



That drop, pool or flow of WATER: What is its true



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BACKGROUND

Food Rights Alliance (FRA) as part of its work on Natural Resource Rights informed by numerous literature they had reviewed and interactions with various stakeholders developed a feel that the true value of water has not found space at the heart of many people despite the exploitative lip service value accorded to it. In this regard FRA sought an interactive community based conversation with grass root communities in Kaberamaido and Katakwi district in eastern Uganda.

The mission aimed at striking a conversation while documenting the voices to inform progress work of promoting an integrated water and

land resource management system in Uganda, profiling the water resources. Three meetings were held, one in Kalaki, Kaberamaido district and two in Atiira and Palam, Katakwi district.

We appreciate our local partners Church of Uganda - Teso Dioceses Planning and Development Office (COU-TEDDO) the Planning and Development arm of the Dioceses of Soroti and Kumi in Teso sub region and Soroti Catholic Diocese Integrated Development Organization (SOCADIDO) the development arm of the Soroti Catholic Diocese. They provided the grass root infrastructure and organized the conversations among communities they work with whose voices are shared in this publication.

We further appreciate Trocaire for the financial support to the resource rights program without which the generation and documentation of these voices could not be possible.

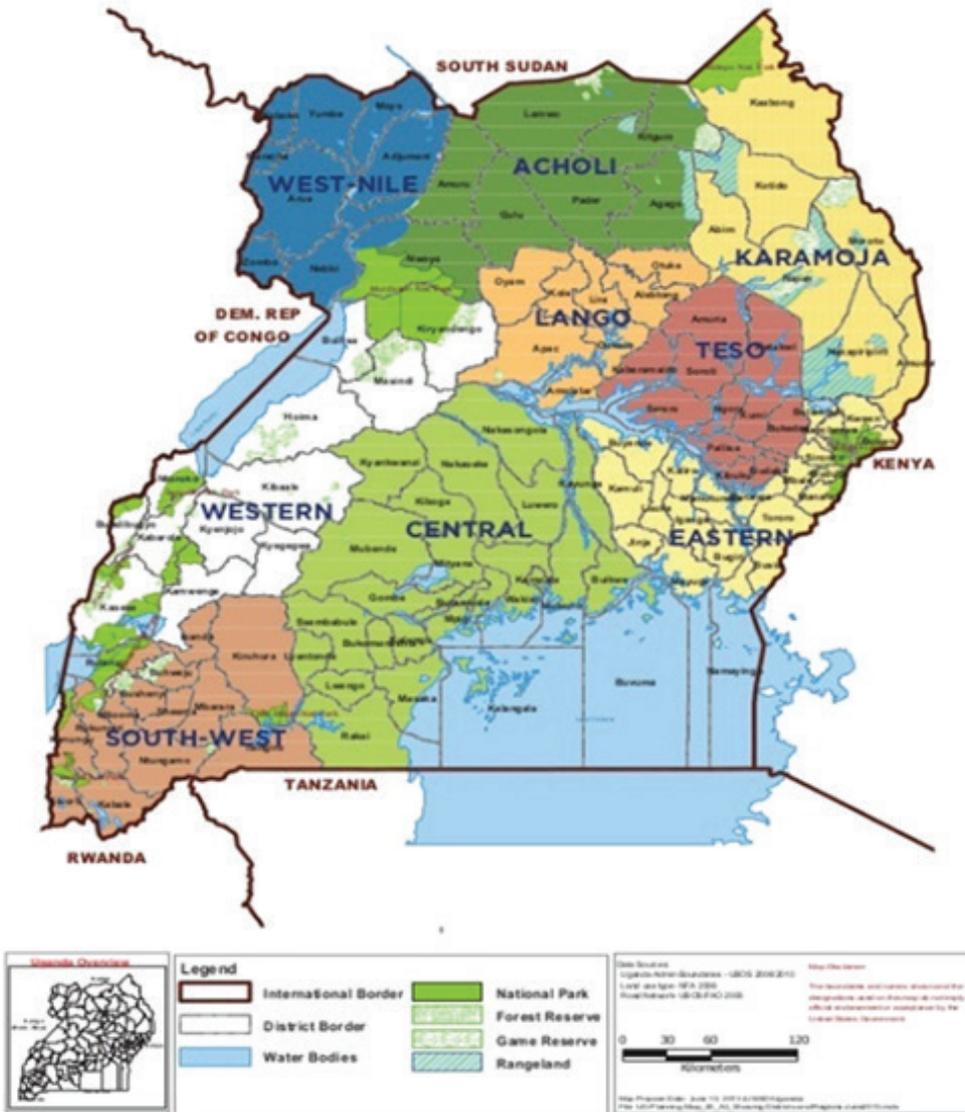
We take pride to invite you listen to these voices while reading this publication. The intention of it to create ground upon which concerted actions and interventions should be crafted building an intrinsic drive among the people to value water as a resource. The anticipated outcome of such interventions will be organically driven collective responsibility and action to sustainably manage preserve and conserve the water resources to sustain farming and food systems.

Location

According to UBOS (2014), Katakwi district is located North-Eastern Uganda, bordering the Districts of Moroto to the North-East, Nakapiripirit in the East, Amuria in the West, while Lake Bisina form its border with Kumi on the South and it has an estimated population of 165,553 people with 84,704 females and 80,845 males.

Kaberamaido District is located in Eastern Uganda, bordered by the Districts of Amolatar in the Southwest, Dokolo in the West and Northwest, Lira in the North, Amuria in the North-East, Soroti in the East and Lake Kyoga in the South and Southeast. According to UBOS (2014), the district has an estimated population of 215,026 people with 108984 females and 106,042 males

A MAP OF UGANDA SHOWING TESO SUB REGION WHERE KATAKWI AND KABERA-MAIDO DISTRICTS ARE LOCATED



6 Courtesy of USAID Uganda

12 | Family Planning Realities Among Faith-Based Medical Businesses in Uganda

What does Water mean?

