

**RURAL WATER SUPPLY
DEVELOPMENT IN TANZANIA:
A CASE STUDY OF FOREIGN DONOR POLICIES**

by

Allison Lane Smith

Thesis

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ABSTRACT

This is a study of foreign donor programs in the rural water supply sector in Tanzania. The study focuses on the policies and priorities of foreign government and non-governmental donor organizations, and the relative effectiveness of each. Issues include technology choice, hydrogeological conditions of each region, the incorporation of community participation in planning, funding, construction, maintenance and monitoring of projects, as well as issues of community management, sustainability and replicability of projects on a larger scale.

In 1971, the Tanzanian government declared that by 1991, all people on mainland Tanzania would have access to a clean, safe source of drinking water within 400 meters of their homes. Foreign donors quickly became involved in this effort, and because the government did not establish clear policies or guidelines to reach the objectives for the sector, donors created their own geographical "spheres of influence" in the country, and designed, funded and implemented most of the country's water projects without involving the Tanzanian government and relevant ministries. Despite the fact that most donors have been in the country for more than twenty years and have spent hundreds of millions of dollars¹ for rural water supply development, it is estimated that only 30% of the rural population has access to a source of water close to their homes.

Interviews and field visits were conducted in Tanzania during the summer of 1993 with foreign donors at program headquarters as well as in the field, and with government staff from relevant ministries, as well as with community members in 25 villages in the Dodoma and Singida regions. These interviews, together with a review of literature from different donor-funded programs in the country provide the bulk of information for this study.

Five major findings come out of the analysis. The first is that community involvement in and management of water projects is crucial for their upkeep and sustainability. Second, the lack of sanitation and water quality testing in donor sponsored water programs has been widespread, and is detrimental not only to the health of people but to true progress in supplying people with a clean, safe source of water close to their homes. Third, an integrated development approach, which is demand-driven and allows a community to decide its own development priorities and choose development projects accordingly, has showed positive results in Tanzania. Fourth, inadequate monitoring and feedback systems for completed projects has led to a breakdown in communication between donors and communities, which in turn has led to poor levels of service, long periods of project inoperation, as well frustration and mistrust among communities. Finally, this analysis suggests that foreign government organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGO's) are fundamentally different in their approach to rural water supply development work in Tanzania, and that the efforts of NGO's appear more sustainable at this time than that of foreign government donors.

The success of future rural water supply programs depends heavily on the restructuring of program policies and priorities, as well as a shift away from a production orientation towards a community-managed, demand-driven approach to water supply development. Other integral issues include cost-recovery, private sector involvement, standardization of materials, more adequate and relevant training at the community level, and the integration of environmental impacts assessment and water conservation.

¹ The financial contributions of the seven donors addressed in this document are over \$22 million annually, according to program documents. Additional funds are given to the national Ministry of Water by other foreign donors.