

4

Experiences with CBP from Uganda

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Background

The Government of Uganda is strongly committed to decentralisation, as evidenced by the devolution of responsibilities for local planning, resource allocation and budgeting, and investment management to local governments. It is a statutory requirement for each local government to produce a three-year integrated rolling development plan.

The Local Government Act 1997 created five tiers of Local Councils (see Table 1). The highest level is the District/City Council (lower council level five, or LC5). This is followed by the county/municipal council (LC4); the sub-county/municipal division/town council (LC3); the parish/ward council (LC2); and the village council (LC1). The table below summarises the nature of local council structures, their populations, and roles.

Prior to the introduction of the Community-based Planning project in Uganda, there were a number of participatory planning models in use, ranging from the use of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) techniques for identifying community needs, to the involvement of communities in the provision of services and maintenance thereafter. Uganda has had an innovative Local Government Development Programme (LGDP) that has made great strides in the development of local government and lower level structures. However the Ministry recognised that it did not sufficiently

address the strengthening of the lowest levels (LC2 and LC1) and so was keen to be a partner in the four-country project, and see how CBP could complement what Uganda was already undertaking.

A steering group was formed to oversee the implementation of the CBP project, which consisted of the Office of the Prime Minister, the Local Government Development Programme, Plan for Modernisation of Agriculture (PMA), CARE International, Bushenyi District Local Government¹, United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), and Uganda Participatory Development Network (UPDNet).

From CBP to Harmonised Participatory Planning Guidelines (HPPG)

This CBP steering group commissioned a study to review the diverse approaches to CBP in Uganda within the context of decentralisation, which was funded by DFID under the four-country CBP project. A national workshop was held to discuss the lessons emerging from the study, which were then shared with other partners in the four-country project. Key policy

¹ It was decided to include one local government where CBP would be implemented, and Bushenyi is an active and innovative local government in the south west of Uganda, which was already being supported by a range of CARE International initiatives.

Table 1: Levels of local administration in Uganda and their roles

Level	Approx population	Structure	Role
District/city Council (LC5)	1.5–2.5 million	District local government/ city council (Kampala only)	Primary local government structure. Elected council appoints and oversees executive staff. Major responsibility for service delivery e.g. agriculture, health, education, water/sanitation. Increasing emphasis on out-sourcing service delivery.
County/ municipal (LC4)	50–200,000	County council/ municipal council	County councils within the rural areas are an administrative structure. These include Municipal councils in urban areas.
Sub-county (LC3)	60–120,000	Sub-county council	Integrated local and district functions. Lowest legal level of LG that can manage and disburse funds. It also includes town councils and municipal divisions in the urban areas. This level plays a significant role in service delivery.
Parish (LC2)	4–20,000	Parish council	Not a legal level of local government – but has administrative community level functions. Council members elected from village level representatives.
Village (LC1)	2,000	Village council	Not a legal level of local government – but has administrative community level functions.

issues that emerged included:

- The current basis for local government planning (developed in 1998) was based on PRA principles and emphasised identification and solutions of problems. Constraint-based planning methods can lead to simply addressing symptoms (and not root causes) of poverty, and rarely raise or address issues such as gender, environment, or HIV/AIDs.
- Despite efforts by government to issue a single set of planning guidelines for community level, there was a multiplicity of planning approaches and systems being implemented by a range of actors. NGOs were particularly guilty of ignoring local government planning cycles, by leading the facilitation process themselves, and undertaking 'project/sector-specific' planning to fit in their own project schedules.
- Planning at the community level was still viewed as a mechanism by which lower level stakeholders could voice their needs to higher-level authorities. It was rarely used as a means to mobilise local resources, influence local decision-making, and identify opportunities for lower level development.
- Planning within local governments remained highly sectoral. This sectoral thinking discouraged opportunities for multi-disciplinary action, reinforced project structures, and meant that sectors outside of the five national priority programme areas (roads, water, health, education, and agriculture) were frequently missed out.

