

Country Director's Report 2024

Introduction

The year 2024 marked a transformative period for our organization as we advanced our mission to improve water access, sanitation, and community health in Uganda. Guided by our strategic plan, we focused on implementing sustainable water management models, empowering communities, and achieving financial independence for critical programs. This report provides a summary analysis of our achievements, challenges, and future plans.

Annexed to this report there are detailed reports of:

- HEDCO Grant report
- Mercy Works 2024 Project report
- WOL – MCW north-eastern Uganda partnership wells rehabilitation report
- GreenWell report
- RUMIS Mityana report
- RUMIS Kabale report

Section 1: Drilling, Rehabilitation and Operational Review

In 2024, our drilling and rehabilitation efforts demonstrated a commitment to sustainable water access for Uganda's rural communities. We drilled 77 new wells across the districts of Mubende, Mityana, Kassanda, and Kabale-Rubanda. This initiative was supported by a diverse group of partners and donors, emphasizing community participation and stakeholder engagement. Additionally, we rehabilitated 110 wells, ensuring continued functionality and reliability for thousands of beneficiaries.

1. Drilling Program

January to December we received a total of 77 wells to drill

- 65 from various donors in US.
 - a. 40 wells drilled in Mubende
 - b. 07 wells drilled in Kassanda
 - c. 18 wells drilled in Mityana
- 02 wells received from Buganda Kingdom drilled in Gomba District
- 10 wells from Mercy Works Foundation drilled in Kabale and Rubanda Districts.

2. Rehabilitation Program

January to December we received a total of 110 wells to rehabilitate and we managed to rehabilitate 100 with 10 to be completed in January 2025.

- 50 wells in Nakaseke District*
- 20 wells in Kassanda District
- 14 wells in Kabale-Rubanda Districts**
- 26 wells in Mubende District

*Nakaseke

We started with 50 wells in Nakaseke District, a District at the north of Mityana and it was a continuation of the rehab work we have done in 2023 when we rehabilitated 100 wells. We decided to conclude the work in Nakaseke and move to other Districts for 2025.

**Kabale-Rubanda

We decided to rehabilitate some wells in Kabale-Rubanda Districts as we came across many wells that needed rehabilitation there. We had a list of over 20 wells that we found non functional or abandoned and after assessment only 14 were feasible for rehabilitation. The rehabilitation of all 14 wells has been concluded and we scheduled them for commissioning starting this week.

3. RUMIS in Mityana and Kabale Districts

Mityana RUMIS Report

1. **Water Access and Functionality Improvements (2016–2024):**

- Water access increased from 74% (2016) to 89% (2024).
- Functionality rates improved from 66% to 84%.
- Wells of Life contributed by:
 - Drilling 187 wells (19.2% contribution to access improvement).
 - Rehabilitating 142 wells (14.6% contribution to functionality).

2. **Data Collection and Community Involvement:**

- 1,924 water points mapped using digital tools (mWater platform).
- 89% of Water Source Committees (WSCs) actively collected user fees and conducted minor repairs.
- Gender inclusion noted, with women constituting 30% of WSCs and holding 83% of leadership positions.

3. **Challenges and Insights:**

- Geographical disparities in water infrastructure distribution; some sub-counties fell below access and functionality benchmarks.
- Sub-counties like Namungo and Bulera require targeted maintenance efforts.

4. **Sustainability and Vision:**

- Extensive training programs and a scalable model ensure the program's sustainability.
- Mityana is poised to become a model district for sustainable water management.

Kabale RUMIS Report

1. **Water Access and Functionality (2024):**

- Average functionality rate across the district reached 76%.
- Sub-counties like Kabale Southern recorded the highest functionality rate at 97%.
- 897 water points were evaluated, including boreholes, protected springs, and public standposts.

2. **Sanitation and Hygiene Initiatives:**

- 4,000 households received sanitation and hygiene training, emphasizing proper water usage and waste management.

3. **Community Impact:**

- Reduced time spent fetching water allowed women and children to focus on education and economic activities.
- Formation and training of Water Source Committees strengthened community ownership and maintenance.

