cumbersome to cover the entire sub county. There is need for functional support structures. The Local Council leaders and parish chiefs should be mobilized first to take up the role of supervising the communities on the designated date of the Omuhiigo. In the pilot phase, district teams supported the sub counties to supervise the communities but that came at a high cost especially in terms of transport funds.

Adoption of the Omuhiigo by sub counties.

After the pilot, sub counties were not able to scale up the strategy in all the parishes. Only a few water sources were covered in the follow up exercise. Buheesi Sub County had drafted a resolution to adopt the Omuhiigo strategy not only on water and sanitation but for the whole aspects of the environment. The first Thursday of the month was declared as an environment and sanitation day. This was passed by the sub county council that sat on 7th May 2012. This brings the number of sub counties that has adopted the Omuhiigo to three after Ruteete and Rubona TC. Adoption of the strategy by all sub counties will require district resolution as well as allocation of resources to the sub- counties

Emerging ideas: In Buheesi Sub County, the idea is to apply the omuhiigo strategies to all issues concerning the environment, not just water. They feel that their effort will come to naught if they focus on water services alone without addressing all the environment issues like forests, solid waste disposal among others. Probably the most plausible idea is to have a minimum number of water sources in each sub county that can be supervised to ensure total improvement and these can serve as "centers of excellence".



Strength in numbers: Rolling out the Lira district HPMA



Hand Pump mechanics attend refresher training in Lira district, January 2012

When Yusuf Kasumba in 1996 mobilised hand pump mechanics in Kibaale to form the first ever Hand Pump Mechanics Association (HPMA) in Uganda, he did not know that he was setting a revolution in motion. Fifteen years down the road, the Kibaale Mechanics Association is still growing strong and nearly 50 districts have followed suit – 37 associations have already been registered.

More still, the Ministry of Water and Environment has endorsed the formation of HPMA as one of the strategies to ensure sustainable functionality of water services. In the annual Joint Sector Review of 2011, the Ministry, in its Undertaking Number Eight, committed to strengthen community based maintenance through the formation of HPMA in 80% of the districts and to operationalise the associations in at least 30% of

the districts by end of financial year 2012/2013. The Functionality working group, of which IRC/Triple-S Uganda is the Secretariat, was tasked to guide the undertaking.

Lira district is one of those that quickly embarked on the formation of an HPMA. By January 2012, the Lira HPMA with a membership of 35 had been registered as a CBO, with a constitution, an elected executive, a bank account and a work plan for the year. Additionally through the association, members were involved in the Mobile Phones for Water (M4W) Project and in refresher training programmes. In April 2012, The HPMA was officially launched at a function officiated by the Lira District Chief Administrative Officer and the District Chairperson. In May 2012, the DWSCC resolved that the HPMA become a member of the committee and they duly

participated in that month's meeting. The Lira District HPMA is being fostered as the model association for Technical Support Unit 2 (TSU2) with lessons already being replicated in neighbouring districts like Alebtong.

Although the process of forming the Lira HPMA might seem rather mundane, it provides insights and key lessons not just for other HPMA's but also for actors who are keen on making this approach universal.

How it all began

The HPMA in Lira was a result of a series of meetings coordinated by a steering committee comprising key players in the district WASH sector. Spearheaded by IRC/Triple-S, WASH partners held an initial meeting and discussed how to start the association. The meeting resulted into the establishment of the Steering Committee comprising the District Water Office (DWO), Technical Support Unit 2 (TSU2), IRC/Triple-S, Divine Waters, Plan Uganda and International Lifeline Fund. The committee was to work behind the scenes while the Hand Pump Mechanics (HPMs) took the front seat.

In one of the initial meetings with the HPMs, the steering committee invited an experienced hand pump mechanic from Adjumani to share experiences with his counterparts in Lira – the Adjumani district HPMA has been operating successfully since its formation in 2009. The guest HPM particularly shared experience on how to form and run a successful HPMA. From the insights in that sharing, the Lira HPMs then identified their own gaps and requested the steering committee to help address them. The first step in that direction was a one-week refresher



Lawrence Angoi - Chairman Lira - HPMA

training in January 2012. The association has not looked back since.

