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# EVALUATION OF WES PROGRAMME

## UGANDA

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The Water Supply and Environmental Sanitation Programme

in the 1995 - 2000 GoU-UNICEF Country Programme



## EVALUATION REPORT VOLUME 1

The Hague  
May 1998

IRC International Water and Sanitation Centre  
The Hague, The Netherlands

NETWAS International  
Nairobi, Kenya

NETWAS Uganda  
Kampala

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**The Water Supply and Environmental Sanitation Programme  
in the 1995 - 2000 GoU-UNICEF Country Programme**

### EVALUATION REPORT VOLUME 1

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## 1. Acknowledgements

The evaluation of the Water and Environmental Sanitation (WES) Uganda Programme can only be successful if a large number of people commit themselves to supporting the applied participatory approach. The evaluation team would like to express their sincere thanks to all those involved for devoting their time and energies into making this evaluation possible.

Particular thanks are due to the Programme Management Team (PMT) and the Programme Coordination Unit (PCU) staff for the strong support provided to the team throughout the evaluation. At national, district, sub-county, parish, village and community level, all government staff, politicians and individuals community members were all very helpful and showed a high level of commitment to have provide the evaluation team with all the required information. The information provided by RUWASA and other sector projects is much appreciated. Thanks are also due to the four district officers who participated in the full evaluation period, their enthusiasm and knowledge contributed to the present report.

The team would also like to thank UNICEF and the GoU for the opportunity to get to know this interesting Uganda WES Programme . Thanks are given to the reviewers of the draft report whose detailed comments were very valuable.

## 2. Executive summary

The present Water and Environmental Sanitation (WES) Programme in Uganda, supported by the GoU and UNICEF, mainly using Sida funds, is one of the four GoU/UNICEF Country Programmes 1995-2000. This Programme was preceded by the WATSAN (Water and Sanitation Programme) and SWIP (South-West Integrated Project). These projects covered 28 of the 39 districts (that time); the WES Programme is now active in 34 of 45 districts and covers the whole country except the 10 RUWASA-supported districts in the Eastern Uganda and Kampala District.

On the request of the PMT, an extensive participatory evaluation was carried out in the period from 1 February to 14 March 1998 by a team composed of staff from IRC International Water and Sanitation Centre, The Netherlands; NETWAS International, Kenya; NETWAS Uganda; and a Ugandan consultant. Four district staff complemented the team during the six weeks period.

This evaluation of the WES Programme has a forward-looking perspective so that the identified lessons from the past and present can contribute to an improvement of the Programme. The main objective of the evaluation is to suggest improvements in the planning and implementation of the WES Programme based upon analysis of the present Programme and earlier experiences from SWIP and WATSAN.

The evaluation was carried out as a participatory exercise, allowing optimal room for key actors at village, parish, sub-county, district and national level to express their views and ideas on the WES Programme. The evaluation was structured around general issues, institutional and process issues, and sustainability of the facilities.

The WES Programme is becoming a mainstream Programme providing a national framework for water supply, environmental sanitation, hygiene and cross-cutting issues such as community involvement and gender as integrated components. The Programme aims to achieve sustainable water and sanitation services and hygiene behaviour. The developed institutional and organisational framework is being used by many other contributors (NGOs etc.) in this sector.

The WES Programme functions in a changing environment of decentralisation and privatisation which demands further development and continuous adjustment of procedures and operational guidelines. Capacity building at all levels on many Programme issues is needed and most effective if a continuous structured learning approach is followed.

The WES Programme is praised for its efforts to find a balance between creating an enabling environment, capacity building, supporting sector development, and also contributing to the construction of water supply and institutional sanitation provisions. Demand-driven and gender-responsive approaches are central elements but need much attention in development, capacity building and institutionalisation.

The SWIP and WATSAN projects created a good foundation with many positive experiences in community water supply and sanitation; some good lessons such as the

Letter of Understanding, explaining roles and responsibilities of various actors, were not transferred.

The three participating GoU ministries have varying degrees of involvement and feeling of ownership of the WES Programme, the cause being the unequal involvement in terms of resource allocation, facilitation and decision making. The Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee (IMSC) should look into factors for improving the participation in the PMT. In several districts the three key departments do not constructively cooperate in the integrated projects. This needs attention by the PCU.

