

INCREASING WATER AVAILABILITY, QUALITY AND QUANTITY THROUGH PUBLIC EXPENDITURE. An experience from the public service delivery in Uganda.

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1.0 Introduction

The water sector is one of the priority sectors in Uganda, as it directly impacts on the quality of life of the people and overall productivity of the population. Water supply and sanitation are among the key issues emphasized under the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs, Goal 7 section c) and National Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP), which is the key government framework for ensuring poverty eradication through creation of an enabling environment for rapid economic development and social transformation. Water is a key strategic resource, vital for sustaining life, promoting development and maintaining the environment. Access to clean and safe water and improved sanitation facilities and practices are pre-requisites to a health population and therefore have a direct impact on the quality of life and productivity of the population. Besides domestic water supply, water is also vital for: Livestock Water Supply, Industrial Water Supply, Hydropower generation, Agriculture, Marine Transport, Fisheries, Waste Discharge, Tourism, and Environmental Conservation. Water, therefore, significantly contributes to the national socio-economic development and thus poverty eradication.

Despite Uganda's being well endowed with significant freshwater resources, the challenges of rapid population growth, increased urbanization and industrialization, uncontrolled environmental degradation and pollution are leading to accelerated depletion and degradation of the available water resources. Uganda is also faced with the challenge of low safe water coverage (59% rural and 65% urban, as of December 2003). In order to meet the above challenges, government initiated reforms in the water sector in 1997 to ensure that water services are provided and managed with increased efficiency and cost effectiveness. Comprehensive sector reform studies have been going on since 1998 and are due to be completed by August 2004. During these studies, detailed situation analysis of the sector was carried out resulting in the preparation of a comprehensive water sector Strategy, investment plans and time bound national targets for the sector up to 2015. In demonstrating its commitment to the reform process, government has already embarked on the process of implementing some of the strategic recommendations from these studies.

One of the key strategic outcomes from the reform studies is the adoption of a 'Sector Wide Approach to Planning (SWAP)' for the sector. The SWAP framework, which has been embraced by both government and the water sector development partners, has already proved to be the most appropriate mechanism for resources mobilization and implementation of the action plans. The SWAP framework also guarantees the participation of all stakeholders in the planning and implementation of water sector

activities. This openness has resulted in increased confidence from the development partners who have now agreed to finance water sector programs through the regular government budget, contrary to the project specific funding characteristic of the past.

Despite the significant progress highlighted above, the sector is still faced with a number of challenges. The major challenge is establishment of strong mechanisms for effective, efficient and sustainable delivery of water and sanitation services to the end users, on the basis of the strategies and funding mechanisms established under the SWAP framework. This challenge, coupled with the inherent financial and human resources constraints at both national and local levels pauses the greatest risk for the untimely achievement of the sector targets.

Improvement on the sector services will require enhanced capacity of the sector institutions, in particular the Directorate of Water Development (DWD), to assume its new role of planning, supporting and supervising water and sanitation programs through improvements in monitoring systems and procedures. Government is now focusing on building capacity of the water sector institutions and Local Governments as well as promoting increased private sector participation and effective community participation in all water sector activities. The policy of promoting community participation based on demand-driven approach is being emphasized. Hygiene and health education are actively being pursued as an integral part of the drive to improve household sanitation.

The following paper therefore seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What percentage of Ugandans use protected water sources?
2. How much time is spent while collecting water from the water source?
3. What reasons do households give for not using protected water sources?

2.0 Background

2.1 Water Sector Goal, Objectives and Targets

2.1.1 GOAL

The goal of the water sector in Uganda is: “To manage and develop the water resources of Uganda in an integrated and sustainable manner so as to secure and provide water of adequate quantity and quality for all social and economic needs for the present and future generations with the full participation of all stakeholders.”

2.1.2 OBJECTIVES

The key water sector objectives include:

- 1) To promote coordinated, integrated and sustainable water resources management to ensure conservation of water resources and provision of water for all social and economic activities.
- 2) To achieve sustainable safe water supply and sanitation facilities, based on management responsibility and ownership by the users, to 100% of both the rural and urban population in Uganda.
- 3) To promote the development of water supply for agricultural production in order to modernize agriculture and mitigate effects of climatic variations on rain-fed agriculture.