Even as the Lira district HPMA continues to thrive, one wonders about their inspiration. Did the mechanics form the association upon the pushing of the steering committee? Did they really believe in the idea?

Whereas the mechanics knew that it was to their advantage to form a common body, they had never taken the initiative. So when the steering committee mobilised them, there was no hesitation. Lawrence Angoi the chairperson of the association says that working individually, the mechanics always had a hard time stocking spare parts and responding adequately to community needs. Also, they did not have operational standards and there were many masquerades and cases of indiscipline among the mechanics. There were complaints that the mechanics were doing sub-standard work, charging exorbitantly for their service and in some cases vandalising facilities.



Meanwhile, some Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) were each mobilising HPMS separately and sometimes selfishly. For example, if a particular organisation sunk boreholes in an area, it also mobilised and trained mechanics to attend to those facilities. It always seemed like the mechanics belonged to the organisation. For lack of a common voice and bargaining power, the mechanics were sometimes exploited. This often caused some mechanics to leave the trade in search for more lucrative activities. All these tendencies were ultimately affecting the quality of service provided by the HPMS. It was therefore envisaged that the formation of an association would address this whole host of challenges, and more.

“The Steering committee wanted the mechanics to be organised and do work as a group so that they could give the best service to the communities. The committee also wanted the HPMS to have collective bargaining power at the district level and to enhance chances of learning from each other,” Teddy Bayige of TSU2 explains.

Now that the HPMA is in place, the real anxieties have started setting in. How

do they ensure that the association is a viable and self-reliant enterprise? The association could get contracts from the CSOs, the district local government, private companies and other clients. However, is the repair of boreholes enough to sustain the association? Both the HPMS and the steering committee agree that unless the association attracts business and generates its own income, its sustainability will remain a key challenge. There are worries about how the association is going to compete for tenders with more established companies. There are proposals that the HPMA be given special consideration during the tendering processes. But since the association has registered with the Community Development Department as a Community Based Organisation, it is illegal for it to bid for tenders as this goes against the public procurement procedures.

All the worries notwithstanding, the association continues to enjoy tremendous support from many WASH actors who believe in its potential to improve services. Apart from endorsement by the Ministry, there is a lot of goodwill and support from the District Water Office, the Technical Support Unit and other organisations. International Lifeline Fund (ILF), Divine Waters, SNV, IRC/Triple-S, Plan Uganda are some of the non-government agencies that have supported the HPMA so far, mainly with mobilisation, facilitation of meetings, refresher training and provision of toolkits.

Members of the steering committee are also taking advantage of existing structures and forums to spread the word about the association. Such forums as the Sub County and district level advocacy



Children should not be allowed to play at facilities because they break them.

meetings, District Water and Sanitation Coordination Committee meetings are all providing a podium for HPMA's proponent. Such endorsement is crucial for the profile and sustainability of the association.

Big dreams for the future

The HPMA's also have their own ideas on how to scale greater heights. The chairperson Lawrence Angoi explains that to start with, all registered members are expected to pay a subscription fee of 15,000 and annual contribution of 50,000. The funds collected have so far enabled the association to open a bank account and also to facilitate the primary processes of registering the association with the Community Development Office. They have also embarked on the production of an association identity card.

Angoi further explains that in the future the association plans to market itself to all potential clients. They want to create awareness about the association by advertising on local radio stations and through community level engagements. They particularly want to propose that Water User Committees (WUCS) make a monthly deposit in the HPMA account so that when the need arises for repairs finances are readily available. For their own visibility and easy identification, the HPMA's want to design a uniform for their members to wear whenever they visit communities.

The chairperson further says that they are considering opening a website and an email account so that they can appeal to international donors and friends for assistance. And to make a comprehensive contribution to the

WASH, the association also hopes to engage in sanitation and hygiene promotion.

"Five years from now we want the association to be big and busy. We want to own property and to also do other business to sustain our association. We especially want to promote the M4W initiative because it makes our work easier," Angoi says.

Perhaps many other districts will follow in the footsteps of Lira. But most importantly they must appreciate four key conditions necessary for the formation of an HPMA:

- **Commitment of the HPMA's:** without the commitment of the handpump mechanics the Lira HPMA wouldn't have seen the light of day. Teddy observes that they have exhibited great enthusiasm, attending all meetings and undertaking all the processes of formalising the association.



