



ADVOCATES COALITION FOR DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT

Monitoring of Local Government Budgets and Road Transport Services in Quarter II FY 2019/20



ACODE Policy Briefing Paper Series No.52, 2020.

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**Monitoring of Local Government
Budgets and Road Transport Services
in Quarter II FY 2019/20**

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Published by ACODE

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Website: <http://www.acode-u.org>

Citation:

Kisaame. E. K., and Ayesigwa, R. **Monitoring of Local Government Budgets and Road Transport Services in Quarter II FY 2019/20**, Kampala: ACODE Policy Briefing Paper Series No.52, 2020.

Cover Photo: ACODE Library, 2019

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ISBN No. 978 9970 567 20 1

Acknowledgements

The research and publication of this report is a result of the **contributions** of several people **especially the research team at ACODE**. We are **also** grateful for the generous funding from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation to the Centre for Budget and Economic Governance (CBEG). We acknowledge George Bogere and Dr. Susan Kavuma for their support in the study design and review of the draft report. We are equally grateful to Prof. Wilson Winstons Muhwezi for reviewing the report and Dr. Cornelius Gulere for editing the report. While the persons mentioned above significantly contributed to this study, the views expressed are those of the authors.

Contents

1.0 INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Overview of the Releases to Local Governments.....	2
1.2 Methodology	3
2.0 FINDINGS	4
2.1 Display of information.....	4
2.3 Display of information at District and Sub County Headquarters.....	4
2.4 Display of payroll information by Service Delivery Units	6
2.5 Display of pension information by Service Delivery Units.....	6
2.6 Timeliness in the release of funds to Districts Sector	7
3.0 MONITORING CAPACITY FOR ROAD MAINTENANCE AND ROAD CONDITIONS	9
3.1 Functionality of the District and Sub County Road Maintenance Equipment.....	9
3.2 Condition of District and Sub County Roads.....	10
Road Surface Quality	10
Existence of Bottlenecks.....	10
Drainage Quality	12
3.3 Nature of Road Works Undertaken by districts.....	13
3.4 Coping with Emergencies.....	14
3.5 Major Challenges facing the District and Sub County in Roads Service Delivery.....	15
4.0 CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS	16
References	18

List of Figures

Figure 1: Sectoral Distribution of the Cumulative (Q1 & Q2) Releases to Local Governments ...	3
Figure 2: Place Where Information is Displayed at District and Sub-county Headquarters.....	5
Figure 3: Relevance of Information Displayed at District and Sub County Headquarters.....	5
Figure 4: Payroll Information Displayed.....	6
Figure 5: Display of Information on Pensions at District Headquarters	7
Figure 6: Challenges that Limit the Use of the District Road Equipment.....	10
Figure 7: Road Surface Quality of District and Sub County Roads	11
Figure 8: Existence of Bottlenecks in District and Sub County Roads	11
Figure 9: Types of Bottlenecks found in District and Sub County Roads	12
Figure 10: Drainage Quality of District and Sub County Roads	12
Figure 11: Main Road Works carried out by the District since FY 2018/19.....	13
Figure 12: Different ways Districts and Sub Counties Cope with Emergences.....	14
Figure 13: Major Challenges facing the District and Sub County in Roads Service Delivery	15

List of Tables

Table 1: Timeliness in the release of funds to Districts Sector (in Weeks).....	8
Table 2: Functionality of Road Equipment at the District Head Quarters.....	9

1.0 Introduction

This report presents findings of the Budget and Service Delivery Monitoring Exercise (BSDME) carried out in 26 districts where the Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment (ACODE) operates¹. The exercise was undertaken by ACODE and its partners. Budget and service delivery monitoring is part of ACODE's role under the Budget Transparency Initiative (BTI). The Initiative is a partnership between Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development (MFPED), ACODE, the Budget Strengthening Initiative of the Overseas Development Institute (BSI-ODI) and the Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group. The main objective of the BTI is to promote budget transparency and accountability in Uganda through the dissemination of budget information to citizens and soliciting feedback on the use of public resources. The BSDME largely focuses on three basic aspects, namely, the display of information on transfers at service delivery units, payroll & pensions, timeliness in receipt of funds, and quality of services including challenges. This round of BSDME specifically focuses on the quality of district and community roads that make up the largest proportion of Uganda's road network. The exercise sought to assess the quality of these roads, the capacity of districts to undertake road maintenance, and the challenges they face.

Road transport is the most utilised form of transport in Uganda, like in most Sub Saharan Countries. According to the Works and Transport Sector Strategic Plan FY 2011/12 – 2015/16, road transport accounts for over 95 per cent of the country's volume of freight and human movement. Uganda's road network stretches to a total of about 129,469Km, of which, community access roads constitute 50%, district roads 26%, Urban roads 7% and national roads 17% of this total stretch.

