

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL SIX (SDG6)

Ensure access to water and sanitation for all

Access to water, sanitation and hygiene is a human right, yet billions are still faced with daily challenges accessing even the most basic of services. According to UN Water, Around 1.8 billion people globally use a source of drinking water that is faecally contaminated. Some 2.4 billion people lack access to basic sanitation services, such as toilets or latrines. Water scarcity affects more than 40 per cent of the global population and is projected to rise. More than 80 per cent of wastewater resulting from human activities is discharged into rivers or sea without any treatment, leading to pollution.

Targets

- By 2030, achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all
- By 2030, achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations
- By 2030, improve water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimizing release of hazardous chemicals and materials, halving the proportion of untreated wastewater and substantially increasing recycling and safe reuse globally
- By 2030, substantially increase water-use efficiency across all sectors and ensure sustainable withdrawals and supply of freshwater to address water scarcity and substantially reduce the number of people suffering from water scarcity
- By 2030, implement integrated water resources management at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation as appropriate
- By 2020, protect and restore water-related ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes
- By 2030, expand international cooperation and capacity-building support to developing countries in water- and sanitation-related activities and programmes, including water harvesting, desalination, water efficiency, wastewater treatment, recycling and reuse technologies
- Support and strengthen the participation of local communities in improving water and sanitation management

The editorial and production process of this publication was managed by Lydia S. Mirembe and Brenda Achiro. All articles reproduced in this publication (with a few edits and additions to fit available space) were published in The New Vision and Daily Monitor.

EDITOR: Lydia S. Mirembe

REVIEWERS: Brenda Achiro

DESIGN AND LAYOUT: Lydia S. Mirembe

Foreword



By **Lydia Mirembe**
Communication and Knowledge
Management Advisor
IRC Uganda

Take a moment to think about a physically handicapped teenage girl - let's call her Mirembe. Her parents are farmers in rural Uganda, who spend most of the day tilling the fields. Because of her extreme physical handicaps, Mirembe cannot attend regular school. Today she is experiencing her monthly period and needs adequate, safe water and soap to keep clean.

The nearest source of safe water is one kilometre away - moreover it is a borehole which can only be used by able-bodied people. The only sanitation facility in Mirembe's reach is a community shared latrine, and to use it she has to crawl in, her bare hands touching the not-so-clean floor....

This may sound hyperbolic but it is a reality that plays out among the populations that do not have access to WASH services in Uganda. Lack of access to WASH services manifests in numerous ways and comes with innumerable negative health and economic effects.

For example the use of "flying toilets" among the urban poor who lack access to proper toilets; open defecation among the rural poor who have failed to construct latrines; filth and disease in areas where solid waste is not properly managed; numerous girls who abandon education for lack of menstrual hygiene management facilities in their schools; the villagers who risk their lives crossing a busy highway to fetch water from a scoop hole in the nearest valley;The list is endless!

With the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a framework for development interventions, the ideal is to attain universal access to WASH services by 2030 - leaving no one behind. Every citizen of the world must have access to safe and reliable WASH services.

Uganda has made great progress in improving access to safe WASH services over the last ten years. In rural water supply, access to safe water has increased from 64% in 2010 to 71% in 2017. Similarly in sanitation, access to an improved facility in rural areas has risen from 69% in 2010 to 86% in 2017. With over 30% of Ugandans without access to a safe water source, and another 30% without access to an improved sanitation facility, there is a lot more work to do.

Uganda's current population is estimated to be 42,946,833. This means that over 12 million people have no access to a safe water source, nor an improved sanitation facility. This is supposed to be a crisis!

The oft-told story of WASH highlights the successes that different sector actors have attained. Stories abound of approaches, innovations and interventions that changed the lives of entire villages and communities. In spite of the numerous innovations and interventions, 30% of the population is unserved - and their story untold.

To bring the plight of the unserved to the fore, the WASH Agenda for Change (WA4C) partnership worked with the mainstream media. Journalists were deployed to different districts to document the predicament of the unserved population. This compilation presents some of the stories that were published in the newspapers as part of the process of telling the untold story of WASH.

There are many more stories in different parts of the country and they all need to be told - if only to attract the necessary attention and action. The WA4C partnership will continue working through different communication and media platforms to uncover the untold WASH stories waiting to be told. ▣

Pay-as-you-fetch: the model to improve WASH services

The 'Water as a business' approach provides revenue to maintain water supply

This article was published in *The New Vision* on Tuesday September 26, 2017. The story was developed from the idea that the lack of access to water is a result of poor O&M. The introduction of pay-as-you-fetch is one of the steps to ensure better management of water sources. In Biguli where it has been piloted, what do residents say?

By Owen Wabagaza

"Don't go ahead of me, you will stir the water and make it dirty," Ayub Bakunda tells his younger brothers Ziad Bakunda and Anthony Baliruno.

Though Ziad listened to his younger brother and obliged, Baliruno did not, saying: "I want clean water, yet this one is stirred and dirty," Baliruno reasoned, as he waded further into the pond.

Stunned by what I was seeing, I moved closer to Baliruno and asked him what they use the water for.

"We use it for bathing, cooking, washing and drinking. We only boil it when we have time," Baliruno says. Ironically, just about 100 metres away from the pond is a non-functional borehole.

According to Baliruno, when the borehole broke down, residents resorted to fetching water from the pond because they did not have money to repair the borehole. This is Bulindo village, Mijwala subcounty, Sembabule district. This is not an isolated scenario.

Operation and maintenance of available water facilities remains one of the biggest challenges to the provision of safe water in Uganda

The functionality rate for Uganda stands at 88% for rural and 89% for urban areas.

According to the Uganda Bureau of Statistics, out of the estimated 109,000 rural water point sources in the country, 16,350 sources are not providing water as expected.

The Assistant Commissioner for rural water supply in the Ministry of Water and Environment, Eng. Christopher Tumusiime, says low functionality is caused by operation



Director of DWD, Aaron Kabirizi turns on a newly-installed tap at Biguli Trading Centre, April 2016 (File photo)

and maintenance failures. "Apart from leading to breakdown of sources, poor operation and maintenance contributes to contamination of water, hence, undermining the goal of improving the quality of life through the provision of safe and clean water," Tumusiime says.

Water as a business model

One of the reasons for the non-functionality of water point sources is that communities are often left to be passive recipients of water facilities.

Yet, it is important that they play a pivotal role in the planning and implementation of their own water programmes and, thus, facilitate the functionality of water sources.

It is for this reason that Water for People-Uganda, a water, sanitation and hygiene non-governmental organisation, introduced a different approach to support sustainable water systems.

"Water as a business" is a model through which Water for People is

encouraging private sector involvement in the water sector, with the aim of improving access to water services.

"The main focus of this model, currently being piloted in Biguli sub-county, Kamwenge district in western Uganda is to collect money for water on a pay-as-you-fetch basis and use part of the collected revenue for maintaining water systems and increasing the sustainability of the system," George Mugenyi, the manager for business development, at Water for People Uganda, says.