Half a pump: Elwany shallow well where the pump has only half a handle

- **Engagement of CSOs:** Civil society organisations have been very supportive to the Lira HPMA. They particularly helped with the mobilisation, facilitation and training.
- **Support from the TSUs and DWOs:** As a way of actualising undertaking number eight, the TSU and DWO have offered tremendous support to the Lira HPMA
- **Engagement with communities:** The main client for HPMS is the community. If the mechanics don't engage with communities, their interventions do not add any significant value. By engaging with communities the HPMS demonstrate their relevance and they can win the confidence and support of their key client. Additionally, it is important for the DWO and the district local government leaders to officially introduce the HPMS to all lower level structures (sub-counties, parishes, villages) so as to build community trust and confidence in them.
- **Commitment from the local leadership:** The HPMA has also enjoyed the goodwill and support of the district political and technical leadership. The official launch, graced by the district chairperson and chief executive, is just one example of the leaderships' commitment to the HPMA.

Ministry of Water and Environment moves to operationalise HPMS

The Functionality Thematic Group in April 2012 adopted an action plan to operationalise at least 30% of district HPMS as a way of enhancing community based operation and maintenance structures for rural water sources.

The action plan is anchored in Ministry of Water and Environment undertaking number eight for financial year 2011/2012. Apart from operationalising the HPMS, the action plan also aims to develop by July 2012, a frame work for guiding Local Governments on engaging HPMS. It also targets to increase functionality of rural water sources to 85% up from 83% where it has stagnated for nearly five years now.

At the start of the implementation of the undertaking, a baseline study was conducted in 10 districts to assess the status of HPMS in the country. Since the first-ever HPMA was formed in Kibaale District in 1997, other

districts have followed suit reaching 81% of all districts in Uganda. A guideline for district local governments on the formation of HPMS has also been drafted.

The Ministry and its partners will also focus on awareness creation and capacity building. There will also be training in the areas of leadership and management; procurement and contract administration; financial management and reporting; and business skills. And by June 2013, the actors will have generated evidence on the impact of HPMS on functionality of rural water sources. The action plan also promises to document and share experiences at national and international level, and to conduct regular coaching and mentoring of the HPMS leadership.

Even as the HPMS revolution unfolds, there are some key outstanding concerns:

Spare parts: There is need for a regulatory framework and stocking of spare parts at sub-county level. It is also important to involve HPMA's in the spare parts supply chain.

Membership composition: It has been noted that HPMA's focus on the mechanics who are trained to handle only the hand pumps. There is need to recognise other artisans and scheme attendants attached to sources with different technologies for example those attending to piped schemes. A clear strategy should be adopted for the recruitment of new members into the associations.

Harmonised approach to rolling out HPMA's: The rolling out of HPMA's has so far varied from district to district. A guiding framework on the formation and operationalisation of HPMA's has been drafted. This will ensure the harmonization of the process.

CBO's or private companies? In some districts the registration of HPMA's remains an unresolved issue – some districts support HPMA's to register as CBO's while others would rather have them register as companies in order to competitively bid for work.

From the onset, the MWE concept note on HPMA's emphasized association formation as Community Based Organisations (CBO's) to enable HPMA's access benefits of improved cooperation and to learn from each other. The functionality working group recommends that HPMA's first register as CBO's but also be given the opportunity to gradually grow into business entities. They should not rush into forming companies for the sake of winning bids.

Should HPMA's get preferential treatment?

The issue of insulation of the HPMA's to monotonously carry out repairs of rural water facilities was considered unfit for the prevailing Local Government Act. Any engagement of the HPMA's by the districts through a memorandum of understanding requires clearance from the Solicitor General.

Who is involved? So far, the Ministry is working with IRC/Triple-S, SNV, Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and UNICEF. However there are plans to bring more actors on board especially NGOs and CSOs which are involved in activities around rural water service delivery.





Bylaws are crucial for water source operation and maintenance

Though not listed among the critical requirements for sustainable management of water facilities, bylaws are crucial to ensure good use and maintenance of sources. Communities through their Water User Committees often institute bylaws but enforcement is usually an uphill task. But one community in Amuca Sub County in Lira district has successfully enforced bylaws for two years. What is their experience like?

