



Graduate School of Development Studies

Community Level Water Governance and Pro-Poor Outcomes in the Water and Sanitation Sector: The Case of Mbarara District, Uganda.

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Brenda Asimwe

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Members of the examining committee:

Dr Sylvia Bergh (Supervisor)

Dr Sunil Tankha (Reader)

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Inquiries:

Postal address: Institute of Social Studies
 P.O. Box 29776
 2502 LT The Hague
 The Netherlands

Location: Kortenaerkade 12
 2518 AX The Hague
 The Netherlands

Telephone: +31 70 426 0460

Fax: +31 70 426 0799

Dedication

To Sandra, Helen, Viola and Peace.
For your future inspiration.

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List of Acronyms

AAMP	Area Based Agricultural Modernisation Programme
ADB	Asian Development Bank
CBMS	Community Based Maintenance System
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DWD	Directorate of Water Development
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GFS	Gravity Flow Scheme
GOU	Government of Uganda
GTZ	German Technical Cooperation
HPMs	Hand Pump Mechanics
IWRM	Integrated Water Resource Management
LCs	Local Councils
LRC	Law Reform Commission
MOFPED	Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development
MWLE	Ministry of Water, Lands and Environment
NAADs	National Agricultural Advisory Services
NGOs	Non Governmental Organisations
NWSC	National Water and Sewerage Corporation
O&M	Operation and Maintenance
PEAP	Poverty Eradication Action Plan
RA	Rubindi A
RN	Rugando Nyabikungu
WATSAN	Water and Sanitation
WSC	Water and Sanitation Committee
WSDF	Water and Sanitation Development Facility
WUC	Water User Committee

Abstract

This study examines how community level water governance works in rural areas in Uganda where the majority of the poor people live. Using an analytical framework that describes the processes involved in the Community Based Maintenance System, the study establishes the relationship between concepts of participation, capacity, and how they influence pro-poor water outcomes within a broader decentralised system of local governance. Using primary data generated from two sub-counties in Mbarara district, the study establishes that water policies in place have little bearing on the practices communities have in place to govern water and sanitation facilities because of the social aspects and political processes at the local level. It concludes by highlighting the fact that favourable outcomes especially for the poor in the water supply and sanitation sector have to continuously be negotiated because of the prevailing local conditions that do not guarantee straightforward solutions to practical governance problems.

Relevance to Development Studies

This study is relevant to development studies with regard to poverty reduction and human development. Access to clean and safe water for domestic use in the rural areas is a critical issue because productivity, health and improved livelihoods depend on the availability of water. Provision of water and sanitation facilities should not only stop at construction of infrastructure but also ensure that appropriate mechanisms for governing such resources are considered. Policy makers should therefore ensure that practical governance mechanisms specific to local conditions are designed and facilitated to bring about positive outcomes for the poor in the water sector.

Keywords

Community Based Maintenance System, Participation, Water Governance, Water User Committee

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

‘Meeting the needs of the poor has too often been seen as simply providing drinking water’ (ADB Overview: 8). The poor in most developing countries and especially Africa suffer acute lack of clean water for domestic use and this pre-occupies their daily lives. At a global level, substantive efforts are being made to ensure that poor people’s interests are safeguarded and that is why Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) has been adopted as a core principle of water governance. Simply put, IWRM refers to a process that aims to promote sustainable utilisation of water resources through establishment of water management strategies at all levels that ensure equitable access and adequate supplies (ibid).

In Uganda, the government with donor support has in recent times embarked on a vigorous campaign to provide clean and safe water in rural areas to improve access for poor communities. Under the fifth pillar of the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) (2004) that is concerned with human development, improving the quality of lives of the poor also entails increasing access to water and sanitation (WATSAN). The overall institutional framework in which this is undertaken includes the Pro-Poor Strategy for the Water and Sanitation Sector (2006), the National Framework for Operation and Maintenance of Rural Water Supplies (2004), the Water policy (1999), Water Action Plan (1995) the Environmental Health Act, National Water and Sewerage Corporation (NWSC) CAP 317(1995) among others.

WATSAN facilities range from boreholes, protected springs, shallow wells, rain water harvesting tanks, Gravity Flow Schemes (GFSs) to public hygiene spaces like toilets and waste disposal sites. While these are strategic efforts to increase water coverage among the poor, many rural areas remain underserved and still suffer a water crisis. At the 2000 World Water Forum in the Hague, it was realised that ‘the water crisis is often a crisis of governance’ and commitments were made to prioritise water governance where each country would institute workable arrangements at all levels for governance and whenever possible, accelerate water reforms (Garande and Dagg 2005, Rogers and Hall 2003:15)

In Uganda, such efforts resulted into the Community Based Maintenance System (CBMS)¹ as a maintenance and management strategy of such facilities that would enlist the support of different actors for water governance. The CBMS has been undertaken as a response for the poor to participate in the management of their own resources within a national decentralised system of governance.

1.2 Problem Statement

Current development practice in community development activities requires that beneficiaries of specific interventions and particularly the poor participate fully so that they are empowered to own such strategies (Choguill 1996, Cleaver 1999, Cleaver 2001, Dungumaro and Madulu 2003, Prokopy 2005). For most developing countries that receive grants for social

¹ The CBMS has been adopted to constitute the management and governance of water and sanitation facilities as well as an Operation and Maintenance strategy for the rural water supplies in the country.

infrastructure investment, this has become a condition from donors to ensure sustainability and hence reduce dependency of communities on external sources (Hartje, 2008).

However, despite the assumptions embedded in most water related policies about how communities can best manage these facilities, a study commissioned by the Directorate of Water Development(DWD) in 2001 revealed that 30% of the all the rural water facilities were not functioning. They 'were either broken down or abandoned' (DWD, 2004: ii). This state of affairs means that a substantive number of people in the rural areas do not access WATSAN facilities. While the Government's objective is to provide services to those who cannot afford them, in instances like these, it is not achieved. Users of such facilities revert to the use of their old sources that are contaminated and unsafe for consumption, hence the rationale for instituting community governance mechanisms.

Specifically, community level water governance entails the adoption of the CBMS within the decentralised system of governance to manage common WATSAN facilities. Decentralisation presupposes increased democratic control and involvement in decision making for community infrastructure through the CBMS. It is considered a viable way to promote empowerment of communities at a low cost. The framework envisages community participation and involvement as necessary pre-requisites for the success of CBMS and consequently the formation of Water User Committees (WUCs) is critical in this model to ensure that the poor influence the governance of WATSAN and consequently voice their preferences.

Therefore, despite an emphasis on participatory and community driven approaches suggested by many scholars and criticised by Cleaver (1998) and Ostrom (1990) in the management of such communally owned facilities, fairly little is known about the community processes and how they bring about pro-poor outcomes in Uganda. In particular, this research seeks to find out how mechanisms and processes for community level water governance bring about positive or negative outcomes for the poor among the remaining 70% of the facilities that still function.

Aware that within the policy and institutional environment other social and political factors play a significant role in terms of how such infrastructure is governed at the community level, the contribution of such factors is studied to establish their influence on the CBMS and subsequent impact on pro-poor outcomes.

1.3 Mbarara District Profile

Mbarara district is one of the eighty districts in Uganda and is located in the south western part of the country. It borders with Ibanda and Kiruhura districts to the north, Isingiro to the east, Ntungamo to the south and Bushenyi district to the west.

Administratively, it has one municipality, 3 municipal divisions and 14 sub counties that are all legally recognised as autonomous local governments.

Regarding the demographic statistics, the 2002 National Population and Housing Census put Mbarara's population at a total of 361,477. Of this, 51% are female and 49% are male. In addition, 80% of this population is located in the rural areas and only 20% is urban based. The population density is 196 people per Square Kilometre and the population growth is at a steady 2.9% pa (DDP 2008-2011).

1.4 Poverty Analysis

In Uganda the poor have been classified using several quantitative and qualitative criteria but the often used one is the inability to spend 1 USD/a day. Taking this as a measure, those unable to spend this are below the poverty line and hence considered poor. Using this criterion, it has been found that 38% of Ugandans are poor. Because the biggest population involved in

agriculture are at a subsistence level, majority of the people have little or no income at household level.

It is also known that the poor also have chronic problems in accessing WATSAN facilities and most service delivery interventions target these categories of poor people (MWLE, 2006). With different strategies, the national safe water coverage is at 60% but while this is the case, access is increasing but quality is not guaranteed because of poor household hygiene practices (MOFPED, 2004). In comparison, the WATSAN coverage in Mbarara stands at 62% for access to water to within 1-1.5km distance and 90% for pit latrine coverage as a sanitation indicator (DDP 2008-2011). This situation requires interventions to ensure that WATSAN facilities put in place deliver on benefits if the burden of poverty in the water sector is to substantively be reduced.

1.5 Study Justification

A study of Mbarara district provided an interesting prospect for research since it is one of those districts in Uganda that experiences periodic long dry spells annually. Acute water shortage occurs during these periods for both domestic use and livestock management. While an emphasis on community level water governance is being promoted through the CBMS, the poor still face problems in accessing quality WATSAN services despite the assumption that such a management model can solve such problems.

The most crucial factor behind this study is the fact that much as the CBMS is being promoted for local level water governance, there seems to be small gains made in efficient management of the WATSAN facilities. Particularly, the interest in the water sector is important since water is a resource all humans cannot do without. Consequently the study could provide some insights on how to ensure that the poor can have better access and improved livelihoods as well.

The literature survey about community based management of water facilities revealed a gap that was identified by an earlier research done by Franks and Cleaver (2005) in 'Water Governance and Poverty: What Works for the Poor?'. In their directions for future research, how to achieve pro-poor outcomes through community level governance of water resources was the acknowledged missing link. This provided a basis for this research.

1.6 Research Objective

The major research objective was to establish and analyse how community level water governance works and how the existing institutional mechanisms can be utilised to ensure pro-poor outcomes.

1.7 Central Research Question

How does community level water governance work in Mbarara district and what institutional opportunities exist to ensure pro-poor outcomes?

Sub-questions

1. Who are the actors and what are the mechanisms in the Community Based Maintenance System in Uganda?
2. How does the existing institutional framework provide opportunities that can be utilised by various actors in the water sector to ensure pro-poor outcomes in Mbarara?

3. How has the CBMS (including participatory processes) provided capacity to user committees to manage water and sanitation facilities for the benefit of the poor in Mbarara district?
4. To what extent has the CBMS led to pro-poor outcomes in Mbarara district?
5. How can community level water governance be supported in the future to ensure pro-poor outcomes?

1.8 Scope and Limitations of the Study

This study focused on the processes within the WUCs as functional structures for the CBMS for rural water supplies. While there are several dimensions to water supply in Uganda that include domestic water supply, water for industrial use and water for production (irrigation and valley dams for livestock management), this study only focussed on domestic WATSAN facilities in the rural settings of Mbarara for the period after 2001. This is the period when the district embarked on the construction of GFSs as an alternative to boreholes.

WATSAN facilities include both the water supply facilities (for example, the GFSs) and the sanitation facilities for waste disposal and management. These include public toilets and solid waste disposal facilities

The geographical limits to this study were set around Mbarara district in the two selected local governments, Rubindi and Rugando sub counties. Work on Rubindi and Rugando GFSs started in 2002 and 2003 respectively.

In terms of limitations, both time and resource constraints affected this study. However, to counter this, the research focus was narrowed down to the WUC mechanisms and their internal functioning. The findings are therefore to a large extent representative of what happens in rural Uganda where GFSs have been constructed.

Having anticipated engaging NGOs and other development partners in this study, it was discovered that most of them in Mbarara district do not undertake GFS construction. They are mainly engaged in shallow wells and rain water harvesting tanks, areas outside the focus of this study.

1.9 Sources of Data and Research Methodology

This study was an exploratory one in which I sought to establish how community level water governance works. The data for this study is mainly qualitative and it was generated through primary data collection and the use of secondary data. Primary data collection was undertaken by a field study in Mbarara district and has provided a basis for conclusions about community level water governance and its influence on pro-poor outcomes.

