

MAXIMIZING THE BENEFITS FROM WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL SANITATION

Communities take on operation and maintenance responsibilities The case of Kigezi Diocese WSP

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The Water and Sanitation Sector is one of the sectors through which Poverty Eradication is being implemented. A study of the water and sanitation scenario carried out in Kigezi revealed a combination of both functional and non-functional structures and lack of safe water and sanitation. These non-functionalities and breakdowns were basically due to poor mobilization at the implementation level. With the community's participation in maintenance of facilities, cost effectiveness will be achieved, leading to improved health and standards of living.

Introduction

Provision of water and sanitation facilities to rural communities in the country of Uganda is being done by many agencies including the government organizations, NGOs and CBO's all working under the Ministry of water, Lands and Environment with the Directorate of Water Development the lead sector agency for rural areas and small towns with a coverage of 57% people accessing safe and improved water sources in rural areas and functionality being at 80% (MoWLE, 2004). Sanitation being responsibility of the ministry of Health in Uganda is still a problem which has lead to poor health and poverty with about 440 children dying of diarrhoea every week and 84% latrine coverage in rural areas (2002/2003 Uganda National Housing hold Survey). Kabale water coverage is at 73.9% and latrine coverage at 80% (end of April 2005 district report).

The water and sanitation scenario is a combination of both functional and non-functional structures and lack of facilities for safe water and sanitation.

Little attention has been given to On-Going support to projects, which has led to most breakdowns and non-functionality of existing structures bringing down coverage.

The breakdowns, non-functionality and poor maintenance of water and sanitation facilities is being caused by poor mobilization at implementation level, lack of training and awareness raising to communities by the implementing agencies and presence of non-functional committees. These cause a set back to proper performance monitoring and evaluation at both community and programme level.

The Millennium Development Goal (MDG's) of eradicating extreme poverty and hunger and ensuring environmental sustainability together with the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) themes and indicators of Access/use-water, functionality, investment cost, Access/use-sanitation, water for production, water quality, equity and access/use-hygiene may not be achieved if the issue of on

going support to communities which ensures sustainability of facilities is not addressed.

Kigezi Diocese Water and Sanitation Programme (KDWSP), which has been in operation since 1986 provides sustainable health improvement to over 22,780 beneficiaries per year in Kabale District, Southwest Uganda through provision of improved and sustainable water supply and sanitation services and hygiene practices through projects (construction of Gravity Flow Schemes, Domestic roofwater harvesting, protection of springs; health, hygiene promotion, and maintenance trainings), on going support to programme beneficiaries to ensure sustainability of improved water supply and sanitation services and improvements to hygiene practices, accelerating service delivery by scaling up water supply and sanitation provision through Community Based Organizations (CBO's), and dissemination of best practices and advocacy to implementers/policy makers within Uganda and beyond. This is in line with the MDGS, and the PEAP themes and indicators for a sustainable development in developing countries like Uganda.

In its component of on going support¹ which ensures sustainability of water and sanitation activities in place KDWSP has achieved its objectives through its performance monitoring and evaluation of the facilities mainly at community level using the community member beneficiaries to develop their monitoring indicators, planning and design, data collection and analyzing, identification and evaluation of findings, disseminating results and preparing action plan to improve programme performance.

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) in KDWSP

M&E in KDWSP is done in a participatory way by both the programme staff and monitoring teams² at community³ level using a variety of methods to ensure sustainability of projects.

How monitoring and evaluation is done with KDWSP

This is done both at programme and community level to achieve the sustainability of water and sanitation facilities.

At programme level:

- Self-evaluation/ internal evaluation: This is done to ensure quality of work and sustainability of the facilities. The programme staff visits different communities with different technologies to assess the standard quality of work. The findings and observations are discussed. Lesson learnt and challenges encountered are tabled and used to draw action plans, which have led to new inventions and innovations in the programme and the programme maintaining its standards.
- The programme also carries out some monitoring of water and sanitation facilities in the communities with the assistance of community water user committees to collect the data which is analyzed together with the community to help them appreciate their situation and draw their own action plans. This is done in communities with no monitoring teams. The programme still monitors the functionality of monitoring teams.
- As a way of maintaining the facilities, the programme has facilitated the communities conduct study tours which act as learning experiences for both host and visiting communities through experience sharing that help to improve and maintain their facilities.
- Another method used by the programme is use of demonstration villages and homes⁴. The programme facilitates the communities and homes through trainings to change their behaviors and attitudes that make them outstanding to qualify them become demonstration villages and homes. At this point, the programme provides more trainings and such homes and villages are used as learning centers to other communities.

