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LOW-COST RURAL WATER SUPPLIES DEVELOPMENT AND
COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN KENYA

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ABSTRACT

This thesis paper discusses community participation strategies used in low-cost rural water supply development. The paper also discusses the advantages as well as constraints and limitations of community participation.

During the study the implementation strategies used in three projects located in different provinces of Kenya were looked into. These projects were:

- 1) the Rural Water Supply Development Project in Western Province,
- 2) the Machakos Integrated Development Programme in Eastern Province and
- 3) Kwale District Community Water Supply Project in Coast Province.

Mutual respect between the intervenor and the community being helped to develop its own water supply is a very important parameter to the success of the project. During the study the author found that the community preferred officers with open mind - officers willing to take into consideration the community's opinions seriously.

Communication media between the intervenor and the community was found to be important in mobilizing the community. The community members were not interested in lectures from the field officers, but audio-visual aids such as films on water and diseases or slide shows commanded large audiences. Music which is used by most African communities for relaying messages was being used in the Western Project to mobilize the community with good results.

In the Kwale Project women were trained to maintain the handpumps. The author noticed that these women were interested in the maintenance work.

Besides the water supply projects, the communities were involved in other development activities. The author found that some individuals in the community were members of more than five development projects. In Machakos District the departments involved in the Machakos Programme worked in close cooperation holding regular meetings. This enabled the different departments to work harmoniously with the community.