Residents of Adel Village in Lira district are enjoying a steady supply of water, thanks to the strict bylaws instituted at their source – St John Chapel borehole.

This celebrated borehole was constructed in 2010 by Link To Progress (LTP) an NGO operating in Lira district. But unlike some cases where sources are donated to communities without plans for operation and maintenance, LTP took time to work with the community to constitute and train a nine-member Water User Committee (WUC). The organisation even went further to work with the community to develop bylaws to manage the source. It is the strict observance of these laws that has brought a smile to many a water user in this village.

The laws address issues which may seem petty, but with serious implications on the management of the source. Such issues include fighting and quarrelling; user participation in maintenance activities; non-payment of user fees; and cleanliness of containers among others. It is these

very basic issues, which if not dealt with, can result into breakages and vandalism which eventually lead to non-functionality of sources.

The WUC treasurer Cyprian Owiny explains that the bylaws were instituted on the volition of the borehole users. The committee members drafted the laws and shared them with LTP, who then helped to refine and finalise. The bylaws were also shared with the village Local Council, before being introduced to all community members in a water user meeting.

Many people did not know the importance of the laws – some of them still don't know. Many didn't understand what the laws actually meant, while others obstinately refused to observe the laws. Sylvia Imat, the caretaker recalls that when they introduced the bylaw requiring all users to fetch water in clean containers many thought it only applied to the outside and not the inside of their jerry cans. So people only washed the outer part of the containers leaving the inside full of grime.



But with continued sensitisation and strict monitoring, people have started taking the bylaws very seriously. The WUC member explains that the bylaws are displayed at the church notice board. They are also repeated to the members every time they hold a users' meeting, which is bimonthly. The caretaker on duty is also tasked to explain the laws to new users.

But most importantly, people know the laws because they participated in the drafting in November 2010. "People in this area used to think that the NGO which gave us the source would also come and repair the source but they were sensitised by LTP and now they know better," Cyprian Owiny explains.

Apart from sensitisation, the community agreed on fines that are payable at the breach of the law and these are stipulated clearly. For example, a user who comes to the source with a dirty container is liable to pay a fine of 500shs (US\$0.2). Those who engage in brawls are fined 10,000shs (US\$ 4) while those who are found quarrelling and using inappropriate language are fined 5000shs (US\$2).

Indeed some residents have got a lashing for breaking the rules. In one case, an errant water user stole a jerry can from the borehole and when he was caught, he was given a fine of 5000shs (US\$2.2). In another case, one head of household did not want to pay water user fees saying he fetched from another source. Once he was caught fetching from the borehole and was fined 5000shs (US\$2.2).

Both the WUC and the community members agree that the observance of bylaws has indeed benefitted them



Elderly Grace Akello is given priority at St. John Chapel borehole

greatly. Having a functional source in the area has resulted into reduced distances in the search for water and better livelihoods especially for those whose businesses depend on water supply. One elderly woman, Grace Akello is particularly happy because the bylaws allow vulnerable people like her to use the borehole without queuing up. Meanwhile the work of the WUC has been greatly eased. "When we started it was difficult to collect fees now the people are better sensitised. There is no more fighting for water, just a few quarrels remain. The work of the WUC has been eased greatly," Owiny says.

As part of the management, the WUC also holds monthly meetings for the executive and bi-monthly meetings for the water users. During the meetings, user fees are collected and accountability is given.

Challenges

Members of the WUC explain that enforcing the bylaws has been a daunting task. When reminded to observe the rules, some community members often



Some members of the Water User Committee at St. John Chapel borehole

first give us accountability and also tell us why they are the only ones who borrow from the fund,” Ojok Charles, a community member complained.

Recommendations

The Ader community called for more visitors to come see their source and share some experiences on source management. They also think that the coming of visitors will encourage them to work harder on maintaining their source because community members always listen to “visitors” advice.

insult or even fight the caretaker. Sylvia Imat, a caretaker even wishes that another committee could be elected soon so that the mantle can be passed on. As such the committee decided that the caretaker role be rotational with different members taking turns every month. They are also considering the idea of paying the caretaker a small fee. Additionally, the WUC decried the community’s poor attendance of meetings and refusal to pay user fees.

