

# National WASH Learning Forum 2009 - Summary Note

## The first Water, Sanitation and Hygiene National Learning Forum Kampala, Uganda, 12-13 Oct 2009

This learning forum brought some 50 professionals together from national and district level to learn about good practices and innovations in WASH. The presentations and discussions were structured around four themes: IWRM, O&M of rural water supply, household sanitation and WASH at schools. The forum created a good platform to share & learn and a ground for critical analysis on factors of the good practices.



Participants said that this Learning Forum has been very successful way to learn for change and be more effective in approaches, methodologies and technologies in WASH.

### Basic facts about the NLF-1

Sanitation and Water Alliance (SAWA) Uganda, a consortium of four organizations (NETWAS, UWASNET URWA and Water Aid-Uganda), together with the Ministry of Water and Environment organized the First Water, Sanitation and Hygiene National Learning Forum (NLF) in Uganda at Speke Resort Munyonyo on 12 and 13 October 2009. The IRC International Water and Sanitation Centre and SNV supported the organization of the NLF. The Danish Embassy, Austria Development Cooperation (ADC), Water Aid-Uganda and NETWAS Uganda (PSO program) funded the event.

### Background and methodology

The rationale behind the forum is to establish a national learning platform for Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) as one of the ways of bridging the gap between policy and practice. It is at the national learning forum that Government, NGOs, private sector, Development Partners and other stakeholders learn together. This would result in cost-effective improvements towards achieving sector targets. The objective of the NLF is to provide a sustainable national platform for sharing, analysing and learning from good local WASH experience and practices to stimulate follow-up activities/products and capacity building for scaling up.

For this first NLF 2009, four themes were identified:

- Localisation of IWRM principles,
- Operation and maintenance of rural water systems,
- Household sanitation and hygiene,
- WASH in Schools.

On average per theme five selected 'good-practice' cases were shared and analyzed by the participants for the factors and drivers behind this claimed success.

### Group analysis of the 'good practices'

A core team of three facilitators identified the five common major factors for success and challenges in the presented cases. These five major factors were then further analysed in so-called 'World Cafés'. The results of the five Cafés were summarised and shared in plenary. These results were the start for further plenary discussion to draw general conclusions and the way forward.

### 2.0 Localising IWRM



Localising IWRM is a complex theme. It requires that the national policies and strategies from the Directorate of Water Resources Management (DWRM) are brought to the local level in an understandable format, and that sustainable solutions are found for the local IWRM challenges. The cases of PROTOS, JESE ad Katosi Women Development Trust (KWDT) showed that there are some successes in making this linkage between the policy and practice, and in making these top-down components understandable for the local basin level. The NGOs' cases concentrated on accessing safe water (good quality) and create safe sanitation (non water polluting) facilities at two lakeshore sites, that is, Katosi Landing site and Lake George Shores.



The localisation included also provision of appropriate ecological sanitation facilities (appropriate in terms of cost, efficiency to exist in these soil conditions) as a solution to mitigate risks of water pollution, and rain water harvesting as a safe drinking water source.

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**2.1 Major factors of success** in localising IWRM discussed were (i) participatory approaches at community level; (ii) sustainability of water basin through collaborating with water users and polluters, (iii) having basin coordination through a multi-stakeholder steering (and learning) committee, (iv) collection and use of reliable data, conduct action-research and implement pilot projects. The main risk is that there are inadequate funds and capacities and skills.

## 2.2 Recommendations and way forward on local IWRM

- IWRM is relevant for all (all people, sectors) involvement and participation of all is important. Learning and creating awareness and the action taken will make IWRM sustainable.
- The DWSCC is a recognized platform but IWRM issues are never discussed. This platform should be empowered and encouraged to address IWRM.
- Develop monitoring indicators to gauge performance and progress on implementation of IWRM.
- Disseminate/share lessons learnt (common elements of IWRM) from the pilot projects to inform activities for all actors in implementation of IWRM.

## 3.0 Operation and maintenance of rural water systems

### 3.1 Approaches and methodologies based on presented cases

The starting point of the cases was the Community-based Management (CBM). In realising the CBM shortcomings, different solutions were presented focusing on the management of the water supply system and services. From the West Nile end of the country the response to O&M was the formation of a hand pump mechanics association. This association enabled the availability of spare parts and readiness of mechanics in responding with quality to the repair of the community hand pumps.



SNV West Nile Portfolio facilitated the process.