4. **Sustainability Measures:**

- Emphasis on community-led maintenance and digital monitoring through RUMIS.
- Future plans include introducing piped water systems and expanding training programs for women in water management.

4. HEDCO Grant and GreenWell Maintenance Program

The GreenWell Maintenance Program, funded by a \$100,000 grant from the HEDCO Foundation, Dan Carney and Colby Sandlian, successfully enhanced water access and sustainability in rural Uganda. The program has significantly improved infrastructure maintenance and established a sustainable model for rural water management.

Through its innovative CBMS+ model, the program emphasized preventive maintenance, ensuring long-term functionality for community water sources. Over the year, the program conducted preventive maintenance on over 300 wells, drastically reducing the frequency of breakdowns and improving the reliability of clean water access for underserved communities.

Key technological advancements included the installation of Sunda meters and advanced monitoring sensors on 30 wells. These technologies allowed for real-time data collection, enhancing our ability to address operational issues proactively. Furthermore, the introduction of a mobile money fee collection system increased financial transparency and trust among community members, facilitating sustainable revenue generation for water management.

Key Achievements

1. **Procurement of Capital Items:**

- Purchased essential equipment, including a pickup truck, motorcycles, laptops, mobile phones, toolboxes, an air compressor, and prepaid SUNDA meters.
- All items were deployed to support maintenance operations.

2. **Maintenance Success:**

- Over 300 wells serviced, benefiting tens of thousands of individuals.
- Maintenance teams trained and deployed to conduct routine inspections and water quality testing.

3. **Community Education:**
 - Launched initiatives to teach proper water usage and maintenance practices.
4. **Financial Sustainability:**
 - Community user fees introduced through prepaid water meters to support long-term maintenance.
 - Sustainable revenue model in place to minimize future reliance on external funding.

Strategies for Long-Term Sustainability

1. **Community Ownership:** Formation of Water User Committees to oversee water points and foster local accountability.
2. **Revenue Generation:** Prepaid water meters and affordable user fees to ensure financial viability.
3. **Preventive Maintenance:** Routine inspections and reliable equipment to maintain water systems.
4. **Capacity Building:** Training technicians and transferring knowledge for minor repairs.
5. **Data-Driven Decision-Making:** Use of digital tools like mWater for real-time monitoring.
6. **Partnerships:** Collaboration with governments and donors for scalability and replicability.

Path Forward

- **Scalability:** Expand the program to other districts and regions based on the successful model.
- **Environmental Sustainability:** Integration of solar-powered pumps and protection of water sources.
- **Transparency and Accountability:** Regular updates, audits, and impact assessments to maintain donor trust and program efficiency.

Challenges

Despite these successes, challenges such as limited availability of spare parts and inconsistent fee collection in some areas persisted. Addressing these challenges remains critical to achieving the program's long-term vision of self-sustaining water systems across Uganda.

Conclusion

The GreenWell Program, developed by Wells of Life, aims to professionalize water system management in rural Uganda using the CBMS+ model. It addresses financial and operational challenges by integrating Area Service Providers (ASPs) and a cashless mobile fee collection system for sustainable maintenance. The program has established a sustainable framework for rural water management, with the potential to scale to other districts, ensuring long-term access to clean water for Uganda's rural communities.

Section 2: Healthy Village Program (HVP) Review

Achievements and Outputs

The Healthy Village Program (HVP) continued to drive transformative changes in sanitation and hygiene. Implemented in 40 villages across Mityana, Kabale, and Rubanda, the program achieved remarkable milestones, such as declaring 22 villages Open Defecation Free (ODF). These accomplishments were verified by the Ministry of Health and underscore the program's focus on sustainability.

Key infrastructure outputs included five latrines (two still under construction), 16 Rainwater Harvesting Systems with Sawyer filtration units, and 20 handwashing stations, all contributing to better hygiene practices within communities. These tangible outcomes were complemented by robust community education initiatives.

Capacity Building

Empowering communities remained central to our strategy. In 2024, we trained 203 WASH facilitators in Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS). These facilitators played a critical role in driving behavioral change and fostering ownership of sanitation initiatives. Additionally, 960 school health club members were engaged to produce 3,200 liters of liquid soap, promoting hygiene in educational institutions. Child protection training was conducted in 28 schools, impacting over 1,000 stakeholders and fostering safer learning environments.

