WATER SERVICES that last

LEVEL OF SERVICE RECEIVED BY WATER USERS in eight districts in Uganda



BRIEFING NOTE, JUNE 2014

POINTS FOR ACTION

National Level:

- Expand the use of Service Delivery Indicators to obtain a better understanding of the quality, quantity, access and reliability of water services being provided and identifying areas wher users receive services that are not up to the required standards.

District level:

- Continue building the capacity of districts to monitor service levels in order to identify responses in the support provided to Water Source Committees.

Sub county level:

- Strengthen the existing Water Source Committees to perform their roles. This will go a long way in improving the levels of the water service received by users.

A tapstand in Kabarole district. Piped schemes provide quality water for people

In Uganda, the service providers for rural water supplies are the Water Source Committees (WSCs) for point sources and the Water Supply and Sanitation Boards (WSSBs) for piped schemes. The levels of the services provided to the people depend on the performance of these service providers in their roles of operation, maintenance and administration. The current set of 11 golden indicators, however, doesn't capture much information on the way these service providers perform, nor on the levels of service that people actually receive.

In response to this gap, in early 2012, Triple-S Uganda conducted an analysis of the Water User Committees Service Delivery Model in 30% of districts in Technical Support Units 2 and 6 (or a total of eight districts) with the aim of understanding how they work, how they perform in service delivery, and challenges experienced in their implementation.

This briefing note elaborates the main findings with respect to the service levels received by users under this service delivery model. It provides results in terms of water quality, quantity, distance of the water point and reliability of the water facilities. While the water service delivery ladder that was designed for this study focuses on those four key aspects of the water service, additional data was also collected and analysed on other aspects that affect service delivery including crowding at the facilities, time spent on a return trip to fetch the water and payment of the service.

ABOUT SERVICE DELIVERY MODELS IN UGANDA

A Service Delivery Model is the 'how to' of applying the service delivery approach and describes the policy, legal, institutional, financial, governance and normative frameworks that determine what services will be provided to consumers, and how this will be done. In Uganda, there are three different Service Delivery Models for rural water supplies: two models under the Community Based Management System (CBMS) – one for point sources, managed by Water Source Committees, and one for piped schemes, managed by Water Supply and Sanitation Boards (WSSBs), and the Self Supply Model.

SERVICE DELIVERY INDICATORS

While the Water and Sanitation sub sector in Uganda uses 11 golden indicators to measure performance of WASH service delivery, these indicators suffer from a number of limitations eg they don't offer sufficient detail on the quality of the service actually received by the water users.

A set of Service Delivery Indicators for the Water User Committee model, based on national policies, guidelines and strategies was therefore first developed. These were then used for assessing the levels of services received by the water users in the eight districts were the study was conducted. The developed Service Delivery Indicators are summarised below;

Service delivered: assessing the compliance of the water service with national norms as regards to water quality and quantity, and to accessibility and reliability of the facility. For those indicators where we didn't measure the service level directly, like water quality, we assessed user perceptions.

Users' level: measuring users' satisfaction with the service, as well as their participation in the management and maintenance of the facility.

Service provider level: looking at WSCs' composition, governance and performance of duties.

Service authority level: investigating how districts and sub-counties fulfil functions such as planning, coordination, oversight of water services, and post-construction support to service providers.

METHODOLOGY

The survey on SDMs was conducted in eight selected districts located in the Technical Support Unit (TSU) 2 in Western Uganda and TSU 6 in Northern Uganda. These districts include Alebtong, Lira, Kitgum and Nwoya in TSU 2, and Kabarole, Kamwenge, Kasese and Kyenjojo in TSU 6. The performance of the Service Delivery Model for point sources

BOX 1: SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

Source of Drinking Water
In all the eight districts surveyed, the main source of water supplies varied: 85% of the households in Kitgum rely on handpumps while 74% of the households in Kamwenge rely on shallow wells for drinking water.

Water Quality
Findings reveal that a majority of users in TSU 6 (except for Kasese district) were generally very satisfied with the quality of the water they receive compared to users in TSU 2.