Mugenyi says they are using the model in reaction to Vision 2040, which calls for installation of piped water supply throughout the country and Sustainable Development Goal 6 (SDG6), which calls for universal access to water and sanitation. "Our aim is to see everyone access clean, safe water and this is one of the few ways through which we can achieve that," says Mugenyi.

Water for People has been piloting the model in Biguli, Sembabule district, since 2013.

How the model works

Mugenyi explains that after installing

the piped water facility, the organisation transfers management to the Directorate of Water Development, which subsequently gives authority to the District Council that later mandates the sub-county to run the system.

Prospective or interested entrepreneurs are then appointed to run the water facility after being interviewed.

A village committee is elected by the locals, with guidance from Water for People officials to supervise the water point sources. "Water prices are set after consultation with locals, with water going for sh100 per jerrycan at many water points. The purpose is to meet the maintenance costs of the water facility so that in case it breaks down, funds are readily available for repair," Mugenyi explains.

Affordability challenges

One of the complaints the model has been encountering is the water pricing, with some arguing that a jerrycan should cost at least sh20. Mugenyi, however, argues that the pricing is right if expenses are put into consideration.

"Sh100 for a 20-litre jerrycan is not too much. Besides, we set the price together with the community," Mugenyi says.

Mugenyi explains that the model faced resentment in its early stages, because people were used to free water, which, in many cases, is not sustainable.

"Wherever we install a water facility, we run a threemonth promotion, where we encourage individuals to have private water connections at just sh100,000," Mugenyi says. He adds in Biguli trading centre, where the first water facility was established, less than 50 people applied for private water connections.

However, the attitude has been changing over time and the latest facility at Bitojo Nyabubaale scheme has had over 200 families applying for private connections.

Simeon Komaho, the LC3 chairperson of Biguli subcounty, says prior to the intervention, a jerrycan of water would, sometimes, go for as much as sh1,000. Komaho explains that although sh100 for 20 litres of water may be a lot of money for some of the residents, it is fair.

"The problem is that we do not have electricity and the water pumps are running on diesel, which is expensive. We are, therefore, calling on the Government to connect Biguli to the national electricity grid to reduce the cost of water to less than sh50 per jerrycan," Komaho says. □

ADVERTISER SUPPLEMENT
WATER AS BUSINESS APPROACH PROVIDES REVENUE TO MAINTAIN WATER SUPPLY

Is pay-as-you-fetch sustainable?

By Owen Waigumba
 I moved closer to Kabiriro and asked him what you use for bathing, cooking, washing and drying. We only boil to wash clothes. We use hot water for bathing. We use hot water for cooking. We use hot water for washing. We use hot water for drying. We use hot water for...
 According to Kabiriro, when residents received a facility they did not have money to pay for the borehole. It is to be noted that the district council is not an industrial area. Operation and maintenance of the available water facilities remains one of the biggest challenges to the provision of safe water in Uganda.



Residents of Lira municipality queuing to collect water after the water supply system broke down. The water as business model is meant to make communities active in maintaining water points.

APART FROM LEADING TO BREAKDOWN OF WATER SOURCES, POOR OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE CONTRIBUTES TO THE CONTAMINATION OF WATER

Water as a business model is not the only solution. It is for this reason that Water for People in Uganda, a water and hygiene organization, has been advocating for a different approach to water supply. The organization's approach is based on the idea of water as a business. This means that the water supply system is run as a business, with the goal of providing clean, safe water to the community. The organization's approach is based on the idea of water as a business. This means that the water supply system is run as a business, with the goal of providing clean, safe water to the community.

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PREMIER SOLAR SYSTEMS (P) LTD
 Head office: Box 113 Kampala, Uganda Tel: +256 312 777222
 P.O. Box 24254 Kampala, Uganda Tel: +256 312 777222
 Email: premier@premier.com

SOLAR WATER PUMPING TECHNOLOGY AN INNOVATION TO IMPROVE LIVES

Motivated Solar Powered Technology

The Government of the Republic of Uganda requested the company to supply and install solar powered water pumps in various districts. The company has been successful in providing clean, safe water to the community.

Head Pump Technology

The pump is a new one, which will be used to pump water from the borehole into a overhead tank connected to a 4" pipe.

Water as a business model

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BELOW: A metered borehole in Kabarole district. To encourage people to pay for water, boreholes should also be metered. (Photo by Lydia Mirembe)



Disabled and neglected

This article was published in Sunday Vision on September 3rd, 2017. The journalist interacted with individuals who are impaired in different ways, living in the rural and urban areas of Kabarole district. What does it really mean for an impaired person to live without WASH services?

BY RONALD MUGABE

“When I have diarrhoea, it is best that I spend the days and nights nearer to the latrine so I can be able to quickly roll onto the pit to ease myself. Short of that, I would never make it to the latrine in time.”

Such is the story of Naome Sababu, a 30-year-old woman who has lived almost all her life with impairment in both her arms and legs. Her only mode of motion is by dragging herself by the buttocks. She suffered a measles attack when she was nine months old and has been paralyzed since.

When I arrived at her home which is approximately one mile up the Rwenzori Mountains, I found her seated by the veranda of her mud and wattle house; helplessly looking at her 7-year-old nephew, Benjamin Kato.

Kato too is paraplegic and was soundly resting in a pool of goat excreta. This sight of the helpless boy in such a dirty environment shocked me so much that I had to excuse myself from my guide for a while as I gathered the courage to return and probe how these two impaired residents of Kibagha-B, Nyakitokoli, Karangura sub-county, Burahya County, in Kabarole district are managing to get by in such deprivation.

Karangura is located about 16km from Fort Portal town, 10km off Bundibugyo road. The villages in Karangura sub-county are far-flung areas bordering and in the middle of the Rwenzori Mountains where families commute long distances of 2-3km in search of clean water.

After Kato's uncle (and my guide), Elikana Kahuzo quickly picked him up, I noticed a freshly wetted patch where Kato was lying; prompting me to ask whether it was his urine.

“Yes, that's his urine. Kato eases himself wherever he gets the urge

because he can't move himself to the latrine. He cannot speak so it is not even easy for him to call out for help when he wants to go to the latrine,” said Kahuzo.

Nathan Kahuzo, Kato's father says that the 7-year-old cannot help himself at all. He cannot walk or sit on his own due to a neurological impairment. The family was told he got

the problem as a result of a delayed delivery process which his twin sister was lucky to survive. She is now studying in primary one at a school down the mountain.

It is on young children like Kato's sister that Sababu relies to access water. “If the children are not around, I have to wait until they come back. Going to the latrine, I have to drag myself by the buttocks,” she says in a tone that hardly hides her pain.

The latrine she uses in used by about seven other members of the family including children who defecate and urinate around the pit. She is in most cases forced to put her hands in the faeces and urine so as to support herself as she eases herself.

But Kato and Sababu's anguish is just but a small representation of what several more persons living with disabilities (PWDs) around the country go through to access water and sanitation services. Many argue they have been left out and only cling by a thread of hope that the situation could change for them someday.

According to the 2014 Uganda Population and Housing Census report, 4,096,477 (12.5%) of persons had at least one form of disability.



This is a considerable number of people that cannot be ignored or left out in national social service programming.

