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MINISTRY OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENT

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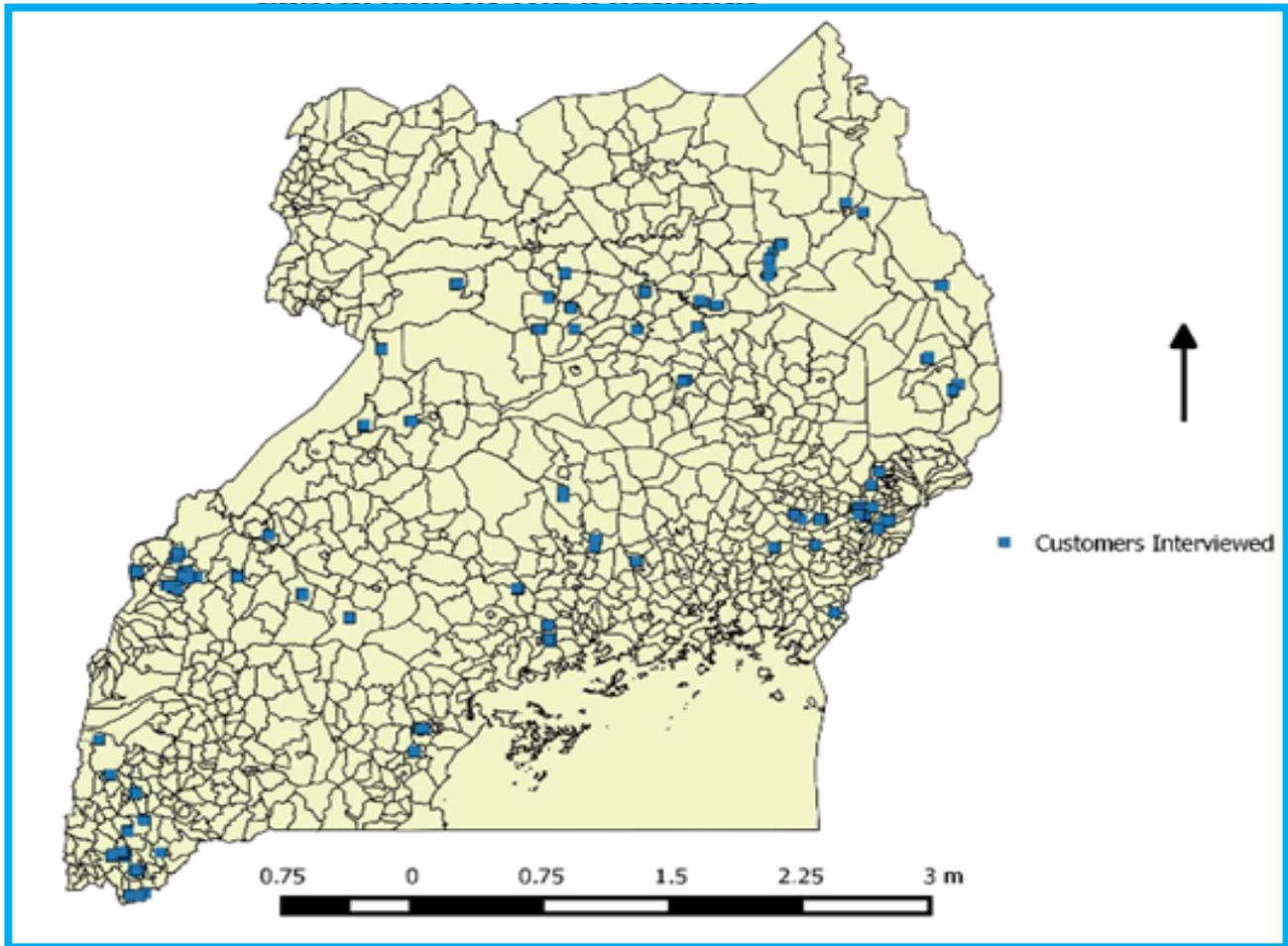
CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY 2018

REPORT

PRO-UTILITY LIMITED
3 Kawooya Road, Lubowa Estate;
P.O. Box 6649, Kampala;

AUGUST 2018

MAP OF UGANDA SHOWING THE DISTRIBUTION OF CUSTOMERS IN THE 6 REGIONS



Acknowledgement

On behalf of Ministry of Water and Environment, we wish to extend our sincere gratitude to all the institutions that played important roles in successfully undertaking this survey.

We are highly indebted to WaterAid Uganda for the technical and financial support rendered to make this Customer Satisfaction Survey a success.

We appreciate the contribution from National Water and Sewerage Corporation (NWSC) and Umbrella Authorities for Water and Sanitation in supporting Pro-Utility Limited to undertake the survey.

We are grateful to the study teams that worked tirelessly to collect quality data.

Last but not least, we thank all respondents who participated in this survey.

Thank you,



Alfred Okot Okidi
PERMANENT SECRETARY

Executive Summary

Pro-Utility Limited was contracted by **WaterAid Uganda** in collaboration with **Ministry of Water and Environment** through the Water Utility Regulation Department (WURD) to conduct a Customer Satisfaction Survey. The survey involved a total 1,492 respondents who included domestic, commercial and people who fetch water from Public Stand Points/Water kiosks. These were randomly selected from small towns (STs), rural growth centres (RGCs) and Towns served by the different operators and National Water and Sewerage Corporation (NWSC). The survey was in 6 regions of Central, Eastern, Karamoja, Northern, Mid-West and South-West covering a total 70 towns (Umbrella Water Authority; 60 and NWSC; 10). The survey utilised a cross-sectional study design using both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods.

The Objective was to determine the current levels of service quality and customer satisfaction among water consumers served. The focus was on; accessibility and affordability, water quality and reliability, and quality of service. The survey largely focused more on Umbrella water authorities to establish bench marks to facilitate performance measurement. Since NWSC conducts periodic customer satisfaction surveys, few towns were selected to only get a feel of the customer satisfaction levels.

The findings show that overall; the Customer Satisfaction Index for Umbrella Water Authority is at 74%. CSI for NWSC was deliberately note computed due to small sample size. The quality of water supply conforms to the customer expectation in terms of smell (95%) and colour (91%). In terms of accessibility and affordability, 81% agreed that new connection fee is affordable however, 63% of the respondents stated that the tariff charged is not affordable. Generally 91% of the respondents were satisfied with the level of service. It was also established that 65% of the respondent said water supply is reliable.