Accountability: In order to reduce suspicion among the users, the WUC should always display accountabilities in public places. This applies to both the user fees and the collections from fines. It would actually be prudent to open a bank account to avoid the risks associated with keeping money in the treasurer’s house.

Accountability: The WUC seems to have a challenge with the management of funds, especially those collected in fines. For example, the treasurer could not account for funds raised in fines saying he had misplaced the book of records. He however said that they were planning to use the funds to facilitate the caretaker – but most community members were not aware of that decision. As for the use of the collections from the monthly user fees, the treasurer said that they are trying to venture into Bol lcap(loan scheme), but so far only the WUC members were allowed to access the loans. Moreover, the source does not have a bank account so the funds are all kept at the home of the treasurer. This raised suspicion among the other users who pay their fees duly. “The committee complains that we don’t want to pay user fees. Let them

Operation and Maintenance: With the guidance of extension staff, the WUC should develop a proper operation and maintenance plan.

Enforcement: The WUC should enforce all bylaws not just some.

Accountability as of March 2012

Fees collected since November 2010	Ug shs 899,750
Capital contribution to source drilling	Ug shs 100,000
Facilitating LTP constructors	Ug shs 116,000
Purchasing seedlings	Ug shs 10,000
Purchasing spanner	Ug shs 3000
Purchasing nails	Ug shs 16,000
Facilitating WUC travel to sub county offices	Ug shs 17,000





About Triple-S Uganda

Triple-S, short for Sustainable Services at Scale, is an initiative of the International Water and Sanitation Centre (IRC). It aims to pilot and test new ways of working for the delivery of rural water services in Uganda and to identify and understand the key challenges that are currently confronting the rural water sector.

The initiative does this through a rigorous process of learning and research which involves the full range of stakeholders from the Ministry of Water and Environment (MWE) to district water personnel, private operators, users, local politicians and opinion leaders.

The results of learning will provide concrete evidence to underpin modified approaches, new information and guidelines about how

to implement and support rural water supply services. Ultimately the new approaches and models will be scaled up and adopted at national level, thereby contributing to improved functionality of systems across the whole country.

Learning and research are at the heart of Triple-S activities. Working within the broad framework of existing sector policy guidelines, Triple-S applies a series of "building blocks" to investigate, research and test new ways of working in the rural water services sector. The building blocks include: Targeted research; Action learning; Testing models in pilot districts; Training and Knowledge management:

Triple-S is structured around a consortium comprising the following members:

- The Ministry of Water and Environment (MWE)
- SNV Uganda
- Uganda Water and Sanitation NGO Network (UWASNET)
- Network for Water and Sanitation (NETWAS) Uganda
- International Water and Sanitation Centre (IRC)