Over the past decade, Government of Uganda prioritized investment in transport infrastructure as a means of unlocking productivity in several Sectors, especially, Agriculture and Tourism; and as a means of easing access to key national and regional markets. The Works and Transport Sector received the largest proportion of the national budget throughout the implementation period of the first and second National Development Plans (NDP I and II). However, despite the volume of investment and the works undertaken on district and community access roads over the years, the state of road infrastructure in most Local Governments has been reported to be poor (Bogere et al, 2014). Many Local Governments have attributed this to limited funding in the face of growing demands on road infrastructure. Given the additional pressure on the limited resources resulting from extreme weather conditions that the country has experienced

¹Agago, Amuru, Bududa, Buliisa, Gulu, Hoima, Jinja, Kabarole, Kamuli, Kanungu, Lira, Luweero, Mbale, Moroto, Moyo, Mbarara, Mpigi, Mukono, Nakapipirit, Nebbi, Ntungamo, Rukungiri, Soroti, Tororo, Amuria, Wakiso,

over these past year (especially the prolonged rainfall seasons), this round of monitoring set out to assess the quality of service delivery in road transport among Local Governments.

Summary of Findings

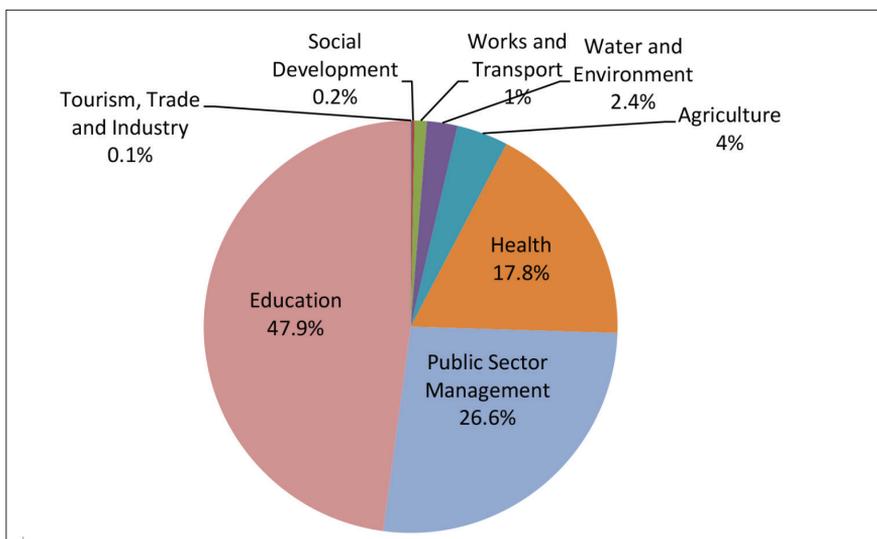
The findings have shown poor performance of districts on display of budget information, seen at 46% down from 72% in the last round of monitoring done in Q4 FY 2018/19. Display of payroll and pension information was at 31% and 35% respectively. The findings also show that, on average, districts reported receiving most grants within two weeks from the beginning of the quarter. This is an improvement from three weeks in the last round of monitoring.

On capacity of districts to undertake road works, it was found that most of the districts visited (77%) had one unit of Wheel Loaders, Vibro Rollers, and Water Bowser that made the simultaneous undertaking of urgent road works on different roads unattainable. In addition, some of the districts had to share some equipment like motor graders that further limited their efficacy in road construction and maintenance. Furthermore, the districts pointed out inadequate funding for operating and maintaining the machinery as a key challenge. The findings on the quality of roads showed that 39 % of the roads were pronounced to be in good motorable condition, yet they were way below the average of at least 50%. It was also found that 51% and 52% of district and sub-county roads respectively had major bottlenecks that constrained the proper flow of traffic.

1.1 Overview of the Releases to Local Governments

In quarter II of FY 2019/20, a total of UGX 5.002 trillion was released to the spending entities of government; of this UGX 309 Billion (about 6.2%) were grants to Local Governments. The release brought the cumulative total released to Local Governments to UGX 740.5 Billion (about 20% of the approved budget). Going by the expenditure limits for the quarter, the Works and Transport Sector, accounts for only 1% of the cumulative releases to the Local Governments.

Figure 1: Sectoral Distribution of the Cumulative (Q1 & Q2) Releases to Local Governments



Source: Computations from the Q2 FY 2019/20 Expenditure Limits

1.2. Methodology

Data collection

The Budget and Service Delivery Monitoring Exercise (BSDME) was undertaken using Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), Document Review and observation methods. These generated sample statistical, financial and pictorial data that was used for analysis. Data collection was undertaken using structured questionnaires administered in the 26 districts by ACODE Budget Champions². The data was collected using the ACODE Citizen Monitor App³.

Sampling

Budget monitoring was undertaken in 26 districts in which ACODE through its Centre for Budget and Economic Governance operates. Details of these districts are contained in the introductory section of this report. In addition to the district headquarters, three sub-county headquarters were randomly selected from each of the selected districts. In each district and selected sub-counties, one district and sub-county road was monitored for periodic maintenance and road works undertaken since financial year 2018/19.

² Budget Champions are ACODE's trained partners in budget analysis and presentation. They are based in selected District Local Government and they disseminate timely budget information to citizens to enable them demand for services as well as monitor the implementation of government initiative in their districts.

³ The Citizen Monitor Mobile App is a mobile app developed by the ACODE aimed at strengthening the demand side of accountability in Uganda. The Mobile App is designed to solicit feedback on public services from citizens in Uganda. With the CITIZEN MONITOR MOBILE APP ACODE provides citizens with a voice to share both positive and negative experiences about public services online with far-reaching audiences.