Whereas it is difficult for customers to appreciate fairness of the tariff charged, findings show a high number of customers are not comfortable with the current tariff regimes. This inevitably requires a comprehensive review of the tariff structure and consideration of innovations such as increasing block tariff as well as continuous sensitisation and engagement with consumers. Routine and timely satisfaction surveys are paramount to check water service levels for sustainability of water supply service provision. There is also need to follow up on the issues observed with the respective stakeholders to ensure that satisfaction levels are improved and/or sustained.

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List of abbreviations

CSI:	Customer Satisfaction Index
KII:	Key Informant Interview
MWE:	Ministry of Water and Environment
NWSC:	National Water and Sewerage Corporation
PSP:	Public Stand Point
RGCs:	Rural growth Centers
STs:	Small Towns
WSSB:	Water Supply and Sanitation Boards
WURD:	Water Utility Regulation Department

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1.0 Background

The Ministry of Water and Environment established a Water Utility Regulation Department mandated to regulate Water Authorities managing piped water systems by contract, as enshrined in The Water Act, Cap 152. Water supply in Small Towns and Rural Growth Centres (RGCs) in Uganda is set within a decentralized political structure where the Town Council or Sub-County is the Water Authority mandated to appoint Water Supply and Sewerage Boards (WSSB) responsible for gazetted Water Supply area. The Umbrella Organizations of Water and Sanitation operating in 6 regions of Central, Eastern, Northern, South-West, Mid-Western and Karamoja have also been appointed as Water Authorities to manage gazetted piped water supply systems. National Water and Sewerage Corporation (NWSC) is a Public Water Utility managing 234 towns in various towns across the country.

Among the cardinal roles of WURD is Customer Protection which is clearly highlighted as ensuring the provision of "...better consumer protection, especially protection of vulnerable groups". This includes receiving and resolving customer complaints and disputes with service providers, develop customer management guidelines based on their rights and responsibilities as well as disseminating information to customers on issues that determine their satisfaction with water and sewerage services. Customer satisfaction can be identified by; supply reliability and accessibility, quality of water, response time to complaints and affordability.

Although quality can be maintained with appropriate operation and maintenance strategies, supplying increasing demand in terms of quantity could turn out to be a challenge due to different priorities by the utility service providers. However, satisfaction of water consumers MUST not be neglected under these circumstances since it also impacts directly on the utility. For example a minimum acceptable level of Hours of Supply of 16 hours a day positively impacts on customer satisfaction which translates into willingness to pay. This has a direct correlation with collection efficiency and sustainability of water supply services (Goal 6 of the Sustainable Development Goals).

It is noteworthy that the Utility enters into a service contract with the consumers at the beginning of their relationship. In this agreement, both parties commit to stipulated terms and conditions which largely lay the burden on the service provider to ensure a certain minimum level of service in other words referred to as a Customer Service Charter. Though it is a high calling most of the time, it will ensure that the Customer is kept happy/ satisfied. The NWSC Customer Service Charter is a clear indication that a Utility makes a commitment to its Customers which then serves as a yardstick against which the level of service is measured. Utilities that understand the attitude, behavior, and practices of their clients are better positioned to target performance improvement initiatives that can increase overall customer satisfaction and mobilize support for infrastructure and service standard improvements (Power, 2016). It is also worth noting that once service levels fall below customer expectations, this will negatively affect business performance of water utilities (Emmanuel, 2013).

¹ *Strategy for Regulation of Water services in Uganda, 2017*

² *J.D. Power, McGRAW HILL Financial; Water Utility Residential Customer Satisfaction study, May 2016*

³ <http://dx.doi.org/10.5942/jawwa.2013.105.0114>

It has been observed that literature on the level of customer satisfaction in small towns is generally scanty. Information available is largely not documented and was obtained through interaction with WURD staff. The Satisfaction levels is said to generally be low due to poor service levels by the Private Operators, Scheme Operators and local governments involved in service delivery. On the other hand, NWSC has continued to publish literature on Customer Satisfaction Indices which are derived from annual customer surveys; the latest being reported as 90% . The Tariff Review Study (2012) established a number of issues that negatively affected satisfaction levels in towns managed under NWSC. Be as it may, there is need to carry out an independent assessment to minimize the element of bias. Hence the justification of this survey; whose findings will help in benchmarking customer satisfaction levels and enhance performance for the different regional water supply utilities that are faced with an ever growing demand for water supply services.

1.2 Overall Objective of the survey

This to establish the level service by water supply providers to facilitate benchmarking with a view of enhancing performance

1.3 The specific objectives include

- Determine the level of accessibility and affordability among water users.
- Determine the level of satisfaction in relation to water quality.
- Establish the level of reliability of water supply services.
- Establish the quality of water service provision among the different water supply service providers.

2.0 Survey Methodology

This study used a descriptive cross-sectional survey design. This facilitated comparison of satisfaction levels of customers served by Regional Umbrella Water Authorities. Both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods were used with the aid of a questionnaire and Key Informant Interview guide (KII).

The quantitative data collection targeted the water users who were sampled based on Water Utility Providers. These include; the 6 Regional Umbrella Water Authorities and NWSC. Since NWSC periodically conducts customer satisfaction surveys, the consultant randomly selected NWSC branches within the 6 regions. Although the initial objective was to validate the reported index (Customer Satisfaction Index), it was observed that the approach (tool/ instruments/methodology) used by the Corporation differed from the one used in this survey. The results therefore cannot be used to conclusively validate the reported index by the Corporation

The survey also included KII interviews targeting key stakeholders who included political leaders, operators of water supply schemes, public stand points/Kiosks, Water User Committees and Local leaders.

