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## Buguta / Makwasinyi community water project

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### ABSTRACT

This paper describes development of the Buguta/Makwasinyi community water and sanitation project, located in the Taita/Taveta District of Kenya.

The paper also describes the principles and philosophy of followed by KWAHO as a facilitating agency in supporting community based projects.

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

-KWAHO - Kenya Water for Health Organization was born in 1976 when it was started as women's project attempting to link water, sanitation and health in community development.

-The first three years were spent in laying the foundation, explaining the philosophy, providing small grants, and monitoring and evaluating the way women's groups used assistance given by UNICEF and an NGO's based in New York.

-In 1980, I took and spent another two years in giving some direction and developing confidence to/in the objectives of this organization.

-Over the next four years, the project developed from a programme disbursing funds to small projects, to an operational agency where programmes were undertaken and administered with the assistance of field staff.

-Today we employ 124 staff members comprising sociologists, community development experts, engineers, public health specialists, home economists, teachers, nurses, accountants, extension workers from agriculture, women and church groups etc...

#### 2. KWAHO - OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Programmes undertaken by KWAHO at present comprise

- Technical and water prospecting
- Health and Sanitation
- Women In Development

- Training for Sustainability
- Operation and maintenance

-Appropriate technology

-Workshops, seminars and educational tours.

KWAHO objectives include :

-Promotion of water provision to realise the "Water for All" resolution.

-fund-raising from international and local sources for water related projects.

-to integrate water and health requirements.

-to support the government of Kenya objectives while remaining non-political and voluntary in nature.

#### 3. THE APPROACH

KWAHO's success in the implementation of community based water and sanitation projects is the result of its commitment to an

integrated approach developed by us over the years. This approach involves the Ministries of Water Development, Health, Culture & Social Services and the Provincial administration, besides other NGO's in the programme area.

In conformity with the Government Policy of "District Focus for Rural Development", KWAHO has shifted focus to accommodate increased responsibility to the districts to broaden the base of rural development of local initiative in problem identification, resource mobilisation, project design and implementation

This integrated approach has given KWAHO a unique experience in playing an important liaison role between the Government Ministries, NGO's and the community in total.

At the grassroots level, KWAHO has adapted the following rules :

- go to the people, live among them, learn from them.
- start with what they know, plan work with them teach by showing them and learn by doing with them.
- identify community leadership and develop it
- aim, not to conform but to transform and not to release in order to achieve sustainable development of the community.
- with their help, help them to appoint a PATRON at village level who will lead them after the agency has phased out.

#### 4. PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION

KWAHO'S involvement into community based programme, originates from requests from the community or donor agencies supporting a project. Based on this request KWAHO staff conduct preliminary needs assessment activities including meetings and discussions with the community members.

During this preliminary activity an awareness creation programme is designed to explain and understand the project objectives.

Responsibilities of all participating agencies are clearly defined and explained. All communication channels are clearly delineated.

As a matter of operational policy and as a basis to its projects, KWAHO undertakes baseline surveys in socio-economic, and technical areas. Several methods, including Participatory Rural Analysis (PRA) and Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) are used for these surveys.

Once the operations are known, a programme for implementation and participation is decided upon. Self-help groups are registered, project committees are formed and funds are collected and banked.

Acceptance of the project based on consideration of affordability and sustainability leads to technical design and construction of the project

Maximum use of local consultancy, manpower and technical expertise is stressed throughout. Care is taken to evolve the grassroot interests in operation and maintenance activities by the project community.

Training needs and materials were identified and provided as support services at this stage.

#### 5. CASE STUDY - BUGUTA|MAKWASINYI PROJECT

##### 5.1 Location & Description

This project is located in Kasigau Location in Taita/Taveta District lying on the extensive Nyika Plateau. Most of the project area is made up of poor alluvial deep sandy soils, lies between 510m and 790m above sea level.

The area is semi-arid having an annual rainfall of about 480-680 mm and high temperatures averaging at 24.9 degrees centigrade. The only surface water available is located at the top of the Kasigau hills in small perennial springs that only travel a short distance downstream before fading away.

##### 5.2 Socio-Economic Background

The current population of Buguta|Makwasinyi is estimated at

10,000 people. Population density varies over the area, being concentrated around Buguta Kisimenyi, Kulikila and Kasigau Hills.

The Taita, Kamba and Duruma ethnic groups comprise the main inhabiting populations.

The project area is a newly settled area and land demarcation and adjudication processes are still being carried out. Most of the population being low income families, rely on subsistence level cultivation and livestock farming as a source of income. Some people also engage in small scale business enterprises such as shops, posho (maize) mills, carpentry, hides and skin, etc...

### 5.3 Infrastructure

A 22 Km murram road connects the project area to the Nairobi-Mombasa highway. Few access roads exist into the project area which has three active trading centres viz Buguta Kisimenyi and Makwasinyi.

Most of the people live in traditional houses prone to termite attack and general climatic wear.

The only health facility - Rukanga Health Centre, is located approximately 15km from most parts of the project area being located at Rukanga. This facility provides general treatment and disease prevention services while a mobile clinic operates at Makwasinyi and Makumbusho once a month. However due to inadequacy of medical care service, many people have resorted to traditional medicine.

