

**AN ASSESSMENT OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION ON THE
SUSTAINABILITY OF RURAL WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION
PROJECTS: A CASE STUDY OF BUIKWE TOWN COUNCIL IN
UGANDA**

BY

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Abstract

A study was conducted to assess community participation in the sustainability of rural water supply and sanitation projects. The aim of the study was to determine the extent to which community participation influences the sustainability of rural water supply and sanitation projects in Uganda.

A total of 52 water supply and sanitation projects were initially appraised out of which 26 were randomly selected for the study. Forty (40) respondents were interviewed during the study. The projects were categorized into A, B and C. Category A denoted the highest level of community participation, category B denoted a fair level of participation while category C denoted the lowest/no community participation in planning and implementation of projects. The study used questionnaires, interview guides, observation checklists and group discussion guides as research tools.

The study found out that majority of the projects studied (50%) were in category (B), 27% of the projects were in category (A) while 23% of the projects were in category (C). Majority of the projects were concerned with water supply. A few projects were on sanitation. All the facilities in category (A) were functioning (either desirably or fairly). Under category (B), 83.3% of the

facilities were functioning. In category (C), only 28.5% of the facilities were functional at the time of the study.

Concerning operation and maintenance; all the projects did not have operation and maintenance plans (O & M). Eighty percent (80%) of the respondents had no idea what operation and maintenance mean. In addition, 68% of the respondents had not been mobilized to take part in clean up exercises for their water and sanitation facilities. Over 75% of the respondents had not been approached by anyone to pay user fees. Over 90% of the respondents were not aware of the existence of bye-laws that guide water and sanitation project users. The resource providers had limited or no budgets for operation and maintenance of water and sanitation projects.

A young population of between 18 – 35 years (40%) and a bigger population of women (57.1%) were the greatest potentials for sustaining water supply and sanitation projects. Large household sizes, low income, low education levels (52.5% primary level), lack of awareness and negative attitudes towards water supply and sanitation projects were the greatest constraints to sustainability of water supply and sanitation projects.

The study concluded that the extent to which community participation influences the sustainability of rural water supply and sanitation projects in Uganda is big. Women should be encouraged to take up roles in the water user committees. The study recommends involvement of communities in planning and implementation of water supply and sanitation projects; provision of more projects on sanitation and provision of soft loans to boost communities' incomes and ability to pay for water user fees.