⁴ NWSC website; <https://www.nwsc.co.ug/index.php/about-us>

⁵ Mott MacDonald (2012), Tariff Review and Affordability Study

2.2 Sampling design and sample size

2.2.1 Sampling design

The study used systematic random sampling approach. This was due to the fact that this approach is the most efficient among all the probability designs since all the different categories of consumers needed to be adequately represented. The study participants were sampled based on the Ministry of Water and Environment regional categorisation used for Umbrella Water Authorities because this personated a wider nationwide geographical coverage. Respondents for quantitative data collection from Umbrella Water Authorities were selected based on categorisation of; domestic consumers, public stand points/kiosks, institutions/commercial. The selection for NWSC was based on lists obtained at branch level with the categorisation of customers as domestic, PSP, Commercial (including large consumers) and Institutions.

2.2.2 Sample size determination

The sample size was estimated for each of the 6 regions including Central, Eastern, Karamoja, Northern, South-Western and Mid-Western.

The most recent NWSC reported customer satisfaction index is at 90%. Z-score at 95% confidence interval=1.96 and 5% confidence limit (D)=0.05

Thus using Kish, the estimated sample size will be as;

$$n = Z^2P(1-P)/D^2 = 138$$

Adjusting the sample size to difference in water user characteristic using deviation (d)=1.5, estimates the sample size n=208

Since the survey was conducted across the 6 region, the estimated sample size was the same across all the 6 regions thus giving a minimum of 1,248 customers (computed sample size) and a total of 1,496 respondents participated in the study.

2.3 Data Collection

The survey used different data collection methods including review of literature/desk study and administration of questionnaires to capture information on the different indicators of customer satisfaction. Each region had a team of two data collectors with a supervisor. The supervisor provided overall supervision of teams in the respective regions and performed data editing before uploading to a cloud server for storage. Quantitative data was collected electronically using Open Data Kit Tool supported by Android tablets. Data management was carried out to ensure quality and completeness. To ensure triangulation of quantitative findings, qualitative data was collected through KII.

2.3.1 Data collection tools and instruments

A questionnaire: This comprised of structured questions to capture information from the different water consumers. Open ended questions were avoided as much as possible due to the fact that they are time consuming and present analysis challenges. The questions were specific on indicators of customer satisfaction in relation to accessibility, affordability, Quality of water service, level of reliability of water supply services and level of satisfaction in relation to water quality (Taste, Smell, Colour). The entire questionnaire was electronically captured using tablets.

Key Informant Interview guide: This also focused on the different themes that determine customer satisfaction. This was administered to cross section of stakeholders who included; political leaders, field operational staff, operators, water user committees/water boards, public standpoint attendants and large consumers in the different regions.

2.4 Participant selection

Systematic random selection was done based on the list of active customers provided by the water supply scheme under Umbrella Water Authorities while branches availed the list of customers for areas under NWSC. A total of 61 water supply schemes/small towns were selected under Umbrella Water Authorities while only 9 towns were considered for NWSC. The selection of NWSC towns was based on old areas (towns managed for over 5 years) and newly transferred towns to the Corporation (managed for less than 2 years). Kampala area was purposively excluded due to her unique challenges and customer dynamics.

In each of the randomly selected towns, a total of 22 customers were interviewed including 15 domestic connections, 5 customers from public stand point/Kiosks and 2 large consumers/institutions. Therefore a total of 1,284 customers were interviewed from small towns and rural growth centres while only 212 participants were interviewed from NWSC branches and town centres. A total of 1,496 participated in the survey.

In each of the selected small town/rural growth centre, key informant interviews were conducted with political leader who included; town mayor, local council three chairpersons, LCV chairperson and resident district commissioners. Local government including the Senior Assistant Secretary and Town Clerk, the field operation team; the desk officer, scheme/private operator, the branch manager and other field staff, the water user committee members, public stand point attendants and large consumers. They were considered to provide an overall perspective on water supply services in the area and the level of customer satisfaction.

2.5 Recruitment, Training and Deployment of data collectors

The survey team comprised of 18 experienced data collection assistants and supervisors who were recruited from the respective regions. The rationale was that people from the study area are more likely to have a better understanding of the study area than those from outside study area and would easily establish the location of customers and able to speak the local language.

The data collection team received intensive training. This include; an overview of Regulation, Ministry of Water and Environment in relation to customer satisfaction survey, introduction to quantitative and qualitative data collection and detailed instruction in procedures and use of electronic data collection instruments.

Pre- testing data collection tools and instruments

All study instruments were pre-tested through mocks with the trainees to ensure their reliability and validity. This was done to check for wording, sensitivity and interpretation of the question and desired responses as well. The questionnaire was evaluated for clarity, continuity and flow; skip pattern accuracy and ability to motivate respondents. Revisions were made on the instruments based on what was learnt from the mock sessions. This helped to determine whether or not the instrument provides the required information to answer the survey objectives.

2.6 Data Management and Analysis

After data collection, the information technology specialist extracted and merged all data from the different regions and exported to excel spreadsheet. Cleaning was done to check out for inconsistencies and outliers. Data was analysed using STATA to obtain statistical outputs including frequencies and percentages in tabular and graphical forms for demographic characteristics and the study objective indicators. The statistical outputs were later extracted and presented in more acceptable tables ready for interpretation

Presentation of findings

3.0 Presentation of findings

This section presents the results from the customer satisfaction survey including demographic characteristics of the customers, quality of service, water supply reliability and affordability and level of water supply service.

3.1 Demographic characteristics of respondents

Table 1 shows demographic characteristics of customers from the different regions. These included Regional disaggregation, gender of respondents, age categorization, type of customers and water payment mode. A total of 1,496 adults aged 19 years and above of the respondents were interviewed. The number of female respondents (56%) was higher than that of male respondents (44%) and the interviews were equally distributed across the different regions.

Overall, the survey largely involved Small Towns and Rural Growth Centers that are managed under Umbrella Water Authorities and this accounted for 89% while only 11% of the customers interviewed were from National Water and Sewerage Corporation (NWSC) towns. Limitation: As much as the study sought to capture the unique characteristics of rural water sub-sector as raised during the discussions of the inception report, there was no clear distinction (either by definition or otherwise) between an RGC and small town.