2.1.3 TARGETS

The national targets for water supply and sanitation in both urban and rural areas are shown in Box 2.1 below:

Box 2.1 - National Targets for Water Supply and Sanitation	
Urban Areas	Achieve 100% safe water coverage and 100% sanitation coverage in urban areas by 2015, with an 80%-90% effective use and functionality of facilities.
Rural Areas	Achieve 77% safe water coverage and 95% sanitation coverage in rural areas by 2015, with an 80%-90% effective use and functionality of facilities.

2.2 Definition of Coverage:

The definition of coverage relates to percentage of the population with access to an improved water source within a walking distance of 1.5 Km in a rural area and 0.2 Km in the urban area. For sanitation, coverage refers to the percentage of the population with sanitation facilities in their place of residence.

2.3 Water Sector Policy and Legal Framework

The government has put in place a comprehensive policy and legal framework for the management of the water sector. The framework comprises of a set of policies and laws the most notable of which include: The National Water Policy (1999); The Water Statute (1995); The National Water and Sewerage Corporation Statute (1995), and the Local Government Act (1997). Though most of the above policies and legislation have been in force for more than five years, a number of provisions are not yet fully operational, especially at the local government and local community levels. Furthermore, some of the legislation needs to be revised to address the emerging issues in the sector like Private Sector Participation, Decentralization, and the SWAP.

2.3.1 National Water Policy

The National Water Policy (NWP), adopted in 1999, provides the overall policy framework for the water sector. The National Water Policy promotes the principles of integrated water resources management as a means to ensuring sustainable management and utilization of Uganda's water resources. The policy also emphasizes the recognition of water as being both a social and economic good, whose allocation should give first priority to domestic use. The Policy is based on the principle of "some for all, rather than all for some" adopted from the 1990 "New Delhi Statement". It anchors operation and maintenance as an important and integral part of all water and sanitation programs to ensure their sustainability. The policy also highlights the key role played by women in all water management and development activities.

2.3.2 Guiding Principles

The National Water Policy adopts the guiding principles for water resources management emanating from the United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development (UNCED, Agenda 21, Chapter 18) as detailed in Box 2.2 below.

BOX 2.2: National Water Policy Guiding Principles

✓ Freshwater is a finite and vulnerable resource, essential to sustain life, development and

the environment
✓ Management of water resources at the lowest appropriate level.
✓ Recognition of water as a social and economic good with a value reflecting its most valuable potential use.
✓ Integration of water and land use management
✓ Recognition of the central role played by women in the provision, management and safe - guarding of water.
✓ The important role of the private sector in water management.

The National Water Policy also re-emphasizes the water resources management strategy as stipulated in the Water Action Plan (WAP) whose preparation was based on the same objective and guiding principles. The key strategy elements are grouped into those supporting an enabling environment, those guiding institutional development and those supporting the upgrading of planning capacity and prioritization of water allocation and use.

2.4 Progress towards achieving MDGs

In September 2000 at the UN Millennium Summit, world leaders agreed to a set of time bound and measurable goals and targets for combating poverty, hunger disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation and discrimination against women. Placed at the heart of the global agenda, these goals (eight in number) are now called the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Progress towards attainment of the MDGs is measured with the aid of 18 quantitative targets and 48 performance indicators. One of the targets – target 10 – addresses water supply and sanitation and calls upon member states to “halve by 2015 the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation”. Target 10 is monitored through indicators 30 and 31, which are the proportions of people with sustainable access to safe water sources and improved sanitation respectively. Using 1990 coverage levels, the MDGs for Uganda are 61.8% if the population with access to improved water, and 84% with access to improved sanitation by the year 2015.

2.5 Issues, Challenges and Opportunities

2.5.1 Issues

Key issues affecting the sector performance include:

a) Inadequate financial resources: The investment requirement for rural water supply and sanitation, to meet the 2015 target, is about US\$ 951 million. The corresponding investment for the urban water supply and sanitation is estimated to be US\$ 481 million. The Government cannot finance this level of

investment from local limited resources. The issue here, therefore, is how to raise the required financial resources to meet the 2015 targets for the water sector.

- b) Inadequate capacity at district and lower levels to plan and implement sector activities. This has consequently resulted in low absorption of funds by the local governments.
- c) Limited Private sector capacity to cope with the increased water and sanitation activities.
- d) Weak coordination and management at both national and local governments' level.
- e) Inadequate involvement of local communities in the planning, financing, implementation, monitoring and management of community based water and sanitation developments.