2.0 Findings

This section presents findings from the Q2 FY 2019/20 budget monitoring exercise. The first section focuses on the display of budget information, payroll information and pension at district and sub-county headquarters. The second section examines the capacity of the works department and the final sections look at the monitoring of district and sub-county roads.

2.1 Display of information

The practice of displaying budget information at administrative and service delivery units is required of all spending entities of government by the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development following. It is also backed by the Access to information Act, 2005 in line with article 41 to the constitution of Uganda⁴. The practice is premised on the notion that citizens provided with accurate and timely information are able to demand real-time services and as well, monitor the implementation of government projects. This, in turn, is expected to promote transparency, accountability, and efficiency in the usage of available resources.

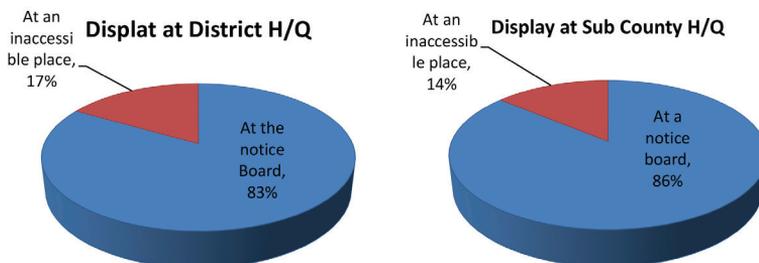
2.3 Display of information at District and Sub County Headquarters

The task of displaying quarterly budget information at the district lies in the planning department headed by the District Planner. This round of budget monitoring shows a 26% reduction in adherence to the practice of displaying information at district headquarters. Out of the 26 districts visited, 46% had budget information displayed compared to 72% in Q4 FY 2018/19. The districts have been known to perform well regarding the display of budget information. This sharp decline could be attributed to a lack of enforcement and sanctions for non-adherence. The sub-counties that perpetually performed poorly in the different rounds of budget monitoring improved from 44% in Q4 FY 2018/19 to 51% in Q2 FY 2019/20. This improvement could be attributed to the efforts by ACODE and other actors in focusing on the sub-counties to improve the practice of displaying information on notice boards.

The budget monitoring exercise also delved into understanding where the information was displayed. For the information to be easily accessed, it had to be displayed in an open place where citizens could easily access it. The findings show that out of the 12 districts that were found to be displaying budget information, 10 (83%) had displayed at a notice board or other accessible place like a wall, and only 2 (17%) of the districts (i.e. Moyo and Ntungamo) had information displayed at inaccessible places such as the office. Most (86%) of the sub-counties had also displayed information at an open place for everyone to access as shown in the graph below.

⁴Access to Information Act, 2005; http://freedominfo.org/documents/uganda_ati_act_2005.pdf

Figure 2: Place Where Information is Displayed at District and Sub-county Headquarters

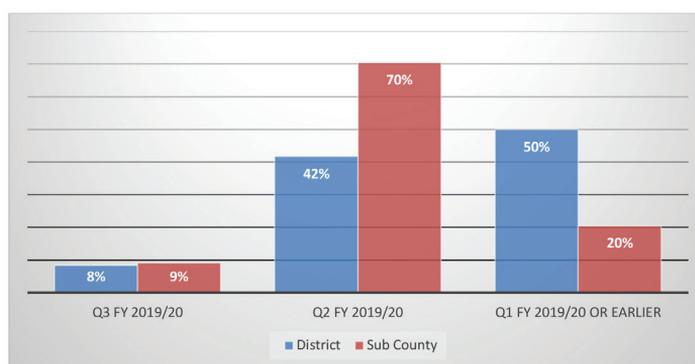


Source: ACODE BSDME Q2 FY 2019/20 Data

Display of information improves transparency and accountability in service delivery, as well as, enhancing the civic consciousness of the citizens. With this in mind, timely information must be displayed. Displaying out-dated information deprives the citizens of their right and opportunity of taking part in the implementation process of government projects.

The findings show that 42% and 70% of the districts and sub-counties respectively displaying information had exhibited Q2 information under review. Half of the districts were still displaying old information of Q1 FY 2019/2020 or earlier thus defeating the purpose for displaying information.

Figure 3: Relevance of Information Displayed at District and Sub County Headquarters



Source: ACODE BSDME Q2 FY 2019/20 Data

In the week starting 15th January 2020, the time when the monitoring visits were undertaken, some of the districts and corresponding sub-counties had already displayed Q3 FY 2019/2020 as illustrated in the figure 2 above. Any delays in displaying

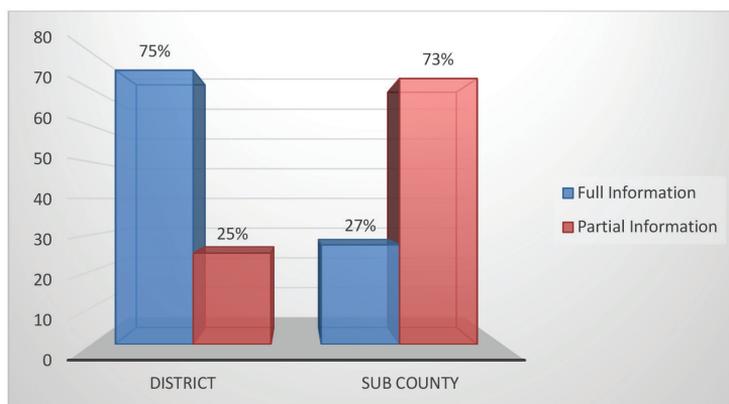
Q3 FY 2019/2020 could have stemmed from the time lags between funds disbursed by the Central Government and the time it takes to reach the Service Delivery Units.