It was noted that 77% of the respondents interviewed pay for water after receiving a bill, 19% pay for a 20 liter jerrican (no connection/account) while 4% of the respondents perceive that water is for free.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of respondents

	Umbrella (n=1,284)		NWSC (n=212)	
	n	%	n	%
Region				
Central	225	17.6	47	22.4
Eastern	221	17.2	46	21.9
Karamoja	210	16.4	22	10.5
Northern	218	17.0	21	10.0
South-West	223	17.4	25	11.9
Mid-West	185	14.4	49	23.3
Gender				
Male	567	44.3	85	40.3
Female	714	55.7	126	59.7

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of respondents continued

	Umbrella (n=1,284)		NWSC (n=212)	
	n	%	n	%
Age category of the respondents				
15-18	14	1.1	2	1.0
19-30	341	26.8	66	31.3
31-40	423	33.3	75	35.6
Above 40 years	493	38.8	68	32.2
Type of customer				
PSP Public	268	20.9	48	23.1
Yard tap	886	69.0	133	62.7
Domestic	119	9.3	20	9.4
Institution	11	0.9	10	4.7
Water payment mode				
Pay after receiving a bill	978	77.4	163	76.9
Pay for the 20 liter jerrican	231	18.3	46	21.7
Only pay whenever there is a breakdown	1	0.1	1	0.5
Water is free	53	4.2	2	0.9

Key Issues Observed

1. The demographic characteristic in which more females than males were randomly sampled highlights the fact that Gender equity should be a key consideration in dealing with customers of water utility providers.
2. The fact that some respondents can still perceive water as a free good is of great concern. This requires continuous concerted effort by water utility providers in ensuring that communities appreciate the costs associated with water supply service delivery.

3.2 Quality of water supplied

This was mainly determined through assessing the level of satisfaction in relation to taste, smell and colour. Table 2 shows that 95% of the respondents perceive the smell to be good while 91% perceive the colour to be good. However, some concerns were noted during the key informant interviews and these largely relate to change of water color during the rainy season as;

“The quality of water is good and areas with gravity water system has no challenge with smell, colour. The water pressure is determined by the volume needed by the customer however some areas near lakes like Ntoroko, Bundibugyo and some parts of Kabarole water is slightly salty and equally areas with boreholes (pumping) experience challenges of colour and smell during rainy season”

Manager_Umbrella_Organisation Mid-West region

“... we experience change of colour of water to brownish and change of smell during rainy season”

Scheme_Operator_Bunyangabu in Mid-West region

“The problem we have here is low volume and pressure of water in Adyeda and some clients are even complaining on the hardness of the water”

Pump_operator_Loro Water scheme Northern region

Table 2: Quality of water supplied

This includes the different water indicators based on consumers’ preferences rate as poor, fair, good and excellent.

	Overall (n=1,496)		Umbrella (n=1,284)		NWSC (n=212)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Quality of tap water, Smell						
Poor	12	0.8	9	0.7	3	1.4
Fair	71	4.7	56	4.4	15	7.1
Good	551	36.8	460	35.8	91	42.9
Very Good	575	38.4	501	39.0	71	33.5
Excellent	290	19.4	258	20.1	32	15.1
Quality of tap water, Clarity (Colour)						
Poor	6	0.4	6	0.5		
Fair	119	7.9	90	7.0	29	13.7
Good	576	38.5	488	38.0	88	41.5
Very Good	525	35.1	459	35.8	63	29.7
Excellent	272	18.2	240	18.7	32	15.1

Table 2: Quality of water supplied continued

	Overall (n=1,496)		Umbrella (n=1,284)		NWSC (n=212)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Poor	13	0.9	11	0.9	2	0.9
Fair	65	4.3	58	4.5	7	3.3
Good	618	41.3	516	40.2	102	48.1
Very Good	554	37.0	468	36.5	83	39.2
Excellent	248	16.6	230	17.9	18	8.5
Volume of water received						
Poor	6	0.4	5	0.4	1	0.5
Fair	63	4.2	53	4.1	10	4.7
Good	613	41.0	521	40.7	92	43.4
Very Good	582	39.0	490	38.3	89	42.0
Excellent	230	15.4	210	16.4	20	9.4

Key Issues Observed

- The study observations revealed that the quality of water supplied generally meets the customers' expectations.

3.3 Accessibility and affordability

The study examined the key determinants of accessibility to water by measuring the perception of customers in relation to the different indicators. The respondents indicated their level of agreement with selected statements based on a five point likerts scale. It was noted that about two thirds of the customers agreed that the terms set in the application for new connections unfavorable.

Table 3 shows that 71% of the respondents were aware of the new connection fees while 29% were not. 81% of the respondents agreed that the new connection fee is affordable while only 19% perceived that the new connection fee is not affordable.

Overall, 63% of the respondents stated that the tariff charged is not affordable while 37% said it is affordable.

During the study, Key Informant Interviews provided more information on the opinion of the different stakeholders on affordability. Variation in tariff affordability is reflected in the following illustrative quotes from Central, Northern and Eastern regions.

“This scheme has a lot of potential in this area and we request for an extension because the demand for water is high and the tariff is reasonably okay because it is at 4,000shs and all the different kinds of customers pay this amount”. *Water_User_committee_Katugo in Central region*

“Some clients are complaining that the bill is high and unaffordable so they fail to pay in time. We request the Umbrella to train the water committee on how to effectively sensitize the community on how to manage the water” *Water_User_Committee_Chairperson_Loro in Northern Region*

“The customers are slightly not comfortable with the tariff but have no choice but to pay because it’s already in place and however we are finding challenges with the neighbouring schemes that pay a lower tariff under Umbrella.” *NWSC_Branch_Manager_Sironko*

Table 3: Water accessibility and affordability

	Overall (n=1,496)		Umbrella (n=1,284)		NWSC (n=212)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
<i>There are unfavourable terms set in the application form</i>						
Disagree strongly	21	1.8	19	1.9	2	1.4
Disagree	275	23.7	248	24.3	27	18.9
Disagree slightly	101	8.7	96	9.4	5	3.5
Agree slightly	112	9.6	94	9.2	17	11.9
Agree	575	49.5	495	48.6	80	56.0
Strongly Agree	79	6.8	67	6.6	12	8.4
<i>I am aware of New Connection fees</i>						
Disagree strongly	41	3.4	41	3.89	-	-
Disagree	263	21.5	229	21.7	33	19.5
Disagree slightly	36	2.9	30	2.9	6	3.6
Agree slightly	80	6.5	72	6.8	8	4.7
Agree	647	52.8	548	52.0	98	58.0
Strongly Agree	158	12.9	134	12.7	24	14.2
<i>The New connection fee is affordable</i>						
Disagree strongly	19	1.8	18	2.0	1	0.6
Disagree	123	11.6	84	9.3	39	25.0
Disagree slightly	65	6.1	54	6.0	11	7.1
Agree slightly	121	11.4	104	11.5	17	10.9
Agree	604	57.0	536	59.4	67	43.0
Strongly Agree	128	12.1	107	11.9	21	13.5

3.4 Billing

This included indicators specifically on timing, billing software and payments.

