

The project was carried out by Join For Water, a Belgian NGO specialized in water resource management - see also [www.joinforwater.ngo](http://www.joinforwater.ngo). In Uganda Join For Water collaborates with 3 local partners who each have their specialized input.

Uganda is situated on the equator, in East Africa, in the Great Lakes region. Uganda has a rapidly growing population of about 40 million Ugandans today. The majority of them live in the centre and the south, especially along the banks of Lake Victoria and Lake Albert. Uganda is 162<sup>nd</sup> on the list of the Human Development Index, and is therefore one of the poorest countries in spite of its natural resources. People primarily make their living from agriculture and fishing.

Join For Water has been active in Uganda since 2000. Initially, their focus was on the Mpanga river basin in the Western part of the country. Since 2017 the river basin along Lake Albert – on the border with DR Congo - has been added to their area of interest. In the new zone near Lake Albert there are enormous challenges: environmental damage, litter, a lack of hygiene and drinking water, uncontrolled use of land.

Main goals for both areas are an improved access to water and sanitation and a better local water resources governance, based on an integrated water resources management.

In 2019, more than 20,000 people gained access to drinking water, thanks to the construction of safe water points, such as a water kiosk with 5 public tap stands. Almost 10,000 people have now access to sanitary services at home. Social marketing campaigns informed people about the benefits of using an Ecosan latrine and encouraged them to build one for their own household. These ecological toilets are made with locally produced interlocking bricks and they separate urine from faeces allowing waste to be turned into compost. 64 household Ecosans were built in Kabambiro, Nyakeera, Kayinja, Karangura, Bukuku and Karago. To ensure the durability of these installations, training was organized to acquire knowledge and skills on operation and maintenance.

Proper sanitation infrastructure at schools is essential to improve the hygienic situation, together with the promotion of good hygienic practices. In 2019, for example, 2 Ecosan toilets were constructed at Kazingo primary school, there are 4 stances and a urinal for boys and 4 stances and a wash room for girls. Boys and girls have separate hand washing facilities. On the walls sanitation and hygiene messages were drawn.

Awareness has increased among key actors on the need to promote integrated planning, management and development of water and natural resources, following a river basin-based approach. Agriculture is an important economic activity and in comparison with other water uses its share is the highest. Therefore, water conservation and its efficient use in agriculture are important to preserve water resources.

To control soil erosion and enhance water infiltration, 33 demonstration trenches in gardens or farms were made to support households in soil and water conservation in their gardens and around the homesteads in Kabambiro. 108 beneficiaries, of whom 66 women, acquired knowledge and skills in the establishment of soil and water management structures.

A more specific agriculture-related activity was the creation of 5 kitchen gardens in Nyakeera. 25 men and women were trained in the growing of vegetables (carrot, sukuma wiki, beetroot, green pepper, cabbage, onions and spinach) using the Ecosan products (only urine) as liquid manure to improve soil fertility.

Planting (fruit) trees prevents erosion and provides income with the proceeds of the fruit. Therefore 2 nursery beds in Mpanga and Nyakera were established in 2019. A total of 120,000 indigenous trees were raised; 46,000 indigenous and fruit tree seedlings were distributed and planted.

Waterboards are formed out of Water User Associations, e.g. the communal management structures, and local authorities in order to professionalise the management and maintenance of drinking water infrastructure. This should lead to better planning, more collaboration between stakeholders and strengthening of their capacities. On 137 out of 231 water points data were collected and analysed, the remainder being done in 2020. Based on this analysis the waterboards of Kanara, Nyabbani and Mahyoro developed an action plan to improve and

ensure water quality and quantity. Water users were encouraged to pay their fees through opening an account at the Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA). The water boards gained knowledge and skills in the VSLA management information system after the training of 46 executive members comprising of 14 women and 32 men.

Raising awareness remains an important topic in the activities of Join For Water. In Uganda, the Mpanga and its banks are severely affected by human activities. During an Event that Join For Water organized in March 2019 awareness was paramount, with broadcasts on regional radio stations, through lectures, and tree planting actions in schools.

From the experience gained in a programme, best practices are documented and used for dissemination and advocacy at national level. In 2019, a report on assessment of the Reuse Safety and the Fertilizing Potential of the Waste Products from Ecosan Toilets in Uganda was shared among the partners and stakeholders in the region. As a result all the communities of Karangura agreed to adopt the Ecosan toilet technology to reduce the contamination of the water resources upstream.

In 2019, Join For Water made things possible with its partners, the people and the authorities in Uganda. But there is still work to be done.

Thank you for your support.



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School girl washes her hands after using the toilet.



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Construction of an Ecosan latrine.