2.4 Display of Payroll Information by Service Delivery Units

Districts, Sub-Counties, and other Service Delivery Units such as schools and health centres are mandated to display payroll information. The display of this information helps citizens to know the expected number of employees at the SDU, and be able to report any inconsistency in the payroll regarding people who appear on the payroll but are not known at the said unit. The citizens also use the information to report employee absenteeism and any other indiscretions that may be exhibited by any employee.

The budget monitoring exercise found that 31% and 12% districts and sub-counties respectively, were displaying payroll information. Concerning the details of payroll information displayed, 75% of the districts that had displayed payroll information were displaying full information (Name, Designation, Registration Number, and Salary scale) and most (73%) sub-counties were displaying partial information as illustrated below.

Figure 4: Payroll Information Displayed

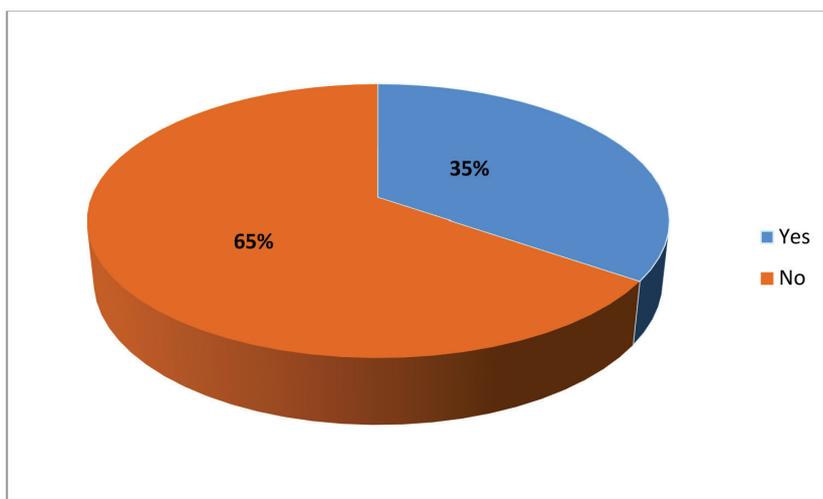


Source: ACODE BSDME Q2 FY 2019/20 Data

2.5 Display of Pension Information by Service Delivery Units

In line with the Access to Information Act 2005, districts are required to display information concerning pensioners in a way to enhance transparency and accountability. The findings from this round of budget monitoring shows that 65% of the districts were not adhering to this practice. It was observed that the number has increased by 9 points from 56% in Q4 FY 2018/19. This could be as a result of less attention paid by Ministry of Finance to display of pension information hence the laxity by districts.

Figure 5: Display of Information on Pensions at District Headquarters



Source: ACODE BSDME Q2 FY 2019/20 Data

The limited display of pension payrolls could also be attributed to the fact that many of the Local Governments have reported limited access to pension payrolls from the Ministry of Public Services. This challenge is highlighted by Auditor General’s report for the FY 2018/19 as one of the explanations given by districts for the rising pension and gratuity arrears.

2.6 Timeliness in the Receipt of Funds to Districts

The time taken for funds to move from the Central Government has been improving over the years as Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development works towards all service delivery units receiving funds within the first week of any quarter. On average, most of the administrative units visited had received funds within the first two weeks of Q2 FY 2019/20. Conditional Works and Transport Grants were received, by some districts, within the first week of disbursement. However, some of the districts, like Nebbi, reported that it took upto 6 weeks for the funds to be received. This meant that Nebbi district lost half of the quarter as funds came with only 6 weeks left to the end of the quarter. This leads to expenditure challenges as the service delivery units would be expected to spent all the funds of that quarter before its end. This leads to procurement delays and award of contracts to incompetent contractors due to the limited time allocated to the procurement process.

Table 1: Timeliness in the release of funds to Districts Sector (in Weeks)

Grants	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
District/ Urban unconditional recurrent grants	0	5	2
Discretionary Development Equalization Grant (DDEG)	0	5	2
Conditional Production and Marketing Grants	0	5	2
Conditional Works and Transport Grants	0	6	2
Conditional Trade and Industry Grants	0	5	2
Conditional Education Grants	0	5	2
Conditional Health Grants	0	5	2
Conditional Water and Environment Grants	0	5	2
Conditional Social Development Grants	0	5	1
Conditional Public Sector Management Grants	0	5	2
Total Grants (if specific grant information is not available)	0	5	2

Source: BSDME Q2 FY 2019/20

There was a great improvement in the timely disbursement of funds by the Ministry of Finance. In Q4 FY 2018/19, it took up to a maximum of 9 weeks for the last district, Amuru district, to receive the funds (District/ Urban unconditional recurrent grants) compared to 6 weeks in the current quarter under review. Also, most of the grants reached the service delivery units with a maximum of 8 weeks (6 grants) while in this quarter; most of the grants took a maximum of 5 weeks (10 grants) to reach the DSUs.