Fully integrated in the government structures, the WES actors at all levels must have clear roles and responsibilities to reduce overlaps, gaps and confusion which may hinder efficiency and effectiveness in the Programme. The Programme should address this issue and improve coordination and communication.

UNICEF keeps a tight control on direction, planning, budget and funds release. It is suggested to transfer this responsibility to the PMT and PCU after annual reviews and agreements.

The PCU does not function optimally, and so not efficiently and effectively. It is recommended to consider regionalisation of PCU staff through outposting to improve their crucial support and monitoring role to the districts. Delegation of activities and involvement of the private sector could be increased. The UNICEF WES team should work jointly and more closely with the PCU. Capacity building of PCU staff on management, planning and support approaches is needed.

The further decentralisation of control in implementation and funds to the sub-county is a promising development. This puts both the district and the sub-county staff in new positions regarding planning, management, accounting, communication and coordination, for which they need to acquire the necessary capacities.

At the district level, the WES Programme is reasonably well integrated in the district structures. To improve the departmental functions, much capacity building needs to be done, particularly in planning, budgeting, management and related issues as contracting, accountability, financial controls and monitoring. Training needs to be followed up by practical guidance in a learning structure. Inter-District meetings (IDMs) and the planned Inter-Sub-County meetings are good fora for exchange if well structured and with proper facilitation.

The WES Programme has taken the role of enabler seriously, and wants to put emphasis on the development of policies, guidelines, strategies, manuals, etc. But this is a continuous process and much is still to be done. Several sector donors conform and contribute to the enabling environment and the framework for an integrated project approach in community water supply and sanitation. The private sector is slowly gaining a place in the support of sector activities at several levels. The WES Programme plans to introduce this but is somehow behind projects such as RUWASA.

The demand-driven approach is seen as an appropriate approach to put people first, and is appreciated by people at sub-county and lower levels. The actual implementation still

needs a lot of attention. The role of the districts is weak. The planning process needs to be adjusted to cater for this approach.

Technology choice, site selection and other key decisions for both water and sanitation should be made by the female and male users on an informed basis. Extension workers should be re-oriented and guided in this process on demand driven approach and key decision making.

The water supply technologies are mostly imposed by the implementors using their own criteria for selection. This has to change in the context of the demand-driven approach, and communities should be given an informed choice of technologies. This will greatly contribute to increased sustainability.

The WES Programme is primarily seen as a capacity builder and enabler in an integrated project framework. As the target area of the WES Programme is some 80% of Uganda, the contribution to the physical WES improvements is thin on the ground. The focus on support for physical structures to districts with lower coverage is appreciated. The effective coverage increase from this contribution is not clear however, as the Community Based Management System (CBMS) is still weak.

