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**REPORT FOR  
JOINT EXCOMM MEETING FOR UMBRELLA ORGANISATIONS**

**Name of Organization:** NETWAS UGANDA

**Workshop Dates:** 6<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> May 2014

**Workshop Venue:**

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**Facilitators:** Peter Ssekuma

**Peter Azuba**

## **LIST OF ACRONYMS**

DWD	Directorate of Water Development
DWO	District Water Officers
EU	European Union
LPO:	Local Purchase Order
NETWAS (U):	Network for Water and Sanitation
TA	Technical Adviser
UOs:	Umbrella Organizations
UWUPP:	Uganda Water Umbrella Organizations Partnership Project
WME:	Ministry of Water and Environment
WRM:	Water Resources Management
WSDF:	Water and Sanitation Development Facility
WSSB	Water Supply and Sanitation Boards

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## **1.0 Background:**

The Umbrella organisation Concept was borrowed from Austria where it has been very successful especially through the efforts of the Austrian government which includes a private operator (Salzburg AG), an umbrella organization (Upper Austria Water), a national association (OVGW), an international association of water works (IAWD, lead partner) and a large city water work (Vienna Water). Against this background, a Ugandan Water Umbrellas Partnership Project (WUPP) was developed and is funded by the European Union (EU) through the Africa-EU Water Facility.

The UWUPP project aims at strengthening these Umbrella Organisations through a partnership with 5 different Austrian sector institutions by a mutual exchange of experiences and know-how. The goals of the projects are enhanced management and technical capacities, raised effectiveness and functionality of member schemes, increased female involvement in decision making, strengthened financial viability of member schemes, enhanced water quality monitoring and improved communication and exchange.

A total of five Umbrella Organisations for Water and Sanitation (UOWS; South-West, Mid-West, Central, East, and North) are registered in Uganda as non-profit making companies, limited by guarantee with a membership of selected Small Towns, rural growth centers and rural large gravity flow schemes. It is their task to assist member schemes carry out operation and maintenance functions and share services that would otherwise be too costly for individual schemes - such as training, water quality monitoring, technical inputs to expansions and system repairs, monitoring of service delivery and operational audits.

By June 2013, the total number of Small Towns and Rural Growth Centers' water supplies supported by Umbrella Organisations (UOs) was 309, a noted increase of 62 members from 247 in the previous year. In order for the Umbrella Concept to cover the entire country, MWE is planning to establish the 6th Umbrella Organisation, Karamoja Umbrella of Water and Sanitation (kUws); this new UO is expected to be fully operational in FY 2013/14.

The major objective of the umbrella organisations is to enhance the sustainability of water and sanitation services in the region. As one of the approaches to strengthening operation and maintenance of piped water supply systems, the Ministry of Water and Environment has since 2006 supported the formation of regional umbrella organisations in the country. This has been implemented through strengthening the performance of WSSBs and water and sanitation committees by sharing ideas and resources together for the achievement of sustainable operation and maintenance for each member scheme.

In 2001, the Ministry of Water and Environment, together with Austrian Partners, supported the establishment of umbrella organisations in South Western and have since been replicated to 5

regions of Uganda South Western (Kabale), North (Lira), Central (Wakiso), Mid-West (Kyenjojo), Eastern (Mbale). These regional umbrellas offer training, technical, legal and organisational support to their member boards, including specific services such as the supervision of rehabilitation and extension works and water quality monitoring, among others. The Umbrella organisations are comprised of members from DWD, a regional secretariat, DWOs and WSSBs. These all report to the general assembly which sits yearly to elect executive committees. The Executive Committee is mandated to develop policy and carry out management oversight of the umbrella organisations.

