

# Marginalisation and Exclusion from WASH Services

## A UGANDA STUDY REPORT

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**IRC**

Uganda

Watershed  
empowering citizens

# Introduction

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The International Water and Sanitation Centre (IRC) commissioned a study to assess the marginalisation and exclusion from Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) in the country in 2018.

The study aimed at establishing the marginalised, documenting their experiences and assessing the main obstacles they face in accessing WASH services.

The study also set out to examine the efficacy and effectiveness of relevant WASH policies and regulation as well as generating recommendations for ensuring access to inclusive WASH services.

# Study Objectives

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- To establish who the marginalised people, groups and communities are as regards access to WASH services
- To assess the main obstacles faced by marginalised groups in the quest for WASH services.
- Examine the effectiveness and efficacy of WASH policies and regulations as regards access to WASH services.
- To document experiences of the marginalised persons.
- Make recommendations for inclusive WASH services access

# Methodology

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- A cross-sectional participatory design using qualitative methods of data collection was carried out.
- Data was generated by reviewing existing literature on international and national legal and policy documents, WASH sector strategies and reports, the project documents and reports.
- Primary data was collected from 13 Focus Group Discussions among beneficiary groups (women, men, girls and boys) in the three Districts of Ntoroko, Kabarole and Kamwenge; 25 key informant interviews held with government officials at different levels {Sub-county, District, Region (TSU6, Albert WMZ)}, and Ministry); and civil society partners.

# Methodology

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- In-depth interviews were undertaken with selected beneficiary groups to gain a deeper understanding of their experiences on marginalisation and exclusion from WASH
- Observations were made to assess the ease with which facilities in communities and schools are accessible to different users.
- Thematic content analysis approach was used to analyze the generated qualitative which informed the writing of the report.

# Policy and Legal Framework

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- Uganda is signatory to a number of international and regional conventions and treaties that recognise WASH as a human right that has a profound influence on achieving other rights.
- Some of these include: UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UNDHR,1948), General Assembly (UNGA, 2010, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, 1979), Convention on the Rights of the Child, (1989), Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006), SDGs (2015), The African Charter on Human and People's Rights (1981), The Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa, and, The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1990).

# Policy and Legal Framework

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- Uganda, has through the 1995 constitution, domesticated most international and regional instruments. The Vision 2040 and NDP III recognise the centrality of water in achieving national development. The National Water Policy (Revision 2018) emphasises the development, management and regulation of water resources in order to maximize benefits for the present and future generations.
- In general the policy context in Uganda is forward looking, rights-based and progressive.

# Effectiveness and Efficacy of Policies and Regulations

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- Close analysis of the sector policies, strategies and guidelines, indicated that Uganda generally has an inclusive legal framework recognizing rights in line with global commitments.
- However, there is limited articulation of financing mechanisms for achieving the WASH targets and the current resources not matched with commitments.
- Further analysis also reveal inadequacies in implementation and regulation that perhaps explains why over 10million people still lack access to quality and sustainable WASH services.



# Study Findings

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# Defining Marginalisation and Exclusion

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- To respondents, marginalisation meant denial or failure to ensure that people access water, sanitation and hygiene services. This could be in terms of non-existent or limited representation in decision making processes and therefore lacking a platform to voice concerns; lack of physical access to the services limited by technology and location; lack of access and control over resources to put up facilities and failure to access justice in instances of unfair denial.
- It is important to note that marginalisation, exclusion may be obvious or concealed, and thus require deliberate policy and operational strategies to ensure appropriate redress.



# Marginalised and Excluded Groups

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- **Women and girls**, by virtue of their gender roles are the main users of water and sanitation at household level. Girls endure long and risky distances and lose school time in search of water or due to lack of adequate sanitation and hygiene facilities at school. Women often lack financial resources and power to participate in WASH related decisions.
- **Communities in hard to reach areas** largely remain unserved due to geographical or topological factors such as high-water tables making it difficult to have sustainable sanitation facilities and limited water source options caused by cases of salinity and turbidity.
- **The Elderly and PWDs** face multiple vulnerabilities due to physical challenges as well as limited participation and representation at household and community level. Often, the WASH technology designs don't cater to the needs of the PWDs and the elderly. Society still expects them to walk long distances to the nearest source and use strenuous technologies like boreholes and squat toilets.