Table 4: Water billing

	Overall (n=1, 226)		Umbrella (n=1084)		NWSC (n=136)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Receive bills in time						
Yes	1,181	96.3	1,005	95.8	175	100
No	45	3.7	44	4.2		
Payment for water bills in time						
Yes	1,001	80.9	846	80.1	153	85.5
No	236	19.1	210	19.9	26	14.5
How monthly bills are settled						
Pay at once	1,015	81.1	917	85.9	97	53.0
Pay instalments and complete before the end of month	166	13.3	98	9.2	67	36.6
Pay instalments even after the next billing	2	0.2			2	1.1
Never pay for water bills	69	4.5	52	4.9	17	9.3
Mode of payment for bills						
Bank	101	7.9	7	0.6	94	51.1
Mobile money	52	4.1	4	0.4	48	26.1
Direct payment at offices	442	34.8	431	39.7	11	6.0
Pay to billing officers	677	53.2	644	59.3	31	16.9
Preferred mode of payment mode						
Bank	95	7.5	20	1.9	75	41.2
Mobile money	130	10.3	77	7.1	53	29.1
Direct payment at offices	398	31.4	385	35.5	13	7.1
Payments to field officers	645	50.9	602	55.5	41	22.5

Key issues observed

1. There is an opportunity for utilities to increase access to water supply services since there is a general awareness about new connection fees and ability to pay appears to be good.
2. The study was unable to establish the actual levels of access due to the fact that study participants were selected among existing consumers. This may require an independent study.
3. The Ministry can consider a review of the tariff structure to consider innovations such as increasing block tariff as well as continuous sensitisation for the consumers.
4. Utilities need to deal with changing the perception that water must be free.
5. The observation regarding the preference of customers paying to field staff is worrying. The other available modes should continuously be promoted by the different utilities and the option of payment to field staff should greatly be discouraged.
6. The billing efficiency by the different utilities was observed to be high.
7. A high number of respondents said their preference was to pay their bills to officers in the field or at offices due to the convenience this provides the customer.

3.5 Level of water supply service

This aspect was considered to establish the quality of water service provision among the different water supply service providers with regard to customer handling. If customers are poorly attended to, this will negatively affect water supply business performance and vice versa.

A scale was used to assess the level of agreement by the customers to the different statements. Generally 91% of the customers said they were satisfied with the level of service. The level of agreement to the level of water supply service was above 90% for all the statements including timely services provision, customer care staff are courteous, effective procedures of serving customers, easy identification of employees, transparency at handling customers, always responds to customers' complaints, requests and queries and cordial relationships with clients and customers.

On billing, customers said they receive bills in time (96%) and payment of bills in time was noted to be 81%. The customers clear their bills at once (84%) while 11% pay instalments and complete before the end of month. The customers largely make payments to the billing officer (55%), 36% pay directly at offices while banks had only 7% and 2% for mobile money. 84% of the customers prefer payments made directly to billing officers and at offices.

The illustrative quote from KII is in support of the preferred mode paying water bills.

"We always issue their bills on time but most customers do not pay their bills in time and this slows down on their revenue collections and most customers say they prefer paying their bills directly to billing officers because they find it convenient, cheap with no extra charges besides having no bank in Sironko District".

Commercial_officer NWSC - Sironko branch

Table 5: Level of water supply services

	Overall		Umbrella		NWSC	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
<i>Provides timely services</i>						
Disagree strongly	2	0.1	2	0.2		
Disagree	17	1.2	12	1.0	5	2.6
Disagree slightly	20	1.4	14	1.2	6	3.1
Agree slightly	108	7.6	82	6.7	26	13.3
Agree	853	60.2	744	61.0	107	54.9
Strongly Agree	416	29.4	365	29.9	51	26.2
<i>Customer care staff are courteous</i>						
Disagree strongly	1	0.1	1	0.1		
Disagree	10	0.7	4	0.3	6	3.1
Disagree slightly	7	0.5	4	0.3	3	1.5
Agree slightly	86	6.0	62	5.0	23	11.7
Agree	889	62.1	780	63.4	107	54.3
Strongly Agree	438	30.6	380	30.9	58	29.4
<i>Has very effective procedures of serving customers</i>						
Disagree strongly	1	0.1	1	0.1		
Disagree	9	0.7	4	0.3	5	2.5
Disagree slightly	13	0.9	11	0.9	2	1.0
Agree slightly	99	7.2	75	6.1	23	11.7
Agree	869	61.7	760	62.0	107	54.3
Strongly Agree	434	29.5	374	30.5	60	30.5
<i>Keeping their promises</i>						
Disagree strongly	1	0.1	1	0.1		
Disagree	12	0.9	6	0.5	6	3.1
Disagree slightly	14	1.0	11	0.9	3	1.6
Agree slightly	98	6.9	68	5.6	30	15.5
Agree	883	62.2	781	63.8	100	51.6
Strongly Agree	412	29.0	357	29.2	55	28.4
<i>It is easy to identify its employees</i>						
Disagree strongly	14	1.0	14	1.1		
Disagree	15	1.0	13	1.1	2	1.0
Disagree slightly	46	3.2	44	3.6	2	1.0
Agree slightly	130	9.0	127	10.3	3	1.5
Agree	762	53.0	681	55.0	79	39.9
Strongly Agree	472	32.8	359	29.0	112	56.6