14-year-old Lawrence Kagenda, a resident of a neighbouring village in Karangura says government has neglected people like him in various programmes including sanitation. When I met him, he was in a wheelchair, being pushed by his friends from school.

“I find it a challenge accessing water or the latrine in instances where there is no one to help me,” he laments. Asked how he moves to the latrine, Kagenda says he moves on his knees which in most cases gets them swollen and very painful.

The distance between his home and the nearest water source is about 200m and he says accessing the source on his wheelchair is troublesome. He survives on the mercy of fellow children.

At school (Kazingo SDA primary school), he uses teachers' latrines because they appear cleaner since they have a concrete slab.

Taking a look at the situation in urban centres, one would expect life to be a little better for the PWDs but living in such areas also comes with its challenges. For Happy Simburiregye, a PWD in Fort Portal town, parting with money to access a sanitation facility is something he has

vowed never to do.

He has been on the Fort Portal streets for about three years now, having moved from Bundibugyo. He says he faces a challenge accessing toilet services within the town because most of the facilities are built with steps (stairs) made of usually slippery tiles yet he cannot climb them without help. To make matters worse, he has to part with some money to access the toilets yet he hardly earns a shilling.

He has hence resorted to easing himself in polythene bags which he dumps in water channels.

“The truth is I don’t have money. But even when I have little, I would rather spend it on getting what to eat than pay for toilet access. I therefore find places where there are no people and ease myself or get a polythene bag.”

This seems to contrast the 2016 Uganda Water and Environment Sector Performance Report which indicates that in FY 2015/16, a total of 29 public toilets in 26 towns were constructed by the Water and Sanitation Development Facilities.

The toilets, according to the report have stances for both men and women, and each of the toilets has two stances for the PWDs, with one on the male side and the other on the female side. But maybe, Simburiregye’s town is not among the 26.

Area leaders speak out

Kahuzo Elikana, the chairperson LC3 of Karangura Sub County says that the area found in Burahya County, Kabarole district is a mountainous area and the natives get several challenges when it comes to water coverage. The area is not well serviced with safe water and most people use the nearby river Mpanga.

When they need water, people in this area have to go deep in the valleys to draw water. “You can imagine how challenging such a terrain can be for someone who is blind or has impaired limbs. I would like to request government and NGOs to consider this sub county at least to have enough safe water sources closer to the people and that PWDs be considered in making designs of water sources and sanitation facilities that can make life simpler for them,” he urges.

“What makes the situation worse is that when it rains, the valleys in which people fetch water are affected by mudslides which contaminate the water. It would be better if we were given gravity flow schemes or water harvesting tanks to enable bring water



TOP: A disabled woman comes to fetch water at a community source
 ABOVE: Naome Sababu drags herself to the latrine, which is shared by all members of her household. (Photos by Ronald Mugabe)

closer to the people in the mountains and in so doing, the PWDs will also be saved the long distances they cover to get water,” he adds.

When it comes to the latrine patterns, PWDs in this area have a huge challenge because the designs don’t cater for them. When you look at the example of Naome Sababu, you can really see that PWDs have a very big problem on their hands.

Joseph Baguma (totally blind) is the councilor of PWDs in Karangura sub-county and also serves as the chairperson of the blind in Kabarole district.

Baguma says, access to WASH facilities in the area is a huge problem for the PWDs. He says there are about 100 PWDs in Karangura sub-county alone with most of them physical impaired.

He says most of the PWDs he interacts with say they can’t fetch water for

themselves. “Some tell me that when they go to fetch water from a water source, the able bodied persons insult and sometimes assault them telling them to go away from the water source because they are not supposed to fetch water there. This is very demeaning,” he points out.

“When I want to fetch water from there, I have to get someone to go fetch it for me or guide me there. But not many blind people have such social support mechanisms. This leaves majority of the kind under the mercy of good-hearted people who might not be there every day,” Baguma adds.

On issues concerning latrine access, Baguma says the designs of latrines in the area do not at all put into consideration the needs of the PWDs.

“The minimum standard latrine that a PWD can use is one that has a ramp but in this area I have not been told of any. And that only caters for those with

arms but what then can a person with no arms do to hold onto the ramps?" he wonders.

What are sector players doing?

Stephen Birungi, working with Health through Water and Sanitation programme (HEWASA), an organisation under Fort Portal Catholic diocese says that in as far as equity and inclusion of PWDs in water and sanitation programming is concerned, more concentration has been put on the sanitation aspect than water.

"In sanitation, we design special stances for the disabled when we are constructing latrines at institution level like schools and health centres. In terms of water, though not much has been done, we are employing models aimed at bringing water closer to the people; including those with impairment. This has been made mainly through gravity flow water systems," he explains.

"With this system we use tap stands where even PWDs can be able to draw water since they are easier to open unlike boreholes that might need one to be very strong," he adds.

But disability being a very complex concept that includes those that have visual, hearing or neurological impairments and can't be able to move by themselves to the tap stands, Birungi reveals that a software component has been employed aimed at making sure that such people have support from the people they live with.

"The software component focuses majorly on sensitising the communities; specifically targeting PWDs and their relatives. This is aimed at making sure that they are able to give support to their persons with impairments," he elaborates.

"We have also come up with a consortium of partner organisations which will mainly focus on advocacy for community empowerment of marginalized categories and in this case PWDs are at the core. Many times, these have been overlooked especially in technology designs. Under this programme, we are trying to give them a voice such that they can be heard and the duty bearers come up with technologies that can take care of PWDs," Birungi adds.

Monica Komucunguzi, also working with HEWASA says several interventions in sanitation have been made to promote social inclusion. "We have a case in Bufunjo in Kyenjojo district, where a visually impaired man did not have a sanitation facility. He was using the bush to ease himself. We worked with community members



ABOVE: Young Kato cannot help himself to the latrine
BELOW: Some of the PWDs in Karangura sub county (Photos by Ronald Mugabe)



to construct for him a latrine and a handwashing facility."

"We have also employed a mechanism of creating stone pathways to the latrine so a blind person can find their way to the latrine even without a guide. Using their walking sticks, they are trained that if they identify where the stones are, they can slowly move along the stone path to get to the latrine by themselves," she explains.

Komucunguzi also states that in some other cases, ropes are used along the path to the latrine so such a person can hold onto that rope to guide them to the latrine.

"More so in places like Kyalusozi, there are albinos who for long have been marginalized by their communities. We make sure that when we are holding WASH meetings in the community, they participate and their views heard. This has made them feel part of the community," she states.

What should be done?

Councilor Baguma says that sensitization of PWDs and the rest of the communities should go on without end. Government and other

stakeholders should also sit and think beyond the box on inclusive designs of WASH facilities that can cater for most disabilities.

"The water should also be brought closer to homes where PWDs are identified to be living. This will improve accessibility," he says.

For places like Kirangira village, in Buyende district, simple technology has seen the construction of inclusive boreholes.

The boreholes have a ramp that allows disabled persons in wheel chairs to access them. In addition, there is a concrete base built purposely for them to sit as they pump water.

Mary Magoba 27, a PWD in Kirangira village says that on several occasions; before the borehole was constructed, she would sleep without showering if at all there was no Good Samaritan to fetch her water. But today she can afford to ride her wheel chair to the borehole and draw water.

