

Outcomes of the Focus group discussions for the situational analysis for water hygiene and sanitation in Mpunge, Kasali and Bulebi landing sites.

Conducted by Katosi women development trust on behalf of Uganda Water and Sanitation NGO Network (UWASNET)

Introduction

The focus group discussions were carried out in an attempt to make a situational analysis of the water hygiene and sanitation situation in the fishing communities of Mpunge, Kasali and Bulebi landing sites, all located in Mpunge sub county in Mukono district. Separate discussions were carried out, one for each of the 3 landing sites. The report therefore highlights the outcomes from each of the landing sites.

Mpunge Sub County is one of the four sub counties where KWDT works, the rest being Ntenjeru, Nakisunga and Mpata. Mpunge was turned into a sub county at the end of the year 2011, having been the biggest and most populated parish under Ntenjeru sub county.

Mpunge has a total number of 6 main landing sites and 5 smaller landing sites, with majority of the people earning their living directly from fishing activities. While men go fishing in the lake, the women and children are normally engaged in the collection, drying and selling of silver fish commonly known as “*mukene*”.

Although no population figures were received specifically for these landing sites, it was observed and respondents often noted that the population on these sites is very high, with high numbers of children especially below the age of 10.

About the Focus group Discussions.

The Focus Group Discussions were intended and targeted to meet at least 10 local LC leaders and leaders of the Beach Management Unit (BMU) for each of the 3 landing sites. Due to the nature and characteristics of these communities however, the would be focus group discussions in some cases ended up being like “community meetings”, this is because, all community members came and gathered around the meeting and were very interested in taking part, and ultimately all of them were allowed to participate in the discussions.

This although was not intended, it brought a lot of life into the discussions and the research team ultimately received useful information from the people. Below are the number of people that turned up for the focus group discussions in the respective landing sites.

	Landing site	Number of participants
1.	Mpunge	31
2.	Kasali	50
3.	Bulebi	17

The key questions that guided the focus group discussions included;

1. What are the key challenges related to hygiene, water and sanitation in this landing site? (the challenges should relate to knowledge, attitudes and practices)
2. What initiatives have been carried out, by who and at what levels?
3. What are the existing gaps /what still needs to be done? What interventions are required to rectify the situation?

About the landing sites.

Bulebi landing site.

Bulebi landing site hosts about 88 households according to the BMU chairman Mr Bwama William. It is quite a busy landing site with trading activities between the various landing sites and beaches such as Gaba, Katosi and more. By observation and responses received during the discussions, the cleanest landing site among the 3 landing sites.

Kasali landing site

Kasali landing site is located further from Mpunge, it is about 9 kms from the main trading centre of Nsanja. The landing site has a total number about 120 households.

Mpunge landing site

Mpunge landing site, also known as *nangoma* has a total number of about 160 households. The landing site as others is characterized by a very huge number of children below the age of 10. The main activity is fishing. While men go to fish, the women major in trading of silver fish. Thus the most times of the day, women are sun drying the silver fish for sale.

WASH related Challenges in the above communities.

- **Limited access to sanitation facilities.** Each of these landing sites has a challenge of inadequate sanitation facilities.
 - In Mpunge, There is only one ECOSAN latrine that was constructed by the sub county 7 years ago, with 2 stances that is serving all the households, with no other form of latrine for any of the households there. The ECOSAN is misused, not only with feces and urine mixed up together, making the decomposing impossible, but also defecating on the floor. In addition, the toilet is full. The community has no clear plan of emptying the toilet.
 - In Kasali, there is one pit latrine that has been constructed by the sub county last year 2011. People here did not have any form of latrine or toilet prior to this. The new latrine seems to have been a very shallow pit, but the residents have no idea how long the pit was. At the time of this survey however, the pit latrine was full and in a very sorry state. It was noted that not more than 20 people in this community do us this

latrine in its current form. People were very passionate in their discussions and they express a lot of anger and disgust about their own sanitation situation!

