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Water for Rural Communities



**Helping People
Help Themselves**

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Efforts to improve the water supplies used by people in rural areas of developing countries have run into serious obstacles: not only are public funds not available to build facilities for all, but many newly constructed facilities have fallen into disrepair and disuse. Along with the numerous failures there are also successes in this sector. From these successes a new view has begun to emerge of what the guiding principles of rural water supply strategies should be.

This book brings together and spells out the constituents of this emerging view. The central message is that it is the local people themselves, not those trying to help them, who have the most important role to play. The community itself must be the primary decisionmaker, the primary investor, the primary organizer, and the primary overseer. The authors examine the implications of this primary principle for the main policy issues—the level of service to be provided in different settings, the level and mechanisms for cost recovery, the roles for the private and public sectors, and the role of women.

The potential advantages of proceeding from this outlook, instead of the older top-down approaches, are considerable. Improvement efforts are more likely to meet felt needs, new facilities are more likely to be kept in service, and more communities are more likely to get safe water sooner.

Of related interest

Community Water Supply: The Handpump Option

Saul Arlosoroff, Gerhard Tschannerl, David Grey, William Journey, Andrew Karp, Otto Langenegger, and Robert Roche

Analyzes the economic, financial, social, and institutional issues associated with wide-scale implementation of rural water supply programs. The Handpump Compendium contains descriptions, results of laboratory tests and field trials, and assessments of forty-two pumps.

Rural Water Supply and Sanitation: Time for a Change

Anthony A. Churchill and others

Discusses some of the issues and problems involved in providing rural water supply and sanitation services, including cost recovery, pricing and financing, strengthening institutions in the sector, improvements in health, better training and technical assistance, and community participation in projects.

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