2.5.2 Challenges

Despite Uganda's being well endowed with significant freshwater resources, the challenges of rapid population growth, increased urbanization and industrialization, uncontrolled environmental degradation and pollution are leading to accelerated depletion and degradation of the available water resources. In addition, the major operational challenge for the water sector is establishment of strong mechanisms for effective, efficient and sustainable delivery of water and sanitation services to the end users, on the basis of the established strategies and funding mechanisms.

2.5.3 Opportunities

In order to cope with the above challenges, government has taken steps to revamp the water sector through comprehensive policy, legal and institutional reforms aimed at increasing the performance of the sector in terms of outputs but also the efficiency in service delivery.

The opportunities available to ensure this transformation of the water sector include:

- a) Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) – Which gives high priority to water supply and sanitation as one of the key intervention areas for poverty eradication.
- b) Water Sector Reform – whose objective is to ensure that services are provided and managed with increased performance, efficiency and effectiveness, while maintaining the government's commitment to equitable and sustainable provision of domestic water supply and sanitation services.
- c) Comprehensive Policy and Legal Framework – which guides the planning, implementation and monitoring of water supply and sanitation activities.
- d) Good governance in both the management of public resources (through multi-annual financial planning and budgeting under the MTEF) committed to water supply and sanitation activities.

- e) Private Sector Participation (PSP) which has brought in expertise and financing from the private sector to support government in the planning and implementation of water supply and sanitation activities.
- f) Commitment from government and development partners for continued support of water supply and sanitation activities.

2.6 Future Outlook for the Sector

Given the achievements made so far, the water sector is on the right track to meet both its medium term and long-term objectives and targets. With the Sector Reforms expected to be completed in December 2004, the sector is bracing itself for a period of intensive activity as the reform recommendations begin to be implemented.

Implementation of the reform recommendations will not only be challenging but will also inevitably have heavy financial, technical and legal implications all of which have to be addressed to ensure successful and timely realization of set targets. All these pre-requisites have been addressed in details in the different sub-sector strategies and investment plans. The biggest challenge to the future of the water sector is mobilizing the necessary financial resources as stipulated in the sub-sector investment plans and putting in place the necessary implementation and coordination mechanisms for the efficient delivery of services to the end users.

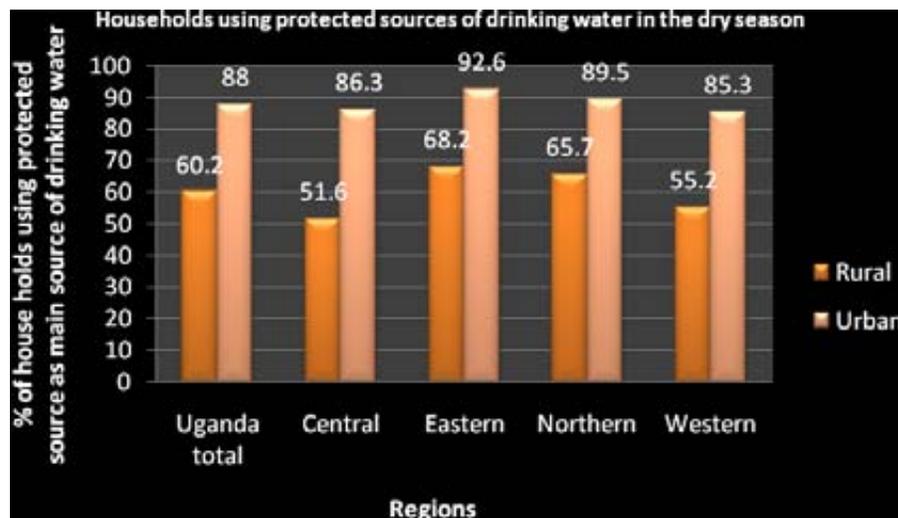
It is envisaged that the private sector and the Local Governments will play a more active role in the delivery of water and sanitation services in the new liberalized and decentralized water sector. The challenge in this case will be building the capacity of both the Local Governments and the private sector to enable them play their role effectively. Increased stakeholder participation in the sector activities will also call for more effective coordination mechanisms and a coherent ME&R framework to ensure transparency and accountability in the sector and to minimize duplication of efforts and wastage of resources.