From these experiences and many more that are left undocumented, living with any kind of disability poses a huge challenge in the search for WASH services. □

Piped water goes to Kamwenge

This article was published in The New Vision on Thursday, August 10, 2017. The journalist visited Biguli sub county, Kamwenge district, where residents are enjoying safe water supply from a piped water scheme built by Water for People. Residents recalled with sadness the bad old days when they fetched water from unsafe sources. What stories would we hear in 2031 if we attained SDG6?



Fresh splash from the Biguli piped water supply scheme constructed by Water for People (File photo)

BY GEORGE BITA

Alice Tushemereirwe gets out of her shop with two 20-litre jerrycans to collect water at Biguli Trading Centre in Kamwenge District. She moves to an adjacent public stand-pipe, pays up and the water taps are opened for her to fill her containers.

“I can get water at my convenience nowadays. There are no more long distances and the water is cleaner and safer, compared to what we used to share with frogs,” Tushemereirwe says.

Barely five years ago, fetching water meant dependency on unsafe wells located in the marshy stretches of Rwakasirabo swamp at the far end of the village.

According to Wilson Magezi, the Biguli village LC1 chairman, before they got piped water supply, local suppliers were selling water at almost sh1,000 per 20-litre jerrycan.

Simeon Komaho, the Biguli subcounty LC3 chairman, narrates that by then, waterborne diseases such as cholera were prevalent and children even drowned while fetching water. George Mugenyi from Water For People explains that by 2013, water coverage in the sub-county stood at about 21%.

“The miserable state of affairs led us to do a baseline survey after liaising with the Kamwenge district authorities. It involved tests on underground water for indicators of potential to drill,” Mugenyi discloses.

He narrates that the idea was to set up a piped water scheme in line with the Government’s Vision 2040 that recommends the installation of such

reliable water supplies.

“The people used to walk long distances to get water. Yet piped water could be brought to them,” he says. The piped water coverage is now estimated at 60%.

Current status

“Once a system is up and running, we transfer management to the Directorate of Water Development. This subsequently gives authority to the district council that mandates the sub-county to run the system,” Mugenyi explains.

Komaho says the piped water is a godsend for the 34,000 people occupying 40 villages in four parishes of Biguli sub-county.

“So far, four piped water schemes have been constructed, while another two are under construction.

Those still being worked on are Bitojo-Nyabubaale and Kabale-Keishungakabuye, he says. He identifies those already established and providing water to residents as Biguli, Kirinda, Malere and Rwebishengo.

Mugenyi explains that each water scheme has a diesel generator that pumps water into a gravitational flow tank, supplying a limited range of beneficiaries.

Obed Mwesigwa, who runs the Bitojo-Nyabubaale scheme, says the system

under construction has a potential of supplying 500 local connections.

“During the system’s set-up phase, consumers can apply under a promotional drive and get private connections for just sh100,000.

After the grace period, the amount is much higher,” Mwesigwa adds.

Justus Bahati, the chairman of Biguli Traders Association, who is contracted to run the local schemes, says big consumers, such as schools, have been linked via pre-paid water meters to curb the chronic non-payment of water bills. “We took the decision eight months ago, to put up such metres at Biguli Secondary School and at the washing bay.

The collections have since risen from 12% to 100%,” Bahati declares.

Annet Kobusinge, the Kamwenge District Water Officer, expresses satisfaction with work done by development partners in lessening the water stress in Biguli.

“Water For People did a commendable job. What makes it a tremendous achievement is that the piped water system will last forever,” Kobusinge says.

She also says the number of people suffering from waterborne diseases has significantly reduced in the area.



Challenges

Kobusinge says even if the water office prefers to go for piped water schemes, the costs involved are not affordable; a reason why most people in villages opt for point water sources.

“Unfortunately, the surrounding areas, such as Bihanga, with a high population, are yearning for similar interventions. However, because of limitations on the distance that can be supplied, they cannot benefit from the Biguli unit,” Kobusinge laments.

Mugenyi decries the use of diesel powered generators that are expensive to run, due to relatively high fuel costs. “If there was an option of changing the power supply to either hydro-electric or solar, then the pumping expenditure would go down. In that case, even the cost per 20-litre jerrycan could go down to sh50,” he reasons. □

also shared by all members of the community and it gets used up quickly.

“When our tank dries up, we face a big challenge where we are forced to send pupils to fetch water from long distances from shallow wells as early as 7.00am. Some pupils use it as chance to escape and go back home,” Apecho says.

Mr Aston Mabiho from Kahugi village, Harugongo sub county says Kahugi parish has two shallow wells that serve a population of over 500 people.

The area has many institutions like schools and health centers that require constant water supply in the area.

“The water we use in our domestic homes is not good and people move long distances between 2 to 3 kms looking for clean water,” Mabiho says.

Despite Uganda being a signatory to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) where SDG 6 is to ensure water and sanitation services for all, several villages in Uganda are still unserved.

There are several villages in Kiko Town council, Ruteete, Mugusu, Harugongo, Busoro, Hakibale, Kasenda and Kichwamba without improved water source.

Despite Kabarole and Bunyangabu districts being endowed with rivers and about 56 crater lakes, many residents are part of the 30 percent of the whole population in Uganda living without adequate water services. The current national coverage is at 70% percent.

In 2015, 6.6 billion people (over 90 per cent of the world’s population) used improved drinking water sources. In this case, people without access live predominantly in rural areas.

According to the Uganda National Service Delivery Survey 2015 report, inadequate safe water sources (47 percent) was the major constraint faced by households in accessing safe water, followed by long distance (34 percent).

According to the Water and Environment Sector Performance Report (2016), the sector target for access to improved water is to have 77 percent of people in rural areas within 1 km and 100 percent of people in urban areas within 0.2 km of an improved water source but this hasn’t been achieved so far.

Across the survey periods, the majority of households moved a distance of up to a half a kilometer, with percentages ranging from 63% to 69 % in the wet season compared to a range from 57 % to 60 percent during the dry season. .

The proportion of households who travel up to half a kilometre to a safe water source constituted the majority in the two survey periods for both rural and urban areas.

A higher proportion of the households in the urban (76 percent), compared to rural areas (55 percent), travelled a distance of up to 0.5 km distance to a safe water source for drinking water.

The same survey indicates that inadequate safe water sources were the major constraint faced by households, followed by long distance. The two constraints were more pronounced in rural compared to urban areas. □



Irumba Moses, the LC I chairman of Mpinga village tries to pump water from the bore-hole (Photo by Felix Basiime)



One of the shallow wells in Kiko village (Photo by Felix Basiime)



Ndabahwenje fetches water from an unsafe water source in Nyabubale village



Residents demand clean water as wells break down, remain unrepaired

This article was published in Daily Monitor on Thursday October 26th, 2017. The journalist highlights governance issues that hamper government's efforts to extend reliable and sustainable water services to the population. It brings to the fore the argument that perhaps the WASH challenge is not so much about the availability of financial resources as it is the management available resources.

BY FELIX BASIIME AND ALEX ASHABA

Annette Nsugwa, 51, lives in Kagusu village, Karambi Sub County in Kabarole district. For domestic consumption, she uses dirty water that she fetches from a well over a kilometer away. The shallow well in her village, set up by government three years ago broke down.

