

MAXIMIZING THE BENEFITS FROM WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL SANITATION

## Capacity building for improved performance of water and sanitation NGOS/CBOS in Uganda

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*This paper highlights the 5 year capacity building programme for more than 94 NGOs/CBOs in the Ugandan water and sanitation sector. Capacity building activity implementation aimed at developing an effective civil society which can complement and inform government towards achievement of sustainable access to water & sanitation takes place at regional level, and is being co-coordinated by 8 regional coordinators in 8 different parts of the country. The 1st year implementation built capacity of NGOs/CBOs in areas of practical skills, report writing and records management using training methods such as workshops, apprenticeship, coaching and internship. By the end of the 1st implementation year, there was visible improvement of co-ordination, knowledge and experience sharing among beneficiary NGOs/CBOs. All of them streamlined their legal status, and service provision/operational focus as well.*

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### Background

The government of Uganda together with its development partners are funding a Capacity building program for NGOs/CBOs that are registered with the Uganda Water and Sanitation NGO Network [UWASNET]. UWASNET is an umbrella organisation for NGOs and CBOs in the water and sanitation sector.

The Capacity building Program is targeting a total number 94 NGOs/CBOs that are operating in the water and sanitation sector in Uganda.

Although these NGOs/CBOs are well suited to providing water and sanitation services to poor rural and urban communities, some of them do not necessarily have the range of skills, knowledge or resources to enable them undertake this role effectively and on a large scale. Their potential to contribute to increasing access to safe water and sanitation varies widely in terms of competence, experience, and access to funds.

The government is funding the NGO Capacity Building Program using the GoU/Donor joint Funding mechanism.

The aim of the component is to, enhance sector capacity amongst key stakeholders at all levels to plan, implement, monitor, manage, and report sustainable water supply and sanitation development.

The purpose of the Capacity Building Program is to develop an effective, dynamic and independent civil society in the water and sanitation sector which can both complement and inform government in achieving sustainable access to safe water and sanitation in Uganda.

The objectives of the programme are:

- To strengthen the Capacity of UWASNET member NGOs/CBOs to serve as an effective hub for increased access to safe water and sanitation.

- To enable UWASNET to effectively coordinate NGOs/CBOs in the sector and manage the Capacity building programme.
- To enable UWASNET member NGOs/CBOs to respond and influence the Ugandan policy and institutional environment in relation to water supply and sanitation.

At the stage of preparing this paper, the first year of the program had just been completed. The paper therefore highlights the design, implementation and Outcomes/ Experiences/Lessons of the program.

