

The Uganda Sanitation Fund - promoting behaviour change practices to end diseases

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Prof. Anthony Mbonye

Professor Anthony Mbonye, Acting Director of General Health Services in Uganda's Ministry of Health has congratulated the Uganda Sanitation Fund (USF) programme for contributing towards the reduction of diseases in Uganda. "By promoting behaviour change practices and enabling the people to understand the linkages between water, sanitation and hygiene and health, the USF has ensured that over 6,000 villages have been triggered and over 3 million people are living in Open Defecation Free (ODF) areas", Professor Mbonye said.

Professor Mbonye was on 28 July, 2016 officiating at the breakfast meeting to celebrate the achievements of the USF programme. The meeting was organised by the Ministry of Health for different USF partners including development partners, the media and civil society organisations. The meeting aimed to share with the partners the status of the USF implementation and to seek their inputs on how to improve the programme's performance. The meeting was also attended by Dr. Sarah Byakika, Commissioner for Planning, Dr. Tumusiime Patrick, Commissioner for National Disease Control, Julian Kyomuhangi, Assistant Commissioner Environmental Health Division and Eng. Sam Mutono, Chairperson of the WSSCC WASH Coalition/National Sanitation Working Group among others.

"We know that sanitation and hygiene are key ingredients of addressing water-borne diseases especially cholera that is becoming endemic in Uganda. The population growth is also high and people are interacting differently with the environment and this has a great impact on the resources. People have different behaviours many of which need to be adjusted to fit within the environment, and the USF is enabling many people in 30 districts to use innovative behaviour practices to improve their sanitation and hygiene situations" Prof. Mbonye added.

The Uganda Sanitation Fund (USF) is a five-year programme funded by the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC) The programme aims at creating a robust demand for sanitation to the point that people seek out creative ways to install toilets in their communities and stop Open Defecation.

The UF journey

Julian Kyomuhangi traced the USF journey in Uganda right from the negotiations in 2008, signing of the agreement in 2011 and receipt of the first instalment of funds in November 2011.

"In December 2011, the 15 district local governments started implementation and in July 2014 we expanded to another 15 districts. The mid-term review in September 2014 provided with more guidance and direction on what to do differently and how to improve the implementation process" Julian said.

The USF achievements

David Mukama, the USF Programme Manager shared the key achievements of USF as including; the adoption of behaviour changes to construct, use and wash hands with soap after using the Sanitation and Hygiene facilities, increased and improved capacity of the Environment Health staff and other service providers to deliver and sustain improved Sanitation and Hygiene services and increased financing and allocation of resources for Sanitation and Hygiene activities in the country. "Through the programme, we have successfully innovated approaches and affordable technologies for improved Sanitation and Hygiene promotion as well as identified and scaled up Open Defecation initiative and enabled a large number of people living in Open Defecation Free areas (ODF)" Mukama added.



Julian Kyomuhangi



David Mukama

USF challenges

But even with the achievements, Mukama shared some challenges that the USF was experiencing including; inadequate data management at village and district levels, capacity gaps in conducting CLTS and Follow-up Mandona among new staff and other sector actors, inadequate harmonisation of approaches among the different actors and lack of staff for the environment health teams.

USF next steps

The USF is looking forward to continued engagement with WSSCC in order to; maintain momentum in the country, ensure sustainability of programme achievements in all districts, increase geographical coverage through move into new districts, replication and scale up of the model of implementation to other sector players (Line ministries, Departments, NGOs and new programmes – USAID/sanitation for health) and building on what has been learnt to date to contribute to country and global learning