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“Bridging the gap between increasing knowledge and decreasing resources”

Local Participation in Sustainable Community Water Management in Peri-Urban Areas of Greater Accra Region

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Abstract

In Africa, Ghana in particular, there is increasing demand for greater inclusion in local decision making, especially in water management. However, few countries have the appropriate institutions and mechanisms in place to ensure more effective local participation. Community water supply systems such as hand-pumps, water points and piped water points are considered as the most viable systems for peri-urban water supply. Data from Rural Water Supply Network (RWSN) shows that in a sample of 20 sub-Saharan countries the average for non-functionality rate is 36%. In Ghana, the non-functionality rates of community managed water systems is around 30%. It can be estimated that in peri-urban context, non-functionality and un-sustainability rate is between 30% and 40%. The study aimed at examining and determining how local community participation and water sector institutions affect sustainability of peri-urban community managed water supply systems in Greater Accra Region. The study employed both in-depth interviews and individual household surveys. In addition, non-participant observation was employed. The study took place in the three communities Abokobi, Oyarifa and Teiman of the Greater Accra Region in Ghana. Factor analysis, logit model and descriptive analysis was applied for the quantitative data. The qualitative data was analysed using thematic content networks. The results indicated that the scope of local participation is limited, since their participation is more involuntary than voluntary. The facilitating agencies seems to determine decision making of the population, especially during planning stage. There were also variations in the perception of the concept of 'participation' between local communities and stakeholders. Local community participation and water institutions have greater impact on sustainability of peri-urban community water projects. Interestingly, local community participation in water issues was remarkably more pronounced for other public social services. In conclusion, systematic participatory in community water management is recommended. Peri-urban community water supply should be given a deliberate effort because of its heterogeneity of ethnic groups, rapid population growth and complexity of the growing of unplanned constructions. Furthermore, local organisation management strategy should be strengthened and enable the operation and maintenance of the water management systems.

Keywords: Community management, participation, sustainability, peri-urban agriculture