3.0 Monitoring Capacity for Road Maintenance and Road Conditions

3.1 Functionality of the District and Sub County Road Maintenance Equipment

Over the years, the government has sunk large sums of money in procuring road maintenance equipment for districts to enable them maintain district and community access roads. To start with, 1,425 pieces of road equipment were purchased from China worth USD 100m in FY 2012/13. This was followed by the purchase of 1,151 pieces of road equipment worth USD 155m from Japan in FY 2017/18 that were distributed to districts, the Uganda National Roads Authority, Kampala Capital City Authority, MT. Elgon Labour Based Training Centre in Mbale and the Ministry of Works and Transport. Each district was supposed to get five units including a wheel loader, grader, bowser, and two dumper trucks.

Table 2: Functionality of Road Equipment at the District Headquarters

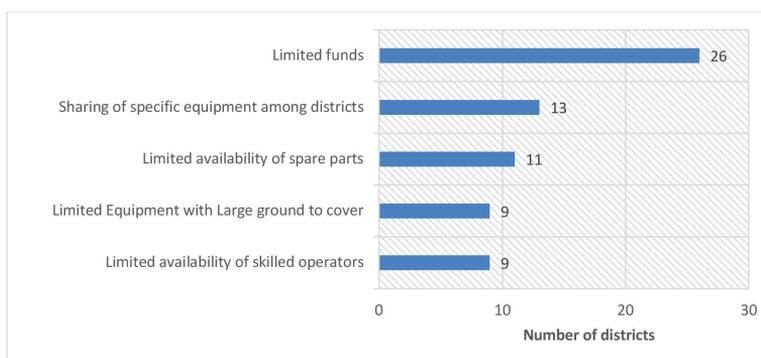
Type of Equipment	Proportion that is Functional				
	0	1	2	3	4
Wheel Loaders		81%	19%		
Vibro Rollers	12%	77%	12%		
Water Bowser	8%	77%	15%		
Dump Trucks		4%	27%	50%	19%
Bulldozer	73%	27%			
Excavators	96%	4%			
Motor Grader	4%	42%	46%	8%	

Source: ACODE BSDME Q2 FY 2019/20 Data

Among the 26 districts that were visited in this round of budget monitoring, it was found out that most of the districts had at least one of the main equipment (i.e. a wheel loader, vibro roller, water bowser and a dump truck) that were functional. While this was good, a smaller number of functional equipment limits the amount of road works that can be undertaken in the district in any given financial year. The districts of Amuru, Kamuli, Luwero Wakiso (that had two grounded water bowzers) and Agago were found to be lacking any functioning vibro roller and water bowser. Nakapiripiriti is the only district among the 26 districts monitored that had no motor grader. Therefore, there is still need to increase the stock of road equipment to achieve the intended objectives of increasing the stock and quality of district roads and do away with the expensive contracting out of road works to rehabilitate and maintain the district, urban and community access road network.

The study also sought to understand the different challenges surrounding the use of district road equipment. All the 26 districts reported limited funding as one of the major problems. On Thursday, July 20 2017, the daily monitor, one of Uganda’s Newspapers, published a story where a dozen of district leaders were interviewed about the effectiveness of the district road equipment distributed by the Government. The major problem echoed was limited funding, they said that the Government distributed road equipment without increasing the Works and Transport Sector budget to cover fuel and maintenance costs for the equipment. The other problem stated by the leaders was the poor quality of the equipment, especially, the first batch that was acquired from China. This was also compounded by the scarce spare parts, a fact echoed in 11 districts, as indicated in the graph below. Sharing of specific equipment between and among districts was also given as one of the major problems.

Figure 6: Challenges that Limit the Use of the District Road Equipment



Source: ACODE BSDME Q2 FY 2019/20 Data

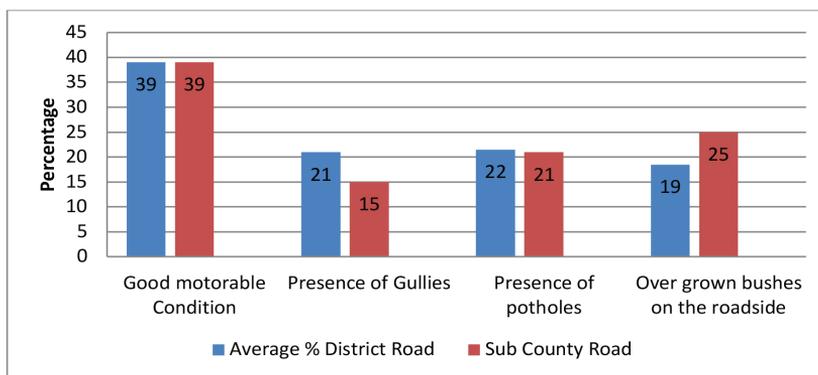
3.2 Condition of District and Sub County Roads

Having monitored the availability of road equipment, it was only imperative that the quality of roads resulting from the road works be monitored as well. Monitoring of roads mainly focused on road surface quality, existence of bottlenecks, and drainage quality for both district and sub-county roads.

