Joint Uganda cities stakeholders' engagement workshop on the urban food-energy-water and waste nexus

Workshop Report

20th March, 2024,
Kampala Uganda

Innovations for Development
In the
Regional Network for Equity in Health in East and Southern Africa (EQUINET)

Contents

1. Background

Growing urbanisation and economic growth in the last two decades have led to emergence of new and expansion of old urban areas in Uganda. The country has seen a rapid transition from one major city (Kampala) to the current 11 eleven cities, 56 municipalities and 111 town councils. The urban expansion has also led to increased population as a result of rural-urban migration associated with search for economic opportunities, expanded commercial activities that have enabled increased opportunities and wealth creation for some social demographic groups.

With an increased population, all cities in Uganda are experiencing increased competition for resources of land, water, food, energy, etc. The competition has created disparities in access to these resources for health within many communities. This is especially the case for those living on the margins of society given the historical, demographic, social and political barriers inherent in nearly all the cities. For example, many migrants in cities are poor, landless and socially marginalised social. Disadvantaged communities continue to struggle with challenges related to poor quality foods, unclean water and energy and waste polluted neighbourhoods.

Urban authorities in Uganda have a duty to support access to food, energy, safe water, and clear environments through waste management. However they have been overwhelmed by the scale of challenges to address and the inequities within cities in relation to available public resources. This means that they have been unable to provide an equitable, sustainable, inclusive and socially just environment for all to thrive in cities. As a result, many households in the low income majority consume poor quality foods, live in polluted and congested areas and face deficits in the basic standards for the safe water, clean energy and other living conditions that promote healthy lives in the city.

There is a demand on cities and towns to ensure an equitable distribution of a range of benefits to all residents living and working in them. This implies providing viable alternatives to reduce exposure to risks from a range of processes and products that are harmful to health, including in relation to production, food systems, waste and pollution management, protecting biodiversity and providing green spaces, and ensuring predictable access to clean energy, safe water and sanitation, economic resources and social services. These goals are stated in the Sustainable Development Goals. They are important in Uganda and other countries in east and southern Africa, where economic inequality is high, and where commercial determinants of health (CDoH) and climate change pose significant burdens.

An organised cities' dialogue workshop was held in on the 20th of March 2024 in Kampala. It was convened by I4D on behalf of EQUINET, and sought to explore the links across food, energy, water and waste management systems to identify evidence on the challenges and opportunities faced in ensuring equitable access to these resources and services, and to share experiences and analysis from dialogues held in Masaka and Kampala, Uganda. The meeting aimed to identify scalable policies, practices and strategies to tackle the challenges in the nexus between food, water, energy and waste, particularly barriers that make cross-sectoral collaboration and partnerships less feasible.

The meeting explored on the critical recommendations from situation analysis, and capacity building sessions for Masaka and Kampala cities and from published EQUINET reports of case study work implemented in Uganda by ACTogether Uganda and Association of Uganda Urban Authorities. The meeting also shared case studies on urban health published by EQUINET from other countries in the ESA region. These published reports are found on the EQUINET website at www.equinetafrica.org together with a conceptual framework for healthy urban systems for food and waste management in ESA countries at https://equinetafrica.org/sites/default/files/uploads/documents/EQUINET%20conceptual%20framework%20for%20UH%20food%20and%20waste%20systems.pdf

This report gives an account of the session. The dialogue involved 15 leaders from the 11 cities in Uganda, and representatives from the Urban Authorities Association and ACTUganda, a non government organisation (NGO), both organisations having partnered with EQUINET and TARSC to document case studies of promising practices in urban areas of Uganda. A total of 18 participants, including urban leaders from Mbale, Fortportal, Masaka, Mbarara, Kampala, Lira, Gulu, Hoima, Mbale, Jinja and Arua attended the dialogue. The participants are listed in the Appendix.

