



Uganda



Environmental Landscaping and Sustainability Program

Joint Effort to Save the Environment (JESE)   

The Environmental Landscaping and Sustainability Program places WASH interventions in the wider context of the natural environment, using an Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) approach to ensure sustainable WASH coverage for communities.

Launched in 2012, Not-for-profit, Agricultural Water Management, Drinking Water, Groundwater Extraction, Irrigation, Policy & Governance, Cross-sector, Cross-sector: Climate / Energy, Women's Empowerment, East Africa: Uganda

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Problem Addressed

The program addresses the current limited, expensive, and inequitable access to water and sanitation services in the Rwenzori Region in Western Uganda. The rural communities here have a low capacity for self-organization, and demand for WASH services and the level of understanding of their importance is low. There is low willingness to pay for WASH services, and the general attitude is that the government should provide communities with water at no cost, except for community labor during implementation. In addition, communities have little knowledge of the causes and prevention of diseases, and many people do not engage in basic hygienic behaviors, such as regular hand-washing. Open defecation, poor safewater chain management, poor solid waste management at household and institutional levels are common.

There are also not enough toilet facilities in primary schools; on average, the pupil-latrine stance ratio in the Rwenzori region is at 75:1 as compared to the national target of 40:1. The quality of these existing facilities is quite low, and students are exposed to the risk of disease. Schools do not manage established WASH facilities and services effectively, reducing their sustainability.

Innovative Approach

JESE's approach is innovative in that they focus on creating and working within governmental institutional frameworks to ensure that water sources are functional and sustainable from the community level to the national level. JESE advocates for and helps to implement institutional water structures, including water user committees and councils. They believe these groups should be legally mandated and households should be required to pay a fee for water use, which promotes ownership and wise water usage. JESE promotes a village savings program to maintain the water schemes, in which community members jointly contribute and can use the joint funds for their own ventures.

Program Solution

JESE's multifaceted WASH program works with local partners, authorities, and schools to enhance sustainable access to

quality WASH services for poor rural and peri-urban communities. This is done by improving access to clean water for consumption and domestic use, addressing appropriate sanitation needs, and enhancing the community's capacity to protect and manage its watersheds and water sources.

In the area of water supply, the program empowers the community to improve the quality of water that is available and accessible for consumption for communities, households and institutions. Communities are mobilized to contribute local materials and financial resources in order to establish gravity-flow systems that bring water to household taps; repair non-functioning rural water systems; and protect and improve hand-dug wells, boreholes, and springs. The provision of water is complemented by the introduction of community and household water treatment technologies such as water filtration systems.

JESE also enhances the community's capacity to effectively manage and protect critical water resources. The program works with communities that share water catchments to develop catchment management plans to protect and conserve their water resources and to restore natural ecosystems to prevent water loss and contamination.

In the area of sanitation improvement, the program supports communities, households and institutions and mobilizes local resources for the construction of household and institutional latrines, hygiene and waste treatment facilities, and associated hygiene education practices. For community based management, the program places great importance on improving communities' management of their own resources. This includes organizing water or sanitation committees, empowering water user association and water boards, training community members in operation and maintenance of water systems, and helping them improve their internal governance. Involvement of women is a key component of these efforts. The program seeks to involve local institutions such as schools in events that promote and share best practices in water and sanitation.