She says government built only two shallow wells in 2010 in their village to serve the entire village but later one became non-functional and has never

been repaired.

Nsugwa says since 2013, they have been fetching water from wells in wetlands, sand mine areas and or tapping rain water for domestic use.

"Government extended safe water to the villages but with no plans to maintain them," Nsugwa says.

Lawrence Ahebwa, 63 also of Kagusu village blamed government for constructing water sources in their area that later became non-functional.

"We don't know why most shallow wells built by our government break down before even ten years, can I say they use poor materials or the contractors hand over shoddy work. Our government should wake up," Ahebwa says.

Rashid Kushemererwa from Mugusu-A Village in Busoro Sub County says they have spent over three years without clean water for domestic use. He says the only shallow well that was built by government in 2010 broke down in 2013.

"The first time our shallow well broke down we were told that the pipes that

were used got damaged but now we don't know what happened," Kushemererwa says.

The most affected areas are Mugusu-A and Kanyamakere both in Busoro Sub County and Kagusu village, Mukonmura and Busokwa all in Karambi Sub County.

Residents and area councilors said government in 2010 set up shallow wells in Kagusu and Mugusu-A villages that functioned for only three years and later broke down a situation that has since forced residents to walk long distances in search of water from unsafe water sources.

Charles Bagada, a resident says lack of safe water due to nonfunctional water sources in Kabarole has increased the incidence of diseases related to poor hygiene and sanitation.

"If government fails to prioritise water supply in our area we shall continue suffering from typhoid and other diseases related to drinking of unsafe water," Bagada says.

Yusuf Ayesige, a resident of Kanyamakere village in Busoro Sub County says

that a shallow well was built by government in 2015 in their area but broke down after one year. "The shallow well that was built to assist us later stopped. We at times spend six hours in queues at a shallow well because they are not functioning properly" Ayesige says.

In 2015, Kabarole local government paid Shs 30 million to extend gravity water to Mukonomura in Karambi Sub County but up to date there is no water in these areas.

On June 20, 2016, then Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), Kabarole, Mr Ocakara Nicholas petitioned police asking them to intervene in the corruption case of this project meant for extension of gravity flow scheme from Buhara in Kichwamba to Mukonomura in Karambi Sub County.

After the contractor was paid, the public raised concern within four months that the project was not implemented as per contract. The works committee followed up the matter and found out that the project was not implemented.

The district management meetings later asked the water officer with the contractor to re do the works and extend the gravity flow scheme from Buhara to Mukonomura but this has not been done to date.

According to the area district councilor, Joseph Mashuhuku, "Only 1.25km of pipes was laid instead of 2km which was contracted. This means a distance equivalent to 750m was not covered as agreed in the contract," Mashuhuku says.

He added, "People are ready to demonstrate over lack of water since 2014 . Despite the Local Government spending money on water provision, there are some pipes but there is no water."

He said, "Kabarole local government also paid a contractor Shs 39 million in 2014/15 to extend water from Mugusu to Busokwa. Later Shs 11 million more was paid for the same, but I can tell you now that there are no pipes or water."

When contacted about all this, the Deputy CAO, Alfred Malinga said, "The fact is that people are complaining over lack of water. Kabarole Local Government was supposed to extend water from Buhara to Mukonomura and from Mugusu to Busokwa in the last three years, unfortunately water stopped...this project had many challenges and police is still investigating"

When contacted to know how far police has gone with investigations, the Criminal Investigations Officer Godliver Twinomugisha said, "The complainant petitioned the Director of CID before I came here, so I don't have the file."

Ms Agella Byangwa, the Executive Director at RAC, an NGO operating in the Rwenzori sub region said, "Locals in these areas especially women in

Residents demand clean water as wells break down

Outcry. They say government built shallow wells in Kagusu and Mugusu A villages that broke down three years later.

BY FELIX BASIME & ALEX ASHABA

KABAROLE. Ms Annette Nsubwa, 51, is a resident of Kagusu Village in Karambi Sub-county, Kabarole District.

Like many area residents, Ms Nsubwa uses dirty water in her home that she fetches over a kilometre that she fetches water set up away since a water source set up by the government three years ago broke down.

She says two shallow wells were built in 2010 but one has been non-functional in the last three years. This has forced many residents to draw water for domestic use from wetlands and sand mines.

"I don't think government is doing a good thing towards extending safe water to Ugandians if no plans are put in place to maintain them. We have been using dirty water for four years," Ms Nsubwa says.

Mr Lawrence Aheba, 63, another resident, says: "We don't know why water sources built by our government break down faster. Can I say they use poor materials or the contractors hand over shoddy work? Our government should wake up."

Mr Rashid Kushemmerwa, a resident of Mugusu A Village in Busokwa Sub-county, says the only well that was built by government in 2010 broke down in 2013.

"The first time when our shallow broke down, we were told that the pipes that were used got damaged but now we don't know what happened. Our leaders only show up during political campaigns," Mr Kushemmerwa says.

Reports of non-functional water sources around the district are several.

The most affected areas are Mugusu A and Kanyamukere both in Busokwa Sub-county and Kagusu Villages, Mukonomura and Busokwa in Karambi Sub-county.

Residents say government built shallow wells in Kagusu and Mugusu A villages in 2010 but they have since broken down. This has forced many residents to walk long distances in search of clean water in the district.

Mr Charles Bagada, a resident of Kagusu Village in the district, says lack of safe water in Kabarole District has led to waterborne disease such as typhoid in the area.

Mr Yusuf Ayesige, a resident of Kanyamukere Village in Busokwa Sub-county, says a shallow well was built by government in 2015 but broke down after one year.

"The shallow well that was built to supply clean water stopped. We at times spend six hours in queues at



Practical. A man fetches water from a well at Nyabubale Village in Kabarole District recently. Access to clean water is still a challenge in the district. FILE PHOTO



Abandoned. A man shows a borehole that was built in Mugusu A Village, Kabarole District in 2010. It, however, broke down after one year. FILE PHOTO

Shs30m

AMOUNT OF MONEY THAT KABAROLE DISTRICT PAID FOR EXTENSION OF GRAVITY WATER TO MUKONOMURA IN KARAMBI SUB-COUNTY. BUT THE MONEY IS SAID TO HAVE BEEN MISMANAGED BY DISTRICT ENGINEER.

He said the district water officer

complained to us . We have women walk long distances in search of water."

Despite Kabarole and Bunyangabu districts being endowed with several rivers and about 56 crater lakes, their people are part of the 30 percent of the whole population in Uganda living without water services. The current national coverage is at 70 percent.

According to the National Population and Housing Census 2014, only 24, 504 households (22. 9 percent) in Kabarole district have access to piped water, while 25,314 households (23.6 percent) use bore holes.

According to the Water and Environment Sector Performance Report (2015), the sector target for access to improved water is to have 77 percent of people in rural areas within 1 km and 100 percent of people in urban areas within 0.2 km of improved water source.

