

WaterAid Supporters Visit to Uganda Highly Commended

WaterAid in Uganda hosted supporters from the UK between 2-9 September 2008 touring both projects and potential project areas.

Kampala City (Kampala Central and Kawempe Division)

Kampala, Uganda's capital city, has a high population density with poor water and sanitation facilities in quite a number of areas, especially the slums.



Poor hygiene and sanitation conditions in the suburbs of Kampala

Kampala central and Kawempe divisions were the only areas toured in Kampala district and specifically the team visited Kampala Central division (Kifumbiira zone), a non- project area. The project areas visited were Mulago III (Kalerwe market area), Bwaiise II (Jambula village, Kimombasa and Tebuyooleka zones). The sanitation and hygiene conditions in the non-project areas are appalling with open sewers, unsafe/unprotected water sources, poor toilet facilities, and poor waste disposal contributing greatly to the existence of diseases like cholera, dysentery and malaria. Cholera cases are reported annually in these areas and since 2006 with fatal incidences.

Supporters also visited WAU's projects where great improvements in sanitation and hygiene have been made. WaterAid's local partner, African Evangelical Enterprises (AEE), with support from DFCU bank, constructed improved public toilet facilities and proper drainage in Kimombasa zone.



An improved toilet facility constructed with support from WAU

WaterAid also supports the provision of clean and safe drinking water in the Kawempe division. The provision of safe water, adequate sanitation and hygiene education have greatly enhanced local people's livelihoods – the community is healthier and hence more productive. However, the achievements shared above have been attained amidst some challenges; there are still members of the community who live without access to safe sanitation. On the whole, the collaborative and participatory approaches through which WaterAid in Uganda implements the projects has been very successful in realising local ownership, proper management and sustainability of these projects.

Mpigi District

Mpigi district is located in central Uganda, about 40 kilometres from the city centre. In Mpigi WaterAid works with Busoga Trust (as a local partner) and the District Water Office (DWO). WaterAid promotes rainwater harvesting in the area through the construction of rainwater jars in homes and Ferro Cement Tanks in schools. We have also promoted innovative technologies such as the rope pump, a deep borehole for a school in Bunjako, construction of eco-san toilet facilities for households and a school. We have promoted total sanitation and hygiene education in Kamengo among other areas.



A Water Jar constructed with the support of WAU in Mpigi

With all these interventions, the water and sanitation coverage levels are still low in Mpigi (standing at 45%) and there are still some cases of open defecation causing diarrhoeal and water borne diseases. One of the outstanding reasons for low latrine coverage in Mpigi is the lack of appropriate technology to counter natural challenges. For example, in Lubembe village people do not have proper toilet facilities owing to the weak and sandy soils that cannot hold the weight of a toilet structure. The local community has resorted to using anti-hills as toilets, some people affording to put up simple structures while others use them without any shelter.



A local toilet facility built on an ant-hill

Those living by the lake side on Bunjako Island use the water as a toilet posing a grave danger of spreading diarrhoeal diseases like cholera and dysentery. WaterAid in Uganda supports Busoga Trust and the DWO in their work with the communities on issues of hygiene practises, water and sanitation facilities.

Another effort by WaterAid in Uganda is to ensure that local planning and development bodies take care of water and sanitation issues. All these efforts have gone a long way in promoting access to clean and safe water, and adequate sanitation in the Mpigi district.

Masindi District

The Masindi district is located in mid-western Uganda and is also a mainly agricultural area. WaterAid in Uganda supported MDLG in establishing a modern Management Information System (MIS) data base for water resources mapping which has proved valuable in planning. The supporters and WaterAid staff met with the district leaders and technical staff. This meeting revealed that water and sanitation coverage improved from 52.7% to 62% and with continued support from WaterAid the leaders hoped the coverage would further improve. The district chairperson specifically pointed out that WAU enabled MDLG to become innovative and outstanding in its use of the MIS data base.

Overall, the supporters were able to gain first hand experiences of the stark difference between the non-project and project areas. The poverty levels and lack of access to clean and safe water and adequate sanitation deeply touched the visitors, the supporters thus reiterated their commitment to continue supporting future work. Such support can help WaterAid in Uganda come one step closer to reducing deaths through water and sanitation related diseases in Uganda.

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