## **1.1 Participants Expectations**

- o Sharing experiences in O&M management
- o Know how to manage member schemes which don't pay subscription
- o Learning the roles of different stakeholders
- o Collective planning by all umbrellas in the country
- o Roles of umbrella in provision of safe and clean water
- o Make more friends
- o Better services for umbrellas
- o Major activities done on O&M in the organizations
- o Learn the UO concept from functioning and operational system umbrellas
- o Make a build up on the first meeting held in city royal
- o Forge way forward on the formation of National body encompassing all regional umbrellas
- o The achievements of UWUPP so far
- o The relationship btn Uos and NETWAS who does what?
- o Update our funding of umbrella organisations in the next financial year
- o To know our responsibility as executive committees of umbrella organizations
- o Handout various presentation

## **1.2 The purpose of the meeting**

To establish and facilitate a network for experience and knowledge sharing involving the five UOs, external partners, member schemes and other

### **1.2.3 Objectives of the workshop**

- o To review progress reports and action plans.
- o To share success and lessons learnt from the operations UOs
- o To come up with clear work plan on the number of Excomm meetings to be held and forge a way forward for their sustainability
- o Share ideas on the upcoming water quality monitoring trainings

- o To formulate strategies for sustaining operations of the umbrella organisations, including the development of regional Operation & Maintenance capacities.
- o To develop an action plan for the key players.

## **2.0 Welcome remarks:**

### **2.1 UWUPP Country Coordinator (MWE).**

The welcome remarks were provided by Mr. Godfrey Hashakimana on behalf of the Commissioner Urban Water. He welcomed all the invited participants and thanked them for honouring the invitation. He informed participants that the meeting was a good opportunity to share ideas, experiences and to agree on the way forward.

### **2.2 Technical advisor**

The technical advisor welcomed everyone and expressed his gratitude on the response by the umbrellas to attend the conference. He told participants that he expected all members to be free and share ideas. He emphasised the need for umbrellas to show their potential through working hand in hand with the schemes. He then noted that schemes cannot work in isolation and hence needed support from the umbrellas. He further noted that even though many schemes exist, there is need for umbrellas to build the skills of the operators of the schemes to ensure that they are sustainably run.

The TA further said that the umbrella model had so been successful in Southwest and even though in other places there were challenges, he noted that there is need to learn from the mistakes and find solutions.

He concluded by proposing a need to have the umbrella organisations organised at national level.

### **2.3 Chair Southwest Umbrella**

The Chairperson Southwest welcomed participants to Kabale and encouraged them to enjoy everything there. He told them that the SWu was formed 14 years ago and used to cover a number of districts though some have moved to other umbrellas. He proudly mentioned that he was happy that SWu as the oldest umbrella had given birth to 5 more umbrellas. He told participants that the umbrella has a Saving and Credit Cooperative (Sacco) to supplement the income of the umbrella organisation in order to help member schemes to get some more money. He noted that the share capital of the Sacco is sixty million Uganda shillings and also gives out loans to its members. The Sacco has 170 members (churches, schools, schemes) and all management is from the Uo.

The Chairperson mentioned that when the central funds delay, the UO uses Sacco funds to work on the scheme.