Water Quantity
In all the eight districts surveyed, while the majority of households access less water than the prescribed standards of 20 litres per person per day, the same users were generally satisfied with the quantity of water delivered by their facilities.

Distance of the water Source
Generally, all users in the eight districts surveyed were satisfied with the distance of their water sources. More users in TSU 6 than in TSU 2 perceived their water sources to be within a distance of 1 km.

Reliability of the Water Source
Other than in Kamwenge and Kasese districts, a majority of water sources surveyed in all the eight districts were generally found to be unreliable, though most users reported being satisfied with the reliability of their water sources.

was measured against a set of service delivery indicators (SDIs) specially designed for this purpose. The SDIs describe how rural water services are delivered and supported across four levels.

Service Delivery Ladder

In order to estimate the Service Delivery Indicators described above, a Service Delivery Ladder was designed as presented in table 1. An indicator would therefore be assigned any of the levels; excellent, good, fair, low or very low depending on the score of the water service received.

TABLE 1 WATER SERVICE DELIVERY LADDER

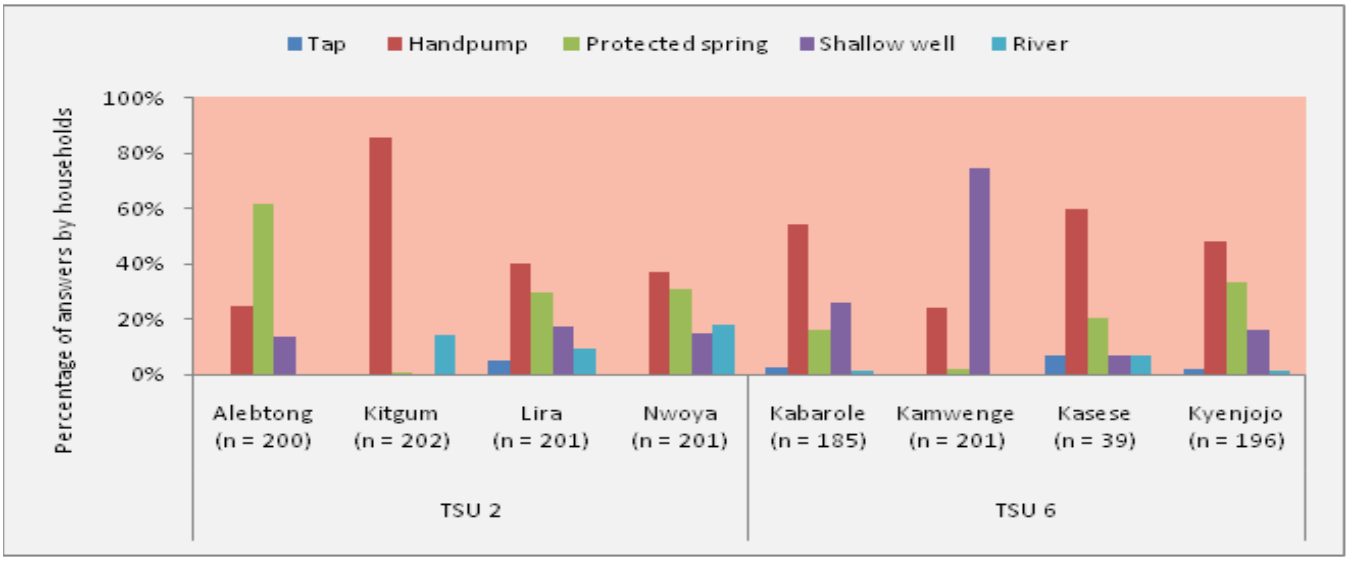
Scenario	Score Water Service	Level Water Service
Good quality water supply of at least 40 lppd within a distance of 0.5 km from a water source that is reliable 95% of the time	1	Excellent
Good quality water supply of at least 30 lppd within a distance of 0.75 km from a water source that is reliable 95% of the time	0.75	Good
Good quality water supply of at least 20 lppd within a distance of 1 km from a water source that is reliable 95% of the time	0.5	Fair
Users access a service that doesn't meet one or more of the following standards: quality, quantity and reliability	0.25	Low
Community doesn't have an improved water source within a walking distance of 1 km.	0	Very low

KEY FINDINGS

Sources of Drinking Water

There were significant variations across districts on the main sources of drinking water. Findings reveal that all districts surveyed generally rely on Handpumps as the main source of drinking water, with exception of Alebtong (protected springs) and Kamwenge (Shallow wells) as shown in figure 1. Up to 85% of households in Kitgum rely on Handpums for drinking water. In Kamwenge, up to 74% of the households rely on the shallow well as the main source.

