



## MASTERS IN THE SHADOW–

(Agents commissioning incomplete Water extension projects as complete)

### CASE STUDY OF KASENDE SUB COUNTY AND KICWAMBA SUB COUNTY

#### Introduction:

In this 2nd edition of the issue paper, is a review in to the challenges Kabarole District Local Government water service delivery extension scheme is facing.

Water extension services fall under infrastructure services

The term 'infrastructure services' covers a wide variety of activities but is defined here as those services derived from physical infrastructure networks or installations, including water supplies, sanitation, drainage, access roads and paving, street lighting, solid waste management and community buildings. These services are normally the responsibility of a local government.

However, over the past decade, private participation (for financing, provision, and regulation) in infrastructure provision has grown significantly in different forms.

Some governments contract services out—to lower tiers of government and the private sector, or to communities themselves.

Kabarole District local government by law is mandated to plan and allocate budgets towards infrastructure development. Projects like water extension service, road network extension service to mention but a few. The period under review spans back to 3 year back with focus on 2 water extension projects in the sub counties of Kasenda and Kicwamba.

The two projects share similar concerns and could provide service providers, beneficiaries and planners a better insight on how to improve service delivery to the grass roots through minimizing the risk of corruption. The two projects being reviewed are incomplete water extension projects that for some reasons are declared complete and full payments made to contractors.



The role of communities, beneficiaries and the local leadership in this process will also be reviewed.

In the last financial years, Kabarole District Local Government has apportioned budgets for safe water extension to Kasenda and Kicwamba Sub Counties to the tune of **27,957,000 and 25,670,000** respectively.

Both projects have been reported as complete yet no water is flowing. In the first case under review (Buhara/Kicwamba – Mukonomura-Karambi water project) no construction was made.

In the second project Kitooro – Rwankenzi and Kibuga to Rwankenzi water extension was partly done.

### KICWAMBA WATER GRAVITY FLOW SCHEME COMPLAINT

Kabarole District Local Government planned, budgeted, approved and contracted a private company namely ACRUM Uganda Limited to construct a gravity water flow scheme from Kicwamba-Buhara to Mukonomura, Karambi Sub County worth **Shs.25,670,000/=** **(Twenty five million six hundred and seventy thousand only)** in the financial year 2015/2016.



Another parallel project was being implemented by National Water and Sewerage Corporation from Mbuzi trading center to Mukonomura on request of the Local Council (LC1) Chairperson (coinciding with the Kabarole District Local Government gravity water flow project implementation).

The launch of the scheme under Kabarole District was launched by the Chairman Local Council V Kabarole District. It was also communicated that the project commences right away after the launch.

Months later, public raised a complaint that there was no project commencing despite the assurance from the Chairperson of the District.

#### THE KARAMBI SUB COUNTY DISTRICT COUNCILOR STATE TO TLC AS FOLLOWS,

*"I discovered that the Kabarole Local Government project had not taken off yet it was being reported as complete and funds withdrawn from Kabarole Local Government account for final payment. The completion certificate had been issued already. Through investigations, I discovered that the District water officer had connived with some officials at National Water and Sewerage Cooperation, Fort Portal to disguise and report reflecting the National Water and Sewerage project as Kabarole District Local Government project to defraud the District of Shs.25,670,000/=."*

It has been observed that all the two water projects were meant to take off around the same time from same communities to the same communities with different purposes. Mbuzi-Mukonomura project under National water and Sewerage Cooperation commenced and was completed while the one under Kabarole District Local Government never took off but was reported complete.

The Kabarole District Local Government project of Buhara-Kicwamba to Mukonomura-Kirambi was not implemented.

The District Councilor also noted that he raised this observation to the office of the Local Council V Chairperson, Chief Administrative Officer and District Works Committee.

The chief Administrative Officer intern raised a complaint to the District Criminal Intelligence Investigative Department and gave reasons why the act was a criminal one that required prosecuting all those involved in the mismanagement of public funds meant to provide safe water to the communities in Kicwamba and Karambi Sub Counties.

Following increased community concerns, the Kabarole District Works Committee made a service delivery tracking exercise to ascertain the status of the project. The committee confirmed that no construction had been undertaken.

Councilor meeting was convened and recommended that the refund of the money be made and the project redone as per the work plan. In the same meeting the District water officer apologizes before the council.

Another twist of events emerged. Fresh documentation indicating that the water project under the National Water and Sewerage Cooperation project was actually a project under Kabarole District Local Government.

The documents were certifying that the water project (National Water and Sewerage Cooperation project) was the Kabarole District Local Government project under the Buhara-Mukonomura Gravity Flow Scheme.