### 3.0 Highlights of presentations from the Umbrellas

- The North had a very poor performance amongst all umbrella organisations; however chairpersons and the rest of the team have been pivotal in ensuring that its performance is raised
- The South West Umbrella Organisation was started with 70 members, when the central UO was formed 8 members joined it from SWuO, and thus the number reduced to 55, however more members are expected to join to increase membership, 2 WSDF were completed in Kiruhura and Ntungamo.
- The SWuO SACCO has been so successful to the extent that when funding from the central delays, the borrow funds from their SACCO to facilitate the schemes activities.
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- The Eastern UO was founded in 2007, the few successes recorded were attributed to lessons learnt from the different UOs, it started with 85 members and 9 executive members, and it covers 32 districts form Jinja to Kamuli.
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- The Eastern UO; before one is connected to scheme, all sanitation facilities should be in place,
- The SWuO was in advanced stages of organising a training of analysts; however an up date of was needed for the procurement of training kits for water quality testing.
- Time sheets are produced late; this affects a late release of funds and hence affecting operations of UO.
- The NuO covers 23 districts mainly in northern, it has 56 member schemes and 66 members, before one becomes a member he subscribes to the scheme, all members are managing water pumps, 35 have water flowing and some schemes are not functioning. 32 of the schemes have functional WSSB. According to the chairperson of the UO, a manager was recruited for the UO; other schemes will be put in place.
- Central UO operates in 25 districts; it has 66 schemes of which 3 have been taken over by NGOs. 59 schemes are functional; the scheme has increased revenue through providing 577 meters for new connections and faulty ones. 2 schemes were rehabilitated, capacity building of 2 operators in operations and maintaining of schemes, 18 new operators were recruited. CuO also facilitated scheme operators and linked them to spare parts suppliers that increased chances of sustainability of the schemes.
- It is expected that by June 2014, pre paid meters will have been introduced and installed to all schemes in the CuO
- The Karamoja UO is the youngest of the 6 UOs, it is operating in 5 districts of Kabong that has 4 schemes, Abim with 4 schemes, Moroto has 4 schemes, Napaka with 3 schemes and Amudat that has 3 schemes. It has an executive with 1 acting manager and 1 social mobiliser.
- In MWuO, the chair person makes on spot verification to schemes to ensure they are fully operational and well maintained, it was reported though that there is political influence that water users do not want to contribute for O&M of schemes. There is a

challenge of road construction that led to breaking of water pipes hence disconnecting water from other areas. The chairperson recommended that rural growth centers need to be connected to metered systems. It was observed that Bwera town council was connected to meters and over 10 million shillings is collected per month.

- The chairperson of CuO took time off to appreciate the role played by the coordination organisation and that of the technical advisor that has ensured a smooth implementation of the umbrella organisations, there isn't much space to accommodate the committee running the UO, however they are in the process of constructing their own premises, and this will smoothen their operations. It was also observed that UO are providing good services to water users that would otherwise be difficult if they were non existent.
- As per the chairperson of the Eastern UO, it was noted that a lot is said about provision of safe water yet less is said about sanitation, the 2 need to move hand in hand for successful results. The cordial working relationship with staff has ensured proper implementation of schemes activities, he however asserted that since most schemes are gravitation flow, they are affected by landslides and hence need for more funding to support them. The EuO is giving services to Katakwi and Bukwo which makes the coverage wider and yet funds are not adequate enough to fully monitor and supervise progress of schemes.
- The Karamoja UO being the latest among the 6 UOs, there is need for pledging to assist them grow like the other UO, making them an independent UO has provided them with confidence to run the schemes, they however noted that it is a dry area and there is need for more water to support hence the need for faster assistance to have schemes fully operational, they also need special assistance to catch up with the rest of the UOs.

### **3.1 Reactions to the presentations**

- Members of the scheme lack inadequate skills to run and manage it need to design trainings and train them to manage UOs.
- The personnel based in Austria needs to come down at grass root to know the situation and that will give a basis for members facilitation.
- There is need to develop activities of UO if a successful work plan is to be developed, this will improve performance.
- The technical advisor should discuss with the Austrians coordinator and NETWAS to come up with a better strategy on how the project should be implemented.
- The work plan should be shared with other members of the UO to have an input that will promote participation.
- There is need to customize the supervision of the schemes to create a sense of ownership for sustainability.
- There is need for linking scheme operators to suppliers of spare parts to avoid middle men as this will increase sustainability.
- All managers should make written presentations and they will be shared among different managers as references for learning.
- Karamoja UO needs special and more assistance to catch up with other regions.



- Policy makers should be guided on how to elect able and competent members who mind about legacy.
- Most UO in Karamoja are not 100% registered, need to register them for proper supervision.
- All UOs should have a sustainability plan; SACCOs should be adopted just like the Western UO.
- Before communities are connected to the scheme, sanitation facilities should be in place.