Figure 1: Sources of Drinking Water



Overall Service Levels

As seen in figure 2, the overall level of water service accessed by the households in all the eight districts surveyed was found to be low, with 89% of households in Kabarole, 74% of houselods in Kamwenge and 72% of households in Kyenjojo in TSU 6 scoring "low service" ie their water facilities did not meet the benchmarks that had been designed in the water service delivery ladder used for this study. On the other hand, in TSU 2, 74% of the households in Kitgum, 70% in Nwoya and 68% of households in Alebtong gave the same response with regard to the water service accessed. On average, close to 70% of all households surveyed in all the eight districts access low or sub standard service.

Figure 2: Level of Water Service Accessed by Households

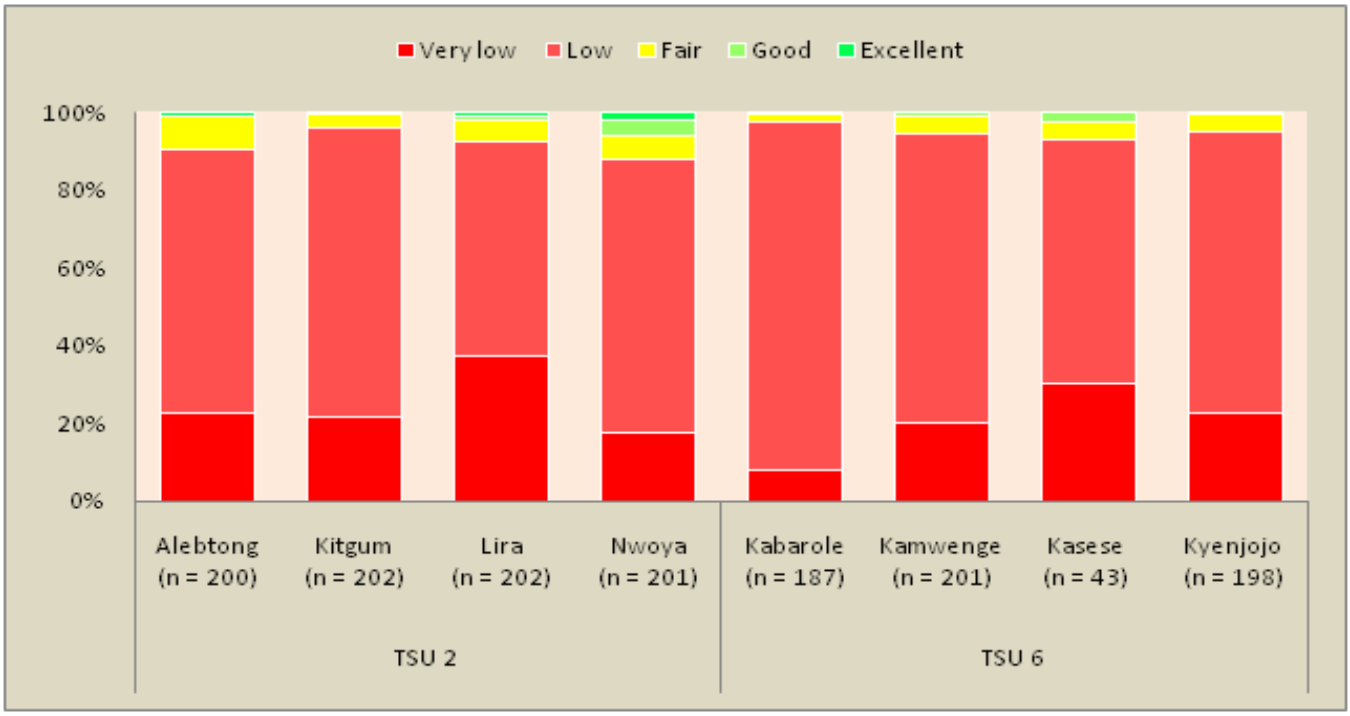
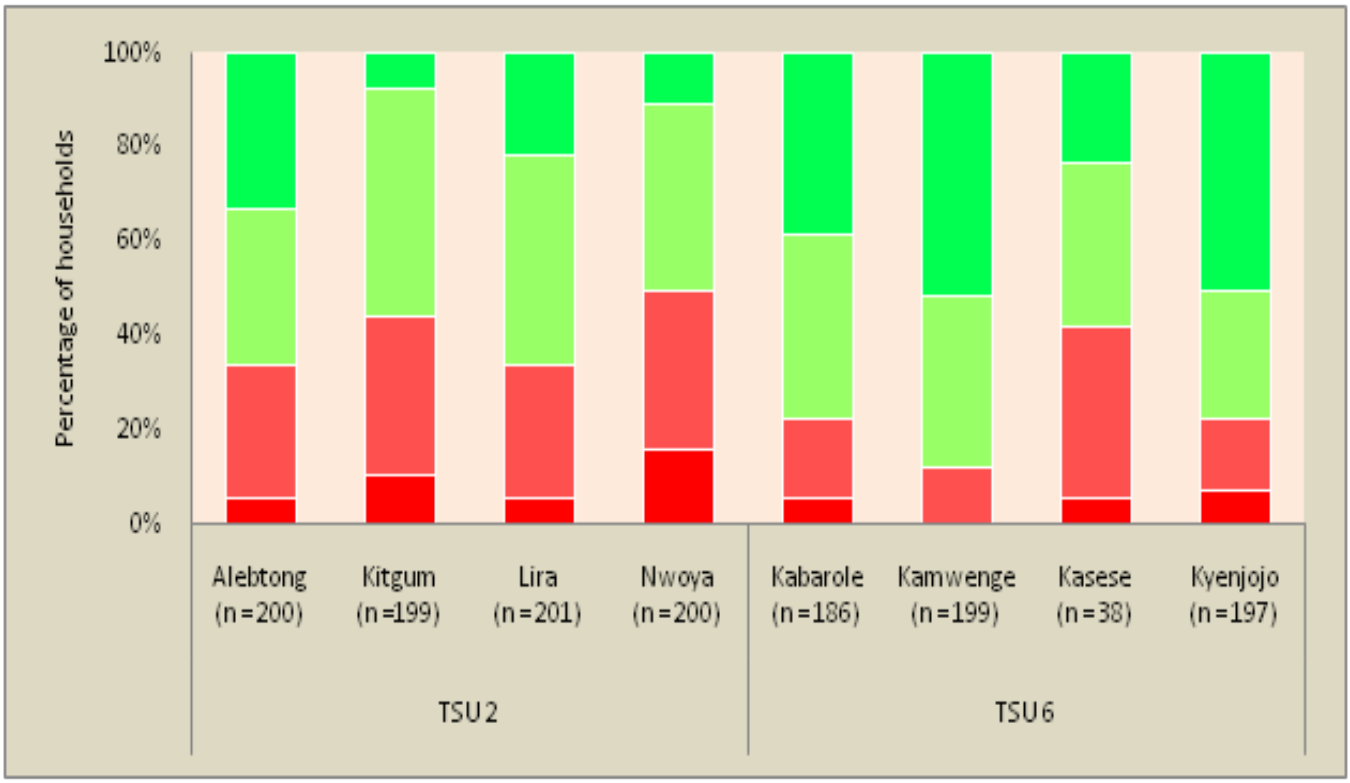


Figure 3: Users' satisfaction with water quality



Water Quality

Measured by assessing the users' perception about the quality of the water that they receive especially for drinking, findings reveal that a majority of users in TSU 6 were generally very satisfied with the quality of the water they receive compared to those in TSU 2, with Kamwenge and Kyenjojo districts scoring 52 and 51% respectively as shown in figure 3.