Despite Uganda being a signatory to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) where No. 6 is to ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all, several villages in Uganda are still unserved with safe water for domestic use. □

raised by the district water officer and payment requests by the contractor were not reflecting the true picture on the ground and therefore are deceitful," he said.

The district management meetings later asked the water officer with the contractor to re-do the work and extend the gravity flow scheme from Buhara to Mukonomura but this has never been done to date.

When contacted, the deputy CAO, Mr Alfred Malinga, says: "The fact is that people are complaining over lack of water. Kabarole was supposed to extend water from Mugusu to Mukonomura and from Mugusu to Busokwa in the last three years. This project had many challenges and police is still investigating."

When contacted, the criminal investigations officer, Ms Godliver Twinomugisha, said, "The complainant petitioned the Director of CID before I came here, so I don't have the file."

However, a survey by the Rwenzori Anti-Corruption Coalition (RACC) early this year found that Kabarole District tops Rwenzori sub-region in corruption cases, with misappropriation of public funds being frequent.

Ms Agella Byangwa, the Executive Director of RACC, says: "Residents in these areas, especially women in Mukonomura have complained to several times. Women walk as far as 8kms in search of water."

Kabarole District, despite being endowed with natural rivers and craters, has 1,121 domestic water points which serve a total of 247,841 to 171, 676 people in rural areas. About 212 water points have been non-functional for more than five years and are considered abandoned.

ISSUES

Water access. According to the National Population and Housing Census 2014, only 24, 504 households (22. 9 per cent) in Kabarole District have access to piped water, while 25,314 households (23.6 per cent) use boreholes. But a recent Uganda Water Supply Atlas on Kabarole, shows access rates vary from 8 per cent in Kijura Town Council to 85 per cent in Bulabula Sub-county.

Water points. Kabarole District has 1,121 domestic water points which serve a total of 247,841 to 171, 676 people in rural areas. About 212 water points have been non-functional for more than five years and are considered abandoned.

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Lack of roadside loos leaves filth, disease

This article was published in The New Vision on Tuesday, September 26 2017. The journalist took a trip on the bus from Kampala to Moroto in North Eastern Uganda and made observations on the way travellers stop to ease themselves in bushes, and how that affects the neighbouring communities.

BY OWEN WAGABAZA AND GEORGE BITA

There comes a time when one has to answer that call of nature. So, what does one do when the urge is unbearable and they are on the highway? Would the nearby bush be the only saviour?

“In Uganda, many highways are designed without washrooms as though people using such roads will never need the facilities,” Daniel Oboda, a regular highway user, says.

Toilets on highways, he says, should be given priority because they are essential for an inclusive, healthy society.

Some 20km out of Iganga town, a bus from Kampala heading to Mbale makes a stopover and the passengers rush out, one after another, to answer nature’s call.

Rarely do vehicles travelling long distances go through this stretch at Bukoona village without stopping for passengers to ease themselves. Given the number of travellers that stop on a daily basis, to use the bush as a toilet, the place reeks of

human excreta.

At Kitantalo village in Kibuku district, the situation is not any better. At a secluded bushy spot adjacent to River Mpologoma, stop-overs to answer the call of nature are common.

“I stay by the roadside and watch as the bushland is turned into a toilet. Over 45 cars stop here on a daily basis. Our only fear is that travellers are leaving us with all kinds of diseases. During the rainy season, the excreta is washed into the nearby river,” Geoffrey Kiisa, a resident, says.

At Kabuhoke village on the Kabale-Kisoro road, Dirisa Manishiimwe, a resident, says it is only by God’s mercy that they are still alive.

“We do not know why, but bus drivers cannot pass by without stopping here for passengers to answer calls of nature,” a worried Manishiimwe says.

Dr Ivan Mukisa, the Butaleja District Health Officer, says when many people are defecating outdoors, it is difficult to avoid ingesting human waste via open water sources. “This is either because it finds its way into food or water supplies or spread by flies,” Mukisa warns.

Mark Ssali, the head of communications and corporate affairs at Uganda National Roads Authority (UNRA), argues that although the agency is aware of the importance of toilets

on highways, they have not been able to construct them because of sustainability challenges.

“Whatever UNRA does, must have a sustainability plan and the same goes for toilets. Setting up a toilet is not expensive, but that is before you factor in the costly maintenance, such as manpower and utilities, like water and power,” says Ssali.

Ssali reveals that UNRA are drafting a clear policy framework that will enable the agency partner with private individuals to set up wellness centres in different spots of the highways.

“We want them to be wellness centres, so that travellers not only stop for calls of nature, but can also buy refreshments and this will help in sustainably managing the centres,” Ssali explains.

As the Government looks forward to achieving Vision 2020, sanitation and hygiene ought to be given the necessary attention, for it is a vital tool for improving the lives of millions of people.

It is, therefore, imperative upon the Government, at every level, to invest more in the provision of water and public toilets and create awareness on the dangers of open defecation.

One such facility is already under construction at Bukoona village, near Iganga town in Iganga district.

Godfrey Mudangha, the manager of the facility, discloses that the private enterprise will not only offer 20 washrooms, but also restaurant services for travellers on a 24-hour basis. □



ENVIRONMENT

34 NEW VISION, Tuesday, September 26, 2017

The absence of toilets remains one of the leading causes of illness and death among children

Lack of roadside loos leaves filth, disease

By Owen Wimbaza and George Bitu

There comes a time when one has to answer that call of nature. So, what does one do when the urge is unbearable and they are on the highway? Would the nearby bush be the only answer to dash into, regardless of class and status? Many times, the nearby vegetation is the only option to save the day.

In Uganda, some people behave as if urination and defecation are not routine bodily functions, but somehow optional, especially when they are away from their homes. Many roads are designed without washrooms as though people using such roads will never need them. “Danger never need them,” Daniel Obuda, a regular highway user, says.

Toilets on highways should be given priority because they are essential for an inclusive, healthy society.

This is particularly true as the population ages and more and more people live with chronic health conditions. A number of health issues affect bodily functions, including diabetes, colorectal cancer, irritable bowel syndrome, prostatitis, shingles, stroke and dementia, not to mention the regular needs of children, pregnant, as well as menstruating women.

Communities at risk
Some 20km out of Iganga town, a bus from Kampala heading to Mbulu makes a stopover and the passengers rush out, one after another, to answer nature’s call. Rarely do vehicles travelling long distances go through this stretch at Bukoona village without stopping for those ahead to answer nature’s call. With volumes of urine as well as faecal matter landing on the area currently rocks

A roadside loo that the Nature Call Centre under construction at Bukoona in Iganga

Passengers from a Kotido-bound bus to ease themselves at Nyakwee village, Abim district

Motorists stop near River Mpologoma in Kibuku district to ease themselves in the nearby bushes

than men. “Although there is common knowledge that the major impact of poor and inadequate sanitation includes diseases, such as diarrhoea, women such as diarrhoea, women look at inadequacy beyond their right to dignity, privacy and safety,” the report partly reads.

Aside from rickshaws, women need well-equipped toilet facilities with rubbish bins for the disposal of used menstrual pads and water for washing.

“The absence of washrooms on highways, therefore, is a woman of her dignity. Needless to say, a toilet considered a vital component in managing menstrual periods,” Nancy Mutinda, a woman activist, says.