### **3.2 Agreed resolutions and issues to consider as a way forward**

Each town in the country will be encouraged to become a member of UOs, this will increase participation and voice for continuous funding due to expressed need for constant supply of water.

Experiences shared in the workshop will help to strengthen UOs and to streamline management, however there is also need for the executive committees to visit other UO; this could offer opportunities for learning and picking good practices that can be adopted.

#### **3.2.1 Other important issues to note:**

Water schemes cannot work in isolation, there is need to network with all partners and stakeholders to increase support for them to be sustainable.

There are no particular skills that chairpersons have to run the schemes, there is need to identify key areas in which those running the schemes can be trained to ably manage them.

There is need for more funding to sustain the schemes, there seems to be constant budget cuts that affect the operations of the UOs, need to streamline funding to have successful meetings and workshops to forge way forward for sustainability

### **4.0 Challenges affecting operations of the schemes.**

- Water users do not own the water facilities, to the extent that when it breaks down they refer to the facility as that of the UO, this has a negative impact on the management.
- In SWuO, the challenge of transports to monitor all groups is affecting progress of the schemes.
- Financial resources are so limited from the joint partnership funds; the limited resources are equally affecting the implementation of scheme activities.
- Water users' failure to pay for subscription has been a challenge affecting operations for the schemes.

- Some operators have personalised the schemes and when their term elapse, they do not want to let them go.
- The coordinator of the project is not flexible, there is need to either change the coordinator or improve to reduce the bureaucracy involved in releasing of funds.
- Some managers of the schemes are selling water meters directly .....
- There are always conflicts of interest when one is the manager and at the same time operator running a scheme.
- Inadequate funds for vehicle maintenance that affects supervision of schemes
- Northern UO has a wider geographical coverage that increases the operational cost due to the need for constant monitoring and supervision.
- Delays in procurement of items and services increases a slow response to activities.
- Continuous and rampant vandalism of water points in NuO that are sold in South Sudan and hardware breakdown still affects accessibility of services to beneficiaries.
- Poor management system for the schemes in the NuO that hinders progress in managing schemes, need to operate independently.

The CuO had the following challenges: some schemes run on generators which are a costly to maintain as tariffs are very high.

- There are accumulated bills of 18 million shillings, this hinders operations and there is need for funds to install prepaid meters.
- Some schemes like that of Rakai has lived its life span hence the need for overhauling or installing a new one.
- Transport i.e. need for a vehicle to facilitate movement within the district to supervise and monitor the operation and progress of schemes.

Member schemes for the Central UO do not want to pay for subscription that is hindering operations of the UO; political influence has its disadvantages for smooth operation of schemes.

## **5.0 Recommendations:**

All participants agreed that the coordinator of the project based in Vienna should take time off to make a visit to Uganda; this will give him more insight of situation on ground other than making decisions based on internet, which will give him first hand information as a basis for decision that he will make.

There is need to hold quarterly meetings for the chairperson, managers and another member of the UO

Chairpersons should regularly meetings with their managers; this will bridge managerial gaps and create room for proper operation and running of the UO and schemes.

All electricity bills should be cleared to avoid the challenges for disconnections and having constant supply of water.

All reports presented by the managers should be printed and copies shared with all members present for other UOs to discern and pick out key lessons that can be adopted by other UO.

All UOs to adopt the SACCO approach as an avenue for raising funds for new and lower schemes.

There is need to blacklist poor service operators, this will make will make the scheme last longer and will promote better performance, also agreed that all private operators should be vetted and recommended before they are given license to run schemes.

NETWAS should be on the ground, they do not have to wait for the quarterly meetings to interact with the executives, and this will provide a firm foundation was coordination and implementation.

Board members should be educated enough to know how to provide quality service for the beneficiaries.