In Mbarara district, the systems studied were Nyabikungu GFS in Rugando and Rubindi A GFS in Rubindi sub counties. For purposes of differentiation and clarity in this paper, RN will be used to refer to Rugando-Nyabikungu and RA for Rubindi-A.

To establish how community level management processes are produced and reinforced to achieve pro-poor outcomes, focus group discussions (FGDs) were held with WUCs of the two GFSs, one in each sub county. RA FGD was attended by six respondents while RN had eight. These were small groups because the executive committee is constituted of a few members. A checklist to guide the facilitation of the discussion was developed to highlight the major issues for discussion. This method was employed to generate the committees' perception of their responsibilities and to establish the relations within the committee itself as the members interacted with each other.

Political and social processes embedded in the system were identified to establish how they influence pro-poor outcomes. Political processes here relate to how WUC members are selected, relationships between this committee and the established local councils (LCs) while the social processes relate to the livelihoods and social interactions among community members in the selected sub counties.

The institutional framework and the opportunities therein for community level water management were examined by the use of document review of Government of Uganda (GOU) policies, laws and regulations and key informant interviews. Additional secondary data was obtained by use of the ISS library resources, evaluation reports from Mbarara district water office, the Directorate of Water Development and academic resources from the internet.

Pro-poor outcomes among the communities were established from two FGDs with users of the WATSAN facilities in the two sub counties. RA FGD had 18 respondents and RN had 14. This was employed to assess the perceived benefits of the facilities and generated varied responses.

Further follow-up semi structured interviews were conducted with community members who were not part of the FGDs but who it was felt, had useful information. These were conducted at their private homes and sometimes with the participation of other members who were present at the time.

Within the decentralisation framework, there are various actors who have a role to play so that poor communities enjoy the benefits of improved WATSAN facilities and these respondents were thus purposively selected. Specifically, semi structured interviews were conducted among selected Mbarara District water officials, the Water and Sanitation Development Facility (WSDF), the sub-county local government officials and selected extension staff. An interview guide was developed for this purpose. These interviews helped to generate the authorities' perception of the problem and the contribution of other actors like NGOs. They were conducted because of their flexible nature allowing for probing during the interviews. These respondents were identified because they have a monitoring and advisory role to play in ensuring that communities use their facilities in a sustainable manner that ensures equity.

Summary of interviews

1. Focus group discussions	4
2. Follow up semi-structured interviews	7
3. Key actors in the CBMS	8

1.10 Structure of the Paper

This paper is sub-divided into five chapters. Chapter one gives the introduction, background to the CBMS and the general context of the study. It describes the problem, gives objectives and research questions and the study methodology.

Chapter two presents the conceptual and analytical frameworks. The concepts of participation, water governance, capacity, institutional framework and pro-poor outcomes are given operational definitions for this study. It concludes with the analytical framework that establishes causal relationships between these concepts and pro-poor outcomes in the WATSAN sector.

Chapter three presents a description of the CBMS and the mechanisms, actors and interests therein.

Chapter four presents the findings of the field study and analysis. It explains why the CBMS operates the way it does in Mbarara district and the extent to which it has led to pro-poor outcomes among community members.

Chapter five summarises the findings, gives conclusions and recommendations for the study.

Chapter 2

CONCEPTUAL AND ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the conceptual and analytical framework used in this study. Participation, water governance, the CBMS, the institutional framework, decentralisation, capacity and pro-poor outcomes are analysed and given operational definitions for this study. It concludes with the analytical framework that establishes the causal relationships between the concepts above and pro-poor outcomes in the WATSAN sector.

2.2 The Concept of Participation

The conceptualisation of community level water governance involves a discussion on participation. Participation has been used to establish the extent to which it can facilitate ownership of community water facilities to ensure equitable access. Since today's development work practitioners consider participation a pre-requisite for empowerment of the marginalised poor in communities (Cleaver, in Cooke and Kothari 2001), this research sought to analyse the concept. While participation is taken to be a means to a particular end, others view it as an end itself. Oakley and Marsden (1991) in Mikkelsen (2005) make a distinction between the two. As a means, participation is viewed as instrumental that is, making development interventions more effective and sustainable by involving users in the processes involved in the intervention. On the other hand, participation as an end is viewed as transformational where people are able to influence their own situations, a process that can lead to empowerment. Similarly, Hickey and Mohan (2004) assert that participation can facilitate the poor with capabilities to manoeuvre within local power relations and hence bring those in positions of responsibility to account.

In the WATSAN sector, it is argued that participation can enhance the fulfilment of the objectives associated with water supply projects that include 'effectiveness, efficiency, empowerment, equity and coverage' (Cleaver and Toner 2006, Prokopy 2005:1801). Additionally, the World Bank contends that participatory processes favour citizens to take part in the governance of their resources between electoral cycles. The Bank further argues that participation 'not only empowers the public but also increases the overall ownership of development policies, thereby increasing their sustainability' (Brown, 2004:242). Choguill (1996) also suggests that participation facilitates people through self help activities to satisfy basic needs. Thus participation is both potentially empowering and a means to achieve other material things. Whether it is a means or an end, participation has come to be accepted as powerful in getting beneficiaries to own and take responsibility for their resources.

Mikkelsen (2005:54) defines participation as 'involvement in people's development of themselves, their lives, and their environment', or 'the voluntary involvement of people in self determined change'. However, criticism is growing about how far participation can go to achieve the desired outcomes (Cleaver, 1999). Prokopy (2005) voices concerns about putting additional burdens on rural communities by requiring them to participate in all interventions even when they may not have a say in how the project is implemented. The limits to participation therefore seem to be recognised especially when the community's ability in terms of literacy levels and economic situations are concerned. These aspects are likely to influence the level to which they are able to take part in participatory processes for the desired outcomes (Dungumaro and Madulu 2003).

This research took the concept to mean the process of individual involvement with programmes or projects that affect the quality of their lives. Specifically, the dimensions of participation have been analysed in the processes of problem identification, analysis, and project/programme implementation and the subsequent use of WATSAN facilities by the poor.

2.3 Typologies of Participation

Building on the instrumental-transformational analysis of participation, Mikkelsen (2005:59) highlights the seven stages of participation as a typology showing various ways in which development interventions can be initiated in communities.

1. 'Passive participation' in which people are merely told what is going to happen and they have no influence or ability to change it.
2. 'Participation in information giving'.
3. Consultation. External professionals may listen to the views of the people but the problems and solutions are defined by these professionals.
4. 'Participation for material incentives'. People only participate by providing physical resources such as labour or land in exchange for other incentives such as financial rewards.
5. 'Functional participation'. People form committees and groups that may be externally initiated and these are formed to achieve predetermined goals.
6. 'Interactive participation'. Participation here is seen as a right and not a mechanical function. People are involved in the analysis and development of action plans and together with partners, a structured learning process is achieved.
7. 'Self mobilisation'. People take the initiative to change systems even independent of external institutions although these institutions can provide an enabling environment.

In the above conceptualisation of participation, there are different ways in which people participate in community programmes but the GOU seems to favour the functional form. This is notwithstanding the fact that a lot of uncertainties are currently being felt towards participation's transformative potential in terms of communities' capacities to manage communally owned facilities. It is thought that instead of making initiatives to provide basic needs to the poor, participation may bring about inequalities where those in power play a significant role (Cleaver and Toner, 2006). In Uganda, community development practitioners feel that the drive to undertake change will most likely bring about the desired outcome although it would have to take a vibrant community to do this (Respondent, interview).

2.4 Water Governance

Broadly, governance is viewed as the interaction and processes of different actors across society to take decisions, that is to 'make choices and tradeoffs' (Tropp, 2007:27) On the other hand, water governance has been defined as 'the range of political, social, economic and administrative systems that are in place to develop and manage water resources and the delivery of water services at different levels in society' (Franks and Cleaver 2007:292, Rogers and Hall 2003:7). Water governance therefore entails designing policies and institutions that are acceptable to all and given the dynamics of water use within societies, managing it equitably and efficiently requires that all users are involved in the decisions pertaining to communally owned water facilities. This will inevitably require the participation of various actors to achieve this and a clear

demarcation of roles and responsibilities between government and local communities (Rogers and Hall, 2003).

Therefore, as Garande and Dagg (2005) suggest, effective water governance at the local level needs conditions that favour bottom up approaches and community participation for development. Hence, Rogers and Hall (2003) prescribe decentralised administrative mechanisms as an approach to increase the effectiveness of water governance. As a result, it has been realised that a relationship exists between participation and local governance and that for the poor to benefit from WATSAN at the local level, effective participation has to be encouraged (Garande and Dagg, 2005).

In Uganda, these systems comprise of the CBMS that is operationalised by the formation of non traditional players for example WUCs to oversee the day to day running of community WATSAN facilities. In essence, water governance is associated with the 'functions, balances and structures' that are peculiar to the water sector (Rogers and Hall 2003:17)

2.5 Community Based Maintenance System

This is the model currently being promoted by the GOU as the best alternative towards the management of WATSAN at community level. Other options include NGO supported management, centralised management, privatised management for urban water supplies and decentralised management (DWD, 2004). Contextualised within decentralisation, it is the last level structure mandated to oversee the functionality of WATSAN facilities. It is taken to be a cheap, empowering and viable option in ensuring that the poor' voices are heard in their programme. It has been analysed to identify the extent to which it has been useful in contributing to the capacity of the WUC in the four areas of leadership, decision making, resource mobilisation and participation of the poor.

2.6 The Institutional Framework for CBMS

The institutional framework has been conceptualised as the enabling environment and structures in place to ensure that community level governance of WATSAN facilities ensures improved accessibility of WATSAN for all. Specifically, decentralisation as a mode of governance, the various policies, regulations and laws in place to facilitate the process have been analysed to assess whether they have made any significant contribution towards the delivery of WATSAN benefits.

Decentralisation

As a mode of governance, decentralisation is the framework in which all administrative and managerial functions are conducted in Uganda. Similarly, the community water governance structures also conform to a hybrid form of this arrangement for consistency and to ensure that WATSAN services are delivered to everyone. Hence it is the broader governance model in which the interaction between actors of several institutions in the WATSAN sector takes place.

In Uganda, decentralisation which was adopted in 1992 is a five tier system of LCs and it is at the sub-county level that most decentralised services take place. The extension workers are posted at this level to deliver services as part of the devolved local government functions. Similarly, the CBMS as a water governance model is expected to be implemented at this level and given support. Hence the Water Policy clearly stipulates the local government's role as follows;

...especially the provision of water services and maintenance of facilities is the responsibility of local councils in districts and urban centres with the support and guidance of relevant central government agencies. (MWLE, 1999: section 3.3.2)

At each tap, tap committees exist that feed into the central WUC in a devolution of roles and responsibilities with the former being the lower structure and the latter being broader in functions. This arrangement is supposed to strengthen community participation at the local level.

Therefore, this kind of arrangement provides the communities with the opportunity to manage their own social facilities. As the Local Government Act stipulates,

The Act aims at providing for a continuous process of decentralisation, whereby functions, powers and services are devolved and transferred to and from Central Government to Local Governments in order to increase local democratic control and participation in decision making, and to mobilise support for development relevant to local needs.(LRC, 2008: section 3.3.2)

In essence, the district ensures that the WATSAN facilities are in place and the sub county ensures that they are maintained to ease the livelihoods of communities in the rural areas.

Therefore, the sub counties are the supervisors of the CBMS structures at the local level. They are supposed to ensure that the system is running smoothly and to provide any support needed for them to operate. This points to the optimism expressed by Manor where decentralisation is concerned;

When fresh powers and funds are injected into lower-level arenas, as is usually the case with user committees, residents within those arenas discern this and respond by becoming more active in order to influence the use of those powers and resources (Manor, 2004:204).

Similarly, Ribot et al. (2008:2) assert that decentralisation is beneficial because it empowers local leaders to articulate local needs for appropriate responses, ‘reduces transaction costs’ and enhances accountability. The government thus expects increased democratic control through participatory processes within the decentralisation framework. This is expected to lead to empowerment of communities to take charge of their own WATSAN facilities.