1.1. Objectives of the dialogue

The dialogue aimed to:

a. Share key issues from the situational analysis prepared by I4D on the food-energy-water and waste (FEWW) nexus in cities and from the capacity building exercises implemented in Makasa and Kampala (separately reported).
b. Discuss the contexts affecting the FEWW situation in Uganda's cities
c. Explore opportunities and options to strengthen inter-sectoral collaboration, partnerships for improving the FEWW nexus in cities, and the synergies and trade-offs in this.
d. Generate recommendations for actions, and innovations to build equitable, inclusive, sustainable and people centred food-energy-waste-water systems for cities in Uganda that can be shared through EQUINET with others in the ESA region.

2. Meeting deliberations

The workshop was facilitated by Dr Danny Gotto, Executive Director of I4D, and Dr Faithful Atusinguza (Consultant).

2.1. Opening

The workshop opened with a prayer from the representatives of Gulu City and a brief introduction by Dr Gotto. Participants were thanked for accepting the invitation and the long journeys of travel.

Opening remarks were given by the Secretary General of the Urban Authorities Association of Uganda (UAAU) Dr Francis Barabanawe. He commended EQUINET and I4D for organising this timely dialogue with cities of Uganda to discuss food-energy-water-waste situations. He reiterated the need for cities to learn from one another.

He noted that each of the 11 cities has a unique feature, practice or innovation that can impact on the country as a whole. However, there is minimal cross learning amongst the cities. He attributed this weakness in part to the limited interest by cities to collaborate, partner or learn from one another. He noted a need to build a knowledge sharing platform where all cities and their respective sectors can firstly connect with one another, and then prioritise regular information sharing and learning.

Opening remarks by Dr Francis Barabanawe. Executive Secretary, UAAU. Photo credit: Joviah Gonza, I4D, 2024.

Dr Barabanawe gave an example of how all cities are grappling with the challenge of waste management. Nearly all cities depend on the landfill disposal approach to deal with their waste. This has proven ineffective to improve the waste system. He further highlighted the minimal waste recovery, reuse, reduction and valuation practices are taking place in Ugandan cities. Yet cities in countries in the world, including some within the ESA region, have proactively adopted circular economic models, nature-protective approaches, technology and people-centred techniques to address waste issues. Some of these approaches are generating fertilisers, energy products and improving food availability.

He wished participants good deliberations, and noted UAAU's support for this given its mandate to facilitate urban authorities to cross-collaborate, build capacity, engage in advocacy to improve policies and practices as well as challenge poor governance.

2.2. Introduction to EQUINET work on integrated management of urban systems for food, energy, water and waste

Dr Gotto provided background information on EQUINET work in Uganda and the region on urban health equity, noting that reports of this work is available on the EQUINET websites. Following initial regional review work by TARSC and case study work by organisations in Zambia, Zimbabwe, Uganda and Kenya on urban health, he outlined the discussions held at a regional EQUINET forum in Nairobi in March 2023 that deliberated on the findings,. Participants at this EQUINET regional meeting from different countries and organisations in the region and the ECSA Health Community identified food systems, safe water, clean energy and green spaces in cities as key areas of focus for improved health equity. Delegates resolved to focus on these key aspects that are critical to addressing urban health inequities within the ESA region.

Observations were made on the need to document and share promising practices to achieve sustainable urban and peri-urban well-being in East Africa by focusing on the following priorities;
- Tools for generating and sharing evidence,
- Specific evidence gaps, including the effects on health and options on food and waste management;
- Tools, capacities and processes for urban health including adapting and ensuring the legal basis for community engagements and participation
- Scaling up promising practices, linking local initiatives to local and national policy change;
- Climate Justice to better understand the field as a whole

In follow up EQUINET has supported a community of practice on urban health in the region and with institutions from ESA countries published 9 case studies on integrated approaches to urban health with a focus on food and waste management systems that link to energy and green spaces and address climate change. An EQUINET conceptual framework articulated the goals and principles for the building an inclusive, sustainable, equitable and people centred food-energy-water-waste systems. A synthesis report on the case studies will shortly be available on the EQUINET website.