If what is alleged that the water project belonged to the district, communities in Karambi and Kicwamba sub counties would not be paying for the water they get from the taps to National water and Sewerage Cooperation. National water and Sewerage Cooperation set up meters along the waterline and collects water fees from users.

Secondly, no official handover of the project to the communities in Karambi and Kicwamba Sub Counties was done yet a launch was made by the District Boss. Normally, public projects are handed over to the public



whenever a project is complete and ready for use.

Also, at the inception meeting, no community member was given Bills Of Quantities to facilitate effective community involvement in the monitoring of the project to minimize the risk of losing resources to corruption actions

Several inquiries were undertaken but no step taken to apprehend those responsible for the misappropriation of public funds.

Unexpected end:

#### THE KASENDA SUB COUNTY GRAVITY FLOW SCHEME EXTENSION PROJECT

Kabarole District approved and allocated 27,957,000 shillings for water Extension of Gravity Flow Scheme to Kasenda Sub County in the communities of Kitooro – Rwankenzi and Kibuga to Rwankenzi, Rwankenzi as the middle point. The contract was awarded to Elon Water and Construction Engineering Co. Ltd of Fort Portal, a company pre-qualified to provide related services to Kabarole District Local Government

The project that was preceded by signing of the contract between Kabarole District Local Government and Elon Water and Construction Engineering Co. Ltd on the 3rd of December 2016 begun construction from Kibuga to Rwankenzi and but never took off from Kitooro - Rwankenzi. No signs of construction exists at Kitooro – Rwankenzi scheme

From Kibuga to Rwankenzi construction begun and stopped at Nsongya A village just before Rwankenzi. The distance between Nsongya A to Rwankenzi is approximately half a Kilometer distance.

The pipes used in the construction of the water scheme did not match the quality / specifications set in the Bills of Quantities.

Due to increased water pressure, some of the pipe broke and in other instances no water on Taps.

*A section of the purported completed water extension project before **Rwankenzi**. Some of the pipes broke because the water pressure the quality of the pipes could not maintain*





Whereas the 2 sections are incomplete, the contractor was awarded completion certificate and paid all the amounts of money on the project contract. For one to be awarded a project completion certificate, a project must have been completed to the satisfaction of the beneficiaries, local community, technical wing of the Sub County and political leaders at the community and district level and for the case of Kasenda Sub County the Water Board.

During the award of the certificate, none of the community members was asked to confirm whether the project was completed in accordance with the signed contract and Bills of Materials. The Kasenda Sub County chief who is the head of the technical wing and the Nsongya A Village Local Council 1 Chairperson confirmed completion by appending their

signatures on forms that certify the project is completed contrary to the facts on project progress.

#### KEY OBSERVATION:

Role played by the technocrats and politicians during approval of

In all the 2 projects, technocrats played a key role in the awarding of completion certificates for incomplete projects or projects that never set off. Implementation and reporting on projects is done in a process that is not transparent.

Reports both Kabarole District report and audit reports are deceptive to deny a transparent and accountable service delivery system that is accountable to the Higher Government levels and communities. What is published in those reports is not true.

#### INVOLVEMENT OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITIES / BENEFICIARIES

Most government projects involve beneficiaries for ownership purposes and enhanced accountability. As a procedure, Government projects are introduced to communities for ownership and monitoring purposes.

Effective forms of community participation create opportunities for more downward accountability and thus reduce the accountability gap between citizens and policymakers. Promotion of community participation strengthens the enabling environment and removes disabling factors.

In all the 2 projects, beneficiaries were never accorded the opportunity to participate in the projects creating gaps for misreporting on incomplete projects as complete.

The community members / beneficiaries lost project that would have provided them cheap accessible safe water.



## ISSUANCE OF FALSIFIED REPORTS

Because communities, beneficiaries and the local leadership were not involved, the contractor and the technical wing were able to issue certificates of completion without the knowledge of beneficiaries, communities nor the projects being completed. A total cost of 53,627,000/ (Fifty three million, six hundred thousand twenty seven thousand shillings) was lost on incomplete projects.

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

Investigations into the water project in Kicwamba was halted half way and the one in Kasenda Sub County cleared as a complete project.

- Kabarole District council should investigate why these projects were reported complete yet none of them was complete. A complete report with recommendations must be shared with the general public as well as facilitate a process of recovering the lost funds and prosecution of those involved in the mismanagement of funds.
- In all projects implemented by government, beneficiaries must be involved, provide them with all the necessary information to enable them track public expenditure. It is also important for Local Leaders to support the people within communities to access and interpreted information about the projects implemented by their government.