

Jan Vandenweghe

SAFAD Placement Mid-term report

January 2018 – April 2018



About GOAL

GOAL is an Irish international humanitarian organization currently working in 12 countries in emergency and development contexts across the world. First operational in Uganda in the late 70's, GOAL Uganda's country programme is focused on long term development in health and livelihoods with a strategic focus on the north and east, where socio economic growth lags significantly behind the rest of the country. It has a coherent and innovative country programme that uses a resilience and systems approach throughout to increase incomes, employment, food security and diversity, increase social capital and improve health. GOAL works on a district focused approach, and uses a mixture of direct implementation and partnerships with local civil society organisations, private sector partners and District Local Government to give effect to their mission.

Chronological overview of project tasks and outcomes

Even though my time so far has mostly been spent in the eastern districts of Bugiri and Namayingo where the WASH team is located, I started off by assisting this team in GOAL's headquarters in Kampala. GOAL allocated a consultancy company to prepare a proposal for a piped water scheme in one of the sub counties of Namayingo, and my task in this project was mainly insuring that the work provided by the consultant was up to par. Because of some shortcomings on the consultant's part, we are experiencing some delays in the project, but we are managing those with support from head office, to get the proposal ready for approval from Uganda's Ministry of Water and Environment (MWE).

The first task I was involved in on the ground in Bugiri and Namayingo, was the piloting of four prepaid meters. The piloting of new technologies is not to be underestimated in rural areas of developing countries, therefore the process consisted of several parts: firstly, a two-day workshop was held to familiarize all stakeholders with the technology. Secondly, the villages that had earlier been prepared for the technology were visited a second time to ensure their appetite for the project. Several complications have developed in the latter step, mostly because of communities' reservations for systems enforcing payment for operation and maintenance. This is partly due to political interference, as political leaders often offer to pay for operation and maintenance during election time, leading to communities' unwillingness to sustain themselves. As work is currently being done around the management model for prepaid water meters, and sensitization of communities about collection of funds for operation and maintenance, the continuation of the project is on hold. Recently, more stakeholder meetings with the relevant political leaders were held and the management model has been discussed further.

Another issue I have been involved in is advising GOAL on water quality results from sub counties in the operational districts where high levels of manganese have been found. GOAL's dilemma followed the targeted communities' outrage due to the disqualification of their safe water source. They exclaimed, rightfully so, that they have been and will continue to collect water from sources with characteristics far worse than the ones found in the boreholes drilled by GOAL, if GOAL discontinues the boreholes. I prepared an advisory paper based on literature review assessing if there was a health claim to under scribe the closing of the boreholes drilled, and have discussed the findings with an advisory political group. They were interested in the findings and advised GOAL for a follow up with the ministry in the future. I also made spatial distribution maps for water quality parameters in the

operational areas, and have shared ways of doing this with GOAL staff. This might be a skill that staff will be continued to be trained in, as it could be beneficial to them.

In light of difficulties of supplying point sources in low water quality areas, as well as the ministry's policy of moving to piped water systems, I am currently looking at the feasibility of gravity driven membrane technology in the Ugandan context. So far, the project has consisted of building a robust model assessing cost benefits in different situations, to be able to make a well-informed decision when the time comes. The next phase will be collecting data from the study areas and connecting with government and NGOs to share experiences on the use of such systems. The same will be conducted for water catchment structures such as sand dams.



Figure 1 Recently constructed borehole GOAL

Recently our Bugiri office was happy to get a visit from GOAL's global WASH advisor. One of the reasons he was here was to facilitate a workshop in a community on improved latrine construction. The purpose of the workshop was letting the participants describe problems they experienced with their latrines and think of ways of how to improve them. This workshop was fascinating, as it showed how communities that have faced these problems for years did have the ability to fix them using their own knowledge and materials. My role was to ask questions with an outsider's point of view, to get the community thinking of other possibilities to the problems they faced than the ones they used up until now. At the end of the workshop, everyone who attended said they were very happy they did, since they learned that they could fix these problems themselves using resources they had available.

The project I am currently working on involves a context analysis concerning the approach GOAL uses in sensitizing communities to become open defecation free. The patterns of some communities that revert to the old patterns of open defecation is a highly studied subject, but is context specific. Therefore, GOAL is interested in studying the slippage patterns in their operational areas, and I have

been asked to assist on the process. So far, I have worked out a terms of reference for approval, and I will continue with the follow-up. The project is expected to be carried out over two to three months.



Figure 2 Workshop constructing better latrines

Final words

I would like to extend my appreciation to the Sue White fund for facilitating this placement. It has enabled the opportunity to turn some of the knowledge acquired during my academic career into practice in areas where it is much welcomed. The technical support that SAFAD volunteers can offer NGOs helps them make informed decisions for the wellbeing of the communities they target and helps their staff to gather tools to be able to carry out their tasks better. Furthermore, the possibility to get hands on experience in various projects is a priceless experience for the volunteer. So far, I am happy to have advised GOAL on issues such as bad quality in some regions, facilitating staff with basic GIS knowledge and researching treatment methods and sensitization approaches. Thanks to the Sue White Fund, the further development of ideas and the sharing of knowledge both from me with GOAL and vice versa can continue in the following months.

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