Within the EQUINET programme of work there was a concern to initiate discussion on scale up of these approaches and promising practices in the region. I4D was thus supported to undertake a pilot initiative in Uganda to:
a. Develop materials and map stakeholders for and convene a pilot capacity-building on the urban FEWW nexus in the Kampala and Masaka Cities.
b. Facilitate a national dialogue on FEWW nexus with key stakeholders from selected urban authorities to foster learning and in-depth discussions on the context and issues arising.
While specific to the work done in Uganda and not the full body of EQUINET regional work, the views from the urban leaders were noted to raise issues for reflection in exchanges within the region and will be shared with the EQUINET community of practice in online and other fora.

2.3.   Observations and feedback on the capacity building in Uganda

The reports of the work done in Uganda by I4D: viz the capacity building materials and reports of the two city dialogues in Uganda–were shared with delegates, who gave feedback on this specific work done, based on their experiences and observations, the context of their respective cities and reality of trends and societal aspirations..

Delegates noted strengths in the capacity building and dialogue work to date:

The capacity building scope, materials and examples provided were relevant, given the current context in the FEWW sectors in Uganda. They included critical relevant aspects of governance, trade-offs, case studies, solutions like circular economic approaches, nature-based approaches.

The capacity building sessions offered practical dialogue opportunities for participants to examine their own contexts, sector-based problems, opportunities/enablers, barriers and to explore solutions.

Participants deliberating during the dialogues. Photo credit: J Gonza, !4D, 2024

Delegates also proposed areas for improvement for the capacity building materials prepared by I4D. and the two dialogues held. They noted that:
- They are skewed more to technical teams and may need to also ensure relevance to non-technical stakeholders, especially political and community representatives.
- The examples and case studies used in the materials need to be widened and contextualised to prioritise interests of the cities especially focusing on the most challenged sectors of food and waste, and to explore wider dimensions beyond the role of FEWW nexus in ensuring climate justice.
- The conceptual framework used profiles key principles. There is need to engage participants on how to put these principles into practice and what it means to domesticate them in the urban nexus intersectoral strategies.
- There is need provide case studies and examples on scalable policies, practices and strategies that show evidence of sustainability, inclusion and social benefits. Where case study examples were single sector based, there is need to identify and provide evidence-based, practical and impactful cross-sectoral linked examples for the stakeholders.
- The content needs to emphasise accountability for the nexus and practical strategies to enhance participation of critical actors like marginalised sections of society, private sector, local leaders, and to provide practical aspects of participatory policy making.
- There is need to build capacity on the tools and practical aspects of monitoring, impact measurement to enhance learning.

2.4. Delegate exchange of experiences on their urban situations

The representatives from the 11 cities made their respective cities' situation analysis while comparing with the information from the discussions by stakeholders in the Kampala and Masaka city dialogues. They were asked to organise their responses to identify the broader cross-sectoral dimensions. The feedback showed a similarity in regards the challenges, barriers, enablers and possible solutions.

Various enablers were noted for cross-sectoral work. They included:
- Even with limitations in scope and adherence the existing policy framework although laborious can offer a good start for assessments and learning.
- Cities have developed or are in the process of developing physical and development plans. This provides an opportunity to advocate for integration of nexus components and mainstreaming solutions and priorities across sectors.
- Each one of the 11 cities has got an identifiable bright spot, innovation or good practice, some of which are scalable and practical to deal with the broader challenges across the sectors.
- The growing potential of private sector actors in all the sectors, presenting an essential opportunity that requires strategic exploitation and support. In some cities the private sector is the only existing efficient player in food, waste and energy sectors.
- The growing government and public attention and dialogues on issues of climate change and its impact on the wider ecosystems of water, energy and food.
- Interest groups and growing civil society interest in climate related issues.