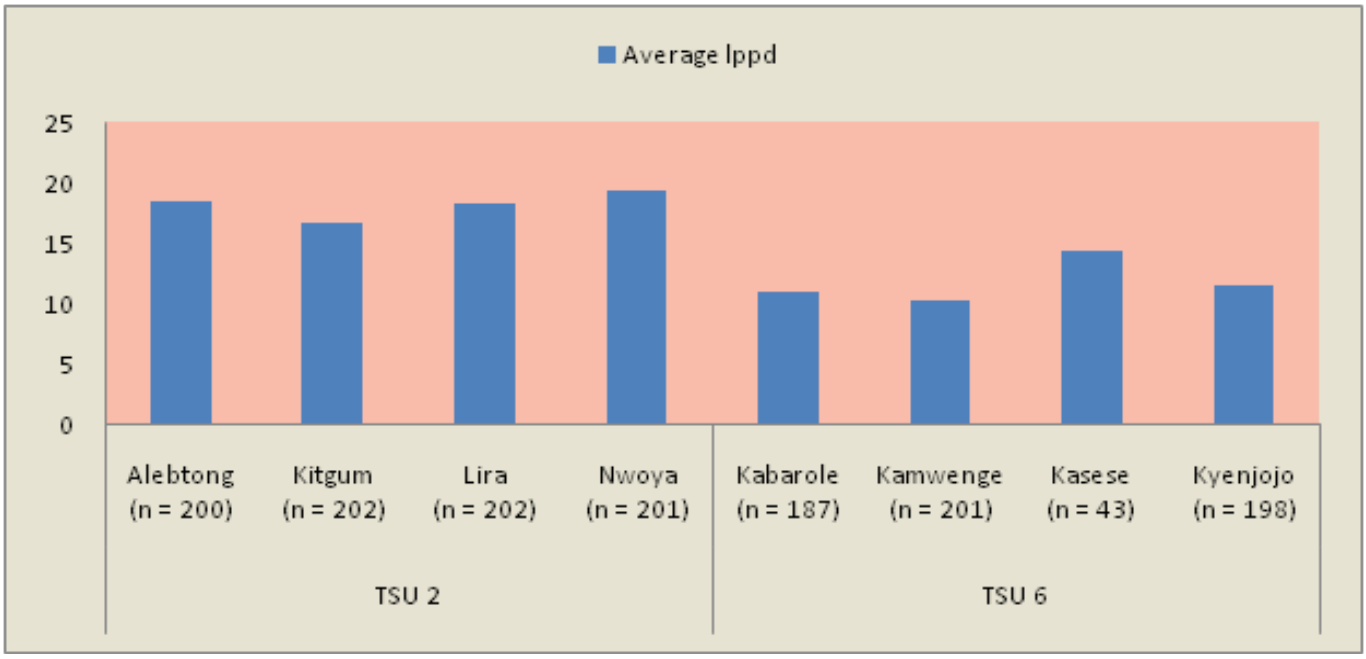
However, while users across all the districts surveyed were generally satisfied with the water quality, the actual quality of the water supplied to the users may not be very good. No water quality data were available to compare satisfaction with actual water quality parameters. Where people were not satisfied with the water quality, the main reason given was its appearance (colour) and presence of particles in the drinking water.

Water Quantity

In Uganda, national standards prescribe at least 20 litres per person per day (lppd). Findings from the survey however reveal that in all the households assessed in the eight districts, households accessed less water than the prescribed standards of 20 lppd as shown in figure 4.

While a majority of users access less than the 20 lppd, they were generally satisfied with the quantity of water delivered by their water sources.

Figure 4: Average quantity of water collected



Distance of the Water Point

As seen in findings presented in figure 5, the average perceived distance in TSU 6 is within the 1 km, as prescribed in the national standards. In TSU2 however, the perceived distance to the water source was on average higher, with Lira being the district where the average distance was perceived to be more than 1 km. It should however be noted that no actual distance measurements were taken during the study, but rather, estimates were used.

