

# UGANDA

Water Without Borders 2013



UNITED NATIONS  
UNIVERSITY

**UNU-INWEH**

Institute for Water,  
Environment and Health



McMaster  
University







# KARIBU



## *The journey Ahead*

I remember the first time we went on a local dirt road and, although I knew that we didn't have far to go geographically, the drive took much longer than I had expected. As we move from side to side as the bus hits pothole after pothole, you come to realize the barriers that the local people face every day. The barriers that they face at times seem insurmountable yet the one thing that struck me is that, even though these barriers exist, you cannot break the spirit of those in Uganda and their genuine smiles were a common sight.





# VUMBUA

With rather clumsy steps, we are trying to absorb as much as we can, fully aware of this one-time opportunity to learn and see with our own eyes what we usually only get to read about in books. The field becomes reality, the everyday life and truth of someone else.







# UMOJA



## Water Binds Us Together

Although customs and practices are different around the world, all communities have areas that bring people together. In some places, it is the community water source, while in others, it is the municipal hockey rink.





# HUSIANO

## Securing Access to Water

The study of water issues is what had brought us there and it is truly what binds us all together as people.

The water seller fills a societal gap that I am accustomed to being filled by a government body. I am used to having my water brought to my home through pipes and pumping stations setup by an institution that we can hold accountable. Never having to worry about the ability to drink or use water for whatever purpose has made me a passive consumer, unconcerned about the many complex supply systems of my own city and other places of the world.

But we can establish a very strong relationship between drinkable water access and many social problems like education, job opportunities, or gender equity. After seeing how hard everyday life can be in rural Uganda, guaranteeing proper access to secure water sources should be mandatory to achieve any kind of worldwide development issues, like those proposed by the Millennium Development Goals.







# ELIMU

## Water and the Life of a Child

Cattle graze the field very close to the water source. No doubt introducing pathogens harmful to human health to this water source. Some young children are unable to attend school because they have to support their family by fetching and providing water. No one in this village has access to safe water at an affordable price.

In theory, the life of a child should be based on a continuous learning process that will help the child enhance his/her capabilities. It should be only about playing and discovering the world as much as possible.

However, I can't stop thinking about all the threats that the lack of a secure water source or unacceptable sanitation and hygiene conditions represent. A child's future might be determined by external factors and not by the child's own decisions.







# SULUHU

## Local, Innovative Solutions

Solutions to the problem of access are not always costly; local, cheap and readily available materials can be used for innovative solutions.

People always seemed to have a new way to tackle a problem. This latrine served as an example of how there are local solutions to the problems we face with regards to sanitation and hygiene, and reminded me that these are often the most effective and worthwhile.

Listening to a number of young but refreshingly confident and inspiring students share their thoughts and knowledge about local issues was important for us in order to recognize the incredible potential that lies in the local youth.







The only way to successfully implement any kind of WaSH project is by first recognizing all the knowledge and experience that the community could bring into it.

JAMII







# IMANI

## Investing in Social Structures

There are complexities and disjunctures between access to safe water and actual use. There is a need to invest in social structures and make communities more responsible in managing and maintenance of water sources for sustainability.

As water continues to become increasingly scarce, the need for better water conservation measures to recycle the backwash water is crucial.

The technology is there, but what policy is needed to make it accessible to the people?







# WASHIRIKA



## Community Partnerships

A sustainable and long-term-oriented solution would be the one in which these agencies think of themselves as community partners. This partnership will be the first step towards building the community awareness needed to avoid dependencies between the community and NGOs.

It is not only about the public health problems that the lack of basic water, sanitation, and hygiene conditions represents. It is about how a country will never be able to develop its potential, both at the individual and national level, until a proper access to potable water is achieved.





UTAFITI

I know that I will need to be much more proactive about gaining a comprehensive understanding of topics in the future, and believe that beyond being aware of my limitations as a researcher, seeking out testimonials and qualitative observations could be helpful.





# JIFUNZA



## Experiential Learning

We are so used to having access to clean, reliable water in a quantity that those in some parts of the world can only imagine.

There was an incredible importance of being in the field and listening to people in order to truly understand and challenge our own perspectives. Our week in Uganda was a colourful and eclectic learning experience that will hopefully have a lasting impact on all of us.





# WALISOMA

Water Without Borders is a unique program not only because of the huge amount of knowledge it provides and the amazing multidisciplinary learning environment. It is unique because it is intended to prepare people that will hopefully participate in the decisions and developments that will help tackle down one of the major problems humanity will face in the near future. Now that I realized the great opportunity that was offered to me, it is my responsibility to make the most of it.

~ Alejandro

Experiential learning creates an educational experience that no amount of course work can match, and tests your course-based knowledge in ways you can never be prepared for. Each of us comes back with a new perspective that shapes us and the work that we do.

~ Dave

I can imagine no other one-week trip that would have offered a more unique opportunity to delve into the realities of remote villages and learn about the everyday water collection journeys of so many different people. As a student of politics, history, and literature, I found myself introduced to issues of health and the close connections between water and well-being.

~ Madeleine

I felt as though I was living and experiencing my research. No book, report, or research paper could capture the cultural nuances that I experienced during this trip.

~ Savitri

Experiential learning offers many benefits and I believe the field course component of the WWB program nicely complemented the academic work we had been doing throughout the year... The field course was an invaluable opportunity to help bridge the gaps between what we had learned and the reality on the ground.

~ Molly

[Water Without Borders] speaks to a multidimensional approach to address water and sanitation challenges.

~ Joseph

[This programme] gave us an adventure that would change our lives. The evolution as people that we experienced while on this amazing trip... We were really fortunate to witness only the best of the best in action.

~ Robyn









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