

Bugiri locals share water sources with animals

Challenge. The residents have no protected water sources, save for a few boreholes built by an individual.

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BUGIRI. I meet Sarah Onono fetching water from a pond with two of children from her homestead.

The same water source is shared by residents and their domestic animals such as cows and goats.

When drawing water into their jerrycans that are nearly of the same colour as the water they are stepping in, it is not an option. Cows that drink water from the same source equally do the same. Residents, whose homesteads are more than a kilometre away from the pond, carry their basins and soap to wash from the pond side as well.

"During campaign time, politicians promise to install for us boreholes. After we have given them what they want (votes), we never see them again. We are just tired of their empty promises,"
YOVAN OMENYI, KIDOWO VILLAGE CHAIRPERSON

"The very few boreholes that are the only sources of clean water got damaged. In the meantime, this pond is the nearest source of water. It is dirty but I have no option," Onono explains.

Trekking distances

While Onono carries a jerrycan of water on her head to her home that is about a kilometre away, another resident, Jackeline Olwo, fetches water using a bicycle.

The maximum she can push is two jerrycans for a distance of about four kilometres between



Desperate. Residents of Butegwa B Village, Bugiri District, draw water from a pond that is also used to water domestic animals. PHOTO BY ROLAND NASASIRA

her home and the pond.

"The pond near home (where Onono fetches water) is almost drying up but village mates and their animals still use it. Locals and animals use it carelessly by stepping in it. I have to ride a bicycle for this distance (four kilometers) to another source

that has some clean water," Olwo says.

Much as it is a rainy season in most parts of the country, Bugiri inclusive, you would expect locals to harvest water.

Unfortunately, for locals in the area and the neighbouring villages such as Nangalama,

Malendere and Butegwa B, harvesting water is unheard of since many of them stay in grass-thatched houses.

Mr Yovan Omenyi, the Kidowo Village chairperson, says last year, he says three residents succumbed to waterborne diseases as result of sharing water sources with animals.

Agulas Alowo is one of the few lucky residents of Butegwa B Village who does not trek a long distance to draw water. When I meet her, she is carrying a 20-litre jerrycan of water that she fetches from a borehole that is about 30 metres away from her house.

"Before the borehole was installed, my household and I would have two meals (lunch and supper) a day. We would forego breakfast because of not having water," Alowo recalls.

GOOD SAMARITAN INTERVENES

The borehole is a donation from Mr Charles Ofwono, a resident of Butegwa Village, who has since installed 12 more in other villages.

"I have seen children and women walk kilometres with jerrycans on their heads and I imagine the pain they go through. I decided to install

some boreholes for the communities much as they sometimes breakdown," Mr Ofwono notes.

He installed the boreholes with support from Mr Ross Alan Hill, the chief executive officer of Bank2 in Oklahoma City, USA.