Reliability of the Facility

As shown in findings presented in figure 6, in all the eight districts surveyed, when the interruptions are due to the breakdown of the facility, the time between a break-down and repair in a majority of districts was more than a week. In Alebtong, Nwoya, Kabarole and Kyenjojo districts, it took more than two months to do the repairs for about half of the water facilities. However, in Kamwenge district with the Yehura Yehoza (Y-Y strategy) and Kasese district where a Handpump Mechanics Association (HPMA) has existed since 2008, the majority of breakdowns are addressed within the shortest period of time (two weeks), which is still very long.

Figure 5: Average perceived distance to water source (KM)

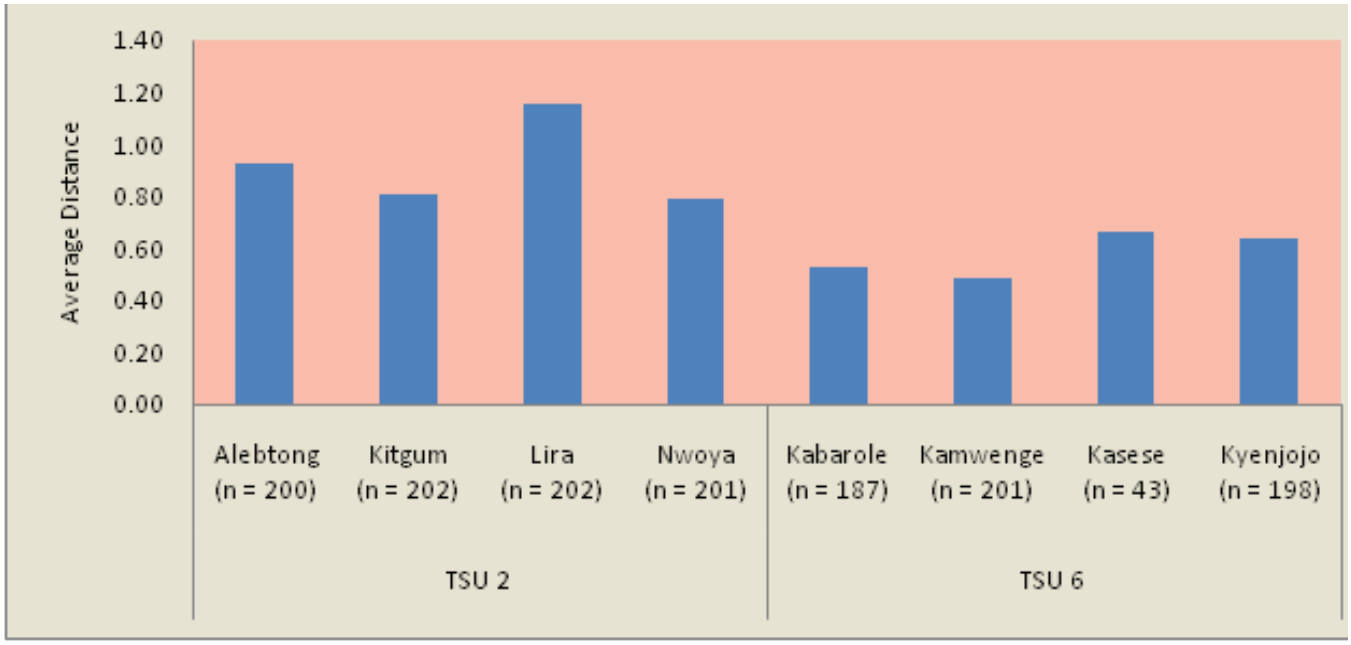
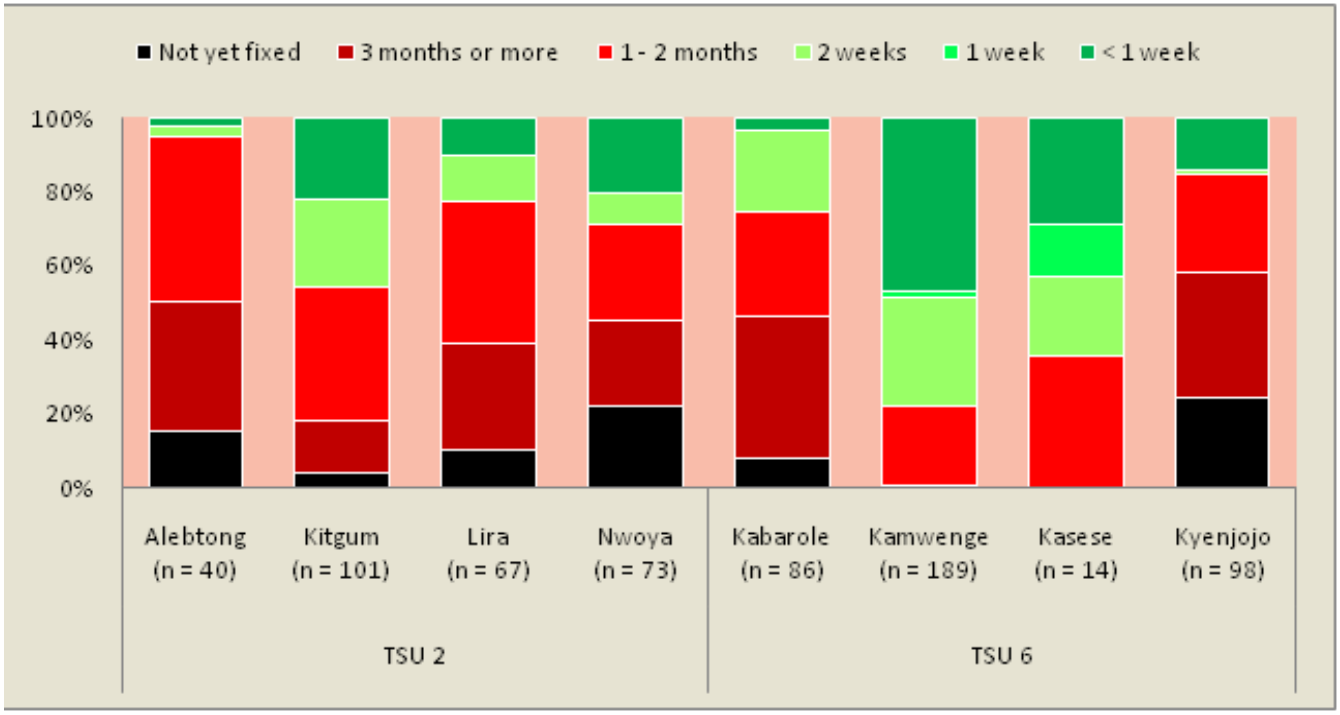