There is need to communicate early when organising for workshops, this will help participants to prepare early enough to have reports shared with all members present. The biggest role of such meetings and discussion is to share ideas with members that were not present.

The management tool and list of functionality of schemes should be put in place; this should be done on a quarterly basis for easy coordination, this is also crucial for the ministry to make constant follow up. It will also help to follow up on preventive maintenance and need for a preventive maintenance plan to be put in place.

- There is need to prepare the training manual
- Need for a clear M&E plan
- NETWAS should develop an MTR
- UO should be trained

The performance of UO depends on how close managers and chairpersons are to the main schemes, managers and chairpersons should ensure this is put in practice to increase progress of scheme performance.

The challenges of IWRM as part of the project should not be ignored; there is need for training and capacity building for the members to the communities on how the 2 can be integrated.

There is need to have standardized trainings, M&E water quality, the ministry has designed frameworks that can be adopted.

In future, the meetings to come should be comprised of at least 3 participants per scheme; members of the WSSB should be involved and should be rotational. The power to choose the other participants lies in the hands of the chairpersons, this is to create sustainability.

There is need for a reasonable management tool, one will be the gray plan for preventive maintenance, and managers should have a draft. They also need to visit schemes as a strategy for good evaluation and donor to know how many W/S are needed per scheme.

Result based functionality of the schemes, the ministry is much interested in systems working and quality of water and they should be updated on a quarterly basis for better monitoring.

## **6.0 Conclusion:**

The next quarterly meeting to be held in eastern (Jinja), Karamoja had been suggested as the next best region to host the meeting however members disagreed on this since it is the newest member of UO and therefore do not have a lot to learn from.

Need for all UOs to adopt the approach of SACCOs to raise funds for running the scheme, this will increase sustainability long after the project closes. There is need to adopt the SwuOs of SACCO that has collected a share capital of 60 million shillings and 102 million shillings in loans to members, this can be used to fund the schemes' activities and increases self sustainability. There are 170 members based in schools, churches, water schemes managed by the SwuO.

There has been an increase of water coverage in south western Uganda; this has changed the lifestyle of people.

Umbrella organisations works with the ministry of education, NAADS and MWE to ensure the schemes are operational.

There is a tendency of private operators to recruit local people that temper with scheme; they should be checked before they are recruited. Private operators are responsible for proper management of the schemes, therefore they should take responsibility in case the scheme is vandalised. Private operators, town clerks, sub county chiefs should be accountable to avoid conniving and fraud.

WSSB should be responsible for raising awareness amongst beneficiaries, they should create platform for raising awareness, and this will help to mitigate the challenges of lack of ownership by the beneficiaries.

Budget cuts affects performance of schemes and management, there is need to adopt the bottom up approach of management and being more practical in implementation.

Forums are learning platforms for chairpersons and secretaries, there is need for participation of other members, and this will widen the understanding on management and operations of the schemes.

## 7.0. Appendices

### Appendix I

#### Workshop Programme

Day	Time	Topic/Activity	Presenter	Session Chair
One	Evening	Arrival of participants		
Two	8.00	Registration	All	NETWAS/ DWD
	8.30	Introductions	All	
	9:00	Expectations & Objectives of the Meeting	All	
	9:15	Welcome Remarks	South Western Umbrella	
	9.30	Opening remarks	Director, DWD	

	<b>10:00</b>	<b>Tea/Coffee Break</b>	<b>All</b>	
	10:30-1:00am	Presentation of progress reports from UOs	Managers,	DWD
	2:00-2:30	Discussions	All	
	<b>1:00</b>	<b>Lunch</b>	<b>All</b>	
	2:30	Formulation of work plan for interval of excomm meetings (GP work)	All	NETWAS/DWD
	3:30	Presentation of work plan	All	
	<b>3:45</b>	<b>Tea</b>	<b>All</b>	
	4:00	Discussion	All	
	5:00	Way forward	All	
	5:30	Closure	Commissioner,	