



# A dirty business — income generation in Kampala

Joy Morgan

**What impact do evaluations really have? In Kampala earlier this year, both the *process* of learning lessons from the field and the *results* of the evaluation itself were significant. Major changes are already underway.**

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Since 1997 CONCERN Worldwide's urban development programme has been working in three of Kampala's informal settlements — home to around 60 000 people (the annual urban growth rate is likely to be significantly higher than the official figure of 5.5 per cent).

Environmental health conditions are extremely poor: people are crammed together in cheap, sub-standard housing, drainage is poor, and there is only limited access to the basic services such as piped water supplies, and excreta- and refuse-disposal facilities. A survey carried out in December 1994 showed that in one area, Kimwanyi, 85 per cent of households lacked access to a latrine and, of the few latrines available, most were in poor condition.

The health and urban environment component of CONCERN's Urban Programme involved infrastructure construction, health education, and capacity building for the local management of the infrastructure through area-wide programme committees and project-based management committees. The socio-economic development component of the programme focused on the formation, training and support of women's savings and credit groups with FINCA (a micro-finance institute).

## Reaching everyone?

The infrastructure provided through the programme (taps, pipes, toilets, open drains and culverts) was having a beneficial effect on the environmental health of nearby residents in almost all of the project areas, although some projects have failed to reach the target group of the poorest families. For example, some residents of Kimwanyi admitted to the evaluation team that when they did not have the cash to use the toilet they threw plastic bags of excreta in the drains or other public places.

CONCERN in Uganda had been focusing on working with HIV/AIDS-affected communities. These slums have some of the highest infection and incidence rates in the country so, with funding from DFID, the programme aimed to:

- improve environmental health;
- identify opportunities for strengthening local community leadership;
- facilitate increased income-generating capacity of selected beneficiaries; and
- improve the standard of living of low-income families within the programme area in a sustainable way.

## Why evaluate?

The evaluation was carried out to:

- assess the extent to which the programme objectives were being achieved and why they had succeeded/failed;
- assess what support might be required by the community structures beyond March 2000; and
- make recommendations on how a similar programme in a new area might be shaped by the lessons learned from the evaluation.

CONCERN Worldwide used an approach in line with its commitment to participatory development: a variety of investigation methods were used, including stakeholder analysis and focus-group discussions. The five-strong evaluation team comprised external evaluators with specialist skills and internal community-development workers — one with environmental-health skills, the other with socio-economic development skills. The evaluation took place at the beginning of the final year of the programme (1999-2000). Each week, staff participated in feedback meetings which allowed them to learn directly from the investigations, and to analyse and solve any identified problems together.



Marita Misago, a resident of Nakulabye, Zone 7

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# assume nothing

The evaluation revealed that the programme had been successful in promoting water and latrine facilities in some of the settlements, although it had problems in reaching the target community of the poorest of the poor (defined as those who have no income or insufficient income to survive). There was a problem with financial management as the profits from the taps and toilets had not been reinvested into further environmental improvement initiatives.

## Committees

The programme intended to target low-income families by involving communities in both problem prioritization and solving. As requested, members of elected local village and parish councils organized open-air community meetings, during which a committee to manage the implementation of the project — including the collection of community contributions, identifying possible contractors and managing the project in the longer term — was elected. In order to oversee the working of the project committees, programme committees were established. At the community meetings people suggested some criteria for the selection of committee members — these included ‘honest and respected’ members of the community but, preferably, not local councillors (LCs) with their already heavy workloads.

Interviews and focus-group discussions with committee members revealed that, primarily, what LCs expected from the programme and project-management committees was personal and political gain; improving the local environment was of secondary importance. All those interviewed said that their primary expectations were being met by the programme! This demonstrates a trend within many programmes in both rural and urban parts of Uganda whereby LCs are able to control what happens, but have only a limited interest in strengthening civil society.