Table 5: Level of water service continued

	Overall		Umbrella		NWSC	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
<i>Transparency at handling customers</i>						
Disagree strongly	8	0.6	8	0.7		
Disagree	10	0.7	6	0.5	4	2.1
Disagree slightly	12	0.8	9	0.7	3	1.5
Agree slightly	88	6.2	58	4.7	30	15.4
Agree	864	60.6	757	61.5	105	53.9
Strongly Agree	445	31.2	392	31.9	53	27.2
<i>Has good telephone etiquette</i>						
Disagree	27	2.7	23	2.8	4	2.2
Disagree slightly	5	0.5	2	0.2	3	1.7
Agree slightly	37	3.7	22	2.7	15	8.4
Agree	569	56.6	466	56.4	103	57.5
Strongly Agree	367	36.5	313	37.9	54	30.2
<i>Responds to letters and mailed enquiries on time</i>						
Disagree strongly	16	2.4	13	2.3	3	2.7
Disagree	37	5.4	31	5.5	6	5.4
Disagree slightly	15	2.2	11	1.9	4	3.6
Agree slightly	42	6.2	30	5.3	12	10.7
Agree	409	60.1	343	60.3	66	58.9
Strongly Agree	162	23.8	141	24.8	21	18.8
<i>Always responds to customers' complaints, requests and queries</i>						
Disagree strongly	2	0.1	2	0.2		
Disagree	15	1.1	8	0.7	7	3.7
Disagree slightly	17	1.2	12	1.0	5	2.6
Agree slightly	101	7.3	76	6.4	25	13.1
Agree	785	56.9	687	57.9	96	50.3
Strongly Agree	460	33.3	402	33.9	58	30.4
<i>Has cordial relationships with clients and customers</i>						
Disagree strongly	2	0.1	1	0.1	1	0.5
Disagree	8	0.6	3	0.3	5	2.6
Disagree slightly	9	0.6	7	0.6	2	1.0
Agree slightly	104	7.3	69	5.6	34	17.4
Agree	890	62.6	775	63.3	114	58.5
Strongly Agree	408	28.7	369	30.2	39	20.0

Table 5: Level of water service continued

	Overall		Umbrella		NWSC	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
<i>Is an organization I am confident about</i>						
Disagree strongly	3	0.2	3	0.2		
Disagree	16	1.1	12	1.0	4	2.6
Disagree slightly	15	1.0	13	1.0	2	1.3
Agree slightly	84	5.7	57	4.5	25	16.2
Agree	855	58.3	741	58.7	87	56.5
Strongly Agree	494	33.7	436	34.6	36	23.4
<i>The bills are accurate</i>						
Disagree strongly	4	0.3	3	0.3	1	0.7
Disagree	23	1.7	16	1.4	7	4.7
Disagree slightly	55	4.1	45	3.9	8	5.4
Agree slightly	135	10.0	99	8.7	28	18.8
Agree	817	60.8	711	62.1	87	58.4
Strongly Agree	310	23.1	271	23.7	18	12.1
<i>Satisfaction with service levels</i>						
Yes	1,305	87.5	1,143	89.4	160	76.2
No	186	12.5	135	10.6	50	23.8
Tariff is affordable						
No	938	62.9	785	61.4	150	71.43
Yes	553	37.1	493	38.6	60	28.57
<i>Reliability of water supply</i>						
No	513	34.4	424	33.2	88	41.9
Yes	978	65.6	854	66.8	122	58.1
Quick response to our complaints						
No	913	61.2	757	59.2	154	73.33
Yes	578	38.8	521	40.8	56	26.67
Timely billing						
No	1,112	74.6	940	73.6	169	80.48
Yes	379	25.4	338	26.5	41	19.52
Accurate bills						
No	1,214	81.4	1,032	80.8	179	85.24
Yes	277	18.6	246	19.3	31	14.76

3.6 Water supply reliability

In this section, the study sought to establish the availability of water supply services as and when needed by consumers. It should be noted that inconsistent water supply affects customers and lowers their level of satisfaction. This section therefore considered the application for a connection and duration taken to be connected, time taken to restore water supply in case of a breakdown, the number of days without water supply in a month and time taken to respond to customer complaints. These aspects were seen as the key determinants of reliability of water supply services in a particular area. It was established that 65% of the customers agreed that the water supply service is reliable while 35% said the services are unreliable.

It was noted that generally 70% of the customers are connected with a period of two weeks while 30% are connected with a period of over two weeks to about two months. Of the 650 customers who have ever been disconnected, 93% are re-connected within a period of two weeks. Overall 43% of the customers interviewed have water supplied all the time in a month, 47% experience no water supply for about 7 days in a month while 10% of the customers experience no water supply for over 14 days in a month. It was also noted that only 39% of the customers had quick response to their complaints while 61% say there is no quick response to their complaints.

It was also established that slightly above half of the customers interviewed say they have ever experienced system breakdown that led to no water supply in a period of 6 months. About 30% of these had water supply restored immediately, 55% had water supply restored within 7 days while 15% had water supply restored with a period of 14 days and above.

The key informant interviews also indicate that water supply is unreliable in some areas.

*“...besides the customers would very happy with services except that the supply is on and off”
Water_User_Committee_member in Katugo central region.*

*“The power in Budaka is unreliable so water reliability is moderate”.
Town_clerk and RDC_Budaka district.*

Table 6: Water supply reliability

	Overall		Umbrella		NWSC	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
<i>Application for water connection</i>						
Yes	1,155	86.3	1,002	87.3	152	80.0
No	184	13.7	146	12.7	38	20.0
<i>Connection duration after application</i>						
7 day or less	568	51.2	495	51.4	73	50.0
8 to 14	202	18.2	165	17.1	37	25.3
15-30	212	19.1	185	19.2	27	18.5
31-60	99	8.9	93	9.7	6	4.1
Above 60days	29	2.6	26	2.7	3	2.1
<i>Time taken to be re-connected</i>						
7 day or less	568	81.4	471	82.3	97	77.0
8 to 14	82	11.8	59	10.3	23	18.3
15-30	36	5.2	31	5.4	5	4.0
31-60	9	1.3	8	1.4	1	0.8
Above 60days	3	0.4	3	0.5		
<i>Number of days of no water supply in a month</i>						
30 days	19	1.4	19	1.6		
21 days	17	1.2	15	1.3	2	1.0
14 days	105	7.5	87	7.3	18	9.1
7 days	660	47.4	562	47.0	96	48.7
Never go without water	593	42.5	512	42.9	81	41.1
<i>System break down in last 6 months</i>						
Yes	734	51.6	626	51.2	106	53.3
No	689	48.4	596	48.8	93	46.7
<i>Time taken to restore water supply</i>						
Immediately	225	30.7	148	23.7	76	71.7
Within 7 days	401	54.7	377	60.3	23	21.7
Within 14 days	46	6.3	42	6.7	4	3.8
With 30 days	18	2.5	18	2.9		
Within 60 days	9	1.2	9	1.4		
Over 60 days	21	2.9	21	3.4		
Never	13	1.8	10	1.6	3	2.8
<i>Time taken to respond to complaints</i>						
Immediately	365	50.1	296	47.7	67	63.8
Within 7 days	269	37.0	243	39.1	26	24.8
Within 14 days	54	7.4	53	8.5	1	1.0
With 30 days	19	2.6	15	2.4	4	3.8
Within 60 days	2	0.3	1	0.2	1	1.0
Over 60 days	2	0.3	2	0.3		
Never	17	2.3	11	1.8	6	5.7