Road Surface Quality

The quality of the road surface determines how fast people can travel from one point to another. During the monitoring exercise, two district roads and one Sub-county road were monitored. The findings showed that across all the 26 districts, only 39% of both district and Sub-county roads visited were in good motorable condition. The rest of the roads were found infested with gullies, potholes and overgrown bushes, as represented in the graph below.

Figure 7: Road Surface Quality of District and Sub County Roads

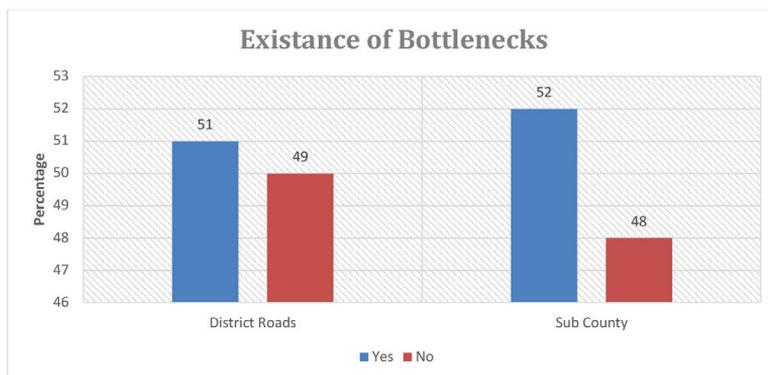


Source: ACODE BSDME Q2 FY 2019/20 Data

Existence of Bottlenecks

Bottlenecks such as broken culverts, streams crossing the road, broken bridges, made it very difficult for people to travel from one area to another, hence, limiting them from accessing public services, such as, schools and health services. The findings from this round of monitoring showed that, 51% of the district roads had bottlenecks while 52% of the sub-county roads in the 26 districts had no bottlenecks across.

Figure 8: Existence of Bottlenecks in District and Sub County Roads

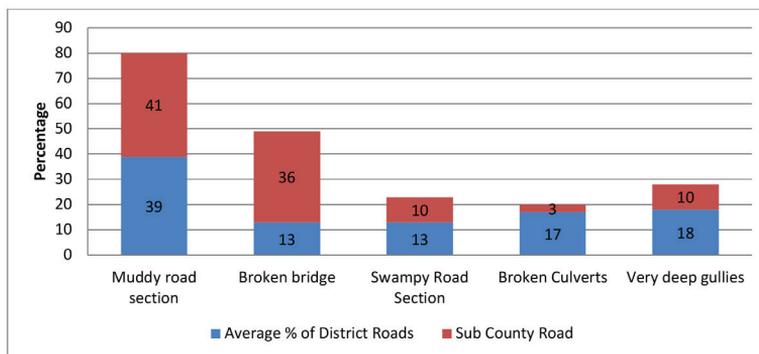


Source: ACODE BSDME Q2 FY 2019/20 Data

The Budget Monitoring Exercise went ahead to investigate the various bottlenecks existing in district and sub-county roads. The findings showed that 36% of the sub-county roads and 13% of district roads visited had broken bridges. This was due to lack of an emergency response mechanism within the Works and Transport Sector to address these challenges. Most districts and sub-counties waited for the financial year to

plan and handle issues that required much money, such as, repairing collapsed bridges could not be undertaken in the middle of a financial year. Most of the roads visited at both districts and Sub-County levels were found to have muddy sections, as illustrated by the graph below.

Figure 9: Types of Bottlenecks found in District and Sub County Roads

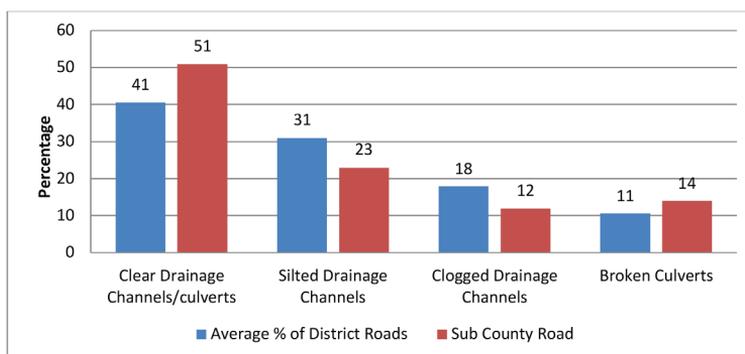


Source: ACODE BSDME Q2 FY 2019/20 Data

Drainage Quality

After working on the road, the nature of the drainage determines the longevity of the road. Roads with poor drainage get easily silted and sections are washed away by the rains fast. This is especially true for community access roads that in most cases are not tarmacked. This creates muddy sections and gullies in some sections of the roads, rendering them unmotorable over time.