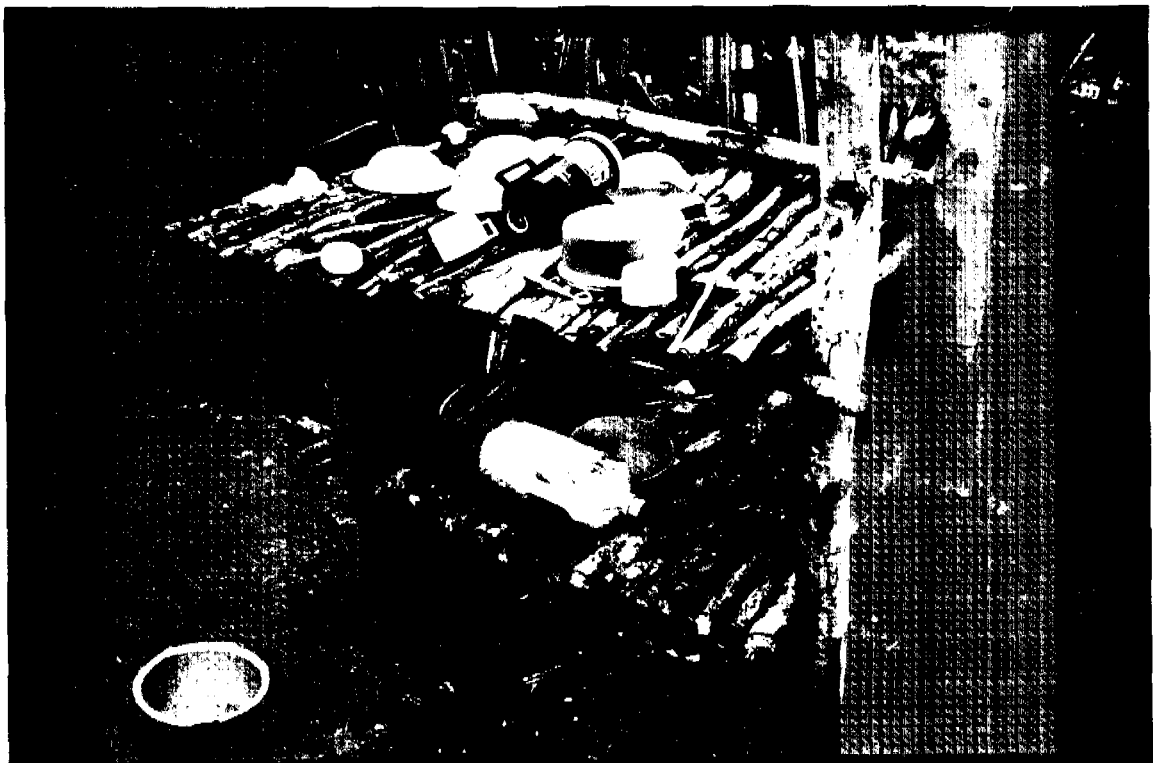
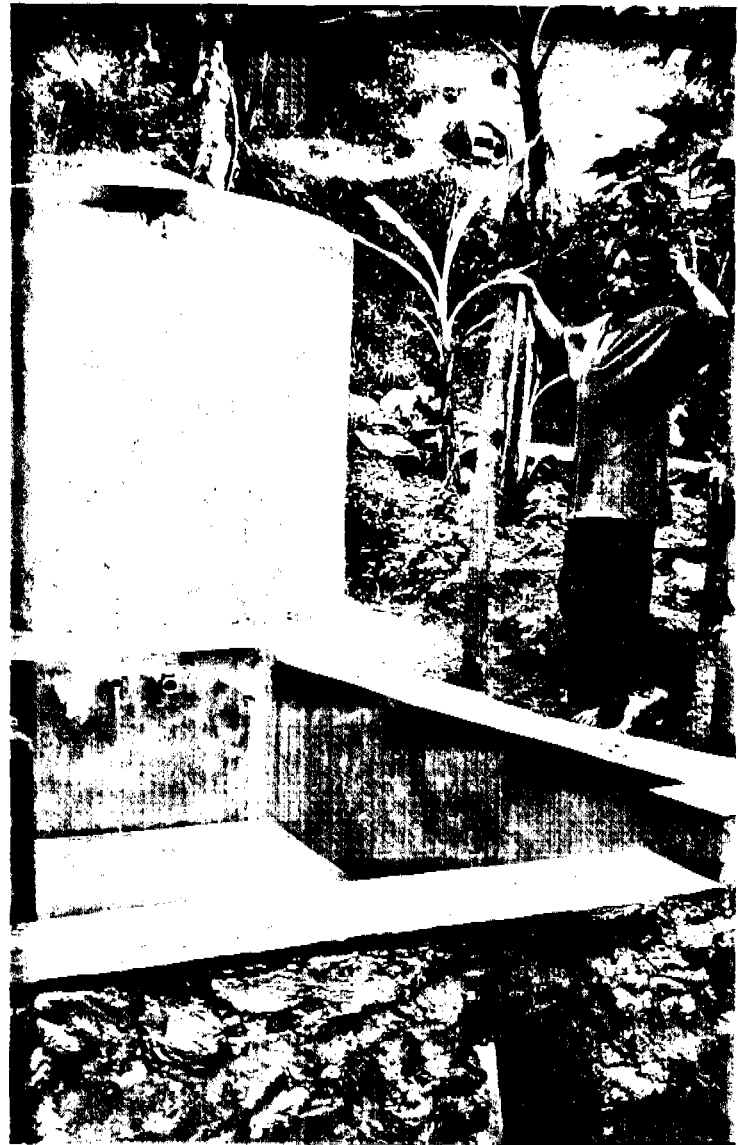
Many water systems are not functioning because of several problems related to the CBMS. Most of the elements of the CBMS of the water facilities, as seen in the districts visited, are weak. A good CBMS is the foundation for sustainability and therefore deserves the highest priority.

