



Protecting Marginalised Groups & Indigenous Peoples: The role young people can play in ensuring not only that young women are protected but also empowered;

Education and Participation in Water, Sanitation and Hygiene: To what extent is it a challenge for young people to access adequate education on the HRWS and potential WASH solutions, and what steps can be taken to overcome these challenges to ensure improved access to information and transparency in decision making.

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Introduction:

About Turikumwe:

- ❖ Turikumwe is a non-governmental organization with a major focus on creating long-term sustainable change through an integrated approach of engaging community members, governments and business owners. It helps them to identify gaps, address challenges, opportunities, develop plans, implement and monitor progress in sanitation, marketing, advocacy, Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM), catchment management and private sector led WASH service provision.
- ❖ Through our work, we mainstream the Rights Based Approach to Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) services during the consolidation phase in order to increase on beneficiaries' awareness that accessing WASH services is a right and this shall enable communities to participate fully in planning, monitoring, resource allocation for operation and maintenance (O&M) of WASH facilities and increased lobbying for government to involve stakeholders in coordination of projects through different fora for planning and budgeting and sustainable management of WASH services.
- ❖ We have been implementing WASH projects in Uganda since 2017 with funding from Young Water Solutions
- ❖ Turikumwe in Partnership with Young Water Solutions has implemented a WASH project in Hakibaale Sub-County, Kabarole District through construction of two (Rain Water Harvesting Tanks) in two Primary Schools of Muhangi and Kyairumba and rehabilitation of two Rain Water Harvesting Tanks at Kijura Health Centre III benefiting 1,410 people with improved access to safe WASH facilities.
- ❖ In 2019, we implemented the Young Water Fellowship Programme-East Africa in partnership with Young Water Solutions; This programme brings about young community leaders capable of successfully designing and implementing sustainable and inclusive water initiatives that significantly improve living conditions in their communities, while contributing to the achievement of SDG #6 (water and sanitation for all).
- ❖ Early this year, we signed an MoU with Young Water Solutions to implement the project, ***“Sanitation for Hakibale through the commitment and actions of young local women”*** This project is about the construction of specially designed latrines for two schools and one health centre. The 30-latrine stances are under construction and are nearing completion at the two primary schools and one health centre targeting over 2,000 people. All latrine stances will be installed with ceramic luxo pans to minimize incidences of children from falling into the latrines, vectors from interacting with the community and they are user friendly for the girl child and pupils with physical disabilities.

Protecting Marginalised Groups & Indigenous Peoples:

- ❖ The indigenous peoples of Uganda include the Benet, the Batwa, the Ik, the Karamojong and the Basongora, although the Ugandan Government does not specifically recognize them as indigenous peoples.
- ❖ Uganda has not adopted the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, ILO Convention 169, which guarantees the rights of indigenous and tribal peoples in independent States. Therefore, its indigenous population continues to live with impoverishment, social and political exploitation and marginalization.
- ❖ The 1995 Constitution does not offer express protection for indigenous peoples, but Article 32 imposes a mandatory duty on the state to take affirmative measures in favour of historically disadvantaged and discriminated groups. This provision, which was initially designed and conceived to address the historical disadvantages of children, persons with disabilities and women, is the basic legal source of affirmative action in favour of indigenous peoples in Uganda.
- ❖ The Land Law of 1998 and the National Environmental Statute of 1995 protect customary interests in land and traditional uses of forests. However, these laws also authorize the government to exclude human activities in any forest area by declaring it a protected forest, thus nullifying the customary rights to the land of indigenous peoples.

Marginalised Groups & Indigenous Peoples in Uganda

- ❖ The indigenous peoples of Uganda include ancient communities of hunters and gatherers, such as Benet and Batwa, also known as Twa. They also include minority groups like the Ik, the Karamojong and the Basongora.
- ❖ The Benets, who number just over 8,500, live in the north-eastern part of Uganda.
- ❖ The Batwa, who number about 6,700, live mainly in the southwest region. They were dispossessed of their ancestral land when the Bwindi and Mgahinga forests were declared national parks in 1991.
- ❖ The Ik number is approximately 13,939 and lives on the edge of the Karamoja / Turkana region along the border between Uganda and Kenya.
- ❖ The karamojong live in the northeast and total about 988,429.
- ❖ The Basongoras, who number 15,897, are a livestock community that lives in the lowlands adjacent to Rwenzori Mountain in western Uganda.