In the eastern part of the country (Amuria District) the efforts between the district local government and AMREF has yielded a collaborative method. The treasurers of Water User Committees formed an association and operate a joint bank account. To trigger the compliancy of the household members to contribute to the O&M cost of the water supply system, a loan scheme was introduced and the household only become eligible to access loan from the association if they pay the UGX 500 per household per month as water user fees.



Interestingly, this Treasurers' Association works closely with a hand pump mechanics' Association! The community development officer (of TSU3) provided the technical support

functions.

A success case on CBM in practice came from Mukono district. The Water User Committee (WUC) has been able to sustain its water source operational at Kabimbiri Trading Centre for the past 14 year. The success factors claimed are a committed WUC, which set and upheld byelaws addressing the source and system management. s has also been The key major factor in mitigating major breakdown of the services has been the compliancy of the users in paying the monthly water user fee.

Management Information Systems (MIS) proved to be a worthy while investing in ensuring regular monitoring and data update. WaterAid through Masindi District Local government has implemented this has led to two major lessons that MIS can be an effective advocacy & negotiating tool for equitable planning and resource allocation. The initiative also invested in training including hand pump mechanics. They play a key role in the regular update of the MIS and routine maintenance of the water sources. It is claimed that functionality has gone up substantially.

### 3.2 Major Drivers for success on O&M

Short-listed success factors are (i) effective local management structures, (ii) associations of hand pump mechanics and treasurers; (iii) MIS and other M&E systems; (iv) DWSCC and links to learning platforms; and (v) support to CBM by technical professionals, extension workers and local politicians.

### 3.3 Recommendations and success on O&M

- Communities should be able to access and use data collected through the MIS
- Water users committees link to AHPM for better airing of views
- Move towards formation of professional associations such as AHPMs, Association of treasures etc.
- Use existing platforms to share findings/learning (e.g. DWO annual meeting) to improve WaSH service delivery
- Disseminate documentation of good practices on AHPMs



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## 4.0 Household sanitation

### 4.1 Household sanitation approaches and technologies

For household sanitation to be successful both households and extension staff need to make more efforts. In the NLF-09, some good practices were presented. The centred around community groups on sanitation, commercial marketing and EcoSan. These are claimed to be promising or proven approaches to ring significant change on sanitation coverage and hygiene behaviours.

Sanitation coverage in Opalangor Village (Amuria) was at 0%; a challenging situation for an NGO. Wera Development Association (WEDA) used PHAST training in clusters/groups of some seven households. Training in the groups and community, did raise the sanitation coverage to 100% within a period of less than one year. Opalangor Village was declared an open defecation free community. It maintained that ODF status by enforcing byelaws that penalises and empowers community members to police each other.



Community health clubs (CHC) can play a key role in the promotion of household sanitation in communities. Masiyompo

Elgon Movement for Integral Development Uganda in Sironko District helped CHCs to substantially improve the water, sanitation and hygiene conditions. It was a combined effort of local political leadership coupled with training of CHCs. Even in Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) camps CHCs made a difference and showed effectiveness. In Pader, the NGO HIDO managed to improve awareness and hygiene behaviours among IDPs, to empower them in economic and social terms. Belonging and involvement in a cohesive group was a key contributor to success of the community health clubs. Music, dance and drama competitions helped CHCs to innovate and disseminate the sanitation and hygiene messages.

**Selling a Latrine** seems a skill. The Health Improvement Project identified sanitation marketing as a key component for effectiveness. Research showed that lack of resources hindered people investing in a sanitation facility. Instead of one uniform design, a range of options is needed to



address varying terrain and soil conditions. The project's answer was a marketing approach offering various design meeting the

contextual challenges. The mason becomes responsible for the entire building including the pit. The common problem of pit collapsing from wrong pit digging got solved.

The Ecological Sanitation (EcoSan) technology is an innovative latrine option. It enables beneficiaries to sustainably and safely utilise human excreta to increase agricultural production. EcoSan has many variations. The most common are urine diversion and composting latrines. The cost-effectiveness of these technologies requires careful consideration.

DED promoted EcoSan in Arua municipality. Initially the demonstration EcoSan latrine would be built in a household but politicians insisted on having it at the divisional headquarters, to reach out to a wider audience. Having that done, the latrine at the divisional HQs was not used, and people who came complained that this was a very expensive option (UGX 4M), not really replicable at household level. DED responded by optimisation the cost by using various locally available materials for the slab and the superstructure.