Sanitation experiences a low demand, although attention has increased due to the cholera outbreak. Households should, as for water supply, be offered a choice of sanitation technologies with an indication of the pros and cons.

The greatest need is to have sanitation and hygiene successfully and jointly promoted. Only a substantial project effort on sanitation and hygiene will be effective to improve these behaviour-related areas. Advocacy and promotion using communication through various channels and change agents is seen as the most promising approach. The attention for institutional sanitation is a positive development.

The WES Programme should investigate how to link to the National Accelerated Sanitation Improvement Programme (NASIP), an initiative from the National Sanitation Forum (October 1997). The resolutions from this Forum (Kampala Declaration on Sanitation) are excellent.





### **3. Major conclusions and recommendations**

The major findings, conclusions and recommendations are grouped as general and according to the chapters on institutional issues, processes in the WES Programme, and the sustainability of facilities. This chapter is meant to give an overview but reference is to be made to the respective chapters to get more details on the background of the conclusions and recommendations. All recommendations are put together in Volume 2, Appendix 5.

#### **3.1 General**

1. The WES Programme is becoming a mainstream programme providing a national framework for water supply, environmental sanitation, hygiene and cross-cutting issues such as community involvement and gender as integrated components to achieve sustainable water and sanitation services and hygiene behaviour. The developed institutional and organisational framework is being used by many other contributors (NGOs etc.) in this sector.
2. The WES Programme, a programme in the 1995 - 2000 GoU - UNICEF Country Programme, is supported by UNICEF, the GoU, districts, sub-counties and communities. It functions in a changing environment of decentralisation and privatisation where many procedures, strategies and guidelines still have to be developed and continuously adjusted before procedures and operational guidelines can be consolidated. The Programme should address the development of procedures and guidelines more thoroughly as a learning process which is an interesting but difficult activity where the minds of all actors must be directed to clear goals. The context of the WES Programme in Uganda also defines limitation such as low remuneration for civil servants and limited resources such as funds and transportation.
3. The WES Programme is praised for its efforts to find a balance between creating an enabling environment, capacity building, supporting the sector development, and also contributing to the construction of water supply and institutional sanitation provisions. Demand-driven and gender-responsive approaches are meant to be central elements in the WES Programme approach to achieving community commitment and sustainable institutions and WES facilities. There is still a lot to be done on the development, capacity building and institutionalisation of these demand-driven and gender responsive approaches.
4. The pre-WES projects, SWIP and WATSAN, created a good foundation with many experiences in rural water supply and sanitation. Many good lessons were incorporated in the WES Programme although some good ones such as the need for adequate support, were not fully taken over. The use of the Letter of Understanding, explaining roles and responsibilities of various actors, was suspended. District WES teams have made good comparisons between SWIP/WATSAN and WES and have indicated positive lessons and room for improvement in the WES Programme.