To begin the development of a CBP approach to lower

level local government planning in Uganda, it was decided to pilot the approach in Bushenyi District, which had agreed to be an implementing partner in the project. Bushenyi was supported by the DFID-funded Integrated Lake Management project, which provided significant resources to support Bushenyi. This initiative strongly supported the subsequent development of government guidelines for planning at lower local government levels, the Harmonised Participatory Planning Guidelines (HPPG).

The initial experience in Bushenyi

Bushenyi District had decided to implement CBP in all 170 parishes (covering approximately 1,000 villages). The Ugandan partners adapted the core CBP manual developed under the four-country CBP project to produce a version for Bushenyi, modifying the methodology to a three-day planning process (see Table 2). A training of trainers was implemented in February 2002, and the planning process undertaken in March and April, linking into the overall district planning process. The piloting of the CBP process within Bushenyi District attracted considerable interest from national government institutions as well as donors and projects supporting decentralisation.

An evaluation² was commissioned under the four-country CBP project for the Bushenyi experience in 2002 some four to six months after CBP had been conducted. The evaluation

² This was carried out by an independent consultant selected by the CBP working group in Uganda.

Table 2: Application of the CBP methodology in Bushenyi District	
Element	Adaptation in Bushenyi
Planning unit	Parish and sub-county
Methodology	Visioning and livelihoods analysis, including interest groups, such as women and people living with a disability) rather than social groups found within communities. Less emphasis was put on outcomes in the first round.
Facilitation of parish plans	By sub-county staff (sub-county chief, community development, agricultural extension).
Training	Three-day training session by district staff of sub-county staff, supported by CARE Uganda and the Integrated Lake Management Project.
Financing of planning process	District local government, sub-county local government, community contribution in kind, Local Government Development Programme, Poverty Action Fund, CARE, four-country CBP project.
Funding of the plans	From local revenue for community projects.
Linkage to sub-county and district plans	<p>LGDP system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sub-county local government plans integrated in the district plans. • Sub-county local governments seek guidance from district local government. before implementing projects that will have recurrent cost on the district local government budget. • District informs sub county local governments in writing of projects to be implemented in their respective areas. <p>Introduced with CBP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The parish and sub-county planning manuals under the HPPG were 60% adopted under CBP. The sections/ideas included visioning as opposed to problem approach, used livelihood analysis and the programme for the planning process.
Implementation of the parish plans	Implementation of parish plans is either contracted out to the private sector or implemented directly by the community through self-help programmes, with targeted support from sub-county or district level staff. Non-governmental organisations may be contracted to implement certain components.
Monitoring of implementation at parish level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By parish executive and parish council. • District and sub-county local government officials. • NGOs, CBOs, and civil society organisations. • The parish residents themselves as key stakeholders.

itself adopted a participatory approach to ensure a wide range of views and concerns were taken into account and to enable the evaluation to be used as a learning experience for those involved. The conclusions included (Androa, 2002):

- more training was needed for facilitators on cross-cutting issues (gender, environment and HIV/AIDS), as these were not prioritised and adequately covered, and on some of the tools;
- more feedback to the communities is needed, such as approval of the plan being announced on radio, public notices and other media;
- refreshments at meetings are a good way of showing appreciation for the time and input people have given;
- the process was too hurried and more time should ideally

be given in the future; and,

- documentation of the process would be useful so that lessons can be learnt and shared.

The evaluation report was used in the review of the HPPG and learning from the experience of Bushenyi was further facilitated by the District being represented on the steering group.

Taking forward the HPPG

The Bushenyi Pilot was run in 2001–2 and the district has continued with CBP since then. Following the South Africa CBP Workshop in August 2001, the Ministry of Local Government worked with the Northern Uganda Social Action Fund, the Office of the Prime Minister, and the UN Capital Development Fund, to initiate a process to review