3.7 Customer Satisfaction Index

Overall the customer satisfaction index for Umbrella Water Authorities is at 74%. Based on the different regions, South-West has the highest 87.6% followed by Central with 78% while Eastern has the least with about 64%.

Table 7: Customer satisfaction index

	Customer Satisfaction Index	Standard Error	95% Confidence Interval
Overall	74.1	0.5	73.1 - 75.1
Central	78.0	0.7	76.6 - 79.3
Eastern	63.9	1.6	60.7 - 67.1
Karamoja	72.6	1.3	70.1 - 75.1
Northern	74.5	0.8	73.0 - 76.1
South-West	87.6	0.7	86.2 - 88.9
Mid-West	66.7	1.5	63.8 - 69.6

3.8 Study Constraints

1. Limited or no literature on Customer Satisfaction for Umbrella towns
2. It was a challenge to ascertain a clear distinction between a small town and Rural Growth Center as hence all Umbrella towns considered as small towns
3. Limitation in a more representative sample size for NWSC due to Budget limitations
4. The study was unable to establish the actual levels of access due to the fact that study participant were selected among existing consumers. This may require an independent study for comprehensive evidence.

4.0 Overall Recommendations

1. Whereas it is difficult for customers to appreciate the tariff charged, findings show a high number of customers are not comfortable with the current tariff regime. This inevitably requires a comprehensive review of the tariff structure and consideration of innovations such as increasing block tariff as well as continuous sensitisation and engagement with consumers.
2. Gender equity should be enhanced in dealing with customers by water utility providers.
3. The perception that water should be free requires water utility providers to increase community sensitizations for consumers to appreciate the costs of operations
4. Routine and timely satisfaction surveys are recommended to check water service levels for sustainability of water supply service provision.
5. There is need for follow up of the issues observed by the study by the respective stakeholders to ensure that satisfaction levels are improved and/or sustained

Appendix 1: Table 8: List of selected towns

Umbrella Water Authority towns

Abim	Buheesi	Kakabara	Kibuku	Mourita	Nkoni
Adwari	Bujuko	Kakyanga	Kigorobya	Muhorro	Nyahuka
Agweng	Bullisa	Kamdini	Kikyusa	Muhunga	Opit
Alebtong	Busolwe	Kanjuki	Kiruu	Muyembe	Otuke
Alerek	Busunju	Karugutu	Kisiizi	Nabilatuk	Oyam
Angwee	Bwanga_kiyenje	KarukaraHamurwa	Loro	Nakapelimoru	Purongo
Bikurungu	Jewa town	Kasambya	Manafa	Nakapiripirit	Rengen
Budaka	Kabango	Katende	Masafu	Namalu	Rwene
Bududa	Kabirizi	Katugo	Mbale	Nambale	Rwenshama
Bufumbo	Kaihura	Katuna	Minakulu	Namutumba	Ryakarimira

NWSC Towns

Dokolo
Kabale
Kabarole
Luwero
Mbale
Moroto
Nakaseke
Nauyo
Sironko

Appendix 2: Questionnaire

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY

Pro-Utility Limited an organization that provides expertise in utility management was contracted by **WaterAid** in collaboration with **Ministry of Water and Environment** through the Water Utility Regulation Department to conduct a customer satisfaction survey to determine the current levels of service quality and customer satisfaction among water consumers served by Regional Water Utilities and National Water and Sewerage Corporation (NWSC). The focus will specifically include; accessibility and affordability, water quality and reliability, and quality of service.

You have been randomly selected to participate in this survey by providing responses to the different questions that determine your satisfaction with water supply services in this area. Your participation is voluntary and you may choose to stop the interview at any time and this will not affect you in anyway. All the information you provide will be kept confidential will not be shared with anyone except the client and shall only be used for decision making and policy formulation to improve the water supply services in this area. This will not take much of your time about 20 minutes only.

Please if you have any questions ask now before we start.

DEMOGRAPHICS

D1. Region; 1) Central, 2) Eastern 3) Karamoja, 4) Northern, 5) South-West and 6) Mid-West

D2. Name of town; -----

D3. Type of town; 1) RGC, 2) Small town, 3) Large Towns

D4. Operator;

1) Scheme Operator, 2) Private Operator, 3) Scheme run by town itself, 4) Umbrella Organization, 5) NWSC

D5. Respondent Sex: 1) Male, 2) Female

D6. Respondent Marital status: 1) Single, 2) Married, 3) Divorced, 4) Widowed

D7. Age of respondent

D8. Major Economic activity of the respondent

- 1) Salaried - Government
- 2) Salaried - Private
- 3) Business – Informal
- 4) Business – Formal
- 5) Farming – Commercial
- 6) Farming – Peasant
- 7) Produce marketing
- 8) Fishing
- 9) Other specify

D9. What is your monthly income (in Uganda shillings)?