## Real costs

None of the committees was able to prove that they were functioning effectively by showing the evaluation team adequate records or accounts. Those books that were available had very few daily entries that did not end in ‘000’. Most likely, these figures had been rounded down by an average of Sh500 each day, amounting to



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Collecting water from the Women’s Credit Group tap (Nakulabye Zone 7).

Sh182 500 (around £80) in losses per project each year by rounding errors alone — enough to pay the caretaker for 1.5 months. All the committee members requested more training in book-keeping and accounts.

As none of the income-generating committees was able to provide satisfactory financial records, the team established an observation exercise. Local accountancy students observed the latrine-users over a day. Using this day as a guide, the monthly gross income from each toilet ranged from Sh390 000 to 982 500 (£169 to £427). Monthly operating costs (including the attendant’s salary, water and electricity charges, soap and toilet-paper) probably amounted to less than 50 per cent of this income. Net income for each of the programme’s latrines averaged Sh350 000 per month. The students concluded that running latrines was a better business proposition than operating the (popular) public taxi services. An entrepreneur had already come to the same conclusion and had constructed another public latrine on the edge of the programme area. During group discussions and interviews, the poorer community members were often unaware of how much money was being generated, and that the money was intended to be used for environmental health improvements *chosen by them*.

Meter readings obtained during the evaluation were used both to estimate tap-water consumption, and to obtain an estimated monthly income and

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expenditure. One of the taps was estimated to make a monthly profit of Sh225 000 (£98) despite the fact that there are natural (free) springs nearby. In areas without free sources, taps could increase profits even further since they can clearly form the basis of reasonable small business ventures. The programme committees were, like other private vendors, found to be charging more than the programme target group could afford. The National Water and Sewerage Corporation (NWSC) had set a guideline for how much vendors could charge for tapstand water — Sh25 per 20 litres, whilst the NWSC itself charges its own metered consumers Sh12 for the same volume. NWSC's experience suggests that vendors at stand-posts are likely to sell more water to more people at the recommended price and to achieve the same or higher levels of profit each month.

**Affordable and clean?**

A recent survey carried out by a joint Kampala City Council/Ministry of Health,Uganda/Robens Institute,UK team revealed that 10 per cent of Kampalans are unable to afford NWSC's recommended charges. Most of the programme's stand-posts are selling water at Sh50 for 20 litres — twice the recommended price and four times the standard NWSC charge. Many of the potential users in the programme's tap-project areas rely on alternative water sources, mainly grossly contaminated springs — especially the programme's target

group of low-income families. The evaluation recommended that the management of the income-generating projects be reorganized. Figure 1 below shows the suggested model whereby the tap or toilet could be managed by a project management committee made up of community representatives, but excluding LCs.