At community level:

- The programme facilitates the communities to form monitoring teams which are voluntary teams comprising of 7 – 18 people. These are at community level. The programme trains⁵ these committees to build their capacity to enable them carry out the work.
- After training these teams, the teams together with their community members plan, start gathering and analyzing the data, they disseminate the information and draw action plans together. The first data collected is used as baseline survey, which the community will always use to measure any changes in the community. All the data collected is discussed with the community members in their general meetings to enable them know their stand.
- These teams later disseminate the knowledge and monitoring skills to other community members and in this each 10 households group themselves and select one member to be on the monitoring team to ensure

behavior change and sustainability of water and sanitation facilities. This encourages close interaction and education at household level as the 10 homes in Kabale District are usually close to each other, sometimes relatives, and interact on daily basis.

- At community level, emphasis is put on behavior change especially safe excreta disposal, hand washing after latrine use and water consumption/head/day and sustainability of water facilities especially looking at cost recovery, functionality and efficiency of the services in relation to time and population using the community agreed upon check list of indicators.

How monitoring teams are formed at community level:

- These are formed in general meetings by community majority vote.
- They are 50% gender represented with a composition of local council members, community elders, church leaders and local community members.
- Each government cell puts a representative.
- Members are elected on merit irrespective of clan, tribe or religion.
- All local council officials in the area are ex officials.

How monitoring teams operate:

- They are first trained by the programme to build their capacity.
- They conduct meetings to enable them carry out the work
- Monitoring teams carry out planning.
- Monitoring and analyzing data with community members and
- Together drawing their action plan and writing reports.
- Conduct mid-year and annual inter competitions
- Educating the masses
- Developing indicators for monitoring together with the community.
- After every two years, the teams are dissolved and new ones formed.

What helps them carry out the work yet volunteers

- Usually these teams have come up with some activities to keep them together, like mutual saving groups, which is done monthly and as they come for the meetings, monitoring reports are given by different monitors to the executive committee.
- They have implemented other small projects like vegetable growing that brings them together and where this has been done properly, the programme has motivated the teams by providing them with spray pumps and the vegetable seeds. Examples are Kisibo Community in Rubaya Sub County and Bukora Community in Kitumba Sub County. Where vegetable growing and saving & credit schemes are doing well.
- The programme gives on going support to these teams

through training (refresher trainings) for communities and workshops and refresher training for monitoring team members and in some instances facilitate them in conducting study tours.

Impact of performance monitoring and evaluation on the maintenance of water and sanitation facilities.

- It has led to cost recovery with gravity flow schemes; each scheme maintains over Ug sh.50, 000 for O&M on their accounts.
- Still in gravity flow scheme communities, it has led to increased spare parts with all the schemes developed with support of KDWSP having spare parts.
- Improved domestic hygiene has been realized.
- Maintenance of facilities is very good with community members having skills to carry out minor repairs.
- It has led to continued reduction in distance and time in water hauling; KDWSP targets the unserved better.
- There is reduction in sanitation related illnesses especially among children.
- It creates collaboration between communities and service providers.

Conclusion

- Once the community is involved in monitoring and evaluation, they get to know where they began and once compared with where they are now, the community is able to draw their own action plans which creates ownership of activities, motivation to carry on as achievements are owned by them which ensures sustainability of water and sanitation facilities.
- With the maintenance of facilities, cost effectiveness is achieved especially in hygiene and sanitation, which eventually leads to improved health and standards of living.
- It's a learning process for community members and supporters.
- Once the community is involved in monitoring and evaluation, it gets organized with a good working network.
- Community empowerment especially women is achieved once they are involved as the women are the custodians of hygiene and sanitation in homes. This leads to cost effectiveness and ensures environmental sustainability.

References

MoWLE, 2004. The Uganda Water and Sanitation Sector: 2004 Performance Report. Ministry of Water, Lands and

Environment

Note/s

1. On going support refers to the support given to the communities worked in with completed projects to ensure sustainability. This is done on a demand driven approach and the programme supports the communities on major repairs, which are beyond the capacity of the communities. The programme uses different approaches like refresher training courses, study tours, use of demonstration villages and homes and competitions in this to prevent these damages. However this support stops immediately the community is able to handle its problems, its not done forever. In this the community contribution is almost 50% the total cost like when carrying out a major repair, the community contributes all the locally available materials which include all the required sand, aggregate, bricks, hard core, clay and unskilled labour.
2. Monitoring teams are formed by community themselves usually after construction to carry on with the maintenance part of the project.
3. A community referring to the project area irrespective of varsity i.e. could be a parish or a village
4. A demonstration village is a village, which has taken in the messages and has 90% hygiene improvements in domestic hygiene, water facility maintenance, income generation and functional WATSAN and Monitoring committees. These are set with the objective of creating learning centers for other communities to learn from
5. Training topics include, what monitoring is, How to develop monitoring indicators, Record keeping, leadership, mobilization, communication, safe water chain, causes and prevention of water related diseases, domestic hygiene and roles and responsibilities

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