Main challenges of Marginalised Groups & Indigenous Peoples in Uganda

- ❖ The indigenous peoples of Uganda experience challenges, especially in relation to the lack of security in land tenure and marginalization in terms of political representation, they have experienced the indigence and historical injustices induced by the state caused by the creation of conservation areas in Uganda.
- ❖ They have also suffered various human rights violations, including continued forced evictions and exclusion of ancestral lands without consultation with the community, consent or adequate compensation, violence and destruction of homes and property, including the denial of livestock of their livelihoods, cultural and religious values, exclusion of ancestral lands and natural resources. As a result, they continue to live with impoverishment, social and political exploitation and marginalization.
- ❖ The safety of the Ik peoples is at risk in large part due to their different positions between two communities. Iks are often caught in the crossfire between the two communities, making them very vulnerable. In addition, their land tenure remains insecure because neighbouring pastoralists and agro pastoralists invade their land. In addition, 70% of the land of Ik has been lost due to conservation initiatives.
- ❖ The Benet peoples have had a long-standing dispute with the authorities over their ancestral lands, which was declared a protected area in 1926 without their consent or compensation. In 2005, the Supreme Court ordered the government to return the protected lands to the community of Benet. However, the failure has not yet been implemented.
- ❖ Inadequate WASH facilities, the marginalized and vulnerable groups lack personal and domestic hygiene and sanitation facilities and as a result, they have been implicated in the transmission of many infectious diseases including cholera, typhoid, hepatitis, polio, cryptosporidiosis, ascariasis, and schistosomiasis.

The role young people can play in ensuring not only that young women are protected but also empowered;

Key to note; If and when youth do want to get involved in social and environmental programmes and movements, the traditional leaders and decision makers are frequently threatened by them and prefer not to involve them in their plans. Although this resistance is partly due to a lack of tools on how to involve them, it is frequently also due to a basic lack of understanding. Adults treat youth as adults — which they are not! — so their methods to involve them tend to fail; thus making it more likely that the programme strategies and activities will not be accepted by the youth.

The good news is that through the youth participation and inclusion in WASH and advocating for human rights, we can ensure a transformational and equitable change not only during these inequalities but also in recovery and reconstruction. As youth advocates for the right to water, sanitation and hygiene, we call on governments to renew their commitment and make this sector a political and financial priority and beyond.

The role of young people can be highlighted specifically on:

- ❖ Ensuring increased youth engagement and participation in water, sanitation and hygiene policy and programmes: Participation is declared as a human right in the Universal Declaration of human rights. All young people have a right to participate in the conduct of public affairs, whether its formal participation in national processes or informal participation in communities or digital spaces.
- ❖ The government of Uganda is working more closely with youth organizations and networks to ensure their voices are heard and opportunities are provided for them to advocate for safe water and sanitation, participate in the implementation of the SDGs, communicate with local communities, civil society and policy-makers and hold their governments accountable to their promises.
- ❖ Utilization of media for successful advocacy to create public awareness of labor, marginalized and indigenous rights as well as health and gender issues.
- ❖ Community theatre exercises and discussions focusing on inclusion themes and issues. This is generally lauded as being an effective low-budget tool for advocacy with high replicability and as an approach that can be used to empower marginalized groups and ensure public commitments of reform from decision- makers.

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Key to note; There is no formal arrangement in Uganda for young people to access adequate education on human rights to water and sanitation and potential WASH solutions unless they are in Universities or other high academic institutions where they can do courses related to Environment, Water or Natural Resources. However; interventions should aim to boost young people's capacity to act as agents and advocates. These comprise:

- ❖ Skill building in aspects of the project cycle (research, planning, monitoring and evaluation), communication and leadership skills, and knowledge to perform different roles effectively. These interventions frequently combine training, implementation and advocacy.
- ❖ Equipping young people to participate in ways of their choosing – often through structured volunteering programmes or support to social change-oriented youth groups.
- ❖ Supporting youth-led initiatives and intergenerational partnerships, informal coalitions and campaigns.
- ❖ Increasing young people's meaningful participation in governance and decision- making.
- ❖ Formation of WASH/IWRM/Human Rights clubs at primary and secondary schools' level and community level to advocate for inclusion and create awareness on WASH/IWRM/Human Rights related issues.
- ❖ Conduct sensitization meetings/workshops to address the gaps identified and develop solutions to address them.

In a conclusion; cultivating an understanding of global perspectives and of international development issues is of special relevance to engaging young people in designing and implementation of programs. It is the young people that day to day play a more transcendental role in any country's economic, political, cultural, academic and social activities. By allowing them to take ownership of different means of expression, and in as much as they receive support from different civil and governmental groups, they will be influential in supporting the sustainability agenda.