3.0 METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS

A sample of 7864 households, both rural and urban from the 4 different regions of Uganda (southern, western, central and northern) was considered. It comprised of respondents between the ages of 15-49 years (National Service Delivery Survey, 2004). This paper is based on descriptive analysis using SPSS statistical package. The following results were obtained.

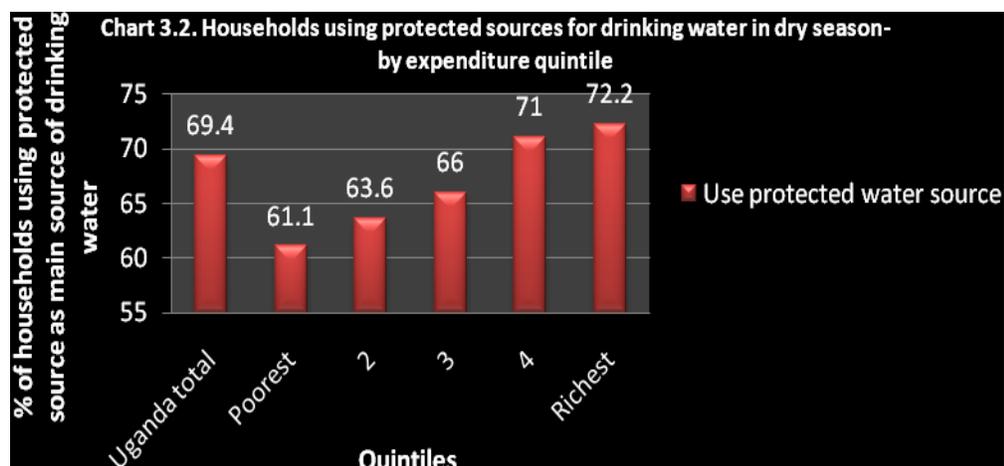
3.0.1 Use of protected water sources.

The survey asked households to indicate their main source of drinking water in both the dry and wet seasons. The responses for the two seasons were similar except that rain water was a significant source of drinking water in some areas in the wet season. Nation wide, 60.2% of rural households used unprotected sources in the dry season compared to 88% of the urban households.



Source: NSDS 2004 Table 13.1.A. The following sources were considered protected; borehole, protected spring, gravity flow scheme, piped water in or outside dwelling or compound.

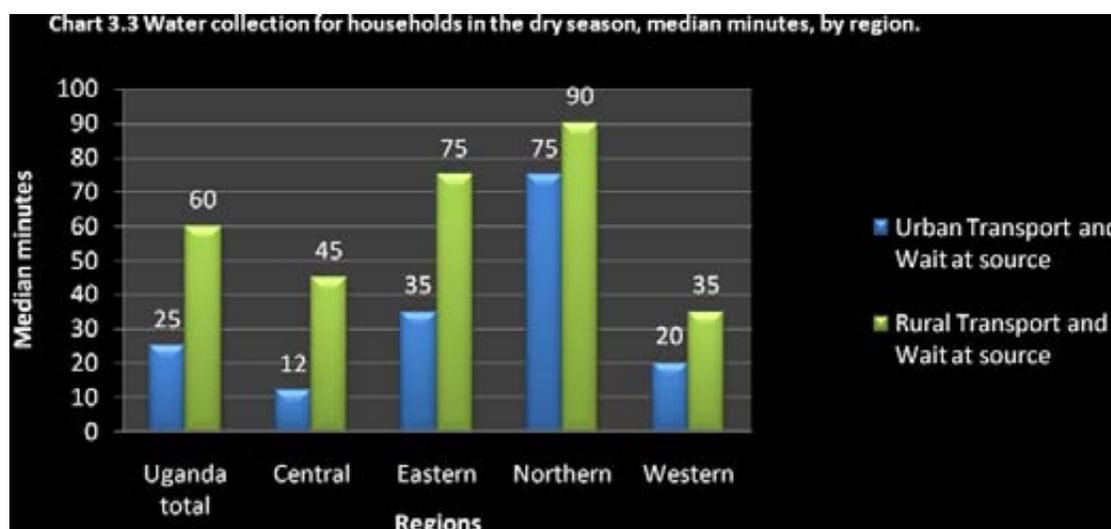
Access to protected sources of drinking water was closely correlated with economic status. In the poorest quintile, use of protected sources was 8% points below the national average of 69.4% while in the richest quintile (largely urban households), the use was 10% points above the national average.



