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**Achievements and lessons learned from the
Uganda Self-Supply Pilot Project 2006-2008**

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This document provides the achievements and lessons learned from the Uganda self-supply pilot Project (2006-2008). The pilot project followed a research study undertaken in 2005 that indicated that self-supply initiatives existed in the Uganda rural water sector. Following the study a pilot project was launched in September 2006 and involved engagement of two local NGOs with support from Government. The pilot brought about a cost effective up grading of 41 water sources serving approximately 600 households. More importantly it enhanced understanding of self-supply in Uganda, and a number of emerging lessons emerged. These provide a better focused definition of self-supply, and of the appropriate ways and means for future scaling-up.

Introduction

Sutton (2008) defines self- supply as the improvement to household or community water supply through user investment in water treatment, supply, construction and upgrading, and rainwater harvesting. It is based on incremental improvements with technologies affordable to users. The Uganda self-supply pilot was based on a research study (Carter et al, 2005) undertaken in 2005 by one international and two Ugandan consultants. The research study, and a field note (Carter, 2006) drawn from it, were published (both published electronically on the RWSN website, and the latter in print also). Those documents drew heavily on experience elsewhere especially Zimbabwe and Zambia (Morgan, 2003, Sutton, 2004) and on primary data collection in nine districts of central and eastern Uganda (Carter et al, 2005).

Following the research study, a limited request for proposals to Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) was issued by the Ministry of Water and Environment, MoWE), for purposes of identifying two NGOs which could undertake a pilot project. Out of those short-listed, two NGOs Uganda Muslim Rural Development Association (UMURDA) and Wera Development Association (WERA) were selected in June 2007 to carry out the pilot. A contract was established between the Ministry and the NGO coordinating body, Uganda Water and Sanitation NGO Network (UWASNET), to manage the funds and establish contracts with the individual NGOs.

Implementation

The pilot project commenced in September 2006, and was completed in February 2008. Technical and financial support to the two implementing NGOs was provided by the Ministry, assisted by one international and one national consultant. The implementing NGOs provided support (through technical assistance, and offering subsidies) to the water users to make incremental improvements to the water sources. The technical assistance by NGOs included assistance in software (community mobilization and sensitization, selection of areas of operation, capacity building and guidance to communities/individuals on operation and maintenance) and in hardware/ innovative technology. The software and hardware approaches used in the pilot were significantly flexible than the 'conventional' approach, in recognition of the very varied communities and water resources with which the pilot worked. More information about the process achievements of the self supply-pilot project are published electronically on the RWSN website (www.rwsn.ch)

Major achievements of the Pilot Project

The pilot brought about a cost effective up grading of water supply services at 41 water sources serving approximately 600 households, with community contribution amounting to approximately 40% per water source.

Implementing NGO	UMURDA	WEDA
District of Implementation	Bugiri	Amuria
Sub counties of Implementation	Buwunga, Nankoma	Asamuk, Kuju, Wera
Water Sources Upgraded		
Springs- Communal land	16	4
Springs- Private land	6	0
Shallow wells- private	0	13
Shallow wells- Communal	0	2
Total	22	19



Photograph 1. A private well in Amuria district. Deepened, brick lined and covered on top in preparation for a hand pump



Photograph 2. A community spring in Amuria district. Community contributed land, sand, stones, labour, delivery pipe and fencing

Next steps

In the Uganda self-supply pilot project, two Ugandan NGOs have worked in their respective districts, over a period of just over one year, to bring about 41 upgraded water sources with a budget of about UGX65m (US\$38,000) excluding the costs of external technical assistance. It is clear that these NGOs and several others like them could carry out more of the same work in the future, through a similar funding mechanism. It is also clear that a new mechanism needs to be found to fully mainstream self-supply into local Government annual work plans and budgets. The proposals for the future therefore envisage a two-stage up-scaling from the pilot project. The first two-year stage involves an expanded demonstration programme, involving about 15 NGOs. The next stage beyond that involves mainstreaming self-supply into the annual work plans of districts through contracting out of software services by district local Governments to NGOs.