### Program design

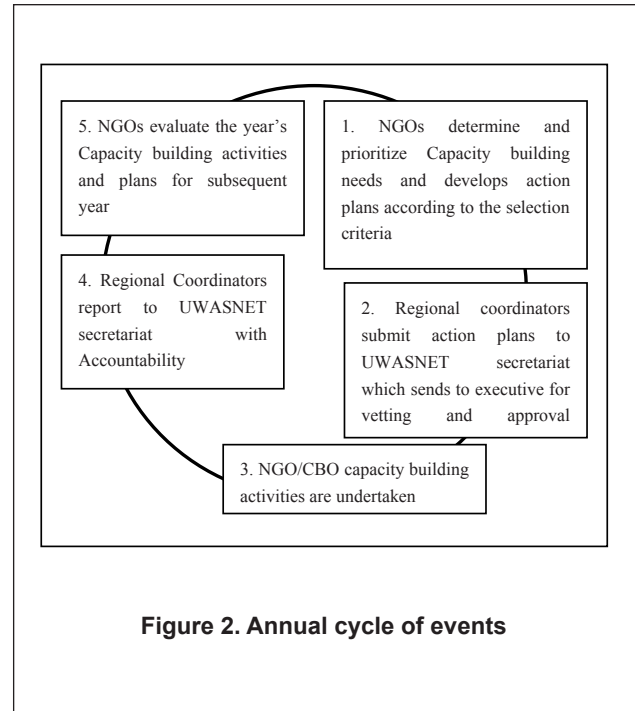
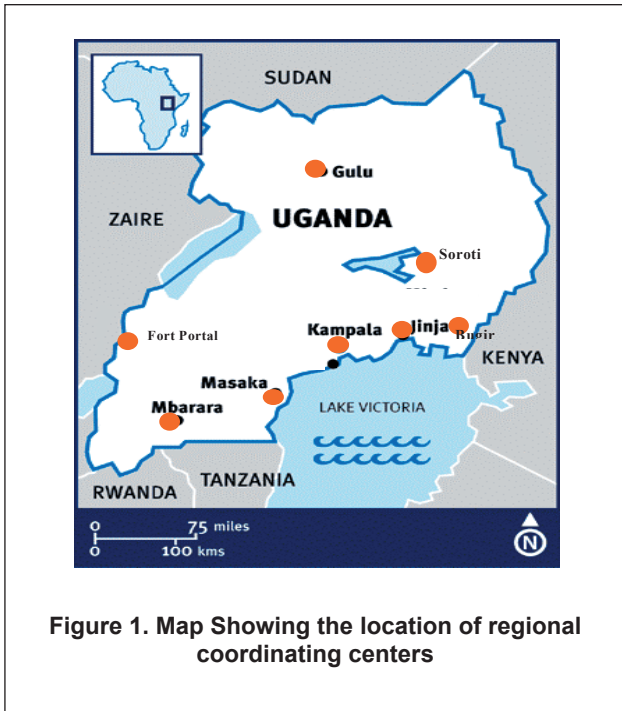
The program targets all the water and sanitation NGOs/CBOs in the Country registered with UWASNET.

It is based on a framework which was developed by WELL resource Center Network.

The programme; includes Participatory training needs identification by member NGOs/CBOs. Thus it does not prescribe specific capacity building activities but recommends that they are specified in response to the needs identified. Annual cycles of evaluations, activities prioritization [according to a set selection criteria] and planning for activities are undertaken. Planning, Capacity Building activities and evaluations are undertaken by NGOs/CBOs arranged in groups at regional level.

Activity implementation takes place at national and regional levels. The regional level is divided into 8 regions depending on the number of Organisations in the area. The regions are units similar to the government's Technical Support Unit (TSU) divisions.

The regional activities are Coordinated by regional Coordinators (RCs) who are members of UWASNET. They were selected through a bidding process that capitalized on



competence, and capacity.

The programme uses a flexible approach to enable the capacity building activities to suit the wide range of NGOs/CBOs in the water and sanitation sector.

This also allows for future and unknown changes in the level and sources of funding available for the programme as well and can respond to changes in the sector, the wider operating environment.

### Scope of the capacity building activities

Creative and Cost effective capacity building methods are utilized. Activities are selected whereby several organizations in a region benefit.

To improve skills in financial resources, the members are; (1) Educated about funding opportunities in Uganda and abroad, (2) Trained to improve their skills in proposal writing/financial management, marketing, and entrepreneurship and (3) encouraged to establish links with microfinance organizations.

Methods to enhance skills and knowledge are follows: (a) Training courses with clearly defined objectives eg workshops, seminars etc, (b) learning from other organizations with practical experience through internship, mentoring, exchange visits, (c) specialists or consultant technical assistance, (d) partnerships and (e) increased access to and use of appropriate written materials eg manuals, books, newsletter.

The programme does not fund; recruitment of staff, implementation of general NGO/CBO activities, capital items, and individuals for higher education courses such as Diploma/Degree/Masters courses.

### Implementation of the programme

Generally implementation of the programme follows the annual cycle of events as indicated in the diagram:

The participatory implementation was spearheaded by UWASNET secretariat which organized orientation of Regional coordinators to manage the planning and implementation of activities at regional level, The secretariat further ensured that the general membership understood the capacity building programme.

An activity selection criteria in the areas of: (1) Practical skills and (2) record keeping/report writing was also provided to increase focus and ensure tackling the most identified capacity gaps.