The barriers to cross-sectoral changes were identified as;
- The overwhelming population growth seen in all cities owing to increased urbanisation and migration across the country. This has exerted pressure on food, water, energy security and generated rising inequality between different urban communities.
- Cities are grappling with resource scarcity to adequately invest in building capacities, and to acquire technologies and implement sustainable and scalable solutions in all four sectors. There is also resource wasteage by local authorities due to limited evidence on the practical trade-offs, impact of solutions and scalable practices. Expensive technology is unaffordable to the existing cities' stakeholders and this compromises technology transfer, adoption and scalability.
- All cities face limitations in the regulatory and policy framework to support intersectoral linkages and practices across the four sectors. Cities continue to implement work in silos, even though this becomes costly and unsustainable.
- Technical capacity gaps (knowhow, innovations, etc) across all sectors were recognised by all cities. Some gaps are worse than others, especially those that are new areas of work where the personnel and structures are yet to be fully constituted.
- Poor governance challenges arise due to the overwhelming lack of accountability, corruption and inadequate enforcement of existing rules and laws governing the four sectors. Political interference in implementation frustrates technical teams in different sectors and this can derail or reverse plans and implementation processes.
- Lack of public awareness of the issues, linked to limited participation/involvement and public vandalism of public infrastructure, and encroachment on protected resources like wetlands, landfills, etc.
- Absence of strong scientific evidences on cross-sectoral policy linkages, practices, impacts to drive interest in investments by all stakeholders. There is limited knowledge sharing and cross-sectoral collaboration, coordination and partnerships.

Participants discussed in the plenary the solutions identified by the two cities of Masaka and Kampala in the respective sectors. They explored what was common within their cities and feasible for interventions.

The following strategies were reported to already be underway.

a. Eight out of ten cities have adopted the polluter pay principles and are at different stages of implementation. There is in addition wide spread use of trade orders, focusing on enforcement rather than over-relying on penalties.
b. The public-private partnership models are widely used across cities at various degrees in all the sectors.
c. A circular economic model has been implemented at various levels especially the circular bioeconomic (CBE) practices in waste valuations (with the 3Rs of reduce, reuse, recycle).
d. The cities recognise urban greening and beautification of open spaces, including planting of carbon sinks.
e. Various practices are underway: Cities are running cleaning campaigns for example Fort Portal and Lira are conducting communal cleaning days every quarter. Rain harvesting technology has been adopted in schools and public hospitals. Two cities, Kampala and Mbale, have an alternative energy incentive framework to support energy transition. Compost plants have been established in 8 cities to convert organic waste into fertilisers.
f. Urban farming promotional practices like land demarcations and allocations have shown potential scalability. The producer led farmers' market in Gulu is providing climate and nature friendly food for local communities.

3. Recommendations and closing

Meeting delegates discussed and agreed on recommendations from the meeting.

3.1. To build capacities
Participants noted the following as critical to building capacity for an integrated urban nexus in the respective cities:
- Development of regional (city-based) knowledge hubs that can facilitate joint collaborative, learning in a multi-sectoral reality.
- Development of tools and innovative approaches to perform impact assessment and situation analysis to monitor change.
- Support wide spread dissemination of case studies on relevant topical issues to stakeholders.
- Facilitate coordination for intra-cities and inter-cities to spark learning and knowledge sharing through existing platforms like the UAAU.
- Cultivate partnerships with potential institutions, networks, civil society, and private sector to integrate capacity building processes in their activities.

3.2. To enhance knowledge generation
Participants recommended actions to build knowledge pools for shared and continued learning:
- Strengthen capacity of potential local knowledge systems (creators, implementors and champions) to be able to generate knowledge through research, information gathering (photo journalism, storytelling activities).
- Facilitate processes to identify, profile and document key innovations from the all cities and facilitate development of a multi-sectoral knowledge accessible to all.
- Create opportunities to document and mainstream often excluded indigenous knowledge and practices from the different sectors, including for inclusion of marginalised voices.
- Review and improve the developed resource material to fill identified gaps.