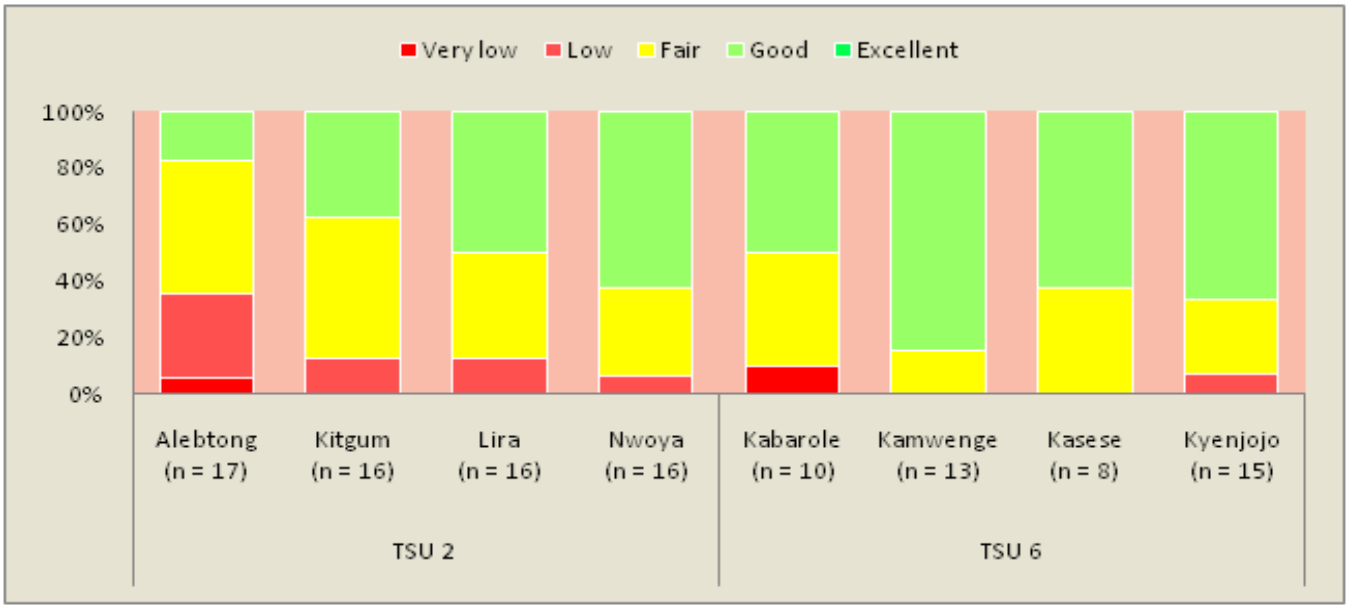
Figure 6: Duration last interruption when due to breakdown of water facility