Regional coordinators facilitated NGOs/CBOs in their respective regions to assess needs and plan for the first year of the programme during which a wide range of activities were selected.

Activities in the following areas were identified and undertaken by the NGOs/CBOs.

1. Post construction skills:- Operation, sustainability and follow up in which training workshops and field visits were conducted to share experiences.
2. Self-assessment methodologies for both the community and implementers: Participatory monitoring, data collection analysis and presentation skills. In which workshops were conducted to impart skills aimed at improving monitoring and evaluation of water and sanitation projects.
3. Community mobilization and Soft ware skills: Participatory Rural Appraisal techniques, communication skills. Internship and coaching trainings were conducted to impart skills aimed at improving NGOs skills in Mobilization and follow up of communities to participate in

WES activities for sustainability.

4. Hygiene and sanitation promotion:- Behavioral Change communication Skills. Training workshops conducted to equip staff with skills necessary for effective hygiene and sanitation promotion for the general community and the internally displaced Camps.
5. Water supply and sanitation technologies:- Skills necessary for construction of various water and sanitation technologies were imparted using workshops, seminars, mentorship trainings and exchange visits. An inventory on technologies and one implementation manual for technologies relevant for SW Uganda was produced.
6. Policy influencing and advocacy:- Policy research, analysis, negotiation skills and lobbying. Training workshops were conducted in which skills aimed at enabling member NGOs/CBOs to influence positive changes in the WES policies were given.
7. Documentation Records and financial management:- Data Base development, data analysis, and records/financial systems. Workshops, coaching and internship trainings were conducted aimed at increasing the documentation and financial management capacity of member NGOs/CBOs. In the SW region, a standardized computerized data base framework was developed.
8. Report writing and self-marketing. Coaching and workshop trainings conducted aimed at improving the NGO/CBO capacity to report to stakeholders

### Capacity building Methods used in the programme

Guided by Regional Coordinators, member NGOs/CBOs were encouraged to choose the most effective methods of capacity building. Some of the methods that were used include;

- Internship: where by some less experienced staff from NGOs visit NGOs with more experienced for attachment aimed at training in topical issues. This was used in training areas where some NGOs were more knowledgeable than others and have the capacity to provide the trainings.
- Workshops/Seminars: In which members are trained on specific and some times technical topics in a classroom-like environment. This method was mainly chosen in cases where by the topic was generally unknown and new to a big number of NGOs in the region.
- Coaching: Here there is someone appointed to reflect on what the trainee does or has done but he/she also gives values to what is observed or told. Coaching is often direct related with job performance and learning in order to do things better than before. This method was used in cases where some NGOs were more knowledgeable in some topics than others and can offer coaching services to a group of staff from other less knowledgeable NGOs.
- Apprenticeship: Whereby people are trained while doing

work. This method was also used by NGOs for training activities which some NGOs had more knowledge than others.

### Major outcomes of the 1st Year Activities

- There was visible improvement of coordination, knowledge, and sharing of experiences among NGOs/CBOs and increased control of WES implementation standards.
- A number of tangible outputs were realized. These included a Uniform data base framework for CBOs/NGOs in south western Uganda to store data, a technologies implementation manual, and standardized financial and administrative guidelines and procedures.

### Experience and lessons learnt so far

- Cost effective and efficient capacity building can be realized when the needs assessment/planning and implementation is participatory and a divergent range of training methods are used. [Despite the short period of implementation, some Members have already have already started utilizing the skills gained to improve their performance – this was brought out in one of the mini internal evaluations conducted].
- Using training methods such as coaching and apprenticeship is less costly and more effective than workshops and seminars.
- Building capacity of individual staff leads to developed capacity of NGOs/CBOs which eventually improves their general performance and contribution towards the sector.
- Stronger NGOs with more knowledgeable staff can be used to train and scale-up skills to other NGOs/CBOs instead of hiring external and expensive consultants.

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