D10. Type of Consumption

(a) PSP Public, (b) PSP Private/Yard tap, (C)Domestic, (d) Institution, (e) Commercial

D11. What is the volume of water consumed by your household per month (50 jerricans of 20 litres = 1m³)

D12. How do you pay for water?

a) After receiving a bill at the end of month, b) pay for the 20 liter jerrican, c) only pay whenever there is a breakdown, d) Water is free

D13. How much to do pay in Uganda shillings (in case of response a, b and c)

QUALITY OF WATER SUPPLIED (Taste, Colour, Smell, Volume received, water pressure). The set of questions below seek to find out how you rate the quality of water using a scale from 1 to 5 that is; excellent (5), Very Good (4), good (3), fair (2) and Poor (1)

STATEMENTS	(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)
Q1. Quality of tap water, Smell					
QS1. Please indicate reason in case Excellent/Very good and Fair/Poor for smell					
Q2. Quality of tap water, Clarity (Color)					
QC1. Please indicate reason in case Excellent/Very good and Fair/Poor for smell					
Q3. Water pressure at the tap					
QP1. Please indicate reason in case Excellent/Very good and Fair/Poor for smell					
Q4. Volume of water you receive					
QV1. Please indicate reason in case Excellent/Very good and Fair/Poor for smell					
Q5. Quality of tap water, Taste					
QT1. Please indicate reason in case Excellent/Very good and Fair/Poor for smell					

WATER SUPPLY RELIABILITY

This section seeks to find out about water supply reliability ranging from connection, disconnection, reconnection and water supply restoration in case of system breakdown.

SP1. Did you apply for water connection? 1; Yes, 2; No

SP2. If Yes, How long did it take for you to get connected?

1) 7 day or less, 2) 8-14, 3) 15-30, 4) 31-60 5) above 60days,

SP3. In case of disconnection, how long does it take to be re-connected?

1) 7 day or less, 2) 8-14, 3) 15-30, 4) 31-60 5) above 60days,

SP4. How many days of no water supply do you have in a month?

(a) 30 days, (b) 21 days, (c) 14 days, (d) 7 days and (e) Never go without water

SP5. Have you experienced any system breakdown that led to no water supply in the last 6 months?

1) Yes, 2) No

SP6. If yes how long did it take to restore water supply during the most recent breakdown?

- (a) Immediately
- (b) Within 7 days weeks
- (c) Within 14 days
- (d) Within 30 days
- (e) Within 60 days
- (f) Over 60 days
- (g) Never
- (h) Don't know

SP7. How long does it take for your complaints responded to?

- (a) Immediately
- (b) Within 7 days weeks
- (c) Within 14 days
- (d) Within 30 days
- (e) Within 60 days
- (f) Over 60 days
- (g) Never

SP7. How long does it take for your complaints to resolved?

- (a) Immediately
- (b) Within 24 hours
- (c) Within 7 days
- (d) After 7 days
- (e) Never

NEW CONNECTION APPLICATION PROCESS

Please provide your level of agreement with the following set of statements regarding the application process for new water connections (Strongly Agree (5), Agree (4), Agree slightly (3), Disagree slightly (2), Disagree (1) and Disagree strongly (0))

STATEMENTS	(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)	(0)
NC1. There are unfavourable terms set in the application form						
NC2. I am aware of New Connection fees						
NC3. The New connection fee is affordable						

BILLING

The following questions are to find out how you pay for water, the payment mode and how the bills are settled by choosing one of the options that correspond to your answer.

B1. Do receive bills on time; 1; Yes, 2; No

B2. Do you pay bills in time; 1; Yes, 2; No

B3. How do you settle you monthly bill

1; Pay at once

2; Pay instalments and complete before the next bill

3; Pay instalments even after the next bill

4; never pay for water bills

B4. What is the current mode of receiving bills?

1) Hand delivered, 2) instant billing, 3) SMS, 4) other specify)

B5. How do you pay for the bills?

1) Bank, 2) Mobile money, 3) direct payment at offices, 4) Pay to billing officers, 5) Pay way agents (Easy money, ...) 6) Other specify

B6. What is your preferred mode of paying bills?

1) Bank, 2) Mobile money, 3) direct payment at offices, 4) making payments to field officers, 5) Pay way agents (Easy money, ...) 6) Other specify

LEVEL OF SERVICE DELIVERY

Please provide your level of agreement with the following set of statements regarding the level of service by the water service provider that is (Strongly Agree (5), Agree (4), Agree slightly (3), Disagree slightly (2), Disagree (1) and Disagree strongly (0))

STATEMENTS	(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)	(0)
LS1. Provides timely services						
LS2. Customer care staff are courteous						
LS3. Has very effective procedures of serving customers						
LS4. Keeping their promises						
LS5. It is easy to identify its employees						
LS6. Transparency at handling customers						
LS7. Has good telephone etiquette						
LS8. Responds to letters and mailed enquiries on time						
LS9. Always responds to customers' complaints, requests and queries						
LS10. Has cordial relationships with clients and customers						
LS11. Is an organization I am confident about						
LS12. The bills are accurate						

LS13. Are you satisfied with the service level? 1) Yes, 2) No

LS14. What is the cause for your dissatisfaction?

- (a) Very high tariff
- (b) Flat rates
- (c) Faulty meters
- (d) Water rationing
- (e) High bills with low service
- (f) Salty water
- (g) Low water pressure
- (h) Delayed billing
- (i) Buying water from vendors
- (j) Other specify

LS15. What is the reason for your satisfaction?

- (a) The tariff is affordable
- (b) Reliability of water supply
- (c) Quick response to our complaints
- (d) Timely billing
- (e) Accurate bills
- (f) Other specify

Appendix 3: Key Informant Guide

The discussion guide is as below; Demographics

For the moderator (capture locator information; Region, name of town, type of town and category of the discussion)

Circulate an attendance list for the participant (Moderator to take note)

Start with basic information about the trendy things in the area to build rapport with participants, like and dislike can form part of the familiarization.

Quality of Water Supplied

Discussion on the following water quality parameters (Taste, Colour, Smell, Volume received, water pressure)

Water Supply Reliability

This section seeks to find out about water supply reliability ranging from connection, disconnection, and reconnection and water supply restoration in case of system breakdown: Prob for availability, breakdown, hours of service, complaint resolution period,

New Connection

Prob for terms and conditions, awareness and affordability

Billing

Here we want to find out how you pay for water, the payment mode and how the bills are settled. Prob for timeliness of bills, payment mode, and preferences and reasons why

Level of Service Delivery

Here we intend to find out the level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction on service provided.

Prob for the following; Timeliness of services, customer care, complaint resolution and level of satisfaction and why

What can be done to maintain/ improve the level of water supply service in this area?