Source: NSDS 2004 Table 13.1.B. The following sources were considered protected; borehole, protected spring, gravity flow scheme, piped water in or outside dwelling or compound.

3.2 Time spent collecting water

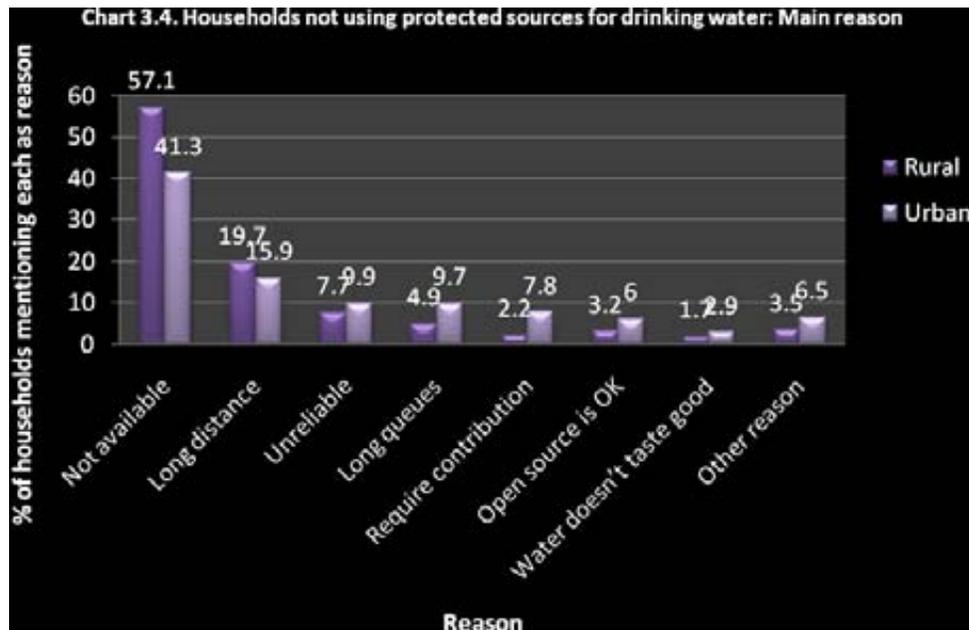
Major disparities were found in the time households reported spending on collecting water. Average total collection times varied significantly among rural and urban areas, with the average rural household spending 60 minutes compared to 25 minutes for the average household.



Source: NSDS 2004 Table 13.3.A. Total bar heights indicate total water collection time (wait and transport).

The above bar segments for the northern and eastern regions indicate a substantial burden on households from the waiting time reflecting crowded conditions at the source of the water.

Households appeared generally to use protected sources for drinking water where they were available. The chart below shows the main reasons given by 30% of households not using protected sources. Unavailability and long distance to a protected water source were the dominant reasons. This pattern was observed in both urban and rural areas in all regions.



Source: NSDS 2004 Table 13.2.A. Base: household giving reason for not using protected sources.

Most households commented on whether the availability of safe water had changed during the prior 2 years. Nationwide, almost 44% of urban households indicated improvement, compared to 33% of rural households. Rural households in northern region gave the least favorable responses: 17.5% of them indicated improved access to safe water in the prior 2 years. Among the expenditure quintiles, the poorest quintile reported no improvement overall, while the richest quintile which was 57% urban, reported substantial improvements overall.

Conclusions

Households' use of protected water sources for drinking was correlated with economic status. Households in the poorest quintile had less piped water and were more likely to use unprotected wells, lakes and river water than the national average. As in other quintiles, the dominant reasons for not using protected sources were "unavailable" and "long distance". The longer distances to water sources for the poorest households (an average of 0.8km in the dry season) and crowded conditions at water points are illustrated by the total collection time in the dry season; the average of 70 minutes for households in the poorest quintile as compared to 45 minutes nation wide.

Recommendations

Provision of safe water sources should prioritize the poorest areas by way of allocating increasingly more funds. The districts that are least served with safe water sources are known by the Department for Water Department. These should be receiving increasingly more funding as compared to other districts.

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E. W. Sugita / *Water Policy* 8 (2006) 529–537 537