Policies, Laws and Regulations

The laws and regulations also provide the mandate for various actors to facilitate the functionality of the WUCs. They include;

- Pro-poor Strategy for the Water and Sanitation Sector (2006). This is a 30 point strategy with specific focus on providing WATSAN services to the poor in a manner that meets their needs in line with the goals of the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (MWLE, 2006).
- The National Framework for Operation and Maintenance of Rural Water Supplies (2004). This framework outlines the mechanisms that should be followed for the CBMS to work. It provides clear roles for all actors and checks and balances within the mechanisms for effective community management of WATSAN facilities in rural settings.(DWD, 2004)
- The Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) (2004). This is the overall government blue print for poverty reduction across different sectors which include WATSAN.
- The Water Policy (1999). In addition to other provisions, the policy also identifies the local level as being responsible for management, operation and maintenance of point water sources and also recommends the formation of community associations for this role.(MWLE 1999)
- The Water Statute (1995). Through its provisions, this statute aims to promote the provision of clean, safe and sufficient water supply for domestic use to all persons.

- The Local Government Act Cap 243 (2008). This provides for the devolution of responsibilities from higher institutions to the lower local levels and provides the enabling environment for service delivery.

2.7 Pro-Poor Outcomes

Outcomes are seen as the results of a particular intervention on a long term basis. Franks and Cleaver (2007) stress that management mechanisms and processes for water resources bring about different impacts for different individuals in the community. While the management of water has been assigned to different institutions, Black and Hall (2004:11) affirm that where competition for water resources is concerned, the poor will always ‘emerge worse off’ unless agents are in place to secure their interests.

For the poor in Uganda, the outcomes can be seen on the basis of access in terms of quantity and quality, availability, and livelihoods in terms of how the poor can use increased access to quality water to improve their health conditions. In addition, the decreased distances would also mean that children who would normally miss out on school classes as they fetch water can now attend full time. For the majority of women, freed up time would also facilitate their ability to engage in other income generating activities. This conceptualisation of pro-poor outcomes was adopted to study the processes through which the poor can benefit from the CBMS as opposed to other management options that operate on the basis of market mechanisms.

2.8 The Concept of Capacity

According to Zinke (2006:5), capacity is defined as ‘the overall ability of a system to perform and sustain itself: The coherent combinations of competencies and capabilities’. Institutional capacity will therefore entail what institutions are able to do to achieve their objectives. Calaguas and Francis (2004) emphasise that different levels of capacity from communities and other actors are required across different water related initiatives. In the context of WUCs, capacity can be looked at as the committee’s ability to undertake all the responsibilities and how the CBMS facilitates this assuming all the other actors play their role. This capacity can be manifest through the leadership patterns, decision making processes, resource mobilisation activities and mobilisation for the poor’s participation in water governance issues.

Leadership

Community leadership is an important and integral part of community management and in the WATSAN sector, it goes beyond the responsibility of elected officials to the non traditional water user associations to influence decision making. From problem identification at community level to project completion, strong leadership is required to advocate for the interests of the poor with government and other actors in the sector. Community representatives should be able to gather and provide information and advocacy and articulate the poor’s needs strongly to ensure that water management decisions are pro-poor (Calaguas and Francis, 2004). While at the political level, local councillors may undertake this, the WUC’s role should be to make strategic decisions to improve the quality of life of the poor through improvements in WATSAN. It therefore becomes imperative to have strong leaders if decision making is to yield meaningful outcomes for the poor and this is the essence of water governance.

Decision-making

Decision making capacity by whoever is in position of power and responsibility is critical in the governance of water resources for pro-poor outcomes. The nature of the water sector is still largely driven by the need to supply more infrastructure than deal with governance issues such as conflict resolution, partnerships, and community mobilisation for participation. This determines the nature of decisions made by water sector practitioners (Tropp, 2007). While the current forms of governance stress joint horizontal decision making to include a whole range of actors, it is not clear whether there are such linkages between WUCs, communities and other actors in the water sector. Moreover, with local power conflicts over resources, the contribution of different categories of people such as women is most times not guaranteed because of their ignorance about their right to participate in decision making (The Gender and Water Alliance, 2004). Singh (2006) contends that if women participate in decision making, their empowerment will be enhanced and that their empowerment will further increase their participation. Hence public-private partnerships, decentralisation and devolution of decision making are being undertaken to provide alternative and inclusive forms of governance for improved decision making, the basis for pro-poor outcomes in the WATSAN sector (Tropp, 2007).

Financial resource mobilisation

The capacity to pool financial resources to initiate and follow up water related initiatives is a critical aspect. While it is the practice in Uganda to generate development priorities for funding in participatory processes under the decentralisation framework, there will always be a need to follow up on this with the relevant district authorities, a process that requires financial resources. Yet, the capacity to pool resources may be inadequate due to poverty levels and poor articulation of the facts by leaders. Moreover community participation requires information, resources and willingness to undertake initiatives for the common good (Tropp, 2007). This places communities in an unfavourable position because they will hardly contribute and for participation to fully occur, communities require finances. While much has been written about the need for communities to develop capacity in several fields, few resources are available for this (Taylor, 2000). Hence capacity to mobilise financial resources remains a core skill that WUCs require to succeed in this form of governance.

Mobilising participation

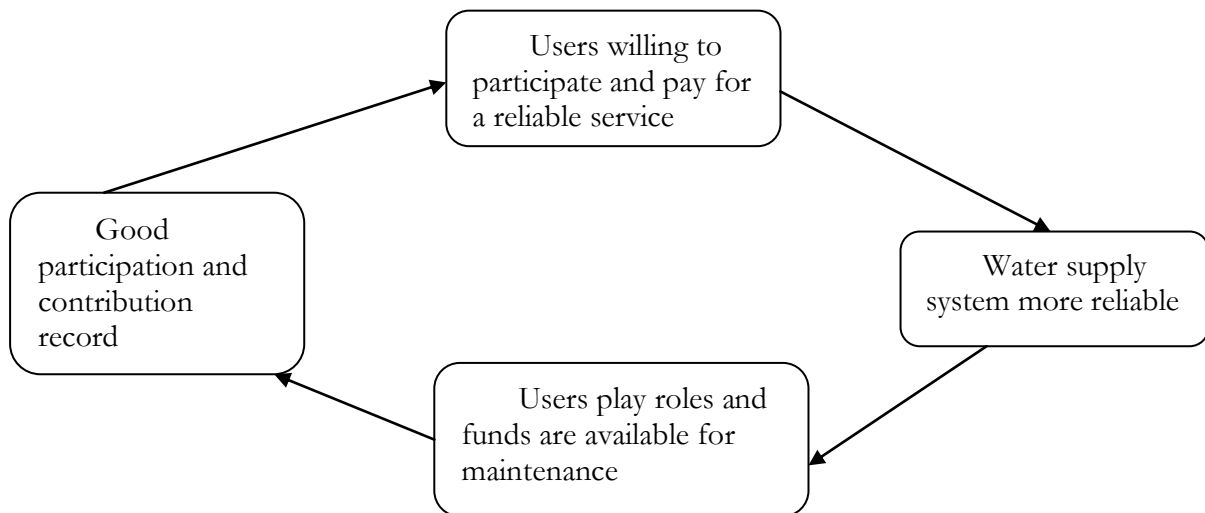
The capacity to generate and sustain community participation in any development endeavour requires skills on the part of the facilitators or government to motivate individual interests without discrimination. As Calaguas and Francis (2004) suggest, this requires time to raise awareness and empower communities to resolve unforeseen conflicts and better manage water resources for appropriate outcomes. Most WUCs in Uganda are only formed when the facilities are in place and yet as the project is being implemented, there is need for continuous community mobilisation to better prepare them for the management of such facilities. The transition from a previously undesirable situation of inadequate, inaccessible and unsafe water to a more reliable and safe system brings about changes in the community that requires sufficient capacity to manage these new changes (Calaguas and Francis, 2004). This goes beyond the few days of skills training that WUCs are given when a project is initiated and hence the ability of the committee to manage these changes is crucial in ensuring that all community members participate. While constant calls are made for communities to participate in their own water affairs, the WUCs still remain largely unsupported to influence individuals to participate for their own empowerment.

The above areas are critical for the capacity of the WUC to undertake its roles. Much as the CBMS attempts to strengthen the committee's skills in leadership, decision making, financial resource mobilisation and influencing community participation, it remains to be seen if it is adequate to influence community responsiveness and subsequently pro-poor outcomes.

2.9 The Analytical Framework

This research is based on both participation as a concept and the decentralisation mode of governance, the basis for pro-poor service delivery. Analysis is based on the processes within the community level water governance with specific interest in the CBMS model. Participation, capacity in terms of leadership, decision making and resource mobilisation have been analysed to ascertain their relationship with outcomes that are pro-poor in Mbarara district. According to the Operational and Maintenance framework (2004), an effective water management strategy would achieve the following outcomes.

Figure 1: The virtuous circle of adequately funded and properly maintained water supplies



Source: DWD (2004:1)

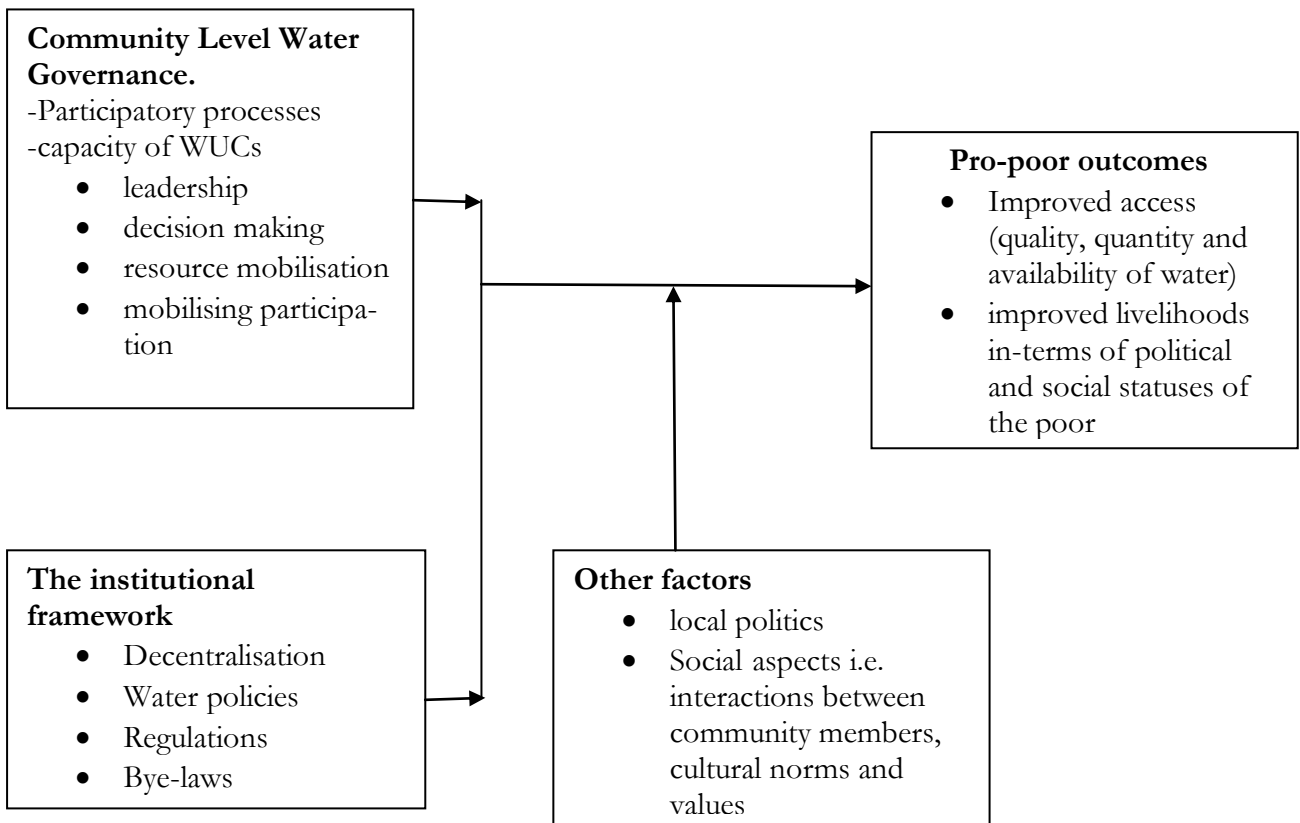
A fully functional maintenance system should ideally constitute of the above aspects related to WATSAN and the CBMS is expected to provide such outcomes.