Klari Ssali, the head of communications and corporate affairs at Uganda National Roads Authority (UNRA), argues that although the agency is aware of the importance of toilets on highways, they have not been able to construct them because of sustainability challenges.

“Whatever UNRA does, must have a sustainability plan and the same goes for toilets. Setting up a toilet is not expensive, but that is before you factor in the costly maintenance, such as manpower and utilities, like water and power,” says Ssali.

Way forward
Ssali reveals that he is drafting a clear policy framework that will enable the agency partner with private individuals to set up wellness centres in different spots of the highways.

“We want them to be wellness centres, so that travellers not only stop for calls of nature, but can also buy refreshments and this will help in sustainably managing the centres,” Ssali explains.

As the Government looks forward to achieving Vision 2020, sanitation and hygiene should be given the necessary attention, for it is the lives of millions of people. It is, therefore, imperative upon the Government, at every level, to invest more in the provision of water and public toilets and create awareness on the dangers of open defecation.

One such facility is already under construction at Bukoona village, near Iganga town in Iganga district.

Godfrey Mudangha, the manager of the facility, discloses that the private enterprise will not only offer 20 washrooms, but also restaurant services for travellers on a 24-hour basis.

VIEW

People’s lives at risk from vice

Samuel Emeru, the WASH programme manager for the region

...cases of for long-term worse is on the

WOMEN AT HIGHER RISK

According to the UN Millennium Project report, inadequate sanitation puts a greater burden on women than men. “The major impact of poor and inadequate sanitation includes diarrhoea. Women look at inadequacy beyond their right to dignity, privacy and safety,” the report partly reads.

Last year, six people died of cholera, a majority as a result of water contamination. Mukisa says.

According to the Joint UNICEF and the World Health Organization 2014 report, the absence of toilets remains one of the leading causes of illness and death among children. The report indicated that diarrhoea, which is often associated with poor sanitary conditions and respiratory infections resulting from poor hygiene, kills about 400,000 children under the age of five worldwide annually.

Heavy burden to women
According to the UN Millennium Project report, inadequate sanitation puts a greater burden on women



Deliverance of a village
...practices of open defecation here. Motorists are advised to stop at a place with public toilets to avoid spreading the disease.

LEFT: Travellers go to the bush to ease themselves

Leaders battle to save Biguli wetland from degradation



Lack of access to safe water and sanitation services is closely related to management of water resources especially by the user communities. In this article, the journalist raises some key issues surrounding the degradation of a wetland in Biguli sub county, Kamwenge, Western Uganda.

**BY SCOVIA ATUHAIRWE
AND PAUL TAJUBA**

Huge expanses of Biguli wetland are now nothing more than a series of dry farmland or soggy soils. The wetland is shrinking rapidly - presenting the reality of water and food insecurity.

“We used not to experience drought because our wetlands were not tampered with. We had water for animals throughout the year,” Benon Betubiza, a resident of Kabale village in Biguli Sub County recalls in disbelief at the current state of the wetland.

Some sections of the wetland have been converted into sugarcane, yams and maize plantations - crops which are alien to the wetland and thus impacts negatively on its functionality.

“Farmers come and burn the wetland to create space for agriculture. The more they dig it, the more it dries up,” Betubiza adds.

Dr Daniel Babikwa, director of district support coordination and public education, at the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) says wetlands are some of the many natural features that influence 40 per cent of rainfall received in Uganda. Any de-

struction on them therefore translates into either no rainfall at all or diminished amounts.

The other 60 per cent of rainfall received in Uganda is influenced by the Central Pacific Ocean and the Indian Ocean.

Wetlands also provide various benefits to the surrounding communities, including provision of water through recharging springs, boreholes, grass for thatching, pasture for animals, providing fish, climate modification, control of floods, water filter, among others.

William Kasango, the Kamwenge District Natural Resources Officer, says a quarter of the wetland has been destroyed by cultivators.

However, as the saying goes, a man’s strength is determined in times of trouble. Some of the residents of Biguli Sub County have allocated themselves the task of fighting to preserve the mega wetland.

“We identified the hotspots and came up with a water resource management plan as a basis of protecting the water catchment areas where wetlands fall,” says Ronald Mugume, the Biguli Sub

County chief.

The hotspots include; Kizikibi, Rwakasirabo and Kagasha wetlands among others.

According to Biguli Sub County Chairperson, Simeon Kamaho, the crusade to save the wetland was launched in the wake of persistent onslaughts, which saw locals burn huge sections of the wetland with a view of using the cleared areas to plant crops.

As if the obliteration of the vegetation was not bad enough, the encroachers also tampered with the water flow channels.

“Cultivators dig trenches to allow flow of water and by doing this, the wetland is drained causing water scarcity in the long run,” says Mr Komaho

In an earlier effort aimed at saving the environment around Biguli, the locals were advised to plant trees, but it would appear that they were never advised on which species would be suitable for their mission.

A local leader, Sirivano Isingoma, says that they ended up planting Eucalyptus trees in the swamps. They did not know that Eucalyptus sucks water and would therefore not be appropriate.

“We are now telling those carrying out bad practices in swamps to stop; those who already introduced the ex-

otic trees in swamps to remove them,” Isingoma says.

Kasango says the district will not “close one eye” and let degraders destroy the wetland considering the importance it presents to local communities and also to River Katonga and Lake Victoria.

“That particular sub county [Biguli] has piped water from underground. And the science is, if the wetland which recharges underground water is destroyed, there will be no water in boreholes...” Mr Kasango says.

Biguli boasts of three rural piped water supply and sanitation systems, built jointly with partner Water for People, ordinary people and the district. The systems have water storage capacity of 90,000 litres, serving hundreds of Rwebishahi, Malere- Nyakabungo- Butanda and Busingye-Buhumuriro residents.

“As I talk now, we have got funds to restore the entire wetland. When we conserve this wetland, we are also protecting the River Katonga and Lake Victoria catchments,” Kasango adds.

Kasango says the district has given out upland rice to residents with the aim of enticing them out of the wetlands but there are also ongoing sensitizations on keeping soil fertility through manure use, intercropping among others.

Komaho says that a team from Kamwenge District headed by the environment officer came on the ground to sensitise the public on the role of the wetlands. They also sensitised the locals on good methods of farming and taught them how to dig channels through which they could tap water from the wetlands into their gardens.

Unfortunately, the locals seem to have “misunderstood” the instructions. They opted to dig trenches in the swamps, which has left many leaders here angry and frustrated.

Now armed with the law, local leaders have made some cultivators restore the swamps, a deterrent measure that has caused a bit of fear and forced potential degraders to abandon their intentions of invading the wetland.



Encroached on. A degraded section of Rwakasirabo wetland in Kamwenge District. Vast sections of wetlands in the district have been turned into farmlands. PHOTO BY SCOVIA ATUHAIRE.

Destroyed. Some sections of the wetland have been converted into farmlands, causing drought.