- **Open defecation.** Majority of the people reported that they use either the lake or the bush/near by “forest”-locally termed as *ntwatwa*. Others places used in this area include anti hills, the lake their compounds and other open places. In Mpunge however they noted also that the *ntwatwa* is also full, and someone can hardly find a place to step while defecating.
 - Statements such as “*ffe wano, tupama nga nte*” loosely translated as; “*for us here we defecate like cows,*” reflect the attitudes and practices regarding excreta management at the landing site.
 - Conflicts caused by open defecation. In the process of collecting data, the researchers witnessed fights that resulted from open defecation where children defecate in the neighbors’ doorways and this caused a fight among the parents in kasali landing site. (*story attached*)
 - Women in these communities highly depend on sun drying and selling of silver fish, locally known as “*mukene*”. It was however realized that the ground on which silver fish is dried is so dirty in the two landing sites of Mpunge and kasali. Often the silver fish was seen mixed together with dry feces. (*a drawing is attached*)
 - During the discussions, many participants noted that they would rather use the bush than using the existing toilets facilities in their areas. One participant noted; “*is it not better for me to use the bush than use the toilet and get sick?*”
 - It was noted also that many families use polythene bags for defecating in the night and then throw the polythene bags either in the lake or in the garbage collection areas in the morning.
 - Others use basins and pour the feces in the water the following morning. Such statements as; “*if you are to fetch water in the morning from the lake, you have to use your jerry can and push the feces away and then fetch the water. Or else, you have to wait until later in the day when the feces disappear in the water, and then you can collect water from the lake.*”
- The people in these places use old fishnets for anal cleansing they noted. This seems to be quite unhygienic since the nets are full of holes and can hardly be effective for anal cleansing.
- **Collapse of soils.** This affects latrine construction. The attempts that have been made in some of the case to construct pit latrines have been frustrated by the collapsing soils. The leaders construct pits one after another but their efforts are frustrated with the collapse of soils.

- It was noted that since July 2011 until now the leaders in Bulebi, had constructed 4 pits; the first one of 3 ft. collapsed, the second one 4ft was filled up in one month, the third one of about 4 ft., is the present one and is about to fill up and is at stake of collapsing again. These shallow pits are constructed with temporal structures made of either papyrus or banana dry leaves for privacy.
- **High water table.** In all cases it was noted that the construction of the traditional pit latrines is made almost impossible by the very high water table. It is estimated that one can hardly construct 7 ft pit without finding water. From the discussions, it appears like the ECOSAN technology could be the most appropriate in this area. This however they noted is expensive for the local people to construct.
- **High population figures** that characterize fishing communities. The shallow pits that are constructed are usually filled up so fast. *“A pit of 2 ft. is full in one week!”* as noted by the secretary BMU Mr Musekula Benon Bulebi
- Termites eat the wood used to put up the latrine structures to ensure privacy.
- **Garbage management.** There is no official place gazzated for specifically garbage collection in these places. However, there are like 3-4 garbage collection points along the Bulebi landing site, while for Mpunge and Kasali garbage is littered anywhere.
- **High dependency on the lake as a source of water.** The landing sites have the lake as the only reliable source of water. Rainwater harvesting is impossible due to the types of houses that are grass thatched and cannot allow harvesting water. The population here relies heavily on the lake as the sole source of water for drinking as well as domestic work. As one of the participants expressed; *“ nze omwana bwa nsaba amazi ago kunwa, mugamba alete ekikopo agende kunyanja”* loosely translated as; *for me, if a child asked me for drinking water, I simply ask her to bring a cup and go to the lake.*
- The other alternative source of water is the local government gravity flow scheme. The gravity flow scheme has a number of standpipes distributed in various parts of the sub county.
 - From the discussion in Mpunge landing site, it was clear that the people at the landing site hardly benefited from the water at the standpipe. Reasons ranged from the fact that the line is always long, the water flow is irregular and the people seemed to have a lot of anger and dissatisfaction regarding the location of the stand pipe, which they claimed was not made for them but for the people in the trading center. Statements like; *“we are forgotten”, “go and ask those people whom you give your services to”* , *“we live by God’s mercy”* among others, showed the anger and disgust that these people had about the water and sanitation services.