These aspects were studied within the wider environment of decentralisation as an institutional mechanism that provides opportunities for the poor to improve their livelihoods through improved access to WATSAN facilities. In addition, the policies, guidelines and laws in place as prior identified were studied to ascertain how the poor can use the opportunities they present especially within the CBMS to improve their lives. The assumptions inherent in these provisions were analysed against community water governance practices in Mbarara that were identified during the field study.

As factors that have an influence on how community WATSAN facilities are governed and maintained, local politics and social aspects were analysed to establish the extent to which they influence pro-poor outcomes.

Consequently, all the above factors were studied within the decentralisation framework to establish how they affect the poor in terms of access and livelihoods in their environment. Decentralisation in practice should facilitate communities to identify resources ,opportunities and find mechanisms of ensuring that policies in place are implemented for improved welfare especially in rural areas where there a few alternatives for service delivery. The extent to which this is achieved is the subject of this study. Figure 2 below highlights these causal relationships as explained above.

Figure 2: The Analytical Framework



Source: own construction

Chapter 3

THE COMMUNITY BASED MAINTENANCE SYSTEM

3.1 Background to the CBMS

According to Manor (2004), most developing countries do not have adequate institutions to engage both citizens and governments in meaningful consultation for policy processes. Therefore, when user committees are established in line with government interventions, local communities may gain influence and establish such institutions to engage with government. As a result, the CBMS that is entrenched in the Water Policy (1999) potentially gives rise to WUCs, associations and groups. This popularises people participation for equity, influence and development of institutions that are somewhat different from the elected LCs and devolves powers over resources to the user communities. This chapter presents findings both from interviews and GOU documents in order to partly address the research question about actors and mechanisms in the CBMS.

3.2 Actors, Interests and Mechanisms in the CBMS

According to the O&M framework (2004), the ideal CBMS structure should include the linkages between the different actors. This conceptualisation of actors assumes that the end users- the community, are a homogenous group with same interests. In the two sub counties under study, there are various types of community members for example, peasant farmers, local politicians, business people especially in the trading centres and some migrant settlers. All these categories of people require access to WATSAN and they all have different perceptions on how such facilities should be governed. Clearly, there are bound to be differences of opinions over what works best.

An analysis in the CBMS therefore reveals that some of the interests are bound to bring about outcomes that were unanticipated at policy making level and consequently affect the poor either positively or negatively.

In addition, the mechanisms in place for the operation of the CBMS include political processes like voting for committee members, following set criteria that include gender and other marginalised groups and vote of no confidence if the committee doesn't perform to the required expectations. Training of the committee to build its capacity in dealing with community affairs is at the heart of the CBMS. It is a mechanism meant to provide hands on skills in leadership, decision making, resource mobilisation and mobilising participation among others. This is usually facilitated by the district officials and extension workers. Community participatory processes should complement all these efforts to provide concrete mechanisms for effective CBMS operation and sustainability. Such practices mean that the governance of community water is affected by all these mechanisms.

In the Ugandan context, the CBMS is expected to constitute of the following actors from the macro level, the central government to the last actor at the local level, the source caretaker²;

- The central government
- Development partners/Donors
- The District
- The NGOs
- The Sub county including extension workers
- The private sector especially in procurement of private contractors
- The water and sanitation committee
- Water user community
- Source caretaker

In Mbarara, one respondent explained that the actors are all those institutions and bodies actively engaged in the provision of WATSAN activities. They include the development partners/donors at a macro level whose interests are to ensure that poor communities have access to clean water. They include World Bank, Austrian Development Agency, European Union, DANIDA and GTZ.

Other actors include NGOs for example Water Aid and ACORD, African Construction Technical Services (ACTS) that construct rain water harvesting tanks for communities. Faith Based Organisations are also involved for example East Ankole diocese

The GOU through its district water offices, NWSC and the WSDF is a key actor. These government institutions work within the decentralisation framework to provide WATSAN services.

Broadly, the private sector is considered a major player especially in the management of the facilities on behalf of the community. This kind of arrangement is mainly found in rapidly urbanising areas and where cost recovery mechanisms are in force. However, in rural communities like Rubindi and Rugando, the sector only serves to provide tools and spare parts which WUCs purchase for maintenance of their facilities and as private contractors engaged to construct the WATSAN infrastructure.

The Water and Sanitation Coordination Committee (WSCC) is a forum that seeks to ensure that systems in place are maintained. It is not highlighted as a major actor in the CBMS because it is peculiar to some districts that need it for coordination purposes. According to one respondent, this committee consists of members from line departments of the devolved administration system, representatives from NGOs and civil society that deal with WATSAN in the district. Periodically it meets to among other things, map out strategies to support and

² In the Ugandan context, the reference to a source caretaker is used interchangeably with the scheme operator to mean the person who was specially trained to maintain the whole GFS. According to one respondent, official documents refer to him as the source caretaker while other practitioners and the community know him as the scheme operator.

improve the capacity of WUCs to do their work diligently. These strategies are indirectly implemented through extension workers at the sub county level.

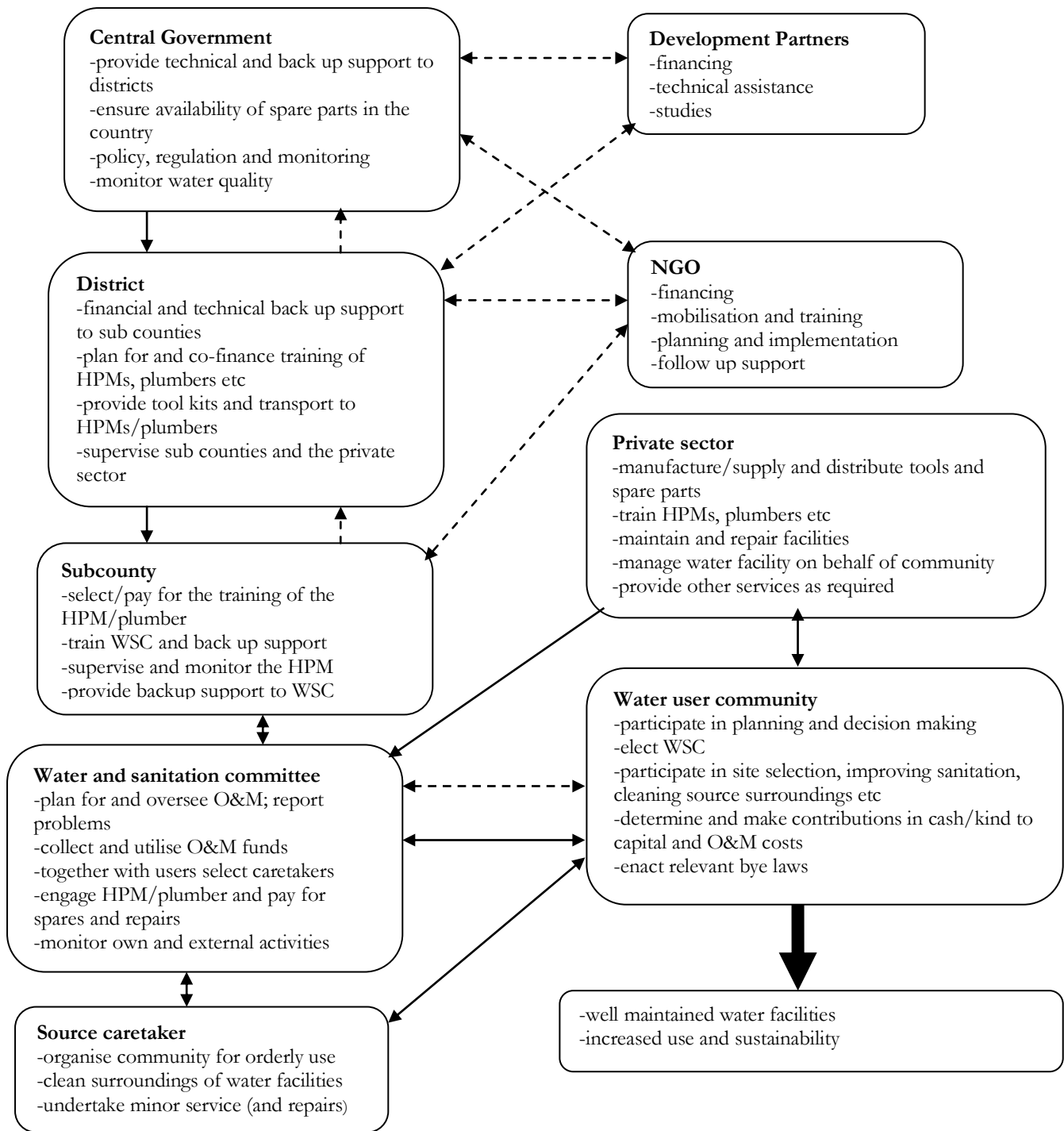
The Water and Sanitation Committee³ is charged with the governance of community water facilities. It is the lowest formal link between the sub-county and the community.

The community members are a major component in the CBMS strategy. Because they are the end users of the facilities, the Water Policy (1999) explicitly prescribes their roles and responsibilities in the CBMS.

While there are several actors involved in the system, the focus is put on the WUC which is charged with the day to day running of the facilities. Figure 3 below spells out the hierarchy of actors and their attendant roles and responsibilities in the CBMS.

³ This reference is used interchangeably with WUC. Different actors in the water sector refer to it with either term to mean the committee that is elected by the users to oversee the general operation and maintenance of the facilities and all the other activities pertaining to their governance.

Figure 3: Roles of key actors in the CBMS of Rural Water Facilities



Key

- Direct support and/or implementation
- Outcome
- Information flow

Source: DWD (2004:12) and own modification.

3.3 Composition of the WUC and its Responsibilities

FGDs with both RA and RN WUCs revealed that the committee, which is the lowest level institution in the CBMS, is comprised of key positions that should enable the system to work. They include;

- The chairperson whose role is to oversee the overall operation of the scheme through all the other members, should ensure that other tap stand committees are fully formed and functional, facilitate decision making, supervise the scheme attendant and be able to identify problems in the catchment area of the GFS.
- The vice chairperson's role is to deputise the chairperson.
- The treasurer's role is to collect community contributions towards the maintenance of the facility. He is expected to prepare annual budgets; keep custody of the funds collected and forecast income and expenditure for each accounting period.
- The secretary's role is to take minutes of committee meetings and to ensure that there is effective communication between the committee and the community.
- Other members. There are two other members on the committee who help to deliberate on issues, oversee and advise the chairperson on the activities of the overall scheme.
- The scheme operator is an ex-officio member of the committee but he does the technical work of the facility maintenance. He undertakes the small repairs that occur and he is expected to monitor the whole facility on a daily basis. He is supervised by this committee. However, there is an overlap in terms of where he reports and how he gets remunerated. He seems to have two responsibility centres to which he is answerable, the WUC and the sub county. In both sub counties, he is on the sub county payroll and gets a monthly allowance for his work. Both committees acknowledged that they are supposed to pay him from the community collections for his routine work. This is supposed to be an informal arrangement that has been suggested to the committees by the district water office to facilitate his work. However, he seems to respond more to where the incentives come from and over the years, an uncomfortable relationship between him and the committee has developed.

In total, this committee is made up of seven members who should over see the smooth functioning of the facility. One respondent revealed that an emphasis is made that 50% of the committee should be made up of women. This is to ensure that the views of the category of people most affected by water problems are fully articulated by them. How they do their work determines whether there will be outcomes favourable enough to benefit the poor. This is where competent capacities are required to take on this enormous responsibility.

3.4 Operations

The day to day operation of the WUC unlike professional organisations is not very conventional. Most committees meet on a monthly basis and determine what is to be done over the course of the month. As Smet (2003) acknowledges from studies done in Tanzania, management oversight is not clearly cut from daily decisions and there is an absence of a robust business plan in the activities undertaken. A whole GFS may have around 70 taps distributed all over several villages and an equivalent number of tap stand committees should be in place to oversee the operations of each tap.