Figure 10: Drainage Quality of District and Sub County Roads



Source: ACODE BSDME Q2 FY 2019/20 Data

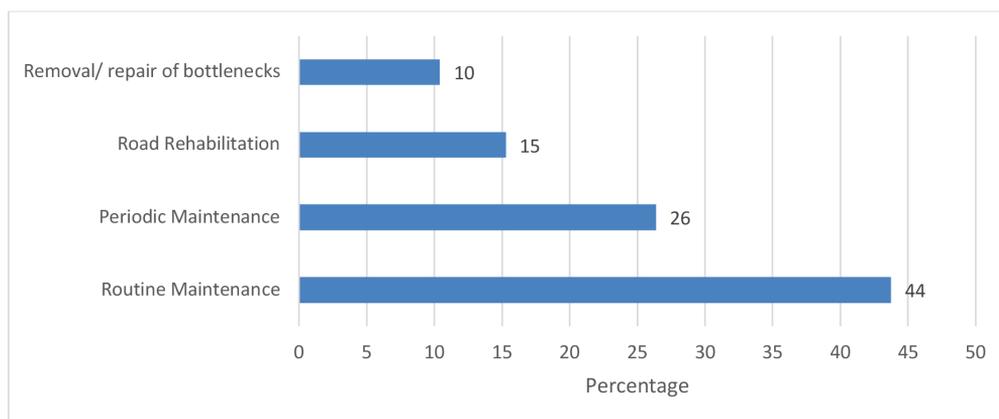
Most of the district and sub-county roads visited had clear drainage channels; only a small proportion both at district roads (31%) and sub-county roads (23%) had silted drainage channels.

Generally, the status of district and sub-county roads was nearly the same when comparing road surface quality, the existence of bottlenecks, and drainage quality with an exception of sub-county roads having more broken bridges as compared to the district roads. However, it is also important to note that most of the roads monitored often needed more work as only 39% of both district and sub-county roads were found to be in a good motorable condition.

3.3 Nature of Road Works Undertaken by districts

In February 2019, the Ministry of Local Government issued a stern warning to district Chief Administrative Officers (CAOs) against continued hiring of private firms to carry out routine road maintenance. The CAOs of different districts had to ensure that their respective districts complied with the new guidelines issued by the Government. This was after the effective delivery of road maintenance equipment to all the District Local Governments, that occurred two years earlier. Consequently, this round of budget monitoring targeted the main road works that had been carried out since the FY 2018/19. In line with the directive above, it was found out that 44% of the districts had carried out routine and periodic maintenance.

Figure 11: Main Road Works carried out by Districts since FY 2018/19



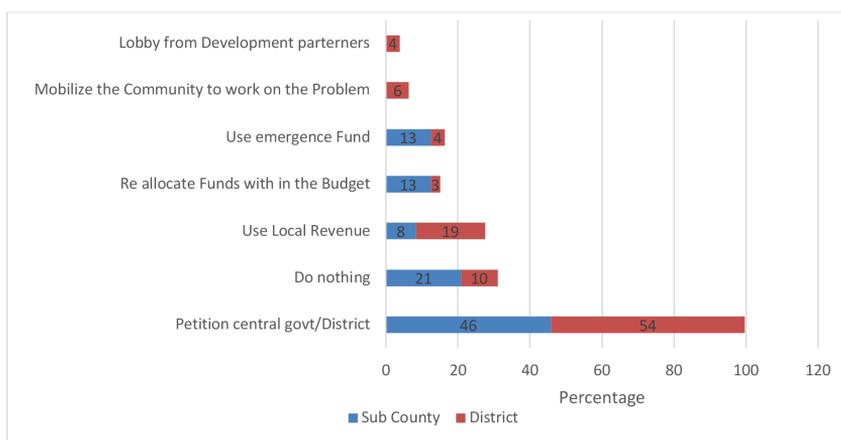
Source: ACODE BSDME Q2 FY 2019/20 Data

Repair or removal of bottlenecks was the least type of road works undertaken during this year under review. This was mostly due to the fact that the districts had no emergency budgets for road works. Therefore, in the event of extreme weather conditions washing away or damaging a bridge, for instance, it was likely to be repaired in the subsequent financial year. The absence of an emergency budget for road works at the district was, therefore, a major constraint to effective service delivery in the road sub-sector.

3.4 Coping with Emergencies

Emergency in road construction is widely defined. For purposes of this study, emergency road works were taken to refer to urgent and previously unplanned and unbudgeted road works arising from weather extremes. These included broken/washed away bridges, bottlenecks arising from busted drainages and water body banks etc. In the absence of an emergency budget for road works, the monitoring sought to assess how districts handled emergencies faced in providing road transport services. Due to weather extremes and natural calamities, such as, land and mudslides experienced by most districts in Uganda, that often affected the roads, the district and the sub-county needed to have emergency plans. During the monitoring exercise, the district engineers and the Sub County Chiefs or LC III Chairpersons were asked how they coped with emergencies. Most of the respondents at both district and sub-county headquarters .i.e. 54% and 46% respectively, said that they petitioned their superiors. The sub-county petitioned the district while the district petitioned the Ministry of Works and Transport or Uganda National Roads Authority (UNRA) for assistance.