Table 3: Comparison between CBP and problem-based planning

Local Government and Planning Guide 1998 and March 2002	Community-based planning approach
Investments based on identification of constraints and problems.	Investment identification based on negotiation of shared vision.
Focus on community meetings at village level with no effort to disaggregate population, particularly the poor and marginalized.	Livelihoods analysis identifies different groups, including poor and marginalized households and solicits their views directly. Views of women solicited and gender sensitive investments identified. Checklists for screening investments gives higher rank to those investments that impact upon poor households.
No explicit poverty focus as emphasis is on community priorities.	Livelihoods analysis promotes better understanding of poverty and project profile incorporates question on linkages between investment and poverty eradication.
No effort to identify assets or opportunities for investments.	SWOT analysis of livelihoods looks at natural resources as investable assets.
No efforts to mainstream environmental issues.	Checklist for screening investments that encourages consideration of environmental impacts.
No analysis of community strengths or weaknesses.	SWOT analysis part and parcel of planning process.

the investment and planning guidelines for lower local governments, which had been in operation since 1998. Considerable input was provided by the Uganda CBP partners and from the experience of Bushenyi Local Government. In 2002, an initial version of national guidelines was prepared, known as the HPPG, which was a combined manual for villages, parishes, and sub-counties.

After an internal review by MoLG, the draft HPPG were distributed to all local governments and town councils in the country, and five two-day regional workshops held in which local government staff (planners, administrative officers, and civil society) were presented with the guidelines and provided guidance in their use. The guidelines were used at village, parish, and sub-county levels.

This rollout enabled widespread piloting of the guidelines, providing essential feedback for the finalisation of the guidelines. The rollout was reviewed in the first half of 2003. This indicated that 50% of the 14 local governments sampled had applied some aspects of the HPPG, but that despite the considerable efforts made to ensure widespread dissemination, capacity gaps existed at local level, restricting the adoption of these guidelines, and its rather bulky and 'user-unfriendly' format restricted uptake. As a result the guidelines have been simplified, and some key decisions made:

- It was acknowledged that detailed planning at village level was too resource intensive and unsustainable. It was agreed that village priorities, from a range of stakeholder

groups, would be incorporated into Parish Development Plans, rather than undertaking CBP at village level.

- It was split into two manuals: one for parishes/wards, and another for sub-counties/municipal councils, so that each group had a shorter more focused manual.
- In addition, greater effort was to be placed on providing focused skills-based training for local government facilitators. This coincided with efforts by the four countries to develop generic CBP training of trainer guidelines, which could be adopted for use locally. The generic guidelines were produced in January 2003.
- It was decided to reduce the scale of the rollout, to only 26 districts for 2003–4, to have a better control on the quality, and to ensure that this would be accompanied by the training above.

The approach used in the revised HPPG is shown in Table 4.

Innovations in the use of participatory methodologies

The CBP programme in Uganda introduced some of the following attributes to the participatory planning process in Uganda:

- a shift in approach to complement the 'needs-based', with the 'vision-based' focus of planning;
- a new emphasis on the parish planning level for participatory planning, as previously more emphasis was placed on the sub-county level of planning;
- planning based on social/interest groups, recognising that

Table 4: Approach to planning in the revised HPPG

Element	Adaptation for HPPG
Planning unit	Parish and sub-county.
Methodology	Situation and livelihoods analyses, service provider analysis, timeline mapping, SWOT analysis, developing a vision and a budgeted action plan.
Facilitation of parish plans	By sub-county staff (including, for example, community development and agricultural extension staff) plus parish chief.
Training	Being finalised – training of training and then training by district staff of sub-county staff planned.
Financing of planning process	By district.
Funding of the parish plans	Implementation of Parish Development Plans is through implementation by local communities, funding from local revenue, national government, NGOs, and donors.
Linkage to district plans	Parish Development Plans are incorporated into sub-county Development Plans, which are in turn incorporated into District Development Plans.
Implementation of the parish plans	Implemented through communities, all levels of local government and through SDPs and DDPs.
Monitoring of implementation at parish level	By sub-county.

- communities are diverse with differing interests;
- involvement of non-council stakeholders (NGOs, CBOs, PSOs) in the planning process;
 - inclusion of methodological issues in the guidelines (i.e. description of the 'how to') in relation to the various tools proposed; and,
 - harmonisation of planning activities with the Local Government Budget Framework Paper (LGBFP).