### **3.2 Institutional issues**

1. The WES Programme is rooted in the three participating GoU ministries; integration of the different departments involved in WES is also found at district and sub-county level. The degree of involvement and the feeling of ownership of the WES Programme varies significantly. At the root of this problem lies the feeling of some ministries and departments that they are not equally involved in the WES Programme in terms of resource allocation, facilitation and decision making. The Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee (IMSC), being a strong body in its own functioning, should look into the factors causing the imbalance of participation in the PMT.
2. Clarification of the roles and responsibilities of many of the key actors in the WES Programme is needed; these include the PCU and UNICEF WES Team, Local Committee (LC) 5 council, district departments and committees, extension staff, S/C committees, Parish Development Committee (PDC), LC1, Water Users Committee (WUC) and caretaker. This will reduce overlaps, gaps and confusion which may hinder efficiency and effectiveness in the Programme.
3. There is a general lack of coordination and communication among and within all levels. Improvement in coordinated planning and implementation, also with other GoU-UNICEF Programmes and water and sanitation sector-related projects, could increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the WES Programme.
4. The link to UNICEF is obvious, they being the funder. Their tight control seems somehow paternalistic. It is suggested to have annual review and planning cycles on the basis of which budget allocations are made to the PCU, which releases the funds to the districts and sub-counties for all their activities twice a year. Strict national and district control mechanisms must minimise the misuse of funds.
5. The PCU is the engine unit of the Programme, but it does not function optimally. The PCU must become more efficient and effective. It is recommended to consider regionalisation of PCU staff through outposting for a limited number of years, which would improve effectiveness in their crucial support and monitoring role to the districts. Delegation to relevant departments in participating ministries and involvement of the private sector should be made a routine. Monitoring as a management tool for the PCU, but very much also for other levels, needs to be developed. The UNICEF WES team should work jointly with the PCU on a daily basis and with the same agenda; this can best (most efficient) be achieved if most UNICEF WES staff is located closer to or on the premises of PCU.
6. If the WES Programme is indeed an umbrella programme on water and environmental sanitation, then other integrated water and sanitation projects such as the EU-funded GFS, RUWASA etc. could be coordinated under that umbrella. The envisaged Planning and Coordination Unit in DWD could play a role in this. Different organisation and management options should be studied for WES at the central level, as well as the strengths and weaknesses in functioning among the frame of three to four participating ministries. Capacity building of PCU staff in

management, planning and support approaches is needed.

7. The further decentralisation of control of implementation and funds to the sub-county is a promising move. This puts both the district and the sub-county staff in new functions such as communication and coordination, for which they not really have the required capacities yet. So, more capacity building is needed and also here, after basic training, much action-learning using their own experiences is needed. Clear agreements on roles and responsibilities (LoU) between different actors are needed. Utilising existing institutions and developing their capacities creates the basis for long-term institutional sustainability.
8. At the district level, the WES Programme is reasonably well integrated in the district structures. There is enthusiasm but also demotivation because the decentralisation policies removed many of their resources, and WES is not a programme with many resources. To improve their functions, much capacity building needs to be done, particularly in planning, budgeting, management and related issues as contracting, accountability, financial controls and monitoring. New effective approaches in capacity building need to be introduced at this level. Training courses, such the IRC/NETWAS course, need to be followed up by practical guidance in a learning context. Other good methodologies, such as the IDMs and the planned Inter-Sub-County meetings, are in principal good but need better structuring and facilitation leading to higher effectiveness.
9. One sensitive area for district WES staff is the facilitation, i.e. allowances and logistical support. The sustainability of this type of support must always be considered. Nevertheless, appropriate logistical support should be provided on a cost-sharing basis to both district and sub-county levels.
10. Institutionally, the focus of the WES Programme is moving from the district to the sub-county, while the real focus is at the community level, where the ultimate difference is made.
11. The WES Programme, particularly when seen as a mainstream programme, has take the role of enabler seriously, and wants to put emphasis on the development of policies, guidelines, strategies, manuals, etc. But this development is a continuous process and much is still to be done.

The enabling environment created in the integrated project approach to community water supply and sanitation are largely attributed to the WES Programme. This has been confirmed by several sector donors who apply the developed framework. The private sector is the next largest contributor in the support of sector activities. The WES Programme plans to introduce this but is somehow behind projects such as RUWASA

### **3.3 Process issues**

1. The demand-driven approach is seen as an appropriate approach for putting people first, and is appreciated by people at the sub-county and in the villages. The actual

implementation still needs a lot of attention. The responsiveness of the districts in particular is not yet as it should be. There is still insufficient knowledge and willingness at this district level to work according to the demand-driven approach. This unwillingness is probably caused by the fear of creating demands that cannot be met, and the lack of experience with and confidence in the approach.

