

MAXIMIZING THE BENEFITS FROM WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL SANITATION

**Participatory planning - challenges for optimal  
community involvement**

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*This paper tries to identify some of the factors which influence the participatory planning process at the district local government while addressing community priorities in development in general and the water and environmental sanitation needs in particular. In 2001, government adopted the participatory planning procedure as a mechanism spear heading planning for local development. The research examines whether 3 years after its introduction, the procedure is delivering as it should basing on case study of one of the districts in Uganda – Bundibugyo district local government. Community involvement in the priority setting for development intervention is a cornerstone for sustainable development and poverty reduction drive as embedded in the legal framework governing development in general and poverty eradication in Uganda. The paper examines the process in which community water and environmental sanitation development priorities / needs are generated and how they are eventually filtered into the district development plans. It also draws a comparison in the quality of the plans developed currently against those developed prior to the introduction of the participatory planning procedure. The research established that while the structures and mechanisms have been established, they have not been fully utilized as laid out in the guidelines and as such there is no optimal community involvement of communities in identifying their development needs in general and how the water and environmental sanitation and hygiene education needs in particular. Some of the reasons advanced for the failure are;*

- *Lack of timely information for planning at all levels.*
- *Capacity of the various stakeholders involved in the planning process.*
- *Lengthy procedure for generating plans leading to taking short cuts in the process.*
- *The cost of the planning process/ procedure.*

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**What is the presentation all about?**

The paper tries to highlight the government of Uganda procedure for participatory planning using The Harmonised Participatory Planning Guidelines (HPPG) for lower local government and parish levels. This guideline provides the steps used to generate community needs, how they are compiled at the parish and eventually to the sub-county and to the district level.

It examines the processes and the outputs of a particular process which was followed during the 2004/2005 planning period, the duration of the whole exercise, the quality of the input. The paper will show the outcome of a planning process, i.e. issues generated at the parish level, what was compiled and prioritized at the sub-county local governments and eventually what was filtered through to the district level for support and the criteria used in the entire process

**What is The Harmonised Participatory  
Planning Guideline (HPPG) all about?**

Government of Uganda aims at poverty eradication and this is espoused in the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) which was adopted in 1997, and is revised every three years. It has four goals namely; economic growth and structural transformation, good governance and security, increasing incomes of the poor and improving their welfare.

The Local Government Act of 1997 (revised 2001) and the decentralization process pre-suppose that the local governments are autonomous and as such have been delegated powers and responsibilities to plan for their respective communities. Article 36 of the Local Government Act cements this role by empowering Local Governments to prepare integrated development plans. The mechanism for facilitating the generation of integrated development plans is well spelt out in the LGDP II guidelines of 2004.

Government has prepared instruments to facilitate communities in identifying their development needs and priorities are well spelt out in the HPPG for lower local governments and parishes among other instruments.

## Formats for capturing community needs/ priorities

**Table 1. Format for identification of village level needs**

Date.....
Name of the village.....
Name of the parish.....
Name of the sub County.....
Problems/poverty issues identified

**Table A.**

Issues identified	Raised by

**Table B. Summary of parish level**

List of proposed projects	Village that originated the proposal	Proposal adopted	Proposal not adopted

Develop a parish map with the help of the Parish Development Committee (PDC) or Parish Investment Committee indicating population distribution, resources distribution.

### Summary of parish issues according to priorities.

Parish chiefs name.....

Signature.....

**Table D. Steps of the planning process and the analysis of how they are followed**

Steps	Status
1. Review of TPC functionality	Somehow but to a very limited extent.
2. Dissemination of planning information to parishes/wards	Somehow/ no
3. Support to parish/ward level planning	No
4. Situation analysis	Yes, but not well done
5. LLG SWOT analysis	Yes
6. LLG visioning, goal setting	No
7. Identification of LLG investment priorities	Only at the district & sometimes at the S/C hqters
8. Budget conference	Not very clear
9. Forwarding projects for district consideration	Yes
10. Devt of project profiles	Yes
11. Review of project profiles by standing committees	Still at the infancy stage.
12. Compilation of the draft comprehensive development plan	Yes
13. Review of the draft comprehensive plan by the executive committee	Yes but sometimes they go beyond their roles
14. Refinement of the draft comprehensive plan by the TPC	Yes
15. Discussion and approval of the draft plan	Yes
16. Finalisation of the comprehensive development plan	Yes but with some difficulty
17. Submission of approved plan to the HLG	Yes, gap is only in acknowledgement
18. Feed back to the LLG/ LLCs	No
19. Monitoring of the performance of the development plan	Yes but with some gaps

**Table C.**

SN	List of priorities in order of importance	To be referred back to the village	To be implemented by the parish	To be forwarded to S/County/division	Remarks
1					
2					
3					

**NOTE:** At the parish level the process will take 2 days. Day 1 will be for data collection and day 2 will be for planning. The planning process will follow the July 2003 HPPG for the parish level.

**Findings:**

- The formats and steps elaborate and thus can facilitate capture the issues and it is easy to trace e.g. using table A and Table B what the priorities for each village and then the parish are. Indeed from all the parishes water was one of the 3 priority areas and hygiene education and sanitation improvement was prioritized in 5 out of the 52 parishes.
- The process raises enthusiasm among the stakeholders especially at community, parish and the Sub-county levels.
- From the analysis of the steps, it is clear that out of the 19 steps only 10 were fully followed.
- The cost of carrying the consultative process is not small and as such the stakeholders prefer to take short cuts.

**Who is the paper for?**

This paper is aimed at sharing with the wider audience the sector wide mechanisms for participatory planning at the district local governments and sub-county local governments and what role the lead ministries could play in guiding the respective sectors in the entire planning process with the set targets are to be met.

Secondly, it is meant for the promoters and practitioners of participatory development processes and particularly those interested in tracking the extent to which water and sanitation and hygiene education issues are articulated by the end users, how they are filtered through and whether or not they get prioritized. Thirdly to highlight whether hardware (water) is prioritized over software (hygiene education and sanitation) issues? And its implications for meeting the water and sanitation targets.

**Learning points?**

- Room for capacity building for the sector lead agencies and the capacity builders of the respective players within the sector wide spectrum.
- Opportunities to improve the sector specific guidelines to ensure the targets are met.
- The mechanisms and dynamisms of the planning process

at the district and the sub-county up to the community/parish levels.

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