All of these attributes have supported the integration of the approach and subsequent plans into mainstream local government development planning. Finally, efforts are now underway to ensure that the rather ad-hoc nature of the CBP working group is more formally institutionalised with regard to the Ministry of Local Government and other central government structures. A working group established by MoLG to advise on participatory planning processes from parish to district level is currently being merged with the CBP working group to ensure that CBP lessons are mainstreamed within government.

Lessons learnt

Many lessons were learnt from the initial implementation and review, which have led to an improved and agreed set of guidelines. These lessons include:

- **The original guidelines were too long and complicated** and the revised version has made the guides simpler, shorter, and more user-friendly.

- **The importance of the strong sense of ownership, interest, and momentum by the Government of Uganda** with a high degree of ownership from LGDP in the Ministry of Local Government and the adoption of the CBP principles in the design of the Northern Uganda Social Action Fund (NUSAF).
- **The necessity to build incentives within facilitating agencies (particularly local governments) if local-level planning is to be institutionalised across Uganda.** Participatory planning criteria are now included in the annual performance assessment process conducted by central government on local governments. Those local governments that score highly on these annual assessments stand to gain greater funding allocations from the centre, and are accorded greater flexibility in how the funding is allocated in support of local planning needs.
- **The participation of non-governmental actors in the development of government guidelines strengthened the process.** The interaction of government with the NGO sector resulted in a healthy debate and even some changed perceptions regarding the respective roles and contributions that each can make to the other, both at local and national levels.
- **Piloting and review have enabled the development of well thought through and practical guidelines.** The process was field tested in the whole country, beginning with Bushenyi District, allowing opportunities for review and finalisation

Photos: Malikhang Masia (ex-Khanya, now IDT)



**Planning in
Katooka
parish**

**Group meeting
under tree in
Katooka parish**



following a structured review process, involving both governmental and non-governmental institutions. There is an appreciation that the process is a long term initiative, requiring corresponding training and capacity building, as well as adjustments in the methods used as the process evolves and develops.

- **It takes time and patience** to change how planning takes place, and to put local institutions and communities in the driving seat. It requires changes in attitudes of local governments, as well as modifications in the systems and structures at district and national levels. Development of new nationally approved guidelines is an important step in the right direction – but it requires a parallel process of training and capacity building, which is now being developed and implemented.
- **The new planning approach challenges parallel planning systems within local government, as it should incorporate all planning needs** (see below).

Way forward

In addition to an extensive capacity building programme to support the adoption of the HPPG manuals, there are three key challenges ahead for effective implementation of the CBP approach and of its resultant plans. These are integrating the results of parish and sub-county plans with district level plans, the existence of parallel environmental planning, with the challenge of integration of the environmental plans into mainstream development plans, and the challenge of ensuring that CBP results in immediate rather than deferred action.

Community-based planning is a cross sectoral, multi-disciplinary process that works from the bottom up. This

approach does not fit well with the existing approach to district development planning. District level planning remains highly sectoral – with sectoral plans providing the foundation for a final district development plan. The forthcoming revision of guidelines for district development planning provides an excellent opportunity to influence the development of a new approach to planning at district level, which should facilitate improved integration of PDPs and SDPs into district development plans.

Currently the planning under the HPPG is for the subsequent financial year. This can result in many months separation between the planning process and implementation, while communities are implementing what they planned last year. For CBP to be fully effective in promoting community action, it is important that the planning leads to immediate implementation. This suggests a differentiation between sub-county planning, which primarily uses external resources and so needs to be part of the annual budgeting process, and parish level planning which primarily uses a community's own resources and some of which could be implemented in the current financial year.

The existence of separate guidelines for environmental action planning, and subsequently, separate plans, has confused the integration of environmental and natural resource (ENR) issues into mainstream planning. As so many people within Uganda are directly dependent on the natural resource base, full integration of ENR into mainstream planning, rather than separate planning, would improve resource allocation and hence management. The National Environmental Management Authority (NEMA) has begun to become engaged in the new planning processes being developed within Ministry of Local

Government, but there is more work to be done in improving integration of approaches. Ultimately, a community-based planning approach within local government is

needed to improve the sustainability of planning by requiring fewer resources than those needed for multiple planning processes.

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