# Marginalised and Excluded Groups

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- **Children** in most communities bear the burden of fetching water, which affects their ability to attend school regularly. They are susceptible to WASH related diseases due to low immunity and lack resources to provide for their own WASH needs.
- **Ethnic Minorities** are excluded from services due to social, physical and historical differences leading to limited representation and ability to voice their WASH concerns.
- **The poor in rural and urban areas** lack finances to invest in and maintain appropriate WASH facilities. They pay higher water tariffs because of too much dependence on intermediaries. They are susceptible to diseases because they mostly live in poor environments particularly in urban areas.

# Marginalised and Excluded Groups

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- **Marginalized populations** because of their livelihood style especially pastoralists, fishermen, forest dwellers and migrant casual labourers on large estates. They are transient in nature and do not seem to settle in a given locality making it difficult to serve them.
- **Refugees and transient communities** – Access to clean water and appropriate sanitation facilities are among the most urgent needs of people displaced by conflict. By providing appropriate water and sanitation infrastructure, and educating people on good hygiene practices, families are helped to live dignified lives.

# BARRIERS TO ACCESSING WASH SERVICES

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- **Planning challenges and population dynamics** – Uganda is experiencing exponential population growth (3% pa) and high urbanisation (6.6% pa) that is not matching the ability of the country to plan and provide appropriate basic services including water and sanitation.
- **Inappropriate and expensive technologies** – due to climatic variations and topographical limitations, some of the traditional water supply technologies such as boreholes and springs are no longer viable. Some areas have high iron content, saline water and collapsing soils that require expensive technologies and significant financial investment, amidst stagnating sector funding averaging at 3% of the national budget per annum.



# BARRIERS TO ACCESSING WASH SERVICES

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- **Geographical / topographical barriers** - some places have poor quality water due to salinity and high iron content making it unsuitable for human consumption. Weak and collapsing soils especially in hilly and flat areas often cause erosion leading to flooding and water logging. In such areas, it is nearly impossible to construct lasting latrines and water sources are easily contaminated. As a result, communities resort to risky, distant, polluted and dirty water from streams and rivers, limiting the amount of water available for use per household per day.
- **Economic or Financial Barriers** – the sector has experienced consistent low funding levels (averaging at 3% pa), insufficient to meet demand in line with the strategic investment plan projections. Only 3% of the district water and sanitation conditional grants can be allocated to sanitation. Budget allocation to sanitation by MWE remains at 2bn per annum, meanwhile the line ministries of education and health has no or limited allocation to sanitation and hygiene in schools and health care facilities.

# BARRIERS TO ACCESSING WASH SERVICES

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- **Institutional Barriers** such as inadequate planning; inadequate participation of communities; lack of appropriate and reliable data; and political influence affecting decisions on resource allocation. There is also limited integration across sectors (such as education and health) affecting prioritisation and resource allocation for WASH and gaps in guidelines for district allocation.
- **Insecure and hard to reach groups or communities** – communities living in remote and insecure locations are sometimes left out of the service delivery chain mainly due to the difficulties associated with reaching them. For example, people in fishing communities, displaced populations and refugees in emergency settings are sometimes excluded from access to WASH services due to planning, technological and cost limitations.



# BARRIERS TO ACCESSING WASH SERVICES

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- **Social Cultural Barriers** – tribal and social classifications particularly among the Batooro and Bakonjo and Batooro and Bakiga were expressed as reasons for exclusion from receiving services or gaining representation in decision-making spaces.



# Efforts to Address Marginalisation and Exclusion, and the existing Gaps

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- The sector has made efforts make policy reforms to support improvements in WASH service provisions.
- This is still affected by low quality access compared to the SDG targets and limited financing at the national and district level. Integrating SDG indicators and targets into the sector performance measurement framework has been done. This has provided impetus to the understand the actual status as basis for planning, resourcing, capacity development and reporting of progress.
- MWE has made a strategic shift from investing in traditional technologies such as springs and shallow wells and focused on piped schemes in order to increase the level of service. To do this requires significant resources yet the sector is still underfunded. Besides, piped schemes present management challenges requiring innovation and increased technical capacity.

# Efforts to Address Marginalisation and Exclusion, and the existing Gaps

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- Strategic partnerships have been essential in supporting innovations to improve systems and access to WASH services.
  - For example, collaborations with partners like Water for People and IRC have enabled districts to undertake water point mapping and investment planning establishing actual status and determining levels of investment required to achieve universal access.
- However, the right levels of funding are still required to ensure there is progressive realisation of the right to water and sanitation. Innovative approaches such as the 'Pay as you fetch business model' have also been adopted with districts adopting guidelines identifying and supporting vulnerable households to access WASH services. There is need however, to ensure that the DLGs are fully in the lead and can sustain such initiatives to guarantee continued access to WASH services.