Satisfaction with the Service Delivered

The levels of satisfaction with the service delivered generally varied significantly from one district to another with satisfaction levels higher in TSU 6 compared to TSU 2. As seen in findings presented in figure 7, again, Kamwenge district with the Yehura Yehoza (Y-Y) strategy had the highest satisfaction levels with 85% of users scoring "good" ie their water facilities met most of the benchmarks that had been designed in the water service delivery ladder used for this study.

Figure 7: Users' satisfaction with the service



OTHER PARAMETERS ANALYSED

Time Spent Fetching Water

In Uganda, while there are no standards in national policy documents regarding the time that is acceptable for users to spend on return trips to collect water, data on this parameter was collected and analysed to be used as a proxy indicator for accessibility of a water service. The survey estimated the time that the water users spent walking to the water sources and also queuing for the water. Over 50% of the water users in each of the 8 districts surveyed reported that they spend between 30 to 60 minutes on return trips to the water sources. This falls short of the national standards which prescribe a return trip of at least 30 minutes (Maimuna et al 2007) or less for a water source which is located within a distance of 1km in the rural areas.

CONCLUSIONS

Most of the parameters analysed on the services received by the water users across all the eight districts reveal that people are receiving a sub standard service. On average, close to 70% of all households surveyed in all the eight districts access low or sub standard service. In terms of reliability for instance, only 32% of the households have access to a reliable water source. The majority of users in all the eight districts surveyd also fetch less than 20 litres per person per day as opposed to the standard 20 liters prescribed by the national standards. A significant portion of water users in TSU 6 were generally satisfied with the quality of water received compared to those of TSU 2, though no data on water quality parameters was collected to confirm this satisfaction. When all these factors are considered, depending on the district, between 55% to 89% of the households access water services that are perceived to be not in tandem with the minimum standards prescribed for in the policy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. There will be need to expand the use of Service Delivery Indicators (currently being developed by Triple-S Uganda) to obtain a better understanding of the quality, quantity, access and reliability of water services being provided to the people in the country, and identifying areas where users receive services that are not in line with the national norms and standards.

2. There is need to continue building the capacity of districts to monitor service levels in order to identify responses in the support provided to Water Source Committees

3. There is need to strengthen the existing Water Source Committees to perform their roles. This will go a long way in improving the levels of the water service received by the communities.

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About Triple-S

Triple-S (Sustainable Services at Scale) is an initiative to promote 'water services that last' by encouraging a shift in approach to rural water supply—from one that focuses on implementing infrastructure projects to one that aims at delivering a reliable and lasting service. The initiative is managed by IRC International Water and Sanitation Centre in the Netherlands in collaboration with agencies in different countries and with funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

For more information about Triple-S and access to resources to support sustainable service delivery, go to www.waterservicesthatlast.org

About this Brief

This brief is based on the findings of a study conducted to assess the permance of the Water Source Committee as the Service Delivery Model for point water sources in eight districts in Uganda. It particularly highlights the issues around the level of service received by water users. The briefing note was written by Joseph Abisa, Valerie Bey and Stef Smits.

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