WASH Gospel and Community Engagement

Faith-based outreach continued to resonate strongly with communities. By presenting the Jesus Film in 96 locations, we inspired 1,870 new converts, integrating spiritual growth with practical health and hygiene education. Furthermore, 62 audio Bibles and 3,000 reusable sanitary pad kits were distributed, addressing critical needs among girls and women. Coordination meetings with WASH CSOs and stakeholders reinforced the program's sustainability and scalability.

HVP Program in Details

Activities	Outputs/Achievements
1. Successfully implemented the Healthy Village Program (HVP) across 40 villages in the Mityana, Kabale and Rubanda districts:	The Ministry of Health (MOH) verified: - 9 out of 10 villages in Kabale and Rubanda as Open Defecation Free (ODF). - 13 out of 15 villages in Mityana achieved ODF status during the first phase of HVP.
Construction - Hardware	
2. Constructed five drainable pit latrines for girls (04) and boys (01) in schools (2 in Mityana and 1 in Rubanda):	- Each school received a five-stance latrine with a washroom , enhancing privacy and convenience for pupils. - 02/05 latrines funded in 2024 are still being constructed in a school in Mityana and will be completed in 2025.
3. Rehabilitated 01 boy's latrine in a school in Mityana:	- Rehabilitated one boys' latrine in a Mityana school, including a five-stance latrine with a urinal .
4. Rehabilitated 03 classroom blocks in 03 schools of Mityana:	- Restored three dilapidated classroom blocks in Mityana primary schools. - Installed 10,000-liter rainwater tanks and provided Sawyer water filtration units for each restored classroom block.
5. Constructed 16 Rain Water Harvesting Tank Systems in 16 schools:	- Built 16 systems (10 in Kabale and Rubanda, 6 in Mityana) in partnership with UWP. - Each Kabale and Rubanda school received a Sawyer Water Filtration unit . - Each of the 10 schools in Kabale and Rubanda was also provided with a Sawyer Water Filtration unit.
6. Constructed 20 hand washing stations in 20 schools:	- Comprising 10 schools in Mityana and 10 schools in Kabale/Rubanda. - Each station has a 1,000-liter capacity and has significantly promoted hygiene practices.
7. Conducted triggering and follow-ups in 40 villages across Mityana and Kabale/Rubanda districts, resulting in significant DIY outcomes:	- In Kabale and Rubanda: Households built 412 new latrines, 552 handwashing devices, 324 bathing shelters, and 298 drying racks . - In Mityana: Constructed 789 new latrines, 96 upgraded latrines, 1,348 handwashing devices, 635 bathing shelters, and 934 drying racks .
8. Installed signposts in HVP villages and schools:	- Installed 57 signposts in 32 schools and 25 villages, improving the visibility of Wells of Life.
Capacity Building - Software	
9. Provided training to 32 schools on crafting liquid soap and reusable sanitary pads:	- Trained 32 schools on making liquid soap and reusable sanitary pads. - Trained 960 School Health Club members , enabling production of 3,200 liters of soap for cleaning and hygiene.
10. Provided training to 203 WASH Facilitators:	- Trained 203 WASH facilitators (101 in Kabale/Rubanda and 102 in Mityana). They included Village Health Teams, and Natural Leaders and training was in CLTS (Community Led Total Sanitation) and Follow Up Mandona.
11. Trained WOL staff in Market Based Sanitation:	- Provided training to 8 WASH officers, 2 volunteers, and 1 Mityana district official on the MBS implementation approach.
12. Trained community masons	- Fifteen (15) Local Masons from 15 target villages identified and trained from 15 on the MBSIA model. Continuously monitored
13. Trained WOL staff in Sports for Development:	- 09 WOL WASH officers plus a volunteer received training in Football 4 WASH , an approach we shall be implementing in schools in 2025. Training was by WatotoWasoka Organization.
14. Trained School Management Committees on WASH policies and guidelines:	- A total of 150 members from School Management Committees in 32 schools across Mityana, Kabale, and Rubanda were trained on National Standards for WASH in schools. This initiative resulted in the development of WASH Improvement plans in their respective schools.
15. Conducted training sessions in child protection (CP) for 28 schools and provided orientation to other school stakeholders, including parents:	- A total of 58 individuals from 22 schools in Mityana and 30 individuals from 10 schools in Kabale and Rubanda underwent CP training. - All 32 schools were guided to develop and adopt Child Protection Policies (CPP) . Additionally, over 1,000 school stakeholders, including pupils, parents, and both teaching and non-teaching staff, were oriented on school CPP.