The tap stand committee is an arrangement devised to ease the work of the WUC and since the taps are spread out throughout the facility catchment area, the users elect a smaller committee at that level to oversee the tap affairs. It is not highlighted in the main CBMS structure because it is a sub component of the already established WUC. The tap stand committee chairperson is supposed to see that the tap area is kept clean and in good working order.

Apart from this, there isn't any clear cut activity on a daily basis for committee members except when they have to undertake joint activities for community mobilisation and to settle disputes. This is why extension staff strongly advise them to engage in this work as side community work rather than a full time employment.

3.5 Financing

Most community managed systems in rural areas are financially facilitated by grants, community contributions, central government funds and sometimes by the private sector (Smet, 2003). In Uganda, the central government and the district should provide financial support to the communities should any break down occur that is beyond the capacity of the community to handle. For the smaller issues, the community should be able to generate sufficient funds to be able to handle these. The policy context in Uganda is such that the community is expected to generate almost all the funds needed for them to be a self sustaining facility. However, some facilities have completely broken down and have remained unrepaired due to the community's inability to fund repairs (DWD, 2004).

3.6 Accountability to the users

Accountability and transparency in the utilisation of communally owned facilities is not always easy to achieve as there are many interests to be served. The absence of accountability mechanisms always attracts mistrust on the part of the user community. The support and information linkages between actors in Figure 3 point to accountability and transparency. In the CBMS model, the WUC is mandated to collect and utilise O&M funds according to agreed upon activities.

According to the National Framework for O&M, the treasurer of the committee is entrusted with the role of collecting the user cash contributions and a procedure for spending it is also laid out in the operational guidelines. All expenditures are supposed to be recorded and this information should be frequently shared with community members or displayed in public places. Bank statements should also be displayed to the users to see the transactions made. The local government staff especially the accountant should also provide back up support in financial management to sort out inconsistencies well before things get out of hand (DWD, 2004).

Therefore, with this kind of arrangement, the committee ensures transparency, confidence and accountability to both the user community and the Sub county council which is the overall overseer of the committee operations. This also creates a feedback loop for the critical actors at that lower level of water governance so that mistakes are corrected and best practices reinforced.

There are penalties to deal with fraudulent behaviour and this also applies to defaulters on non payment of user fees (DWD, 2004).

3.7 Summary

The CBMS as described above and field data provide a blue print for the governance of communally owned water facilities in the rural areas in Uganda. For most districts, attempts have been made to modify some provisions to suit different local circumstances. Adoption of what

works best is at the discretion of sub counties as provided for in the 2004 Operation and Maintenance framework but in the study area, such modifications have not yielded the expected results. This chapter has shown how the CBMS is expected to work as highlighted in the policy documents and as described by respondents. It partly answers research question one. The next chapter discusses how the CBMS practically works, the processes, mechanisms and interactions involved.

Chapter 4

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study. It explains how the existing institutional framework provides opportunities to ensure pro-poor outcomes and to what extent participatory processes influence such outcomes. It also analyses the capacity of the WUCs and the extent to which the CBMS has led to pro-poor outcomes. An analysis of the incentives, the problems, the politics and challenges in the CBMS is presented at the end of the chapter.

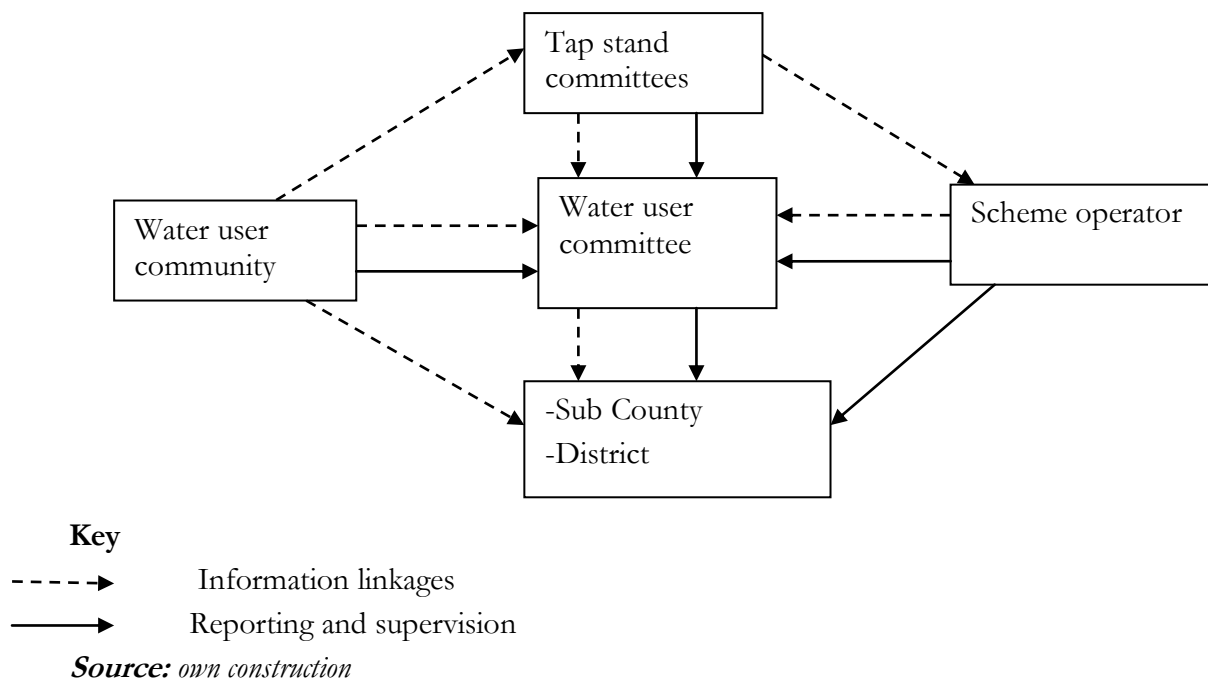
4.2 Overview of CBMS Implementation in Mbarara District

The CBMS through the formation of the WUCs is overseen by the district and sub county local governments so that such an institution takes on the responsibility of maintaining WATSAN facilities. In Mbarara, where a facility has been completed, the community is facilitated by an extension worker to form a WUC. This is formed by user villages who in turn forming individual tap-stand committees and these committees come together to nominate and vote for a central user committee that is at the sub county level. In both RA and RN, this was the practice and the actual committees do exist although the degree to which they function varies.

Further, at this tap level, mobilisation of financial resources is done to finance anything that may occur for example repair of the tap. If such repairs don't occur, the committee can use its discretion to initiate income generating activities using the accumulated funds. However, it's only one village out of sixty four in RA that had successfully managed to do that and has a relatively functional tap committee. This has been attributed to the enterprising character of the chairperson and the integrity of this small committee in ensuring accountability to its users.

Figure 4 below shows the linkages between the actors in the CBMS in the district. Clearly, the WUC is the focus as the central actor but interacts with others to bring about desired outcomes.

Figure 4: the relationships in the CBMS in Mbarara District



4.3 Participatory Processes under the CBMS

According to Mikelsen (2005), participation is a process that should facilitate end users of an intervention to take part in the implementation of the facility. Within the CBMS, participation is expected to take place right from the problem identification stage to the completion of the facility. However, in both RN and RA, it seemed unclear as to whether user communities were actually involved even in problem identification or even remotely in a position to hold anyone to account. This is echoed by one respondent thus;

I remember one morning we saw a group of technicians with their equipment come to lay pipes and to do source protection. When we asked who they were, they said they were contractors who had won the contract for the job. We then just looked on as they did their work.....(Respondent, RA FGD)

In RN, the respondents acknowledged that they identified the problem themselves after a serious outcry of water problems in the sub county. However, the actual conceptualisation was done by the district. One respondent said,

We used to have a problem of water but the district officials came here to assess whether we actually needed water. For us, it was a relief because our wives and children had suffered enough looking for water sources.... (Respondent, RN FGD)

The above assertions depict a situation where the communities are not actually in charge of their own problem identification. It is apparent that this is passive participation as highlighted by Mikelsen's participation typology because the community has no influence over what has been decided by the external professionals. While, it may be helpful to consult the community to identify local needs and interests as a form of participation, this is rarely or haphazardly done. Consultation would not only enhance the use of local knowledge but would improve the quality of the project (Garande and Dagg 2005). Other respondents cited situations where politicians hurriedly lobby the district council to construct GFSs so that it is seen that their problems are

being taken care of before the next round of elections. In whatever case, participation seems highly minimal as far problem identification is concerned.

During implementation, the community according to the guidelines is supposed to take part in mobilising locally available resources. However, as Taylor (2000) asserts, most communities are usually not in a position to mobilise financial resources and this curtails their level of participation. One respondent also revealed that since the construction work was contracted out to private engineers through competitive bidding, communities now feel excluded from participating in actual implementation.

Previously, the district would undertake the work and enlist the participation of communities. As provision of voluntary labour would be considered some form of participation, engagement of private contractors has made this impossible and this has negatively affected ownership of such facilities. Communities are now only engaged in identifying land for construction of reservoir tanks and tap stands. This is why one respondent was more insistent on taking an approach that gets communities to actually contribute physical labour for them to appreciate the facility by digging trenches and providing stones. Garande and Dagg (2005) assert that it is in such processes that they can also take part in decision making.

Although there's some degree of ownership by the communities of their WATSAN facilities (especially in RN), the actual burden is placed on the committees who have voluntarily taken on a role that lacks incentives. This presents a fundamental challenge to the governance of the water resources since most people don't want to be bothered with issues that may cost them more time (Taylor 2000). While most WUC members expressed their willingness to volunteer for this responsibility, they felt that the community is highly unconcerned about the management of the water resources as far as their responsibilities are concerned

Brown (2004) suggests that the participatory processes should ideally not only inform government's administrative decisions but also facilitate increased ownership of the governed and hence empower them. However, in water governance as seen in RA and RN, there seems to have developed what Waddington and Mohan (2004:220) have called 'dependency rather than empowerment' as an inevitable outcome. The communities have come to depend on the institution of the WUC as taking responsibility for their WATSAN creating apathy towards the mobilisation of meaningful resources to sustain the water facilities established. The participation in the affairs of the tap stand and central WUC can also be seen to be limited to the process of voting them on the committees only. Once they have formed the committees, the community assumes that the responsibility for managing the WATSAN facilities lies entirely with the committee, a highly burdensome situation. Here, participation can be considered functional where committees are formed to achieve predetermined goals, in this case water management. The community also relies on the extension workers to facilitate this committee formation process and this is consistent with what Mikkelsen prescribes.

Therefore, the participatory processes in the study areas are limited to providing information by extension workers, haphazard consultation, passively observing the work being done by private contractors and functionally forming committees to oversee water governance. While participation should be instrumental or transformational as suggested by Oakely and Marsden (1991), it only seems remotely instrumental in the WATSAN sector of Mbarara.

4.4 The Institutional Framework

Both decentralisation and policies regarding delivery of services are in place to guide management of WATSAN facilities. While claims about the benefits of decentralisation are consistently emphasized by their proponents, it is important to tailor such institutional frameworks in order for them to work at local levels. Harpe (undated: 11) asserts that despite the fact that all countries have national policies to guide supply of WATSAN facilities, very few have

bye laws for this. This is also true of the CBMS as a management mechanism. Bye laws entail 'rules of the game' and in the CBMS, they range from service standards, determination, collection and use of user fees, O&M to dealing with defaulters and illegal connections. However, in both sub counties, there were no bye-laws regarding management of WATSAN facilities. One local government official stated that,

...bye laws for water related services would make things clear for communities especially their roles and responsibilities. However, experience shows that unless the sub county is involved in their enforcement, they cannot work... (Respondent RA: interview)

As previously discussed in chapter two, decentralisation has devolved technical capacity to the local level in form of extension workers to the Sub-county level that facilitate participatory processes and provide information. For example health assistants continuously educate communities about the importance of a safe water chain and better hygiene practices. This provides opportunities for community members seek better WATSAN practices from people with the technical capacity and this improves the health of the communities.