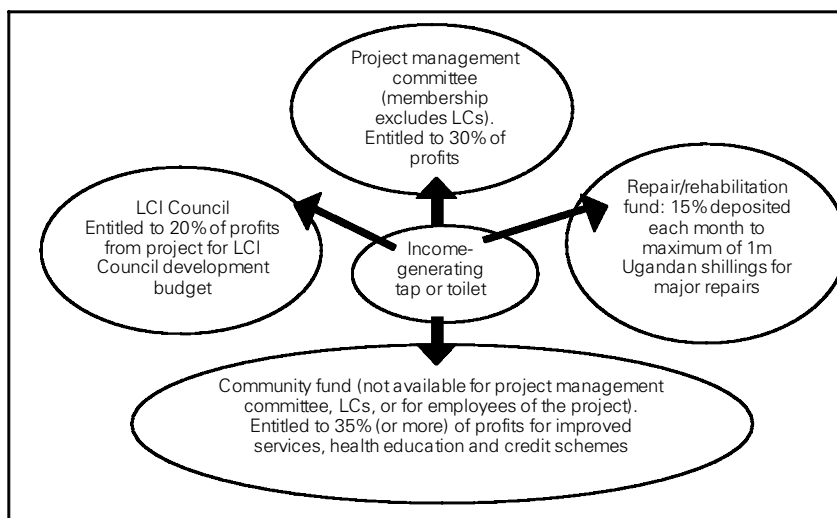
**New model**

Project committee members would have to recruit and manage the attendant, collect and account for the money, pay bills promptly, and distribute the profits in accordance with the constitution. For their work they would be rewarded with a percentage of the profits (say 30 per cent). The management committee would be monitored by the village council (LC1) rather than the programme committees, which would be disbanded. The village council's monthly village-development budget would be credited with a percentage of the profits (say 20 per cent). The payment for management services is contrary to the original intentions of the programme, but, if the interests of these important and influential stakeholders are not even partly met, any project success is unlikely. A proportion of the profits would be deposited in the project bank account for serious repairs or rehabilitation (say 15 per cent up to a maximum of one million shillings — about £435). The remaining money would then be directed into a community fund, to be made available to the community members to improve services such as water supply, toilet/latrine facilities, drainage, garbage collection, or even a credit fund for small business development. Funds would not be available to members of the project management committee, LCs, project or programme workers.

The model could be further refined through consultative community meetings where attendance is widened as a result of radio announcements, fliers and posters. At the community meetings, the model can be discussed, management positions and remuneration levels decided, nominations for posts received, and the focus of the community fund clarified. Decisions should be confirmed in

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Figure 1. Suggested model for tap or toilet project management structure.



## webwatch

### ■ Global Water Partnership (GWP)

(GWP) is an international network open to all organizations involved in water resources management (WRM), created in response to the need to promote WRM in a coherent manner. Integrated Water Resources Management is thus the focus of GWP's advice on strategic issues through central and regional Technical Advisory Committees (TACs) and specialized sub-groups. The website contains news from the TACs, forthcoming events, access to GWP-published documents, and an entry-point to the 'Framework for Action', which runs in parallel to the development of the World Water Vision (see below).

<http://www.gwp.sida.se/>

### ■ Swiss Centre for Development Co-operation in Technology and Management (SKAT)

SKAT focuses on a variety of specialist areas including: construction and building materials; urban development (including municipal solid-waste management and healthcare-infrastructure support); energy generation; water supply and sanitation; handpumps; small enterprise development; industrial development. SKAT supports two specialist networks: Building Advisory Service and Information Network (Basin) and Handpump Technology Network (HTN).

<http://www.skat.ch/>

### ■ World Water Council

A non-profit, non-governmental umbrella organization which is, in essence, a think-tank that actively participates in strategic areas of the international water policy debate. Members include a wide cross-section of individuals and organizations. The World Water Council is currently developing a Vision for Water in the 21st Century.

<http://www.worldwatercouncil.org>

### ■ World Water Vision

The World Water Vision aims to develop massive public awareness of the risks of major water problems as a result of inaction, as well as encourage innovative thinking on how these problems can be tackled. It should encourage and empower people to participate in devising and implementing solutions to these water problems, and generate the political commitment to turn this increased public awareness into effective action. The site includes details of the global vision process, including outcomes from regional vision consultations; access to an e-mail discussion forum on the vision exercise; a useful, 'frequently asked question' site; and a well-resourced library of on-line documentation.

<http://www.watervision.org/>

Compiled by Darren Saywell, WEDC

writing and distributed/displayed widely at strategic locations. At a later meeting, the model and the members of the project management committee could be finalized. Good publicity around the selection of project committee members would increase the accountability and quality of the committees. The interests of LCs will still be partially met.

### User power?

Income-generating taps and toilets can provide services to the low-income areas of cities like Kampala, but a strong regulatory mechanism is needed if the poorest of the poor are really going to benefit. The mechanism for the community development approach might be the involvement of the poorest of the poor in the management decisions. An alternative is to fully privatize the system and to use the market forces of competition to improve service delivery and reduce charges for users. CONCERN is now working to improve its community development approach by focusing its activities directly on the target community, making more information available to them and increasing its opportunities to voice their opinions in decision-making meetings. ■

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