Four primary schools enrolling 1800 pupils and having a combined staff strength of 31 teachers provide the total educational infrastructure. The nearest secondary school is located in Rukanga. Adult literacy centers are found at Buguta, Kisimenyi, Kiteghe and Makwasinyi.

The area is administered by the Makwasinyi Sub-location assistant chief assisted by village elders.

### 5.4 Water Requirements and Sources

There is no permanent source of

surface water in the project area. Studies which included the sinking of two exploratory boreholes were unsuccessful. Because of this, the average resident in the project area is forced to walk an average of 6 to 20km a day to fetch water from the hills of Kasigau. Livestock are also trek similar distances for their water.

### 5.5 The emergence of the Buguta/Makwasinyi Community Water and Sanitation Project

In 1984, the Buguta community formed the Taita Integrated Rural Community Water Community Project (TIRCOWAP) funded by African Development Fund. Under this scheme, two boreholes were sunk at the Makumbusho area

This project was unsuccessful because a number of factors were not taken into account. This prompted the community to think seriously of alternative sources including exploring possibilities of tapping the sources from the far away Kasigau hill.

First step, KWAHO organised a community workshop for the Buguta/Makwasinyi and Kiteghe communities involving some 52 participants in project definition, planning and detailing. As a consequence of this workshop a community water project self-help group was registered in January 1989. The community with the assistance of the Ministry of Water Development and KWAHO personnel planned and designed the Buguta/Makwasinyi water project and opened an account.

Second step, the community mobilized their resources -ie:

- They paid membership fees
- Share capital
- Local expertise

A series of 'Harambee' fund raising drives were conducted

Step three. Through KWAHO, WaterAid (London) pledged support to the project to the tune of Stg. £ 136,000 to supplement the communities efforts. As a result, in March 1989, construction work commenced.

## 5.6 Collaborating Agencies

Various agencies have been involved with the community in executing the Buguta/Makwasinyi project among them KWAHO and the Ministries of Water Development, Health and Culture and Social services as well as the local administration.

## 5.7 Project Accomplishments

Since 1988 when KWAHO came into the scene, this project has so far achieved:

- provision of 35 km of main and distribution water pipelines, 4 ferrocement storage tanks (200 cubic metres capacity in total), 3 spring intakes, 3 break pressure tanks 5 water kiosks and 9 stand-pipes.
- sanitation services comprising 4 number blocks each comprising 2 toilets, 2 bathrooms, a washing slab as well as 5 VIP latrine slabs manufacturing moulds.

On Health Education, the project has a culture specific education manual "Maji na Afya Bora Kwa Jami" and calenders with health messages.

## 5.8 Project Organization

The project area has 8 villages who have formed 8 women groups and five sub-branch committees consisting of 9 members each. The Umbrella Committee comprising of 15 members who are the main policy makers in the project are selected from the five sub-branches.

The various collaborating agencies have a representation on the Umbrella and sub-branch committees.

The project beneficiaries have elected a patron who acts as a chief advisor to the project and is also a link between the community and the collaborating agency. His role within the community include that he/she will make sure of the following:

- That the community is fully aware of their felt need
- That they understand the element of cost sharing

That the community understands that the project belongs to them and not the donor agency.

That they will maintain and operate the water system efficiently

That the community will meet the expences of keeping the water Kiosk attendants

That the project will all along it's cycle, include the element of basic health requirements i.e :  
-Clean toilets  
-Clean enviroment such as dumping of refuse in well maintained pits, and that the refuse is burnt regularly

That they make good use of any form of health education materials given to them

That they practice regular personal hygiene i.e : body, hands and face cleanliness e.t.c

That mothers and children under five years attend the monthly mobile clinic provided by the ministry of Health and KWAHO.

That the patron together with the community opinion leaders and project committee organize regular fund raising activities to suppliment the agencie's funding.

That he supervises the funds collection along water kiosks and that the funds are well utilized.

That he harmonizes possible negative situations that may arise

## 6. CONCLUSION

As earlier mentioned, the project has registered over 1800 families who contribute Ksh. 20/- and a monthly subscription of Ksh. 10/- per family for the sustainance of the project.

Many lessons that have been learnt by KWAHO include :

Careful study of the communities socio-cultural background before the commencement of the project.

-A successful project such as Buguta/Makwasinyi was founded on a failure porject.

-The take-over of a project at the end of it does not exist if the patron position is not established from the beginning.

-The women groups have been a focal point changing the lives of the community

-That a water project has no end

In conclusion, we wish to extend our gratitude to the WEDC organizers for giving us the privilege of presenting this Buguta/Makwasinyi success story located far away from Nairobi and who have almost zero opportunity to be visited or heard, as it lies almost 450 Km from Nairobi.

Lastly but not least, to thank all donors who are interested and have assisted arid and semi-arid lands and in particular, for this project, African Development Foundation, for the eye opening on whose resources have assisted KWAHO to establish a successful project, being funded by WaterAid - London through (MoWD) - Kenya government, for which the community and KWAHO are greatly indebted.

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