2. There is an urgent need to remove these obstacles in thinking on the demand-driven approach, through re-orientation and training on how to implement it using action-learning methods building upon own experiences. Confidence in the demand-driven approach has to be built up gradually. In support of this, guidelines and manuals have to be developed and resources to be allocated to experimentation. Support has to be given to enable the institutions to introduce the demand-driven approach more effectively.
3. The demand-driven approach needs to be institutionalised at district, sub-county, parish and village level. Politicians may play a positive advocacy role but could also easily misuse the approach for short-term benefits. A clear and transparent procedure on the processing of and responding to demands should be developed to increase efficiency and accountability. This should include criteria for the honouring of demands, ensuring an equitable spread of resources. Good control mechanisms, accountability procedures and checks and balances should minimise misuse.
4. The demand-driven approach has a direct bearing on the planning process, which is then fully determined by demands at community level. This will change the planning process at district and national level drastically, and if the WES Programme is serious about the demand, this will imply that budget allocations are significantly determined by the communities.
5. Technology choice, site selection and other key decisions for both water and sanitation should be made by the female and male users on an informed basis. Extension workers should be re-oriented and guided to ensure this participatory and gender-responsive process.

### **3.4 Sustainability of WES facilities**

1. Although the WES Programme is primarily seen as a capacity builder and enabler in an integrated project framework, it continued to allocate a substantial percentage (1998: 53%) to the improvement of water conditions in the villages and sanitation in schools. As the target area of WES is some 80% of Uganda, this contribution for physical improvement is thin per district. For 1998, allocation of funds for water supply improvement support will be concentrated on certain districts with low coverage. The effective coverage increase from this contribution is not clear, as the CBMS is still weak.
2. The demand for water is high in all districts visited. The technologies preferred are principally sound but some more flexibility could be practised for special areas, allowing, for instance, support for home-based rainwater harvesting in semi-arid areas.

3. The water supply technologies are mostly imposed by the implementors using their own biased criteria for selection. The WES Programme should, also in the context of the demand-driven approach, leave the final decision on technology to the communities after having informed them on potential technologies and service levels and the implications of these in terms of O&M costs, management structures, etc. This will greatly contribute to increased sustainability.
4. Many water systems do not function because of several problems related to the CBMS. Most of the elements of the CBMS of the water facilities, as seen in the districts visited, are usually weak. This applies to the management structure, which may be at the (often dormant) WUC or at the LC1 or LC3. It also applies to the presence/absence, the role and functioning of the caretaker and the HPM. It is related to the common absence of preventive maintenance. Spare parts depots and hardware shops do not have the spare parts. Funds are only collected from users when the system breaks down. Accountability and communication to the users is weak. All these facts contribute to the low level of sustainability of the water supply facilities. The WES Programme urgently needs to address the CBMS very thoroughly. It is doubtful whether the districts and sub-counties take the CBMS seriously, and understand the issue of sustainability sufficiently. The Programme has to initiate several actions such as advocacy on sustainability and CBMS, (refresher-) training, private sector stimulation and support, and a structure of regular support visits to the WUCs by the districts and extension workers. A good CBMS is the foundation for sustainability and therefore deserves highest priority.
5. Sanitation experiences a low demand, although attention increased due to the cholera outbreak. The sanitation technologies provided (predominantly the simple pit latrine) are appropriate although some problems occur due to specific soil conditions for which solutions should be sought. The sanplat has become the standard. This technology should be seen as a step in the gradual upgrading of rural sanitation and be placed between the simple pit with logs and mud floor, and the cement slab. Households should, as for water supply, be offered a choice of sanitation technology with an indication of the pros and cons.
6. The greatest need is to have sanitation and hygiene successfully and jointly promoted. In some districts the latrine coverage is low and/or the conditions of the latrines are poor. Only a substantial project effort on sanitation and hygiene will be effective to improve these behaviour-related areas. Advocacy and promotion using various communication channels and change agents is seen as the most promising approach.
7. The WES Programme should investigate how to further contribute to NASIP operations (apart from what is already in the 1998 Programme Plan of Action, PPA), an initiative from the National Sanitation Forum (October 1997). The resolutions from this Forum (Kampala Declaration on Sanitation) are excellent. The NASIP has to get started so as not to lose any more momentum; this has been lost somehow as the LC5 chairpersons, who signed the Declaration have not returned in their positions after the February elections.