

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION SERVICES IN WESTERN UGANDA.

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Community Empowerment Initiative (CEI) is an NGO operating in Western Uganda. CEI implements community development programmes at the grassroots level in Western Uganda. Its core programme is water and sanitation.

CEI implements water and sanitation programmes directly in partnership with the local community at the grassroots. It is a condition for CEI to implement any water and sanitation programme, the needy community must participate in the project through material contribution, manual labour and joint planning and for CEI we participate by providing resource personnel such as sanitation promoters, social workers, technicians, masons and community development workers, these resource personnel help in construction of shallow well, training community on good practice of hygiene and sanitation at household level.

Community participation in implementing water and sanitation programmes has helped CEI for its projects implemented to be sustained by the beneficiaries who are the communities.

In western Uganda where CEI operates, there is a general problem of lack of safe water and proper sanitation. Most of the water sources need to be protected and community trained on good practice of proper hygiene and CEI is addressing the problem with the small resources it has in terms of funds.

CEI has a problem of funds, the funds we have are not sufficient to address the problems. In water supply and sanitation services, CEI is looking for development partners also to participate in addressing the problems through funding of CEI projects, development partners could intervene through CEI website at www.geocities.com/ceinitiative/index.htm.

Before implementation of any programme for water and sanitation in the area of operation, CEI co-ordinates with the local government to get the general data of the District, it goes a head to carry out the base line survey at the grassroots, an example where CEI has implemented the project is Bugaki Sub-County funded by Fort Portal Catholic Diocese.

The baseline was carried out in that area called Bugaki Sub-County and it was found out that sanitation and hygiene was very poor in all the villages of that area about 60% of the population had no pit latrine and 98% had no hand washing facilities and water was not safe. The common hygiene behavior were sharing with animals (pigs and goats) in

utensils, washing clothes at water sources, defecating around the compound and the bush, drinking unboiled water which was collected from unprotected water sources, urinating near water sources, and low income in families which contributed to the problem of poverty among the community and this was generated from lack of awareness about health living conditions. Generally the standard of living was very poor.

Impact of Implemented Action

- The water sources protection/constructed by CEI are functional and producing safe water up to date.
- Water sources are being maintained by the general community plus community structures put in place during implementation process.
- Water related diseases reduced from 60% to 4% which is now evidenced by health records available at health centres in the project area.
- Every home stead has a pit latrine with hand washing facilities, which was not the case before CEI intervened.
- WATSAN & Village Health Committees (VHC) are functional.
- Local leaders are playing a big role in mobilization when carrying on activity concerned with health especially water and sanitation services.
- Local communities in Bugaki Sub-County Kyenjojo district in Western Uganda are trained on hygiene and sanitation practices and they are practicing the system.
- The local community have benefited from CEI where by most of CEI staff come from the area where CEI operates, so this programme has increased job opportunity among the community in rural areas of CEI operation.
- Families, which is used to spend a lot of money to hospitals and health units no longer spend it in stead they use it for other development activities to generate more income.
- The committees which collect money from water users have already formed micro finance schemes, which result to economic development to the local community.
- Some people who used to wash clothes from the rivers and streams no longer practice it which is good for controlling water contamination hence promoting environmental protection.
- Death rate has also reduced which was mostly caused by water, hygiene and sanitation related diseases.

Stakeholders participation

This stakeholders in the project participated fully through:-

- **Community:** - Local material contribution (stones, sand, aggregates, clay and bricks) in construction of shallow wells, springs, rainwater tanks and water jars, in this process the community would bring local materials to CEI technical staff.
- **Community Empowerment Initiative (CEI):-** As an implementing organization, CEI brought in materials like: hand pumps, technical staff to provide skilled labour to community, cement, transport of materials, facilitators of the trainings. i.e. social workers/hygiene educators and mobilization.
- The government officers (extension staff): - These were also involved in mobilization of community training and these represented the government of Uganda.

Sustainability

The general community would be trained on O and M, the same applies to formed committees like village health committees (VHC'S), water source committees (WATSAN) since the community was involved from the beginning of the project up to the end there is sustainability of the project.