The voices in response to this question are a mixture of definitions, descriptions, slogans and alike. Nevertheless they provide the deep view of the inner feeling the people hold in regard to this resource.

A super essential liquid which is tasteless; colorless that is necessary for life, without water, there is no life. Water is beyond super liquid, and it controls life.

Water is life; water is seasonal

Something essential or something everybody needs to sustain life.

Water is all about agriculture, without water one cannot practice agriculture which sustains most livelihoods in Atiira Village

Water is the head of everything.

Water is a colorless, tasteless liquid that sustains life.

Reflection on what water actually means to these communities intrigued to further reflect on the definitions and conceptualizing them in the fabric of their livelihoods. The deep thoughts gave birth to these perspectives;

“If water is seasonal, that means the lives in Kalaki are seasonal as well since majority largely depend on water.”

“If water is life, then there is water in Kalaki, otherwise majority of us, crops and animals would be dead, then we have enough water.”

“Am over sixty years old but I had never heard a discussion on issues of water as a resource. Majority of the stakeholders have conducted trainings and sensitization sessions on agriculture, land and domestic violence, but none has ever conducted a session on water as a resource.”

*“Anything on earth survives on water.”
“When there is rain in the area, there is water which facilitates us to go farming.”*

“Without water we cannot do agriculture.”

“Water helps in promoting domestic life in our households.”

“Water helps us to promote hygiene and improve our livelihoods.”

But for sure is there water in these communities?

The voices in response to this question are a mixture of definitions, descriptions, slogans and alike. Nevertheless they provide the deep view of the inner feeling the people hold in regard to this resource.

“There is water in Kalaki County but we have to collect it from a far distance. This involves all members of the family.”

“There would be enough water in Kalaki because when it rains water is in excess. It becomes completely little later on simply because we do not have the skills, knowledge and attitudes good enough for us to harvest the water.”

“Most of the time the water is little but we collect from the various water sources especially during the dry spell is not sufficient to sustain our lives, crops

and animals.”

There are various water sources, the springs, the wells, from the spring wells, swamps and boreholes.”

“The sufficiency and insufficiency of water in Katakwi is seasonal during rainy seasons, the water is much more than we can handle and during the dry seasons the water is too little to meet our water needs.”

The voices and discussions on water availability also raised concerns related to maintenance of water sources and the quality and safety of water from these water sources. For instance Oddot Parish recorded three boreholes and only three were functioning. In addition, a good fraction of the community were concerned that one swamp from which the collect water but the water quality was not adequate for human and animal consumption. Rooted in their super natural faith, communities do strongly believe that water is a gift from God and that God is so faithful and merciful. In

that faith and mercy so they will always have water as it is a gift from God.

“It is Gods duty to take care of man and provide water for man as well to sustain his livelihood.”

“We only collect water from one swamp (Angobo swamp) which is accessible to all members of the community, and 2 boreholes of which only one borehole is functioning at the moment.” Participant from Atiira.

Sources and Destinations of Water

Reflections of sources and destinations on water aimed at establishing whether communities appreciate the interrelatedness of the source and destination to accord value and responsibility for sustainable management at both ends.

To the communities in Kalaki, Kaberamaido district, twelve water bodies surrounding the community were identified including eleven (11) swamps and one (1) lake (Lake Kyoga). However of the 11 swamps, five (5) swamps (Amileny, Adiye, Olio, Kalaki, and Etemu) were recorded to have dried up and six (6) Swamps (Omunyai, Olianai, Opiro, Omabar, Awimom, Acwide, and Odone) were still in a considerably good state.

In Atiira village, Palam sub county in Katakwi District two identified boreholes of which one that was constructed by colonialists in 1960s had broken down at the beginning of the year leaving the community with functioning one borehole. The other source of water identified was Angobo swamp whose water hails from Karamoja leaving Atiira village along the passage on its way to the swamp. Communities also identified, Ikwangan dam that was constructed by colonialists too but silted beyond recognition. It cannot be accessed as there is no pathway not even a footpath.

“The water in this district is largely rain water that ends up in the swamps. We have encroached on the swamps, cut down the trees no wonder the swamps are drying out.”

“I have all along been seeing this water flowing during the rainy season from Karamoja to the swamp. I have never been respecting Karamoja as the source of water that we use.

Steps to take and walk to the future of sustainable water resources

After reflecting on the status quo great desire to correct the past arose with regrets in action and absence of knowledge to take appropriate action. The communities identified some actionable areas as shared below:

Let's take responsibility as a community and leaders should control manage and take care of the water bodies and sources in our .

Water and land is one and the same and community therefore while allocating land for development and construction of water sources such as dams, the two should be negotiated concurrently.

The issue of local revenue should be reviewed as local governments focus on collecting revenue from charcoal trucks than enforcing the laws against destruction of forests and cutting down of trees.

Water as a scarce but valuable resource should be a message preached to everyone all the time such that people, duty bearers and rights holders appreciate this resource, plan and use it consciously and sustainably.

Cultivation in wetlands and swamps should either be restricted or technical guided. Local Government Production units should develop and implement Wetlands User plans to guide action.

The water that flows as run off during the rainy season is sufficient for every house to sustain minimum production during the dry season. Communities need to be trained and supported to access appropriate technologies on water arvesting.

Planning for water resources should consider water for production (crops animals and fish), water for people, and water for the eco system for the current and future generation.

“ That drop of water.
You will never see it
again. ”

Supported by: **Trocaire**



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