

Performance Improvement through Learning in Sanitation

District- and Sub-county-based learning and action research for increased performance, innovation and change in rural household and school sanitation & hygiene

The project context

Post-Humanitarian development

After more than 20 years of insurgencies, North Uganda is going through a transition phase from strongly-externally supported humanitarian aid to peace and sustainable development. Three to four out of five Internally Displaced People (IDPs) have left the camps and are now either in transition camps or in villages. At the same time many humanitarian NGOs and UN agencies have left Northern Uganda or have substantially reduced their programmes.

Returnees and their living environment

The returnees are faced with many challenges to develop their livelihoods and get to grips with the routines of daily life. In fact, most have to start from scratch: building shelters, cultivating the bare land, and possibly even facing insecurity. Education and health may be priorities only after a shelter has been built and food secured. Having been in camps for more than a generation, and fully dependent on food, housing, health and education assistance, may not have made people well equipped to fend for themselves. Helping them to take responsibility for their own family development and become less dependent on external aid needs a structured approach. Moving from dependency to actively taking initiatives is a great challenge.

Good hygiene and sanitation are key factors in staying healthy in order to promote high productivity, good learning conditions and keep doctors' and medicine bills low. Approaches and solutions for sanitation and hygiene that rural households and primary schools can afford and sustain do exist, but these need to be tested in real village situations. Tested approaches need to be shared with households, schools, and the private sector so they can be further applied and improved.

Local government, local NGOs & private sector

The district and lower local governments face many challenges in this changed context of new settlements and need/demand for central government support. New GoU and Development Partners' funding mechanisms have been established. These funds will definitely be insufficient to address all development demands adequately. Local NGOs face funding gaps as many humanitarian funders have left the region. The private sector is barely present in the rural areas because of low demand and profitability.

On the other hand, the new situation creates opportunities to look at the tasks differently from the perspective of governance, planning, implementation and roles and responsibilities. The situation in Northern Uganda marks a new era and is therefore an excellent learning ground. Implementation modalities, approaches and technologies with high cost-effectiveness and sustainability potential may be entirely different than elsewhere in Uganda where the situation has already been stable for a long time. District and sub-county stakeholders must analyse the present planning, financing and implementation modalities and search together for good practices that fit the contextual factors best.

What is PILS?

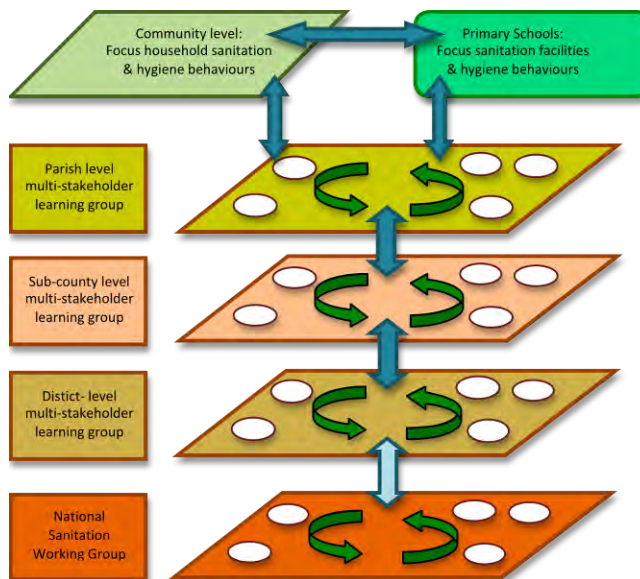
The PILS project is an initiative of IRC, NETWAS Uganda and Caritas Gulu. *PILS- Performance Improvement through Learning on Sanitation* is a two-year project that began in October 2009. PILS assists local government and NGOs to improve rural household and school sanitation and hygiene. The project will facilitate district- and sub-county-based learning and action research in three districts of North Uganda: Pader, Gulu and Kitgum. PILS is funded by the Austrian Development Agency and co-funded by the partners. The project budget is € 388k.



The overall aim of this project is to strengthen good governance on sanitation and hygiene. Increased efficiency and effectiveness in delivering a sustainable sanitation and hygiene service forms the core of this project. Local government, NGOs, the private sector, schools and households are the main players, and improvements can only be achieved with optimal coordination, harmonisation and collaboration between them. This is primarily the task of the District Water and Sanitation Coordinating Committee (DWSCC), the institution where this initiative is anchored.

Learning for better performance

Procedures, guidelines and standards set by government or organisations often define the way we work. Technical innovations and changes in our work procedures do not come about automatically. This project's starting point is that in order to make any improvement we have to learn: learn about how sanitation and hygiene promotion is currently done, about successes and failures, and how we can improve. The project is two-fold: it will put learning into practice through learning platforms and action research. This process will take place at district, sub-county and parish level, involving all key sanitation and hygiene stakeholders. The action research is at household and school level.



At district level, decision-making takes place within the District Water and Sanitation Coordinating Committee (DWSCC), and they carry final responsibility for learning, coordination and harmonisation. However, the learning platforms will support this through structured reflection, analysis and a focus on learning.

Envisaged deliverables of PILS

- *District-based multi-stakeholder learning platforms* are functional and contribute to changes in perceptions and attitudes, increased effectiveness in coordination and harmonisation, more capacities and decision-making for improved performance;
- *DWSCCs have realistic performance targets*, innovative strategies and monitoring and accountability systems;
- *Stakeholders in selected sub-counties and villages take on their responsibilities*, use improved monitoring methods and tools, carry out action research, construct several sanitation and hygiene facilities at households, schools and sub county offices, have increased capacities on approaches and technologies including sanitation marketing, contribute to better S&H conditions in rural households and schools;
- *National stakeholders value district-based learning*, promote it and share experiences and information products with other partners and regions, contribute to the discussion on reformulation of strategies, approaches and guidelines, and share findings globally.



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