# Capacity Gaps among Sector Actors

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A number of capacity gaps assessed during the study relate to:

- Limited understanding and appreciation of the existing WASH policies and guidelines in line with the right to water and sanitation,
  - Inadequate technical ability to conceptualize,
  - Translating designs,
  - Implement and manage inclusive interventions relevant to needs,
  - Inadequate data for planning,
  - Limited financial and human resources.
- The study also revealed there is: General lack of knowledge and appreciation of the importance of WASH among key education stakeholders at school level affecting prioritization and resourcing of WASH in schools.
  - All these are compounded by lack of appropriate and harmonized approaches to ensure inclusive services, as well as inadequate documentation and packaging of lessons and experiences and using existing platforms to influence learning and resourcing of WASH interventions.

# Potential role of CSOs in addressing marginalisation and exclusion

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- It was widely acknowledged that CSOs have a significant role to play in addressing marginalisation and exclusions from WASH services.
- CSOs are better positioned to create awareness on the right to water and sanitation as well facilitate documentation and learning processes.
- CSOs can effectively contribute to policy processes through investing in research and innovations to support evidence based advocacy as well facilitating policy dialogues.
- There is need for CSOs to use own programming experience to strengthen planning, implementation and monitoring as well as financing of inclusive services

# Conclusions

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- The legal and policy context in Uganda is conducive and elaborate, which if implemented effectively would address challenges of marginalisation and exclusion
- Marginalisation and exclusion manifested in various ways linked to environmental, geographical, social, economic, political, technological and institutional barriers.
- Women and girls, the elderly, communities in remote and hard to reach areas, children, ethnic minorities and the poor people were are affected by lack of access.
- Limited participation and influential voice, lack of adequate appreciation of the issues among decision makers, inappropriate technology, inadequate financial and technical capacity exist.
- Better articulation of the issues, increased awareness and deliberate efforts to design and finance appropriate interventions that address the unique needs of the different categories of people is needed.
- This will require consistent evidence-based advocacy to bring the issues to the attention of planners and decision makers, and building sector capacity to deliver

# Recommendations

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## Influencing legal and policy processes

- Strengthening policy and institutional processes to ensure that the standards and indicators for water, sanitation and hygiene align with the SDGs to improve monitoring of progress
- Strengthen regulation of services, accountability and feedback mechanisms to increase participation and response to the needs of the less served populations
- Undertake consistent and targeted advocacy to influence key decision makers in MWE, MOES, MOH and DPs to increase sector financing.



# Strengthening planning, Implementation, monitoring and reporting processes

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- Support mapping and generation of disaggregated WASH data to improve investment decisions
- Disseminate existing policies, strategies and guidelines to increase understanding and response on the right to water and sanitation, targeting political and technical leaders, and communities.
- Adapt and scale up appropriate technologies and approaches to match context specific needs of the marginalised and excluded groups.
- Strengthening integration and coordination across sectors to increase harmonisation and influence appropriate planning and resourcing of relevant WASH interventions
- Strengthen support supervision; monitoring and inspection of WASH infrastructure to improve access for all at schools, health care facilities, household and community level by key actors



# Prioritising Research, Documentation and Learning

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- Investing in research and learning in collaboration with the private sector, NGOs to innovate and adapt new models and approaches that may be more effective and efficient in addressing unique needs of the different groups and context.
- Organise and facilitate learning forums and dialogues at different levels to share experiences and stimulate debate on pertinent issues that compound marginalisation and exclusion with a view to inform practical actions for redress.

## **Strengthening partnerships and collaborations**

- Strengthening partnerships and collaborations with different sector stakeholders (line ministries, private sector, CSOs, Government Agencies, to improve targeting and leverage technical and financial resources

# Improve Sector Capacity

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- Undertake continuous and well targeted sensitisation to improve appreciation and stimulate action from the right actors to address marginalisation and exclusion from WASH services
- Strengthen capacity of implementers to appreciate the issues, appropriate approaches and technologies and provide adequate financial and human resources to address marginalisation and exclusion
- Empowering women and men on their critical role for providing WASH and increase community WASH financing through supporting Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs) or initiatives to address resource requirements at household and community level.

# Thank You