- From all the three landing sites, it was reported that there is a lot of irregularity of the water flow as well as management issues between the people and their leaders.
- It was reported that the leaders are charging people for the water in the name of operation and maintenance. However, the people say, something that brought a lot of heat in the discussion, that they never get to know how that money is used, and besides when the tap breaks down, again they are all called upon to contribute to its repair
- Boiling or treating water for drinking is almost non-existing from the responses received during the focus group discussions. It was noted that getting firewood in this area is not simple despite the fact that they have bushes and trees around them. They noted that they can only get some firewood to cook their food and not for boiling water.
- This community is multi cultural, with people from various areas in Uganda including but not limited to; Karamoja, Arua, Gulu, Amuria, Apac, Kabong, Kitgum, Koboko among others. This multi cultural nature of the place does not only cause disagreements, but miscommunications and favoritism. This was discovered to be a catalyst for the existing disagreements thus worsening the hygiene situation in this community.
- Related to the above is the fact that the inter cultural nature causes poor sanitation practices such as some cultures, whose beliefs do promote open defecation by making the use of latrine a taboo for women and girls. Whereas some participants noted that toilet use is a taboo for women during pregnancy, others noted that it's a taboo even without pregnancy, for both women and girls.
- Religion. Many of the people are Muslims and they are pointed at as having been the trouble causes in the poor use and maintenance of the available ECOSAN toilet in Mpunge for example. Although the toilet was meant to separate urine from feces, it is said that the Muslims must use water for anal cleansing, and this defeats the whole purpose of the ECOSAN technology.
- There is no single pit for garbage collection in this area. The garbage is unsorted and littered in very unhygienic ways. Unlike Bulebi, for Mpunge and kasali landing sites, one could hardly notice any organized garbage collection point, but instead garbage is almost thrown everywhere.
- There are some *Land grabbing* issues in this area. Residents say that the land here and part of the lake was sold to some private investors who have stopped all the local people from using that part of the lake that is nearest to them and thus interfering with their source of livelihoods. This seems to discourage the existing efforts either to construct sanitation facilities or to maintain the existing one.

Actions taken so far.

Bulebi

- In Bulebi, the local leaders (BMU) enacted the bi-laws against open defecation. Every one caught defecating in the open, whether an adult or a child, he or she is charged a penalty fee of 20.000 shs. For children, the fee is charged on the parent. This is on top of embarrassing you by taking you around and calling all people to come and see what the person has done and how bad it is. The leaders say that this is done so that others can learn and avoid the same act for fear of both embarrassment and payment.
- The above bi laws were put in place at the end of 2009 when open defecation was so rampant, until the BMUs and LCs sat in a meeting, and made those decisions, and then invited a village meeting where the bi-law was passed against open defecation. Since the bylaw was passed, so far only one person was caught defecating in the open, was embarrassed and after pain a fine of 20.000 shs.
- In the same place, a 4 ft pit latrine was constructed, with 2 stances/squat holes that are being used by almost all the people at the landing site.
- Individual households have been encouraged to dig shallow pits of 2-3ft for their household use. When one pit is filled up, the household is expected to burry it and dig another one.
- All people who are in the business of harvesting and selling the silver fish, locally known as "*mukene*", have been asked to displaying it on fish nets and not bare soil as it is done in other places visited during the survey.

Mpunge

- Contrary to Bulebi, the leadership in Mpunge doesn't seem to have taken any much actions or initiative to solve the existing challenges regarding access to water and sanitation. This is because, apart from the ECOSAN toilet that is poorly used and hardly managed which was constructed by the sub county, there is not even a single individual household or public toilet in this place and no visible efforts to put up one.
- Apart from the leaders, even with the individual households also, there doesn't seem to be any purposeful intervention to improve the situation for now.
- **Kasali.** The story is not any different in Kasali. There does not exist any single initiative either by the people themselves or the local leaders to solve the situation.

Recommendations / proposed solutions.

- There is much more need for sensitization on excreta management and the dangers of open defecation in these communities especially Mpunge and Kasali where the situation is so appalling.
- There is need to educate the users on how to use the ECOSAN toilet. Proper use of the existing facility is paramount to ensure sustainability even for future facilities in this area. The ECOSAN here needs to be emptied and rehabilitated if possible for continued use.
- There is need to rehabilitate the existing toilet facilities in some of the landing sites. Mpunge for example, has an ECOSAN toilet that needs to be emptied and rehabilitated and this can serve for some more time.
- There is need to construct more ECOSAN or other types of toilet facilities along the landing sites. This is because each of the landing sites has got only one toilet facility, with 2 stances and they are all full in addition to being at the verge of collapsing in. the existing toilet facilities, with only two stances can hardly be used effectively by all the households in this area.
- There is an urgent need to construct other toilet facilities in this place. Preferably ECOSAN toilets due to the high water table. It is evident that the members in this area are willing and interested to partner with any organization that may be able to come to their rescue. Through the discussions, they pointed out the fact that they are willing to contribute to the construction and take charge of the maintenance of the sanitation facilities if an opportunity arises.
- Exchange visits. Despite the challenges observed, there were a lot of good lessons especially in Bulebi landing site that can be of help for other people and leaders in the other landing sites. The place was quite clean and their practices and attitudes quite impressive. An exchange visit among the leaders of the various landing sites, both to see what happens in other landing sites, and to understand the leadership and management styles and how it impacts on the hygiene and sanitation situation in these places.