HVP Program in Details

Handouts/Incentives	
16. Distributed reusable sanitary pad kits, including panties and soap, to girls in 40 villages across Mityana and Kabale/Rubanda:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A total of 3,000 sanitary pad kits were distributed, benefiting 2,000 girls in Mityana and 1,000 girls in Kabale/Rubanda. - The distribution was conducted in collaboration with the Miss Uganda Foundation, which engaged in dialogues with the girls on menstrual hygiene management (MHM), confidence, and life skills.
17. Provided latrine slabs for vulnerable households:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 110 plastic slabs (satos) and stools for latrines were provided for able households to purchase and donated for free to vulnerable households.
Other Activities	
18. Conducted project entry meetings for the 2024 Healthy Village Program (HVP) involving key stakeholders in Mityana, Kabale, and Rubanda districts:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A total of 03 three meetings were held, attended by various HVP stakeholders, including DHOs, ADHOS, VHTs, village leaders, school leaders, pupils, Mityana local government officials, LC1's from villages, parish chiefs, VHT coordinators, Sub county LC3, and politicians. These sessions resulted in a shared understanding of the HVPs in Mityana and Kabale, increased awareness of each stakeholder's roles, and improved coordination and reporting mechanisms.
19. Broadcasted WASH improvement messages on local radios in Mityana (Mboona FM) and Kabale/Rubanda (Voice of Kigezi FM) throughout the year:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A total of five 05 daily messages covering topics such as handwashing, ending open defecation, child protection, etc., were aired, contributing to the promotion and adoption of health messages while enhancing the visibility of Wells of Life (WOL). - Additionally, conducted talk shows on menstrual hygiene management in collaboration with the Miss Uganda Foundation on both radios.
20. Coordination – UWASNET:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conducted mapping of 72 civil society organizations involved in WASH implementation across 13 districts in Central Uganda. - Executed a preference survey among CSOs in Central Uganda for the Centre for Affordable Water and Sanitation (CAWST) capacity-building initiative. - Organized training for CSOs from Central Uganda in Effective Delivering of WASH Trainings - Provided training to CSOs on annual reporting. - Facilitated two quarterly coordination meetings with CSOs in the central region.
WASH Gospel	
21. Presented Jesus film shows in 96 locations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We mapped out 42 churches across the 30 villages earmarked for the HVP of Mityana District in 2024. - Training sessions on WASH Gospel were conducted for 156 religious leaders hailing from 42 churches. - The Jesus' Film was screened 96 times, encompassing churches, schools, and village centers in Mityana district. - A comprehensive outreach effort to show the Jesus film engaged a total of 10,732 individuals. Among them, 1,870 individuals became new converts, including 209 adults and 1,661 children who embraced Jesus Christ as their savior. - Distributed 62 audio bibles to churches that were actively involved in the HVP - Developed and distributed 100 WASH Gospel Guide booklets to aid churches incorporating WASH messages in their preaching.
22. Key Learnings:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Utilizing market based approaches has to sanitation improvement positively influences the quality of latrine facilities. - Churches continue be effective vehicles for promoting WASH initiatives and providing support to vulnerable households. - The successful implementation of the HVP with Sanitation Marketing components requires a span of 12 months, targeting clusters of 15 villages and 10 schools therefore . - Signposts with stickers are not sustainable. Messages need to be painted directly on the signpost. - Large capacity tanks (10,000 liters) are more effective in schools where there is no alternative source of water as opposed to the smaller size (1000 liter) hand washing stations.
23. Challenges Faced:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Traditional CLTS approaches are not effective in semi urban locations which are common in Mityana. - The allocated six months for implementing the HVP proved insufficient, leading to activities from Phase 1 extending into July and August 2024. Additionally, some Phase 2 activities had to be postponed to be handled in 2025. - Persistent heavy rains throughout Phase 2 of the HVP created significant disruptions in the field, causing challenges such as impassable roads and hindering the smooth execution of planned activities.

