Supporting Water Sanitation and Hygiene services for life
What is IRC?

IRC—International Water and Sanitation Centre is an international think-and-do tank that works with governments, NGOs, entrepreneurs and people around the world to find long-term solutions to the global crisis in water, sanitation and hygiene services. At the heart of IRC's mission is the aim to move from short-term interventions to sustainable water, sanitation and hygiene services.

With over 45 years of experience, IRC is operational in Africa, Asia and Latin America and has since 2006 implemented a diverse portfolio of projects and activities in Uganda, mainly in West Nile, Rwenzori region, Northern Uganda and at national level with the Ministry of Water and Environment and other key WASH stakeholders. Focus in Uganda has been on:

1. Strengthening national and district-level learning processes
2. Action research and learning on sanitation, monitoring sanitation and promoting effective WASH in schools including Menstrual Hygiene Management
3. Piloting and testing new ways of working for the delivery of sustainable rural water services in Uganda.
4. Good governance including accountability and transparency in WASH

Our Vision

IRC’s Vision in Uganda and in all the countries where we work is a world where all people enjoy their human rights to clean, safe, accessible and sustainable water, sanitation and hygiene services that they use and can afford
Our Mission

We believe that clean and safe water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services should be accessible not just for the few or for a limited time, but for everyone, forever. We know that achieving WASH services that last will not be easy, or quick, but will require all stakeholders to work together towards a common vision and be willing to learn about what works and what does not work. We believe that government leadership is essential to reaching this goal, and that sector donors, international and national NGOs as well as political leaders and other stakeholders in the WASH sector in Uganda, must also embrace change.

IRC’s values and principles

- We believe in human rights: access to safe, sustainable water, sanitation and hygiene is a human right for everyone, not a privilege. We are committed to supporting those who are poor and excluded from basic services to enjoy that right.

- We listen, learn and share: we do not have all the answers and we are open to new ideas and different ways of thinking. Our partnerships – with donors, governments, sector specialists, NGOs and communities – are based on listening, learning and sharing; openness and respect; consensus and agreements; and mutual ownership of solutions.

- We work with integrity, honesty and transparency: we do not shy away from the truth; we are open and honest with ourselves, and the people we work with. We stand up for greater transparency in sharing knowledge and information.

- We believe in local autonomy and accountability: decisions need to be taken as close as possible to those they will affect. Those with community or regional
responsibilities must have the freedom and means to take action, and also be held accountable.

- We are **professional in purpose and in action**: we see ourselves as a professional body, both in supporting and developing our sector and in our own drive for excellence.

- We **live and work by these values and principles**, and encourage our partners in communities, governments and NGOs to do the same.

IRC’s specific objectives

- Uncovering the challenges of maintaining WASH services in the communities that need them most.

- Supporting those who plan and provide WASH services to adapt and change the way they think and work; creating learning communities that go on to develop credible, affordable and long-term services.

- Putting ideas and knowledge into practice through innovative action research that helps actors make better use of money and time and increases their awareness of what is needed.

- Advocating and sharing expertise, experience and insights with all those who can make change happen.

- Influencing policies and practices that affect people whose lives and futures are threatened by unsafe water, sanitation and hygiene.

Our approach

We are driven by a desire to see fundamental, long term change that creates a strong, nationally led sector with the capacity to learn, adapt and evolve independently to meet the challenges of permanent service delivery far into the future.
This means taking risks and supporting innovation to improve all phases of the WASH service delivery cycle.

We believe that this change requires a continual, iterative process of researching potential solutions, implementing the best ideas, documenting the outcomes, learning from the results and sharing of knowledge. It also requires engaging with stakeholders at every level from the local to regional and national, and linking local action research and reflection to broader policy dialogue. We know we cannot achieve this alone: we therefore work in partnership with national ministries, local governments, other NGOs, academia, private sector and development partners.

Our services
We focus our expertise on supporting change and provide a range of services and tools geared towards better, safer and more reliable WASH delivery:

- **Action research and learning**: we analyse problems and test new approaches such as asset management, life-cycle assessment approaches, post-construction support, coordination and good governance.

- **Capacity building**: we provide both hands-on support and formal training to build permanent capacity at different institutional levels and with different target groups.

- **Knowledge management**: we take the outputs of our own and others’ learning and communicate the findings in accessible ways to promote change.

- **Innovation and change processes**: we support and facilitate communication and planning to bring about long-term change and strengthen accountability mechanisms.
Our future role
As well as build on the successes of our recent programmes, including Sustainable Services at Scale (Triple-S), we will focus on the most critical challenges facing the WASH sector in Uganda today:

- **Financing**: we are addressing the financing gap to support service delivery by better understanding fiscal flows and decentralisation and finding ways to unlock new capital sources for extending access and maintaining services.

- **Service delivery**: we will continue our core work on service delivery approaches to water, while exploring how the lessons can be applied to sanitation services in small towns and rural growth centres.

- **Monitoring and accountability**: we are refining ways to monitor the functionality and sustainability of service delivery and to improve regulatory functions so that local operators and local authorities more accountable to consumers.
IRC manifesto

At IRC we believe that turning on a working tap should not be a surprise or cause for celebration.

We believe in a world where water, sanitation and hygiene services are fundamental utilities that everyone is able to take for granted; for good.

We face a complex challenge. Every year thousands of projects within and beyond the WASH sector fail – the result of short term targets and interventions at the cost of long term service solutions.

This leaves around a third of the world’s poorest people without access to the most basic of human rights and leads directly to economic, social and health problems on a global scale.

IRC exists to continually challenge and shape the established practices of the WASH sector. Through collaboration and the active application of our expertise we work with governments, service providers and international organisations to deliver systems that are truly built to last.
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