

Water and Sanitation (WATSAN) Programme in Phases IA and IB of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project

The WATSAN programme is an integral Public Health component of the Environmental Action Plan (EAP) aimed at mitigating adverse impacts resulting from the implementation of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP). The programme provides water supply to communities affected activities of the LHWP. The programmes also provides ventilated pit latrines (VIPs), clean potable water, solid waste and sillage management systems

Sensitization of Communities

The LHDA has undertaken sustainable community participation to ensure sustainable community buy-in. Local government structures participate early planning stages. They are informed about the objectives of the programmes which are to provide clean potable water, safe hygienic sanitation solid waste and sillage management.

Provision of Water supplies.

The numerous construction activities relating to the LHWP have impacted upon traditional water sources such as springs most of which were not protected; wells, and river beds. Reliable water sources were identified from historical information provided by elderly members of the communities who used to herd animals in the veld or those who had attended initiation schools out in the veld. The sources vary between 2-7km from villages and further uphill. LHDA team perform reliability tests to ensure continuous water supply even during dry spells.



An example of a public water standpipe. LHDA brings clean, potable highland quality water to Communities.

Committees were established to organize implementation of the programme. Committee members included both the elderly and the youthful members of the communities. The youthful members were given training in pipe laying, operations and maintenance. The elderly members provided guidance in the management of the programme to ensure that everyone else had equitable opportunity in participating in the programmes. Community members working on the water supply programme receive payment for work done. It was therefore important that each member has their turn to work to ensure peace and equitable benefit. Those who could not attend due to ailments, old age, tender age or any other acceptable reason in the community, alternative opportunities were put in place so that they still receive some rewards.

Committee members also organised awareness campaigns to prevent of vandalism to the infrastructure provided. Although this is incidental rather than the norm, herdboys out in the veld, when they get fatigued from their rhetoric assignments, their curiosity then gets the better of them and they start ‘working ‘ on the stone and brick wall structures sometimes ultimately destroying them. Herdboys are then called to the traditional kraal discussions or to a pitso to advise them not to engage in activities

that harm the communities interests and services. They are sometimes told in the strongest of the possible ways. They have refrained from their dubious actions. At household level, mothers also play a very important role advising their children about the impacts of the destructive actions on community services.

Water is then delivered to an agreed point in the village where it can be easily accessed by all. Water points are also availed for the herdboys and their stock as well as communities members when working in the fields. This ensures that communities and their herds can access water wherever they are. Communities are very happy about this development and have expressed endless gratitude to the Government of Lesotho and the Lesotho Highlands Water Project. Where before they used to travel hours to and from fetching water and usually from unprotected springs, they now open a tap and out comes water!! They have submitted that doing household chores has become a lot more easier and enjoyable and there is time for after activities.

Water quality tests performed on the water revealed that the water is of highest quality with clarity of below 1NTU free of indicators of pollution. Such is the characteristics of the Lesotho highlands water sources.

Sanitation facilities (ventilated pit latrines, refuse pits and soakaways)



Community members take an active part in the provision of sanitation facilities in their household backyards. The 1517 Mercedes trucks are useful for reliable delivery of construction raw materials in the villages.

The approach to providing sanitation differs slightly to the case of water supplies. Because provision is at household level, the responsibility to ensure speedy implementation lies with individual households heads. Once the Committee members have received the stockpile materials at a communal place or store for safe keeping, it is the individual household members who ensures that their quota of the building materials reach their homesteads. These are concrete bricks, cement, river sand, doors, ventilation pipes, wash bottles, toilets seats designed to cater for the adult and child.



The dual purpose VIP toilet seat providing the needs of both the adult and children

Payment is not awarded for construction of the toilet as the toilet directly benefits the household. However the masons and carpenters do receive payment for construction of the structures. Local masons are trained in construction and related skills.



Construction of VIPs will ensure privacy for the user, address hygiene issues .They are provided with water bottles on the exterior sides for hand-washing after use of toilet. Construction of VIPs also addresses pollution coming into the reservoir from the catchment.

Local masons receive on-the-job-training during the construction. The objective is to empower the communities with skills to take care of future maintenance works and /or undertake new construction ventures.

Community members are taught to engage in cleaning campaigns where they are advised to deposit solid waste inside refuse pits. Sullen domestic waste water is deposited into soak-away pits. These activities are aimed at addressing public health issues as well as ensuring upkeep of the catchment such that surface run-off into the reservoirs is free of litter and other polluting agents.

WATSAN programme is implemented by the LHDA in-house team, which has proved to be more cost effective and productive than previous Contractor/Consultants.



Solid wastes are fenced in and covered with soil. Just outside is the soakway concrete pit for sullen water disposal. (every household upstream of the reservoir provided with the facilities)

Progress Status on the WATSAN Programme

Phase IA		Phase IB		
Description	Project Target		Project Target	Progress To date March 2005
VIP Latrine	5400		2505	1862
Water Supply	132		101	56
Soakaway pits	5400		2501	1719
Refuse Disposal pits	5400		2501	1048

Note:

Phase IA is yet to start and is anticipated to be completed by 2008 while Phase IB programme is anticipated to be completed by June 2005. The programme will begin in June 2005.