In addition, while efforts to make decentralisation in Uganda political, administrative and fiscal; the government largely remains constrained to provide the necessary resources at the local level for service delivery. Moreover the conditional grant given to districts for the water sector has strings attached to them regarding how the funds should be utilised (Key informant interviews). For example, community bottom up plans may reflect the need for special consideration of the elderly and persons with disabilities in the distribution of taps. However, these are subject to technical aspects that may override the actual needs of the poor.

Similarly, Ribot et al. (2008) emphasize that power transfers should give responsibilities and resources to render it a worthwhile venture to engage in desired behaviour and exert influence. However, with WUCs, only responsibilities have been transferred without the resources. Because it is assumed that decentralisation should facilitate resource identification at the local level so that opportunities are exploited for the community's wellbeing, a lot of responsibilities have been given to users regardless of their capacity to handle such. Scarcity of resources will mean that opportunities that may exist in the institutional framework will not be exploited and as such, they will only remain on paper.

As a governance mechanism, decentralisation should lead to empowerment of grass root communities and bring forth local leaders. However, in the study area, some leaders have only served their interests in these positions. As the discussion on politics in section 4.8 will point out, some LCs in place have usurped the power of WUCs and therefore undermined its effectiveness to deliver pro-poor benefits. As Rondinelli (1991) asserts, decentralisation is just one of the conditions that can facilitate community management of water resources. Other institutional arrangements need to be reinforced to take on the management of such resources.

4.5 Capacity of WUCs

Most of the difficulties encountered in the management of water facilities have been attributed to the inadequate capacity of the WUCs. Capacity is looked at here in terms of resources, leadership, decision making, power and mobilising community participation to bring about pro-poor outcomes across sectors (Taylor 2000). While capacity building in terms of training of the scheme operator and the WUC in basic community management skills is at the heart of CBMS, both community and committee FGDs revealed some weaknesses in these aspects.

A case in point is the RA WUC where the chair person died a year ago. The committee itself acknowledged that there was a transition crisis from the deceased chairperson to the vice chairperson and that the activities of the committee had stagnated. The community also agreed

that the committee derived its strength from the character of the chairperson whose absence seems to have paralysed the functioning of the committee. One respondent had this to say,

We knew that committee was finished when Mr Bettina died. He was the most trusted, serious person and we all respected him because he listened to us, at the same time he could not tolerate defaulters. He had integrity... (Respondent RA FGD)

Clearly, this shows that the leadership capacity hinged upon the chairperson's character and not necessarily the committee being empowered enough to provide leadership capacity to the community. An incident was cited in which the water pipe burst and the committee did not respond to this until the sub county authorities were called to intervene and do some repairs. Coupled with the fact that there's hardly any remuneration for this committee, it is hardly surprising that they cannot get any work done in time.

On the other hand, RN seemed to have a better level of leadership capacity though it was not strong enough to counter the illegal practices of the scheme operator. This was because the scheme operator is always instructed by the political leadership to connect more people for gains allegedly shared with him and the politicians. While the illegal connections were regularised and made legal at the handover of the facility to the community, this did not stop the practice. It was discovered that an additional six connections have been made in a short period of ten months.

Despite the fact that the chairperson seemed a strong willed character and in charge of his committee affairs, he seemed sceptical about how far the committee would go in ensuring the desired outcomes because according to him, 'the politics of votes is killing the system' with the LCs manipulating the system to gain votes in the next round of elections. This kind of leadership patterns consequently affects the kind of decisions taken by the committee. In RN, this was said,

...and whenever we try to prevent illegal connections, we are told by residents that they have already paid for this service somewhere. Politicians have made this work totally unbearable since we don't have power to stop them.... (Respondent, RN FGD)

This is a reflection of the power struggle between the committee and LCs with the former accusing the latter of meddling in their affairs. The politicians don't recognise the legitimacy of the committees in place and will go to great lengths to undermine them.

Similarly, the resource capacity required to make the WUC function is a critical issue in both sub counties. The success of governance practices is highly dependent on the amount of resources invested in them. However most communities find that they are incapable of participating because they can hardly contribute financial resources and this places them at a disadvantage. Communities require financial resources to reinforce their participation (Taylor 2000) and in the CBMS model, it is expected that the WUCs mobilise users to contribute towards the maintenance of the facilities. This contribution is a monthly fee of five hundred shillings (0.16 Euros). However, the committee reported that it is very difficult to get households to pay because some claim that they cannot afford it and those who can pay may not continue to pay when they realise that those who don't pay still have access to the facilities. Moreover, some politicians still urge people not to pay saying 'water is a free resource, you don't need to pay'. Other cultural norms forbid 'selling' drinking water to someone who is thirsty. Because there are different categories of income groups for example business people, farmers, the self employed, many respondents felt that this was a token amount that even the poorest households could afford to pay. Considerations about a progressive contributory scheme should be made in which those in a better income position pay a little more than those in the extreme margins of poverty. More financial resources would be generated this way.

The absence of a critical resource like finance is a major issue since the immediate repair of broken parts, community mobilisation for resource generation and reporting mechanisms for appropriate responses to community water problems all require a budget set aside for such

activities. In both sub counties, there were hardly any financial records except in RA where the treasurer kept cash collections registers for individual households. The apparent failure of both committees to successfully mobilise resources from the community will result into these functions not being done. The support of other partners like the local governments is required to obtain compliance on the side of community. Indeed that is why according to the Operation and Maintenance framework sub counties are expected to give back up support both technical or in terms of enforcement of bye-laws to make the work of the committee effective.

In general terms, both committees seem to have weaknesses in capacity to undertake their responsibilities. However, RN was more in charge of its affairs than RA and had moderate capacity in terms of quality of leadership, decision making, mobilising both community and financial resources. Its major problem seemed to be an insubordinate scheme operator. RA seemed to have a multiplicity of problems stemming from conflicts between the local politicians and the committee over who had authority over water affairs. This was coupled with the committee's weaknesses in the same capacity areas identified above. These capacity weaknesses have negatively affected the range of pro-poor outcomes and more so in RA.

4.6 Pro-Poor Outcomes

Outcomes are seen as the results of a particular intervention on a long term basis. Franks and Cleaver (2007) stress that management mechanisms and processes for water resources bring about different impacts for different individuals in the community. For the poor, the outcomes can be seen on the basis of access in terms of quantity, quality, availability and livelihoods in terms of how the poor can use increased access to water to improve their statuses socially or politically.

In both RN and RA, there seemed to be consensus on who is considered to be poor. They were described as those who lack enough food, appropriate shelter, low or no incomes, prone to frequent disease outbreaks, financially highly indebted, inability to access basic services like health, education and WATSAN. Hence, these same community members also categorised themselves as being poor since majority of them lacked the things that they had identified. However, they also acknowledged the existence of some community members who are economically better off than them.

Similarly, the official poverty indicators for Mbarara district depict a situation that needs urgent strategies. Using the 2002 Uganda Population and Housing census reports and several monitoring visits, the district has identified poverty pockets using the major social-economic indicators and the average distances established as 5km from social services and water. For RA and RN, they are thus;

Table 1: Poverty indicators

Subcounty	AHS>5.1	>5km to HF	>5km to PS	>5km to WS
RN	Yes	No	No	No
RA	No	Yes	Yes	No

Key:

- AHS** Average household size
- HF** Health Facility
- PS** Primary school
- WS** Water source

Source: Mbarara District DDP (2007) and own modification.

An analysis of the above indicators shows that while RN has larger households, it has better access to the identified social services in terms of distances travelled to reach them compared to

RA which seems to have smaller households but travel longer distances. However they both have considerably better access to water sources and this is because of the availability of the tap stands in the villages as a result of construction of GFSs.

In the two sub counties, most community members felt that the monthly fee was affordable and hence pro-poor. However it is not paid and even those who pay don't do it timely. The capacity of the WUC to collect it is questionable.

This consequently influences the quality and range of pro-poor outcomes since financial resources to actualise such outcomes are compromised. The analysis of such outcomes is done based on the quality and quantity of service, access and improved livelihoods.

Quality and Quantity

As far as quantity and quality of the WATSAN services is concerned, respondents revealed that with WUCs in place, improvements have occurred due to the feedback mechanisms created between the committee and the water department at district level. The complaints registered by the committee make the basis for improved quality of water through treatment and quantity by ensuring that the volume of water received is consistent with the community water needs. These regular checks by the water department as a result of information provided by the WUC depict an improved situation from the prior arrangement where the seasonal water sources would dry up and the poor would have no option but to fetch water from dirty swamps. As one respondent put it,

Sometimes the children would go without a bath the whole day because there was simply not enough water for this. With the GFS and WUC, at least they try to see that we have enough water even with the problems they face. (Respondent, RN Interview)

Access

Regarding access, the outcomes from the two sub counties seem to contrast. In RN, there's general consensus about improved access now than it was before 2003 due to the fact that there are tap stands across most villages. The existence of the WUC has brought out certainty of having uninterrupted water supply. The construction of GFSs in rural areas is a major step towards providing cheap and affordable water to the poor. However, in RA, there are problems with access. While the distribution taps are in place, the system is riddled with illegal connections backed by influential politicians, a problem that the committee has inadequately handled. This was asserted by a respondent,

..What is the point in having so many taps with no water? In my view the committee should first concentrate on dealing with illegal connections rather than harassing us to pay for water we don't get. (Respondent, RA Interview)

Illegal connections take away large volumes of water such that some taps dry up leaving users without water. In such a scenario, the poor who can't afford alternative sources are the victims of such practices. This undermines the anticipated pro-poor outcomes as far as accessibility for all is concerned.

Improved Livelihoods

One of the major contributions the GFSs have provided is the improvement in both social and economic livelihoods among the poor. This is felt most in RN. Most respondents agreed that since the water facilities are better maintained and water readily available, community

members now have more time to engage in activities they previously could not. One of the men remarked,

My wife now does not have to wake up so early to fetch water from the 3km stretch that she used to walk twice each day. It used to frustrate me seeing her do this but I was so helpless where water was concerned..... (Respondent, RN FGD)

On the other hand, most women were relieved that their children could now go to school timely. They felt that most of their children were not performing well at school because they always got to school tired from fetching water very early in the morning. However in RA, most respondents felt that the benefits were short-lived and inconsistent because there were constant breakdowns of the facilities. This was attributed to the inability of the committee to adequately manage the WATSAN affairs of the Sub County.

Other women acknowledged that they can now join community functions and income generating activities because they have some time freed up from not having to walk long distances to fetch water. One woman realised that she could now attend the village burial and wedding meetings and participate in deliberating on issues to do with governance of their village. For the community members, attending these functions fosters community cohesion and a commitment to help each other out in times of need. They all attributed this to the new governance mechanism of the WUC.

Another fundamental outcome of this arrangement is the fact that health and especially child health has improved. According to Howard and Obika (2004:73), 'water, poverty and health are closely linked'. Access to good quality water means that the transmission of water borne diseases has been kept low and the WUC's insistence on keeping clean water containers for fetching water has been instrumental in the reduction of cholera cases in most villages and especially in RN. Therefore, establishment of WUCs has brought about some relief by instituting strict measures for ensuring that the water containers and tap-stand areas are kept clean. This ensures a safe water chain and prevents disease outbreaks. If consistency is maintained, water borne disease burdens will as a result incrementally be reduced.

4.7 Persistent Problems

Despite some success stories attributed to the CBMS, the freedom to take up other active roles in community activities seemed to be spearheaded by those women who were already in positions of influence. Informal interviews with women who are in charge of some community affairs revealed that only a very small percentage was liberated enough to take on community activities. Other poor women were still tied up in other domestic chores like tending to their gardens for food production, grazing livestock and taking care of the children and the elderly. One woman stated,

I have to prepare children for school, my husband for work, lunch, mobilise firewood, food and tend to my other gardens. I honestly don't have the time to engage in water management. (Respondent, RA interview)

The reduced burden of fetching water seemed to have freed up some time to engage in even more burdensome domestic chores.

