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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Driving the change together: transforming local WASH systems in Kabarole district

Fort Portal, Kabarole, Uganda (**02 December 2021**): Kabarole District and IRC Uganda today wrap up a successful [Sustainable WASH Systems \(SWS\)](#) learning partnership, a collaborative project that has harnessed decentralised systems and structures to strengthen rural water supply and small-town sanitation services.

Funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) [SWS Learning Partnership](#), IRC facilitated the Kabarole District WASH Task Team (DWTT) to adopt the learning alliance approach and transform into a platform for reflection, experiential learning and sharing, action research, planning, and monitoring, as well as advocacy and influencing for policies that promote Kabarole's goal of universal access by 2030.

“The learning alliance approach broadened our space and capacity to coordinate every stakeholder – whether individual or institution – to contribute to the vision: it is like building the kingdom of God with each one of us bringing a different but critical brick to the construction site,” Richard Rwabuhinga, LC5 Chairman Kabarole DLG and member of the DWTT.

The DWTT membership comprises of political leaders and technical officers of the local government as well as private sector, civil society, religious institutions, and the media. Over the past five years, the DWTT has thrived as the bridge that connects service users to the providers, grassroots associations to sub-national agencies, and private entrepreneurs to policy makers, towards achieving Kabarole's shared WASH agenda.

Milestones along the journey

The first major undertaking of the DWTT was to steer the development of the [Kabarole District WASH master plan 2018 - 2030](#): a blueprint of what needs to be done by when, how much it will cost to deliver safe and full water, sanitation, and hygiene services to all the people of Kabarole.

“We are keeping track of the targets and influencing for budget allocation to least served populations. As the Chairman of the WASH task team as well as Secretary for Works and Technical Services, I provide background information during the committee of council seating to

ensure that we incorporate the proposals and targets of the WASH master plan,” Aaron Byakutaaga, Chairman DWTT.

There is now more deliberate connection between the demand and supply loops of WASH services in the district. On the demand side, communities through their water user committees have acquired skills to collect and save money for operations and maintenance. On the supply side, hand pump mechanics have benefited from the learning opportunities and capacity strengthening organised by the DWTT.

“They [DWTT] do not just tell us what to do, but they show us what is working elsewhere, and support us to replicate. They took us on a peer learning visit to Kamuli district. Today, KAHASA is the go-to service provider in the community for operations and maintenance for pay-as-you-fetch water points,” Stephen Balyebuga, Publicity Secretary, Kabarole Handpump Mechanics Association (KAHASA).

Looking ahead

The project period may be over but learning and transformation continues. The DWTT envisages itself as a forum that will continue to coordinate stakeholders, influence policy and mobilise resources to drive safe water supply and sustainable sanitation in Kabarole.

“At IRC, we know from experience and evidence that no single person or entity can create lasting solutions for the immense WASH challenges. We applaud the Kabarole DWTT for driving a shared vision and providing a befitting platform for advocacy and influencing not only for universal access, but for safe, sustainable water and sanitation services that last. It is a living example that learning alliances work and should be replicated in all the districts of Uganda,” Jane Nabunnya Mulumba, Country Director IRC Uganda.

Editor’s notes

About IRC

IRC is an international think-and-do tank that works in strategic partnership with decentralised and national governments, NGOs, businesses and people around the world to find long-term solutions to the global crisis in water, sanitation and hygiene services.

Operating in Uganda since 2006, IRC has implemented a diverse portfolio of projects and activities mainly in the Rwenzori region, and particularly partnering with Kabarole and Bunyangabu District Local Governments to ensure lasting WASH systems and services.

For more information about our work in Uganda visit our webpage on ircwash.org/uganda

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