

Innovative Research Solutions with Industry

International Development

CLIENT:
Irish Aid / HEA

AREA:
Water



Improving access to clean drinking water in Uganda



Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT) is the lead institution for the Water is Life Amazzi Bulamu project (www.waterislife.ie) which aims to improve access to clean drinking water and understand the role of water in the health and well-being of populations in rural Uganda.

Nine million people in Uganda do not have access to safe water; this represents almost a quarter of the population. Without access to safe water, Uganda's many farmers struggle to grow crops or earn a living and the lack of clean water and safe sanitation traps them in poverty. The incidence of waterborne diseases such as malaria and childhood diarrhoea can be reduced significantly if an improved clean water supply is available.

The partnership aims to explore innovative approaches to sustainable water management in rural Uganda. This project is ensuring that technical and social expertise in relation to water management is being built up through strategic partnerships spanning Ireland and Africa simultaneously. The project is hosted in the Centre for Freshwater and Environmental Studies in the Department of Applied Science but also involves the Departments of Nursing and Mechanical Engineering in DkIT. Much of the proposed research has drawn on lessons learnt from already well-established projects here in Ireland, ensuring a fast-track approach to outputs.

The Water is Life project is funded by the HEA and Irish Aid as part of the latter's Programme of Strategic Co-Operation. This aims to promote



The Water is Life project in Uganda

innovative research across a range of subjects in support of Irish Aid's mission and develop higher education capacity in Ireland and Uganda for developmental research. The project involves a consortium of Irish and Ugandan Higher Education Institutes and NGOs, with a goal to conduct research that supports sustainable water resource management as a catalyst for sustainable economic and social development in rural Uganda.

Irish Aid/HEA awarded a total of €1.5M to DkIT for this project. In addition funding was secured from Irish Aid's 'Simon Cumber Media Fund' in 2010 for dissemination purposes – a photo →

Irish Aid | www.irishaid.gov.ie

Department of Foreign Affairs,
Riverstone House,
23-27 Henry Street, Limerick.

T: +353-1-408 2000
F: +353-1-408 2880



•> exhibition took place in 2011 which documented the activities of the project both in Ireland and Uganda. Funding was also awarded by The Science Gallery in TCD to one of the PhD research projects (hand pumps) and this resulted in the development of an exhibit 'Water Wear' which formed part of the hugely popular 'The future of water' exhibition which ran in the gallery in 2011.

Outcomes from the project include:

- PhD theses (8)
- Geographical Information Systems (GIS) database
- Jointly developed (all academic partners) Certificate in Sustainable Water Management
- Contribution to a Master's in Development Studies (Makerere University)
- Project Publications (Project book published)
- Peer-reviewed papers
- Community water improvement programme
- Participation at international and national conferences

The experience of the PhD researchers and their research outputs will provide case studies that can be built into courses both in Ireland and Uganda at primary, secondary and third level across a wide range of disciplines. The project has facilitated research capacity building among Irish and Ugandan academics and the 8 PhD researchers based in Uganda will contribute to the training of future African researchers.

The strong links, inter-institutional collaboration and mutual understanding built-up during this project will help to inform future research and also guide policy and social understanding to allow better advice and knowledge to be imparted to Irish Aid to inform its approach to international development. ■

TESTIMONIALS

Medical Missionaries of Mary

Makondo, Uganda and Drogheda

"The holistic approach taken by DkIT to the problems of safe water was of crucial importance. In Uganda water is vital and lays the foundation for health and well-being. The regular visits to Makondo by the project team acted as a stimulus and encouragement to the committees in Makondo (Uganda) to actively participate and their contribution to safe water management was recognised at a higher level."

UWASNET

Ugandan Water and Sanitation Network

"UWASNET has been involved with DkIT under the Water is Life Project as a member of the Advisory Committee. Under Water is life great insights have been gained from the research findings and studies of the PHD students which have had a great contribution to the network in terms of providing evidence to generate advocacy issues in the sector and with eventual improvement and increasing knowledge base to enhance water and sanitation services delivery"



Dr. Suzanne Linnane

CENTRE FOR FRESHWATER & ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

Dundalk Institute of Technology

Dublin Road, Dundalk. Ireland.

T: +353-42-937 0200

E: suzanne.linnane@dkit.ie