Sanitation

Sanitation has been relegated to the sidelines because much as the district water department tries to address WATSAN issues concurrently, the community seems less enthusiastic about it. It was observed that the drainage systems are blocked; the public toilets unhygienic and even the garbage collection sites are inappropriately managed to keep the environment clean. As Harpe

(undated) notes, water coverage is increasing at a much higher rate than sanitation services but acknowledges that WATSAN activities cannot be sustainable if the problems of sanitation are not addressed. Therefore, as institutions are continuously put in place to ensure access to WATSAN for the majority of the poor, sanitation has been grossly neglected. The WUC in conjunction with the sub county officials is expected to put in place mechanisms for proper garbage disposal, hygiene of the public toilets to ensure improved environmental health. Unfortunately, this has been largely ignored by the two sub counties and thus the community has been deprived of this benefit. Considerable gains have only been made at household level through individual efforts.

4.8 Politics in the CBMS

This section relates to research question three and four in establishing the political processes affecting the capacity of WUCs and subsequently the extent to which these processes affect pro-poor outcomes. Manor (2004) voices concerns about the fate of the poor in the administration of the user committees. While it is the practice that committees are selected democratically by the whole community participating in the voting process, it is common place to find these committees dominated by those with some degree of influence. Such people have the political skills and self confidence to manoeuvre through the procedure and get elected to these committees.

Despite the fact that in both local governments studied, there was mandatory representation of women and other marginalised groups in stipulated proportions (50%), the influence of the dominant male members of the committee seemed to be in force (RA interview). Concerns have been expressed towards the fact that mandatory representation of women doesn't necessarily guarantee that women will have meaningful influence over governance affairs (Manor, 2004). Singh (2006) cites two factors for this. First, individual factors such as lack of interest in political processes, illiteracy and lack of confidence. Second, institutional factors that include cultural norms and domestic responsibilities all of which reduce their participation in meetings at specific times and locations. In the study area, some women expressed that they are sometimes too intimidated to make any meaningful contributions to the work of the committees. As one women committee member said,

....there is a member of the LC executive on this committee who never wants to listen to what I have to say in the meetings. Every time I try to say something, he says that we women have too many demands on the committee. I even feel like resigning this responsibility because am not contributing anything..... (Respondent, RA interview)

This seems to be confirmed by Cleaver (2004) who asserts that village level management structures also demonstrate how such organisations can bring about hierarchies of power and reinforce exclusion of the voiceless due to the fact that communities are not homogeneous. While the interests of women would be to ensure that they reduce the distance walked to collect water, the men may be concerned with how to maximise collection of user fees to ensure that they have more funds at their disposal for facilitating other functions that may not necessarily be water specific. This is also echoed by Singh thus;

While women are generally responsible for all decisions regarding domestic water management, men are concerned with water management issues outside the domestic sphere. (Singh 2006:72)

These assertions reflect that women's involvement with WUCs does not necessarily bring about their own empowerment. They may continue to be excluded even in the space of the WUC.

In addition, the formation of committees for different sectors has consistently returned the same people in leadership positions and this is mainly due to the absence of a critical mass of

people who can read and write and have spare time for these responsibilities. This means that the same people manoeuvre for leadership positions, monopolise decision making and participatory spaces in communities exacerbating the issue of elite capture. In their findings on a Tanzania study, Cleaver and Toner (2006:1) discovered that ‘even with rules in place to encourage participation, elite interests can predominate’. This is notwithstanding the fact that all community members are constantly encouraged to participate. Yet, even when other people attempt to rise to such positions, those already established in mainstream political bodies see them as potential threats to their positions.

The issue of illegal connections is still a problem in most GFSs and in both RA and RN, the committee seems incapable of handling it because according to some people, the sub county political leadership sanctioned such connections. As the time for elections is fast approaching (2011), the politicians are using water to canvass for votes. Other people still bribe to get illegally connected to the water system for other uses for example, filling up tanks for both cattle and poultry use. This is where power politics and patronage play a huge role as those in power will use public resources to further entrench themselves in positions of power.

In RA, there has emerged a strong group of people who have come to govern how water is distributed even when they are not on the WUC structures. They are part of the established LC structures that govern at village level. They assume responsibility for overseeing the facility to the extent that the community has come to see them as the legitimate overseers of the system rather than the WUC. While this committee is expected to be non partisan and non discriminatory, it is common to find members aligned to particular political groups and this also affects the way they do their work. In RA, suspicions are that with the cooperation of the scheme operator, they even intentionally cut off the water supply so that they collect money from residents in order to restore the water.

This shows that the elected politicians at the local level usurp the power of the committee over water affairs. When public powers are transferred to parallel institutions at the local level, competition with democratic local governance can emerge (Ribot et al, 2008). Indeed the local leaders see the WUC as a parallel institution that has come to do the work of the social services committee of the LCs, a situation that has created tension and conflicts between the mainstream local institutions and the supposedly voluntarily formed institution of the WUC. To illustrate this, Figure 5 below shows the different levels of power wielded by different stakeholders, their interest and level of influence at the local level in both sub counties as described by some respondents.

Table 2: Power-Interest-Influence Grid in the CBMS at the local level

Stakeholder	Power/mandate	Interest	Influence
Elected LC officials	High	High	High
WUC	Moderate	High	Moderate
Water user community	Moderate	High	Moderate
District	High	Moderate	Moderate

Source: own construction

From the above table, we can see that elected LC officials have high levels of power, interest and influence over water affairs in both RN and RA. They derive their power from the fact that they are universally elected in a legally recognised electoral process. This means that power politics will influence how such water resources will be managed and these officials are bound to strongly influence how things get done within the community. It also explains why whenever they incite the community not to pay maintenance fee, everyone follows. However, the WUC has moderate power, high interest and moderate influence. Thus the committee will not command favourable responses from the community to, for instance make monetary

contributions to the maintenance despite the fact the committee has a lot of interest in seeing that the system works, the purpose for which they were elected. Yet the user community for which all these efforts are made, has moderate power, high interest and moderate influence. This is mainly because of their social and economic situation that places them in a vulnerable position in which they may not ably negotiate with those in power for their rights.

Interestingly, the district that is supposed to oversee service delivery to the lowest level in the spirit of decentralisation has a high level of power, moderate interest and influence. It has the power to determine what services go to which people despite the fact it may not have interest and influence at the local level because it is far removed from the realities at village level and the ability to influence things there is heavily delegated to the local officials.

The above power-interest-influence analysis presents a situation in which the governance of the WATSAN facilities is riddled with complex social-political processes at the local level. This explains why outcomes for the poor are mixed, some of which are incidental in nature.

Too many committees?

With all the political processes taking place, the communities expressed that they are overwhelmed by the number of committees that have to be formed each time a new programme is established by the government or NGOs. One respondent had this to say;

We have to form committees for water, NAADs, AAMP⁴, health, schools, HIV prevention and our own self help groups. We elect the same people to these committees though some of them are unhelpful but they are the ones who offer themselves all the time. The rest of us are tired of same people but we have no option..... (Respondent, RA FGD)

While it is donor belief that committees give people more influence over decisions that affect their daily lives (Manor, 2004, Ribot et al., 2008), these committees have empowered a small elite group which has the ability to get themselves elected to these positions. Indeed, the above quotation from RA FGD suggests this and points towards a fragmentation of efforts by different sectors. This places a burden on the community in terms of the time needed to elect them and contributions to be made to all of them.

From this, it can be inferred that there has emerged a committee fatigue phenomenon among most communities. These communities seem to have lost track of the committees as most of them overlap in their functions and demand a lot of their time in order to bring about supposed participatory governance in most of these programmes.

Therefore, the existence of parallel leadership structures to the formally established ones and committee fatigue has dominated the institution of the WUCs with power politics at the centre of CBMS participatory processes. As a result, political entrepreneurs have emerged with those in positions of influence utilising available opportunities to further entrench themselves even when they are not necessarily delivering on their pro-poor mandates.

4.9 Incentives for the WUC Members

According to Cleaver (1999), a lot of the literature on participation does not fully explain the incentives that bring about participatory processes. Instead it is assumed that if communities get involved in development initiatives, it is for their own good and this should motivate

⁴ NAADS and AAMP are government initiated agricultural programmes that support farmers to increase agricultural productivity for income generation among the active poor.

participatory behaviour. Indeed, practitioners assure communities that by participating, individual benefits will accrue to them and hence it is in their own interest and morally responsible for them to engage in such processes. In the same spirit, most of the provisions in Uganda's policy documents highlight the mechanisms that the WUCs can utilise to mobilise, spend, and account for financial resources collected for the facility maintenance. The Operation and Maintenance framework (2004) even provides guidelines for O&M costing, collection of user fees, use and management of user fees and custody of O&M funds. It also gives specimen samples for keeping simple books of accounts for accountability and transparency purposes. However, there is no provision for individual benefits as incentives for people to serve on the WUC. While it is assumed that the community's desire to have a well functioning system is motivation enough for them to work without any payment (Cleaver 2000, Rondinelli 1991), this is a gross oversight on the part of policy makers.

Only the scheme operator, who is identified at construction phase and trained, gets a token allowance and a bicycle from the sub county for doing his work. While the committee members volunteer to take such responsibility, they clearly expect something in return for their services. This may range from the esteem derived from community members to subsequent opportunities for them. Based on their performance, subsequent programmes may require their services from which they get small incentives especially in health, agriculture and community development initiatives. In this way, the WUC becomes a foundation for members to further advance their personal social and economic status within the community setup. This is one of the small gains that WUC members can get from the CBMS.

The lack of incentives was reinforced by another sub county official whose concern was that the committee was not doing its work properly because 'there was inadequate funding for the maintenance of facilities and facilitation for the committee to do its functions.' Another extension worker knowingly suggested that,

...the CBMS is a good governance model if members were motivated enough with bicycles and tee-shirts to give them the esteem that they need to stand out in the community. (Respondent, RA Interview)

These assertions reinforce the fact that for any responsibility to be ably carried out there needs to be an incentive mechanism to motivate people to continue engaging in such activities. Rondinelli (1991:422) stresses that 'social and symbolic rewards' constitute incentives for community involvement in water related activities. Recognition of WUC at public forums by award of certificates is highly valued in many rural communities and would motivate further participation (ibid). Failure of the community to recognise some members' contribution in ensuring there is water for all seems to have reduced the members' commitment towards their roles. Similarly Cleaver (2000:363) acknowledges that incentives are an integral part of 'resource management' as ways that help to influence both 'individual and collective action'. Both committees of RN and RA seem to have sacrificed a lot in terms of the time and resources invested in running of the system, arbitration in conflicts related to water usage and providing information linkages to facilitate better functioning of the WATSAN systems in place. The benefits from engaging in this behaviour accrue to all community members but the burden is borne by a few. It is further made worse when one of them, the scheme operator is given an allowance. It makes other people's work seem insignificant and makes it difficult to supervise someone who is better placed than all the committee members in terms of benefits.

One may therefore come to the conclusion that the lack of incentives is one of the major factors that have hindered the full realisation of pro-poor outcomes. While the benefits of having a functional system accrue to the whole community, only a few are motivated to engage in behaviour that sustains these facilities. The assumption that the benefits should be an incentive for everyone to be concerned about management of the facilities has not been so in Mbarara.

The fact that the community has to some extent benefitted from the activities of the WUC does not necessarily mean that the committee is satisfied. An incentive system that rewards their efforts however small should be considered if such efforts are to be sustained over time.

Table 3: Summary of findings according to Participation, Capacity and Pro-poor outcomes for RA and RN GFSSs.

	RN	RA
Participatory processes		
Problem identification	Good, as a result of public outcry	Poor, initiated by district
Project implementation	Poor, construction contracted out to private firms	Poor, construction contracted out to private firms
Election of a WUC	Good	Moderate
O&M	Poor, critical issues relegated to committee to handle	Poor, Subcounty only pays scheme operator to do minor repairs
Capacity of WUC		
Leadership	Moderate	Weak
Decision making	Moderate	Weak
Financial resource mobilisation	Moderate	Weak
Mobilising community participation	Moderate	Weak
Pro-poor outcomes		
Quality and quantity	Improved	Improved despite persistent shortages and illegal connections
Access	Improved	Improved, installation of tap stands
Improved livelihoods (health, children's well being)	Good, low incidence of water-borne diseases, children go to school on time	No significant change, constant breakdown of facilities.