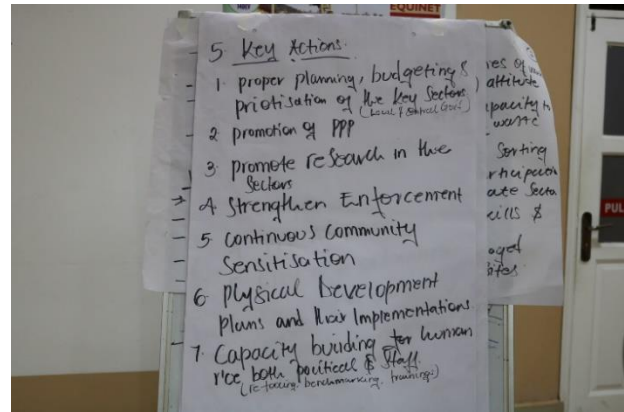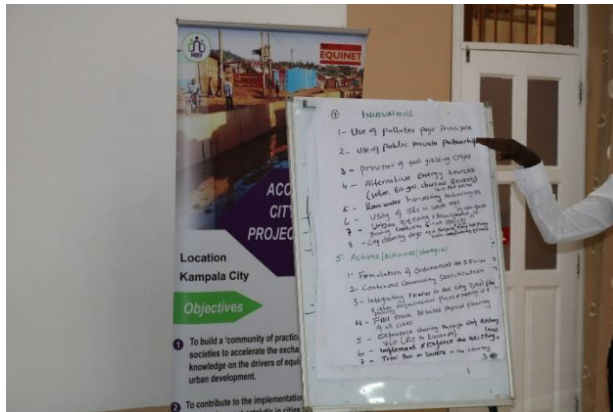### 3.3. To enhance governance of the FEWW nexus

Participants recommended ways to improve the governance of the cross sectoral processes and work within urban authorities:

- Support documentation and dissemination of governance specific case studies to avail opportunities for learning on best practices in governance.
- Identify and support on-going enhancement of governance processes with the cities. For example, the ordinance development/review processes in particular cities offer entry points.
- Integrate and improve the content on improved governance within the existing resource materials to inform leaders and managers.
- Facilitate targeted capacity building for relevant personnel to improve local governance systems, capacity and impact.

3.4. To enhance participation and inclusion

Participants recommended the following to enhance participation and inclusion:

- Map, identify and provided targeted messages/information to excluded groups within urban spaces.
- Use existing open-access information sharing platforms to disseminate information on urban nexus / cross sectoral options and climate action to key stakeholders.
- Support selected excluded groups with skills for documentations, storytelling (photo-journalism) and measurement of impact.
- Support advocacy efforts with local affected stakeholders within urban authorities.

Reporting recommendations and actions in the meeting. , Photo: J Gonza, I4D, 2024.

Having concluded the key goals, the meeting was closed with appreciation to delegates for their contributions and note that the report will be made available to delegates.

Appendix : Delegate list

#	Name	Organisation	Title
1	Nyaribi Rhoda	Mbale city	Principal Environmental Officer
2	Natugonza Gladys Mirembe	Fort Portal city	Senior environmental officer
3	Nabadda Pauline	Masaka city	Senior Environmental officer
4	Amanyire Moses	Mbarara city	City prod. officer
5	Jenny Frances Asiimwe	Urban Authorities Association of Uganda.	Administrative officer
6	Anyole Wani	Koboko Municipality	Assistant water engineer
7	Hirotot Chris	Lira city	Senior health inspector
8	Ogwang Patrick	Gulu city	Public Health Officer- Environmental Health
9	Waisswa Kakaire	ACTogether Uganda	
10	Barabanawe Francis	Urban Authorities Association of Uganda (UAAU).	Secretary-General
11	Amolo Moses	Soroti city	Principal Health Inspector
12	Robbinson Dragi	Arua city	City Agricultural Officer
13	Businge Solomon	Hoima city	SATC
14	Nakato Prossy	Jinja city	Principal Health Officer- Environmental Health
15	Sebbanja Junior	ACTogether Uganda	PSO
16	Danny Gotto	I4D	Executive director
17	Joviah Gonza	I4D	Officer
18	Faithful Atusinguza	Consultant	