

## WaterAid in Uganda Country programme evaluation

This is the report of a country programme evaluation of WaterAid Uganda, undertaken in July 2010. It was carried out at the same time as WAU's country strategy development, and was designed to support that process. After many years of change, WaterAid in Uganda is poised to move forward into strength.

This report intends to capture that opportunity at this key point in time for WAU. WaterAid Uganda (WAU) is operating within a national WASH sector which is very strong, and in which policies and processes are well-documented. Consequently the highest priorities for WAU are to (a) be fully familiar with and contributing to the continuing development and updating of the sector policies, guidelines, procedures, institutions, systems and performance; and (b) to support Government and other service providers in their realisation. WAU should see itself primarily as a development partner (and so follow Paris and Accra principles as far as appropriate), not as an agency operating independently of Government and other players. It should be a critical friend to Government, and if it acts in this way its credibility and reputation will be enhanced.

We support the District-based approach which was written into the current (2006-11) country strategy, but which has not been applied consistently since then. WAU should select a small number of Districts (we suggest four plus Kampala) according to clear criteria, and then design District-specific programmes of work with District Local Government, partners and collaborators. Such programmes should generally include elements of carefully targeted service delivery, research, networking, advocacy and capacity development. They may involve both rural and urban elements. In communities experiencing very high levels of poverty explicit links should be made to savings, credit, income generation, livelihoods and vulnerability reduction.

A national programme of research and policy advocacy should link strongly to the District activities, in order to create real synergies and two-way learning opportunities for the sector. WAU should work to make itself known for highly professional and ground-breaking work in two focus areas, namely equity and inclusion, and sustainability. It should build its capacity in relation to wider environmental and water resource management issues.

WAU should distinguish between true partners – with partnership agreements, transfer of funds, and a joint way of working – and rather more distant collaborators (those other organisations with which WAU needs to work, and which it needs to influence). WAU should reduce its partner numbers to less than ten.

In its partnerships, WAU should separate engagement over content (led by Project Officers) from accountability over finance and reporting (led by Finance). Consideration should be given to modifying the Country Programme structure according to (a) District programmes, (b) National Research and Advocacy, and (c) National cross-sector support (HR & Admin, Finance). All staff should benefit from team building and management training, with leadership support to the SMT. WAU should develop the team competence and expertise in (a) wider development issues of environment, livelihoods and natural resources; and (b) groundwater development and engineering.

WAU should seriously address its weakness in relation to research and learning, seeking greater visibility and seeing research from conception through to research-into-use in a far more systematic manner than at present.

#### **Recommendation 1**

In recognition of the common goals of Government and WaterAid, influence and support national processes. Don't 'go it alone'.

#### **Recommendation 2**

Work in a few carefully selected Districts, chosen using agreed and transparent criteria. Within each District design an integrated programme of support, working with District authorities and local representatives at village, parish and sub-county levels, and collaborate with all other players in that District, including those in the wider development environment.

#### **Recommendation 3**

Carry out a national programme of research and advocacy into issues affecting the sector as a whole, grounding this research in the programme Districts. The research topics and outputs should be consistent with the priorities and thrust of the NDP.

#### **Recommendation 4**

Link the District-based and national programmes through multiple means of exchange and communications in both directions, focusing on local-national research linkages and a clear communications strategy.

#### **Recommendation 5**

Don't separate community-level advocacy from service delivery. People need to see tangible outcomes, and this principle applies from user level right through to national Government. If WAU 'only talks' it will lose credibility. Develop a well-articulated approach to the integration of service delivery and advocacy.

#### **Recommendation 6**

In service delivery work in very low-income areas, make much more explicit links between WASH service provision, income generation (perhaps through SACCOs), livelihoods, disaster preparedness and conflict. Don't let WaterAid's WASH focus constrain the scope of partner engagement with communities.

#### **Recommendation 7**

Work hard to make equity and inclusion one of the things which WAU is known for. Be a leader in the professional outworking of this principle.

#### **Recommendation 8**

Focus also on sustainability of water and sanitation services and hygiene behaviour change. Be a leader in this difficult area. Specifically find ways of enabling repairs to school services to be adequately financed.

#### **Recommendation 9**

Distinguish between true partners and organisations that WAU collaborates with. Partners are WAU's hands and feet. Collaborators are its companions. Reduce the number of partners, working with those which have a high level of competence. Collaborate with all, regardless of competence – but work to influence their approaches.

### **Recommendation 10**

Let the Programme Officer – Partner relationship be centred around content and sector issues, while accountability matters are dealt with by Finance. Encourage the creation of synergies between projects, programmes and partners.

### **Recommendation 11**

Develop and use clear partner selection criteria, approaches to partner capacity assessment, capacity development strategies and criteria for exit from partnerships.

### **Recommendation 12**

Build the WAU team capacity in (a) wider development issues of environment, livelihoods and natural resources; (b) groundwater development and engineering.

### **Recommendation 13**

Consider re-organising the CP structure around (a) Districts, where integrated work programmes including service delivery, research, advocacy and capacity development take place; (b) a national programme of research and policy advocacy; and (c) a national programme of cross-sector support (HR, Admin and Finance). Design strong linkages especially between (a) and (b).

### **Recommendation 14**

Invest considerable effort into team building and leadership, involving all staff.

### **Recommendation 15**

Transform WAU into an organisation known for the quality and visibility of its research, research products, and research-into-use. Take learning seriously, and fund it adequately. Develop M&E into an adequately supported, focused and outcome-oriented activity.



WaterAid transforms lives by improving access to safe water, hygiene and sanitation in the world's poorest communities. We work with partners and influence decision-makers to maximise our impact.

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