Source: own construction

From the table above, it is apparent that RN has delivered more on pro-poor outcomes than RA. Considering participatory processes, a scale of good, moderate and poor is used to describe the state of such processes. Good is the best level of participation, moderate is average/fair and poor is the worst, a case of non participation. Both areas have poor levels of participation during project implementation, the time when it is considered very important for beneficiaries to get involved in project activities. Using the participation typology, RA fits the passive form while RN is a modest form of participation by consultation and this partly explains the differences in the range of outcomes for the two areas.

Under WUC capacity, good, moderate and weak is used to reflect the level of capacity the committee possesses to do its work. It is realised that no committee is at the best level and this could in part, explain why there is mediocrity in the range of outcomes. For pro-poor outcomes, good, improved and no significant change are used to explain the quality of these outcomes. Good is used to describe a desirable situation achieved, improved, in instances where there has been some positive gains as compared to the previous situation. Where there have been no visible improvements, no significant change is used.

One can therefore conclude that to a large extent, there is a relationship between people participation, capacity of WUC and the pro-poor outcomes delivered. However, the presence of other factors like volatile local politics and the social aspects prevalent in communities should not be ignored because they can influence outcomes even where participation and a strong committee are present, issues that have had an influence in RA.

4.10 Summary

Governance for pro-poor outcomes constitutes interactions, processes, mechanisms and institutions through which all actors can channel their interests, undertake their responsibilities and take decisions to deliver WATSAN benefits. Water governance therefore entails improvement in the way such processes work by paying attention to critical issues for instance incentives, capacity building, financial resources and politics. In RA and RN, these processes have played a significant role in the outcomes delivered to the poor.

Chapter 5

STUDY CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the study conclusions and summarises the answers to the research questions regarding community level water governance in Mbarara. It also highlights some policy recommendations for the WATSAN sector in Uganda.

5.2 Actors and Mechanisms in the CBMS

Broadly, the major actors in the CBMS include the government through the decentralised system of districts and sub counties, development partners, the communities, NGOs, the private sector and WUCs. However, at the community level where the WATSAN facilities are located, it is the sub counties, WUCs, the scheme operator and the community that are directly involved in the operation of the CBMS.

The mechanisms in the CBMS primarily entail the institution of the WUC, its operations, interactions with the community and relationships with other local institutions at that level to bring about pro-poor water service delivery in Mbarara district.

5.3 The Institutional Framework

The CBMS as a management mechanism for WATSAN facilities in rural communities is highly entrenched in the policies, laws and regulations pertaining to the water sector. However, while the national policies are in place to guide the management of WATSAN facilities, enacting local bye laws still remains a challenge. It therefore becomes difficult to implement broad national priorities in a local setting unless localised rules of the game are enacted in the form of bye laws.

Decentralisation, which is grounded in the Local Government Act CAP 243, is the mode of governance that aims to bring services nearer to the users in Uganda. It is the overall institutional framework and the WUCs are a delegated responsibility towards communities to manage their own WATSAN facilities.

These frameworks provide the communities with opportunities to manage their own facilities in ways they find feasible for their local circumstances. Moreover rural and poor communities may not conceptualise the opportunities in the policies if they lack the knowledge, resources and skills to exploit them. In this case, they remain blueprints that may not serve their intended purposes.

In any case such policies should provide a guide on how to manage communal facilities although different mechanisms can be devised to suit different local contexts, a process that if well managed can lead to increased democratic control and empowerment of communities in the WATSAN sector.

5.4 CBMS and WUC Capacity

While Mbarara district has committed resources to increase the capacity of WUCs in basic management skills through training, this has been inadequate to give them the hands on skills they require in the day to day management of WATSAN facilities. This is because it is a one-time exercise done at project inception. The scheme operator is trained in basic mechanical works for post construction maintenance. However, changing local circumstances require dynamic skills on the part of the committee and hence the need for refresher training at periodic intervals.

Both RN and RA committees displayed inadequate capacity to fully carry out their duties. Weaknesses in leadership, decision making, financial resource mobilisation and ability to mobilise full participation of users are still massive. While the government empowers the water department and extension staff to equip these committees with such skills, there are other factors that hinder this. The issue of power politics and emerging conflicts between parallel structures have had a big role in undermining the capacity of these committees to deliver on their mandates.

5.5 CBMS and Pro-Poor Outcomes

The CBMS as a management model is expected to generate outcomes that benefit the poor and improve their livelihoods. Modest successes have been registered especially in RN. The construction of the GFSs and subsequent institution of the WUCs have brought about some improvements in access to both quantity and quality water. Poor people's socio-economic livelihoods have improved as a result of time saved from fetching water from long distances to other productive activities. Despite the fact it may not be visible in the short run, the social wellbeing of the women and children who fetch water has significantly improved with children now going to school on time and women engaging in other income generating activities. However, in areas like RA, the gains have only been minimal because of the other factors like politics and the incapacity of the WUC to manage the water affairs, issues that may not have been envisaged by the policy makers as they designed the CBMS strategy.

The extent to which the CBMS brings about pro-poor outcomes is determined by a multiplicity of factors. Given the indicators in the virtuous circle of a well maintained system as prescribed in 2004 O&M framework (refer to Figure I), the case study areas are very far from achieving this state. While it is a difficult task to measure such outcomes for impact, the general trend is that the WUCs have done what they can in the prevailing circumstances. Therefore, on average the extent to which the CBMS has delivered on pro-

poor outcomes has been less significant as compared to the expectations of the policy makers, practitioners and the users.

5.6 Future Support for Community Level Water Governance

In order to strengthen and motivate WUCs, an incentive system that recognises their contribution towards governance of water affairs is necessary. The idea that community management is about taking full responsibility of communally owned facilities without remuneration places an extra burden on a community that lacks the resources to do this. Policy makers should therefore make an extra effort to facilitate committees until such a time that they are able to generate their own funds function without external support. Non-financial incentives like bicycles, tee shirts and badges would set them apart and give them esteem in the community.

While participatory processes are favoured to enlist the involvement of stakeholders in development, they may not necessarily be a solution to all community problems especially in the WATSAN sector. They do not always guarantee positive outcomes so they should be used concurrently with coercive means by local governments to achieve compliance especially with defaulting users. These may include the community putting mechanisms and sanctions in place that may be invoked to deal with defaulters. The sub county could use its administrative machinery to help in apprehending the defaulters and to ensure subsequent compliance especially in the payment of the maintenance fee.

5.7 Recommendations

The institutional framework is full of attractive and credible provisions to make CBMS a vibrant mechanism for effective governance of WATSAN facilities. However workable bye-laws are not yet in place and hence enforcement of such mechanisms seems to be the weakest link as some of them don't fit particular local circumstances. For example, the insistence on payment of a flat fee for everyone even when it is clear that there are those who can afford to pay more is inappropriate. A pilot implementation of alternative mechanisms should be made from which efforts can be replicated and lessons learnt for continuous improvements in the CBMS. This could entail adopting a progressive scheme from which payment of user fees for maintenance is made according to one's economic status.

Governments should realise that whatever donors prescribe may not necessarily operate in local contexts. Although they finance most of the WATSAN infrastructure and provide the technical support needed for this, there is need for a change in the methods donors use to facilitate these investments. Insistence on the institution of WUCs as management models for investments in the water sector may work for some countries but not others and it's the role of governments to advance this if they are to fully support communities to better manage their communally owned water facilities.

5.8 Conclusion

At the start of this study, some assumptions were made about community level water governance and its influence on pro-poor outcomes in Uganda. After all, policies and institutions were in place to support the CBMS as a governance mechanism for rural WATSAN facilities. While conducting the study, it became apparent that some assumptions especially the potential of participatory processes to deliver pro-poor outcomes were highly exaggerated. Despite the fact that some positive outcomes have been registered as a result of this, political conflicts have also emerged. WUCs are too busy reacting to the political manipulations of the LCs and this has undermined effective water governance. Moreover, capacity as an important dimension to governance is still far from being achieved. The governance of public resources like water facilities is constantly changing and requires dynamic skills to match such changes. Too often, change brings about resistance that generates political conflicts that cannot be resolved by external solutions. There are no straight answers, panaceas nor prescriptions to how community WATSAN facilities can best be governed. There are only fundamental principles that apply across all governance mechanisms. A best practice approach needs to be adopted in which lessons learnt from different areas can be tailored to improve the CBMS and subsequently water governance. This would ensure that pro-poor outcomes are continuously reviewed and improved for better water governance in rural communities.

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APPENDIX 2:

Interview guide for semi structured interviews for Key Informants (Mbarara district water officials, Water and Sanitation Development Facility, Rubindi and Rugando Sub county Local Government Officials)

Research title: Community Level Water Governance and Pro-poor Outcomes in the Water and Sanitation Sector:: The case of Mbarara District, Uganda.

1. Background

- Background to water and sanitation sector in the district
- Actors in the water and sanitation sector in the district (any other actors in the like NGOs involved, donors etc?)
- Implementation issues for gravity flow schemes in the district
- Decentralization processes for water and sanitation services in the district
- Any opportunities within the decentralization framework that can ensure pro-poor outcomes in respect to water and sanitation

2. Community level Water Governance systems in the district (CBMS)

- Modalities for the Formation of water user committees in the district
- Community participation in the formation of water user committees
- Challenges for the CBMS in practice
- Other factors that have an influence on how the system works and how they affect the poor

3. Pro-poor outcomes

- Perceptions about the relationship between water user committees and increased access in terms of availability, quantity and quality of water and sanitation services
- Perceptions about community livelihoods as a result of the influence of water user committees
- Opportunities for improved functionality of the water user committees

APPENDIX 3:

A checklist for Focus Group Discussion for the Water User Committees in Rubindi and Rugando Sub Counties- Mbarara district

1. Background to the management of community water facilities prior CBMS
2. Current criteria for the formation of the water user committees in Rubindi and Rugando sub counties
3. Management processes for community water and sanitation facilities
 - Roles and responsibilities for committee members
 - Group dynamics of leadership, decision making and member participation(some of these to be observed during this interaction)
4. Resource mobilization for improved functionality of CBMS
5. Relationship between the CBMS and the sub county local government in as far as management of water and sanitation facilities are concerned
 - Any support given to the committee by the local government in management of water and sanitation facilities
 - Does the interaction of the CBMS and Local government if any, bring about any relief to the poor regarding water and sanitation outcomes?
6. Any favourable outcomes for the poor as a result of CBMS?
7. Challenges for the committee in the CBMS strategy
8. Other political or social factors that have an influence on the CBMS working mechanisms

APPENDIX 4

Checklist for community members' focus group discussion

1. Community perception of the poor (who is poor according to the community in terms of characteristics)
2. Situational analysis of water and sanitation before the construction of gravity flow schemes
 - Type of water and sanitation facilities in place
 - Access to these water and sanitation facilities
 - Quality and quantity of water accessed
3. Situational analysis after construction of gravity flow schemes for the community
4. Community participation in the:
 - Problem identification and analysis
 - construction of the facilities
 - selection of the water user committee
 - management of the water and sanitation facilities
5. Perceived and felt benefits to the community as a result of the CBMS
6. Any particular issues for the poor regarding the CBMS as a management model

APPENDIX 5

Checklist for follow up semi structured interviews with community members

Background information

- Community composition according to you, characteristics of community members in terms of income levels, social and political characteristics
- 2. Any activities engaged in for income generation
- Any community activities engaged in
- Leadership of the villages, parishes and the Subcounty

Water and Sanitation

- General water and sanitation situation, where do you fetch water?
- Situation before construction of GFS
- Current situation after construction of the GFS
- Level of satisfaction of WATSAN service delivery
- Responsibility for overseeing the WATSAN facilities in the community
- The role of the WUC and its functions
- Any advantages of having the WUC in place?
- Any problems/ challenges in accessing water in its right quality or quantity?
- Are there any areas in which you would require improvements?