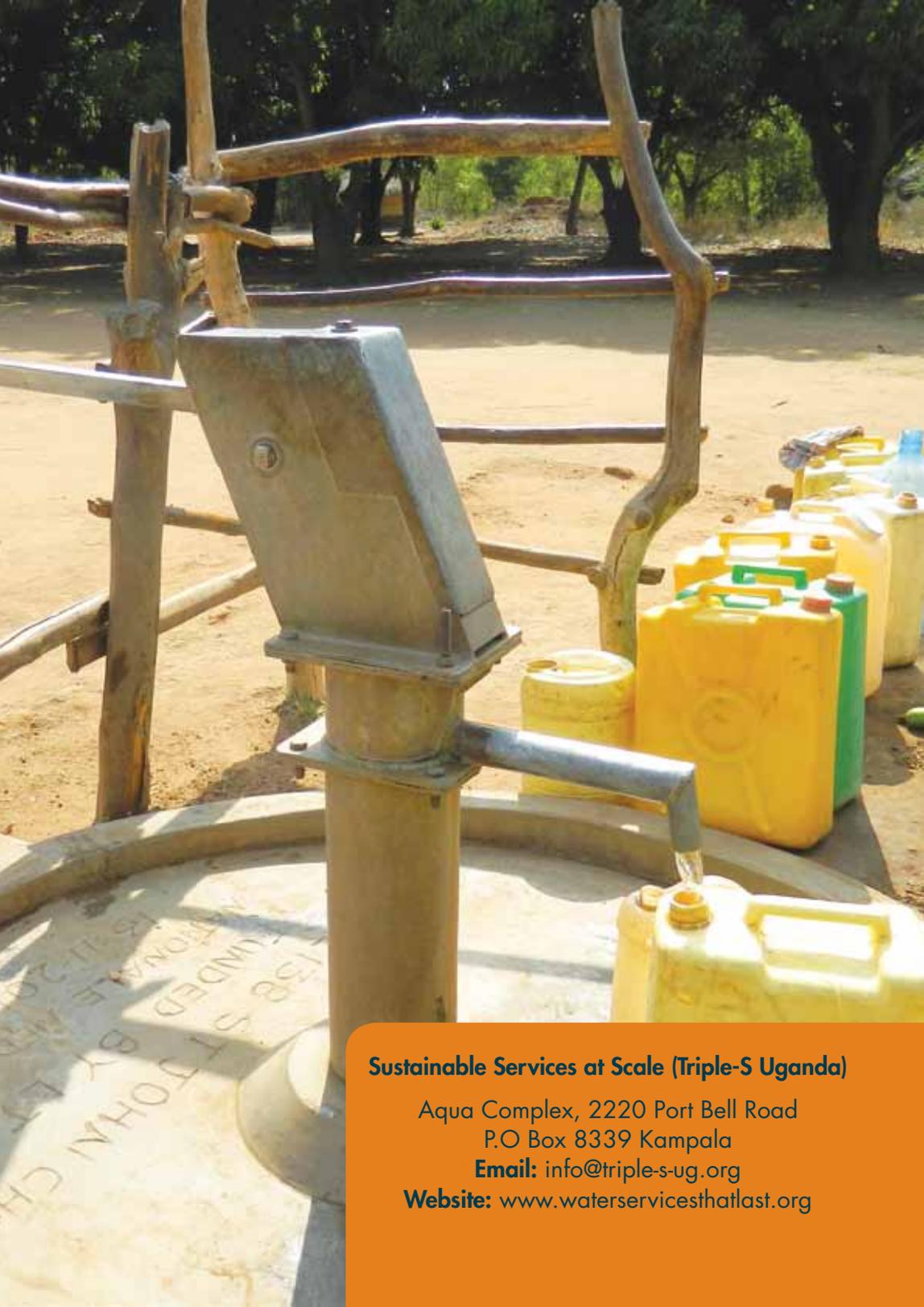
TRIPLE-S VISION: Reliable and functional water supply provided at scale in rural areas of Uganda.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This collection of experiences is a result of invaluable input from a wide range of stakeholders. IRC/Triple-S Initiative would like to acknowledge the contribution of the institutions, organizations, communities and individuals below

- District Water Officers of Kabarole and Lira
- Community Development Officers of Kabonero,
- Buheesi, Ruteete and Rwimi in Kabarole; as well as Lira, Ngetta, Adekwokok sub counties in Lira district
- Senior Development Officer, Kabarole District
- Head of Community Development Department, Kabarole district
- Technical Support Unit 2 and Technical Support Unit 6
- The Functionality Thematic Group of the Ministry of Water and Environment
- Hand Pump Mechanics of Bukuku, Ngetta, Adekwokok sub counties
- HPMA of Lira and Kabarole
- Communities and water users at the following sources:
 - Sipatala shallow well, Nyamiseke Parish, Buheesi Sub County, Kabarole
 - Kamataruka spring well, Rushenyi village, Ruteete sub-county
 - Rushenyi A shallow well, Rushenyi village, Ruteete sub-county
 - Telela shallow well in Ngetta sub county, Lira District
 - Opelo village borehole in Boroboro West Parish, Lira District
 - Akwoyo springwell in Tebung anywomore, Ngetta sub county, Lira District
 - Omitto borehole in Awire Alem village, adekwokok sub county, Lira District
 - Okello Amuku shallow well in Akolodong village, Lira Sub County, Lira District
 - St John Chapel borehole, Adel Village Amuca sub-county in Lira district.



Sustainable Services at Scale (Triple-S Uganda)

Aqua Complex, 2220 Port Bell Road
P.O Box 8339 Kampala

Email: info@triple-s-ug.org

Website: www.waterservicesthatlast.org