Sustainability of Donor-Funded Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Projects in Mbire District, Zimbabwe

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Abstract

The sustainability of donor-funded rural water supply and sanitation projects was assessed in Mbire district, Zimbabwe in terms of level of community participation, quality of implementation and reliability of the systems. The study was carried out through questionnaires, focus group discussions, interviews and field observations. The results show that the quality of implementation of the projects was deemed to be good and participation of the communities in project ideas initiation and choice of technology was found to be very low. Reliability of the systems was found to be very high with 97% of the boreholes in all the three wards studied being functional. Financial management mechanisms were very poor because water consumers were not willing to pay for operation and maintenance. The projects were classified as potentially sustainable with sustainability index between 5.00 and 6.67. Poor financial management mechanisms for effective borehole maintenance, poor quality of construction and lack of community participation in project planning were found to be potential threats to the sustainability of the projects. Future projects should establish the need for the service and should thus be demand driven to ensure effective participation of the water consumers and enhance project's potential for sustainability.

Keywords

Boreholes;
Community participation;
Financing;
Reliability;
Rural water supply;
Sustainability index