Figure 12: Different ways by which Districts and Sub Counties Cope with Emergences



Source: ACODE BSDME Q2 FY 2019/20 Data

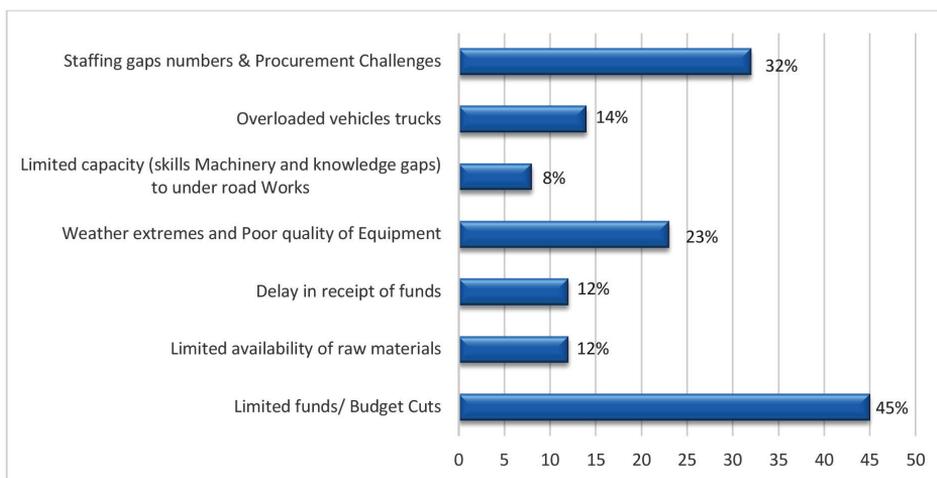
A substantial percentage of sub-counties (21%) admitted to doing nothing and waiting for the new financial year to handle the problem if it still persisted. Some of the sub-counties (6%) said that they mobilized the community and solved the problem. This is a noble act of nationalism that other sub-counties should emulate where possible.

The limited nature of the funds available to deal with emergency road works and road rehabilitation had resulted into an increasing trend of districts seeking to classify some of their roads as national roads so that the rehabilitation and maintenance thereof falls under the remit of UNRA.

3.5 Major Challenges facing the District and Sub County in Roads Service Delivery

Districts have been grappling with various challenges in carrying out their mandate of service delivery to citizens. Most of the challenges raised were perpetual in nature owing to the revenue sharing challenges between Central and Local Government Agencies of Government. Unsurprisingly, the biggest challenged highlighted was that of limited funding and budget cuts accounting for 31% of the challenges raised.

Figure 13: Major Challenges facing the District and Sub County in Roads Service Delivery



Source: ACODE BSDME Q2 FY 2019/20 Data

Over the years, the national roads and transport budget had increased while the allocation to the roads and transport sector at the district has remained relatively constant. The second challenge raised was low staffing (22%) of the Works and Transport department followed by extreme weather conditions (16%), and poor-quality equipment to handle works in such weather conditions, among others, as illustrated in figure 12.

4.0 Conclusions and Policy Recommendations

Overall, the findings showed that on average, districts reported receiving most grants within two weeks from the beginning of the quarter. This is an improvement from three weeks in the last round of monitoring. The latest time reported for receipt of Q2 grants was 6 weeks that is an improvement from the 9 weeks reported in the previous round of monitoring for Q4 FY 2018/19.

However, this round of budget and service delivery monitoring noted poor performance of districts in adherence to the requirement for displaying budget information. Less than half (46%) of the districts visited were displaying budget information. That is a major decline from 72% in the last round of monitoring done in Q4 FY 2018/19. The sub-counties that had often performed below average scored 51%, indicating a 7-point increase from 44% in Q4 FY 2018/19. Although the display of payroll at district headquarters reduced by 10%, display of pension information at district headquarters increased from 44% in Q4 FY 2018/19 to 56% in Q2 FY 2019/20.

This poor performance in displaying budget and payroll information could be attributed to a lack of enforcement of the requirement to display budget information and the lack of sanctions for non-adherence. The poor performance could also be attributed to the fact that some of the districts and sub-county headquarters did not have appropriate notice-boards, and as a result, information was displayed in the open spaces where people and weather could easily damage it. However, while it was imperative that administrative units improved their adherence to this requirement, it was also an opportunity for other intermediaries, such as, the CSOs to also provide this information through their respective networks.

On the capacity of districts to undertake road works, it was found that most of the districts visited (77%) had one unit of wheel loaders, vibro rollers, and water bowser that made the simultaneous undertaking of urgent roads on different roads unattainable. In addition, some of the districts had to share some equipment, such as, motor graders, further limiting the efficacy of road works. Furthermore, the districts cited limited funds for operating and maintaining the machinery as key challenges. The findings on the quality of roads showed that 39 % of the roads were adjudged to be in good motorable condition, which is way below an average of at least 50%. It was also found that 51% and 52% of district and sub-county roads respectively had major bottlenecks that constrained the proper flow of traffic.

Based on the findings of this monitoring, we recommend the following:

1. The practice of displaying budget information for the public needed improvement. The MoFPED should incorporate directives in the budget call and execution circulars

aimed at making the display of budget information mandatory. In addition, the MoFPED should put in place sanctions for non-adherence to this requirement.

2. Comprehensive training should be offered to equipment operators in all districts to increase their operational skills and effectiveness in handling the equipment. This would increase their efficiency in terms of kilometres worked daily, effective fuel consumption, and equipment management that may give the machinery longer life.
3. With districts having road equipment, additional funding is needed in the District Works and Transport Sector budget to cater for emergencies, such as, the washing away of bridges that hampers access between communities.
4. There is also need to fill the staffing gaps in the Works Departments. The current staffing levels in the Works Department are low. This leads to low morale and output. The district should consider filling the department with a complete engineering unit to enable timely supervision of road maintenance works. The substantive District Engineers, Assistant Engineers, and Road Inspectors have to be instituted by the Districts' Service Commission.

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