Lessons learned

The process of implementing the pilot led to a good deal of lessons learning. The lessons were learned by implementing NGOs assisted by one international and national consultant. The implementing NGOs

documented implementation experiences. In addition the baseline research (Carter et al, 2005) and the 6 master thesis (Alford, 2007, Jeanne-Astrid, 2007, McGourty, 2006, Mills, 2006, Rogenhofer, 2005, Tillett, 2007) that were carried out on specific aspects of the work usefully added to the knowledge and learning during the pilot. The lessons fall into two main groups, those concerned with how self-supply works on the ground and those concerned with management of the pilot, and, by implication, future scaled-up interventions. These are each addressed below:

Lessons from the pilot

1. **Importance and potential of self-supply.** Targeted support to self-supply is one important strategy for the provision of safe sustainable water supplies. It has significant potential to serve many people at low cost than through the conventional approach and with a greater degree of cost sharing between government and the community.
2. **Drivers.** Self-supply initiatives are common in areas where water is distant, unreliable and costly but with opportunities for shallow ground water, rainwater harvesting possibilities. The drivers which motivate individuals to initiate self-supply improvements include personal convenience, the desire for self-improvement, possibilities for productive water use, and service to the wider community.
3. **Ownership.** At the heart of true self-supply is the issue of water source ownership. Communal ownership and management are problematic, while ownership by a motivated individual provides a greater prospect of functional sustainability.
4. **Technical constraints.** Certain water source technical options are better suited to self-supply than others. In the Uganda pilot, the focus has been on shallow wells and natural springs. The former lend themselves better to self-supply initiatives. It is likely that domestic rainwater harvesting would also be a good option. Where deep boreholes are needed, self-supply may not be an option.
5. **Selecting project locations.** The selection of locations for future pilot projects or scaled-up initiatives needs to take account of technical options, the existence of motivated individuals, the need for improved access to safe water, and opportunities for productive uses of water.
6. **Communicating the concept.** Communicating the concept of self-supply to NGOs and CBOs, local Government, and other stakeholders is important, but challenging. It is easy for the concept to be misunderstood, or for some stakeholders to feel threatened by it.
7. **Water safety.** Experience from the Uganda pilot demonstrates (a) that water quality can be significantly improved through self-supply upgrading, but that (b) water users often wish to progress quickly up the "ladder" of improvements, to a covered source equipped with a handpump.
8. **Role of implementing agencies.** The role of organizations which become involved in support to self-supply is to promote and encourage self-supply initiatives; provide technical and management advice, specialist skills and (limited) material support; promote sanitation and hygiene improvement; all while avoiding stifling private initiatives.
9. **On-going support to water users.** Implementing agencies must continue to be available to water source owners, providing continuing advice in the event of technical or management problems.
10. **On-going support to implementing agencies.** Implementing agencies themselves need continuing support from local and central Government and/or international NGOs, partly to resource their support activities to water users, and partly to ensure their knowledge is kept up-to-date.

Lessons from the pilot process/ management

Lesson	Comments
The pilot (and up-scaling) demands a considerable amount of supervision and technical assistance	Self-supply is a relatively new concept in Sub-Saharan Africa and especially in Uganda. Much needs to be done to support implementing NGOs in their own understanding of the concept. They also need close supervision, especially as the capacity of many national NGOs is relatively weak
Implementing NGOs need a great deal of help with communication and reporting	Reporting and communication are particularly weak points for some NGOs. Simple reporting formats can help. But NGOs need to be encouraged to reflect on their experiences and communicate their experiences and thoughts

KIWANUKA

Technical Know-how and ability to innovate should not be taken for granted.	Some technical expertise may be present, but often the ability and freedom to innovate lacking. Support needs to be provided to encourage such innovation.
Software know-how and ability to innovate should not be taken for granted	In Software too, NGOs tend to have their own 'tried and tested' approaches which may not fit the self-supply approach perfectly. Support needs to be provided to encourage innovation

Conclusions

The Uganda self- supply pilot project offers good lessons on how self supply can be effectively supported in Uganda and beyond. The self-supply pilot has demonstrated that self- supply initiatives are favourable in areas where water is distant, unreliable and costly. The demonstration that water quality can significantly be improved through undertaking incremental improvements in self supply is another important lesson. Lastly the pilot project demonstrated the importance of considerable supervision and technical assistance to NGOs and communities undertaking self supply initiatives.

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