Section 3: Income Analysis. 2023 vs. 2024 Review

Total Income Comparison

- 2023: **\$1,598,108.50**
- 2024: **\$1,561,727.00**

Program-Specific Income (in \$)

Program	2023	2024	Change (%)
Operations and Salaries	421,499.50	408,656.50	-3.0%
WASH	319,559.00	290,313.00	-9.1%
Drilling and Rehabilitation	857,050.00	862,757.50	+0.7%

Programmatic Insights

The year-on-year analysis reveals a slight decline in total income, primarily due to shifts in donor priorities. While Operations and Salaries saw a 3% reduction, this reflects optimized expenditures and a focus on efficiency. WASH funding decreased by 9.1%, indicating a strategic reallocation of resources to other pressing needs. Conversely, Drilling and Rehabilitation experienced a marginal increase, highlighting sustained donor support for the projects.

2024 Operations Estimated Budget vs. Actual

Please note that the Operations budget below does not include the salaries of WASH/HVP employees as they are paid from the WASH/HVP budgets.

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	Annually Total	Monthly Average
ACTUAL FUNDS REQUESTED/RECEIVED														
Total Income	\$29,018.00	\$27,536.00	\$41,617.00	\$27,661.00	\$28,339.00	\$31,231.00	\$29,171.00	\$28,391.00	\$33,369.00	\$31,331.00	\$31,566.00	\$37,345.00	\$376,575.00	\$31,381.25
ANNUAL ESTIMATED BUDGET														
Total Expenses	\$54,432.26	\$31,631.54	\$37,395.04	\$27,684.04	\$27,231.54	\$26,809.76	\$26,314.04	\$27,231.54	\$25,895.04	\$26,314.04	\$27,231.54	\$47,610.04	\$385,780.42	\$32,148.37
NET (Income minus Expenses)	-\$25,414.26	-\$4,095.54	\$4,221.96	-\$23.04	\$1,107.46	\$4,421.24	\$2,856.96	\$1,159.46	\$7,473.96	\$5,016.96	\$4,334.46	-\$10,265.04	-\$9,205.42	-\$767.12
Projected End Balance	-\$25,414.26	-\$29,509.80	-\$25,287.84	-\$25,310.88	-\$24,203.42	-\$19,782.18	-\$16,925.22	-\$15,765.76	-\$8,291.80	-\$3,274.84	\$1,059.62	-\$9,205.42		

Section 4: 2024 Challenges and Lessons

Challenges

The challenges of 2024 underscored the need for resilience and adaptability. Persistent heavy rains disrupted Healthy Village Program activities, delaying construction and rehabilitation projects. Additionally, time constraints led to the spillover of several initiatives into 2025, necessitating a reevaluation of project timelines.

Gender inclusion remains a critical area for growth. While women constituted 30% of Water Source Committees, further efforts are needed to enhance their participation and leadership roles.

Lessons

Despite these challenges, key lessons emerged. Market-based sanitation approaches proved effective in driving quality improvements, while partnerships with faith-based organizations amplified the reach and impact of our programs. These insights will inform future strategies, ensuring greater sustainability and inclusivity.

Section 5: Recommendations and Vision for 2025

1. **Expand GreenWell Program:** Scale preventive maintenance and Sunda meter installations to additional wells.
2. **Strengthen Capacity Building:** Focus on gender inclusion and leadership in WSCs.
3. **Enhance Funding Mechanisms:** Optimize donor engagement and expand mobile money systems.
4. **Leverage Data Insights:** Utilize RUMIS findings to address infrastructure disparities.

By advancing these priorities, we aim to solidify our impact and improve the lives of many community members in Uganda.

Section 6: Conclusion

2024 was a year of significant progress and transformative change. As we look ahead to 2025, we remain committed to building sustainable systems, empowering communities, and achieving long-term financial independence for our programs.