Leaders battle to save Biguli wetland from degradation

BY SCOVIA ATUHAIRE & BY PAUL TAJUBA
editorial@ug.nationmedia.com

Voices

KAMWENGE. Huge expanses of Biguli wetland have been degraded by people seeking land for farming

Mr William Kasango, the Kamwenge District natural resources officer, says

adding that there are also ongoing sensitisations on how to keep soil

Section 36 of the National Environment Act provides for protection of wetlands and prohibits any person from reclaiming, erecting or demolishing any structure that is fixed in, on, under or above any wetland.

“We are in the buffer zone and we shall agree on the activities like bee keeping which can be carried in the wetlands without degrading them,” Komaho says.

“I appeal to the public to abide by the laws governing the wetlands and urge you to voluntarily evict yourselves from the wetland because with effect 1st August, we shall forcefully begin evicting you,” he adds.

In January 2017, during the launch of a new 38m Euros (about Shs146bn) water pumping station and pipeline in Gaba, Kampala, President Yoweri Museveni, gave all those who had encroached on wetlands one month to quite or be forced out by the Police.

“All those occupying swamps should leave in peace before police comes for them. If you have planted crops, harvest, and go away,” said Mr Museveni

who blamed the water shortages that were being experienced in the country at the time on degradation of the environment.

The Presidents directive has not been adhered to by some of the residents of Biguli and the Police too has never moved to evict anyone.

Now, Komaho says that it will be enforced in order to not only maximize use of the piped water projects, but also save the entire environment.

The threat to the initiatives is however a scarcity of land for cultivation. Biguli Sub County has 34,560 people, a population that Mr Kasango says is high.

“But that does not mean invading the wetland. The best option is to maintain the fertility of the soil,” Kasango says.

Given the numbers, the LCI Chairman of Kabale Village, Mr Kananoti Kamusiime, says that some of the residents are hesitant to vacate the wetlands, saying they do not have any other land on which to grow their crops.

It is now apparent that the fight to save the wetland leads into yet another fight - but this time against the encroachers. □

When people cross a highway to use the latrine

Imagine having to cross a busy highway every time you have to answer a call of nature. This is what residents of Kamuwunga have to go through on a daily basis.

BY CHRISTOPHER KISEKKA

Eric Muzeyi, a nine-year-old boy, has to be escorted by an adult to cross the accident-prone Kampala-Masaka Highway to answer the call of nature. Sometimes, he has to wait for hours if there is nobody to help him cross the road. Muzeyi lives in a family of eight at Kamuwunga Village in Lwera, Lukuya Town Council on Kampala-Masaka Highway.

Kamuwunga Village, with a population of about 700 residents shares one dilapidated pit-latrine located at the right side of the road. The residents on the left side must cross the busy highway to access the facility.

Expense

Ronald Kayondo, the village chairperson, says people often have to line up to use the pit-latrine. Sometimes, those who find it hard to wait are tempted to ease themselves in the bush.

Kayondo adds that it is expensive for individual households to construct their own pit-latrines in an area whose water table is so close. "It requires specialized expertise which can cost up to Shs7m," he says.

The chairperson adds that although two businessmen who settled in the area to carry out sand mining put up private pit latrines, they do not allow other people to use them.

"So far, eight people - five of them juveniles - have been knocked down by speeding vehicles in the last three years as they crossed the road," says Aisha Nalukwago, the village secretary.

"The lack of sufficient toilet facilities in the village was bound

22 Homes & Real Estate > KNOW YOUR HOOD Kamuwunga: Where residents cross a highway for a pit-latrine

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A mother and child take turns to use the only available toilet facility.

SETTLEMENT

It is often rumored that those who settle in Lwera, a wetland, are there illegally. However, residents claim they own plots of land in the area and have inherited them from their parents. Aisha Nalukwago, the village secretary, says the area is currently working on a development plan which will guide the settlement on the physical grounds of the area. "Currently, we are in the final stages of a physical development plan. It will guide us on whether the area is suitable for settlement or not," she says.

The chairperson adds that although two businessmen who settled in the area to carry out sand mining put up private pit latrines, they do not allow other people to use them. "So far, eight people, five of them juveniles, have been knocked down by speeding vehicles in the last three years as they crossed the road," says Aisha Nalukwago, the village secretary.

He adds another fact that suggested that each household pay a management fee of Shs200 per week to enable authorities buy toilet paper, but the residents declined and ended up using hard paper which blocked the water-borne toilet.

700
THE ESTIMATED POPULATION OF KAMUWUNGA



to cause diseases related to poor hygiene such as diarrhoea. We fear that if the situation worsens, we may end up with an epidemic," she adds.

However, the Kalungu Water Officer, Dan Rwabuhinga, says the area was given another toilet, but it was mismanaged by residents.

"Two years ago, we constructed a Shs16m water-borne toilet in that place on our Rural Water Grant. We trained them on how to manage and use it but in a period of two months, the facility was out of service," Rwabuhinga says.

He adds that authorities had suggested that each household pays a management fee of Shs200 per week to enable authorities buy toilet paper, but the residents declined and ended up using hard paper which blocked the water-borne toilet.

Wilson Bukenya, a resident, blames the Town Council authorities for having deliberately constructed a toilet which they (the residents) could neither use nor maintain. "Before they started constructing a water-borne-toilet here, we had advised them that locals do not know how to use it but they insisted," Bukenya says, adding: "What surprised us was that even the water borne toilet was constructed on the other side of the road, still putting residents' lives at risk. □"



WASH Agenda for Change in Uganda

GOAL: Universal access to WASH by 2030.

Every household; every clinic; every school; hence every citizen has access to water and sanitation services that last, leaving no one behind.

WHY

i) Because WASH contributes significantly to all development outcomes.

ii) Access to sustainable WASH services is recognised by the United Nations (UN) as a fundamental human right.

CURRENT SITUATION (June 2017)

- 30% rural population without access to safe water
- 29% urban population without access to safe water
- 30% rural population without access to improved sanitation facilities
- 15% rural water sources non-functional
- 8% urban water supply facilities non-functional
- 14% urban population without access to improved sanitation facility
- 20% rural population without access to improved sanitation facility
- 63% not practicing proper hygiene

KEY CHALLENGES/GAPS

Population explosion, limited funding; poor citizen participation; institutional capacity gaps; low enforcement of policies and regulations; limited appreciation of whole system approach;

WA4C Proposals principles

- Government must lead efforts while external agencies work in a way that supports and builds government capacity to lead and to succeed.
- Integrate and build alliances with other sectors, including health, education, finance and the environment
- Build partnerships, alliances and working relationships between government, communities and the private sector – at national and local level
- Develop comprehensive district-wide investment plans, coordinated and led by local government. These should inform national policy, programming, finance, systems and practice priorities
- Adopt creative and effective financing mechanisms coming from individuals, communities, and district and national governments. Combine these with traditional aid, philanthropy and crucial funding vehicles like loans, social impact investments, and bonds.
- Adopt different WASH management models to guarantee services for all. The models may be public, private, community or combined.
- Strengthen local and national monitoring systems.
- Ensure community empowerment and engagement as a fundamental part of realizing the rights to WASH services, and ensuring that governments and service providers are held to account.
- Invest in documentation and learning from work at the local level, and disseminate the lessons to higher levels through robust learning mechanisms.

Photo by Jeroen van Loon



Photos by Jeroen van Loon