JESE also came up with cheaper models of urine diversion latrines. They claim that the cheaper designs cost now between UGX 200,000 and 800,000; at least for some households more affordable than before.

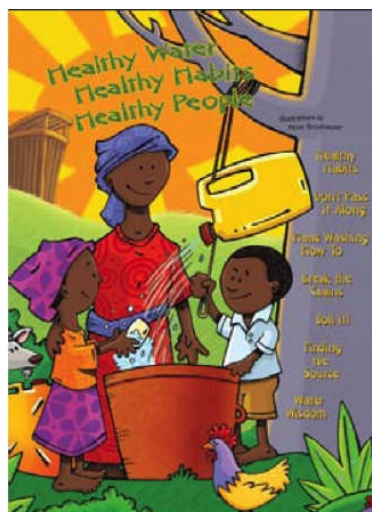
#### What works well in household sanitation or the

**common success factors:** (i) PHAST and Community Health Clubs (CHC) approaches; (ii) Marketing of Sanitation (Sanitation as a Business); (iii) Sub-County politicians and extension staff involvement; (iv) Affordable Technologies – Ecosan etc.; and (v) Local learning platforms for sharing experiences.

#### Recommendations and way forward

1. Link product marketing and social marketing
2. Assess conditions and offer appropriate technology options
3. Document effective practices and disseminate these
4. A revolving fund methodology to ensure access
5. Guidelines on ecological sanitation to apply strategy

### 4.2 Innovations in approaches to WASH@Schools



The NLF-09 showed interesting and innovative cases to improve WASH@school. The 'good' practices ranged from teaching aids to child-friendly facilities including girls' urinals. UNICEF gave good lessons learned and pointers to improve this sector.

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The Water Education for Teachers project (WET) developed creative materials on WASH for schools. Primary education is a good entry point for knowledge on mismanagement of water resources, water supply, and sanitation and hygiene practices. By playing different games, pupils can learn the important concepts. That knowledge seems to have changed their behaviours with an outreach to their homes. Hand washing at school and demanding soap is claimed to be one of the results.

Also JESE emphasised children participation in sanitation and hygiene implementation in schools. The children were involved in the establishment of school sanitation facilities. PHAST training was main methodology used. Pupils developed nice visual aids on WASH for their schools. Again the appreciation of the WASH messages seems to have changed pupils' practices and behaviours at school (and possibly at home).



Technological innovations appear to be needed to have more child-friendly and cost-effective facilities. The girls' urinals introduced at

several primary schools is such an innovative case. The technology showed to reduce congestion and struggling to get access to the toilet facilities during the school rush hours. Particularly the youngest girls seem to be the victims of that situation. School urinals will reduce the number of latrines required; it is claimed that most pupils only go for 'short-calls' during school time. CIDI claims that the cost of a urinal block for five small girls



attached to a latrine cost UGX 800,000 only. The innovation triggered varied reactions from the participants such as design specification, privacy, safety of the urinals, and

that the law may not allow girls' urinals!

Joy drilling presented another child friendly technology. The technology is an integrated water pump and toilet system that is facilitated by children playing on a "Mary Go-Round". The complete system component include, a complete hand pump, underground tank, Mary-Go-Round System and toilet system with a water tank. It is claimed that this technology ensures availability of water and access to safe sanitation facilities in the schools. However, operation and maintenance may be critical for sustainability.



UNICEF has supported the government to implement WASH in schools in Uganda. Based on its wide experience in WASH@school, UNICEF gave an overview of critical omissions and challenges. Sanitation and hand washing facilities need to go along with hygiene promotion; disposal sites for sanitary towels are needed; facilities need better O&M and reliable water supply; do not forget latrines for the teachers!

## NLF Recommendations on WASH@chools

1. Integration of Hygiene and Sanitation messages in textbooks.
2. Equity and inclusion in WASH @school.
3. Document and share good practices on School Health Clubs, games and songs
4. Improve coordination between line ministries for WASH@school.

## NLF-2009- Key Lessons

The WASH sector has many good practices and innovations not documented and/or shared

More policy makers need to join the national learning forum to incorporate good practices in policy.

Some innovative need to be backed by research; therefore invite research institutions



Overall, the participants said that this first National WASH Learning Forum was a success. Mr. Sam Mutono closed it by saying, we have done something very innovative in Uganda. Others will

follow this learning initiative. To be continued!

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