

**“COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN WATER DEVELOPMENT IN
KAJIADO DISTRICT: A STUDY OF ILLOODO-ARRIAK WATER
SUPPLY PROJECT”**

By

PHILLIP L. KISHOIYIAN

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this project paper was to explore the factors that influenced the outcomes of Illoodo-Arriak water project. The survey approach has been further broken into three objectives, to establish how community participation initiative resolved water problems:

- To analyse strategies and methodologies used,
- To describe ways of mobilising participation as applied in Illoodo-Arriak and
- To describe the influence of traditional cultural values on the results

The project paper also examined joint roles of the local community and external agents in resource mobilization and in facilitating local participation. The study shows the interface between community institutions and socio-cultural factors behind the formulation, implementation, and management of Illoodo-Arriak water supply case study.

The survey framework is in three broad theories in participatory development: the decentralization theory, Freirian participatory theory and cultural ecology resource management. The first theory, decentralization emphasizes are on moving action from the centre to the general community in the periphery. The Freirian theory is geared more towards community education, involvement and pro-active participation. The focus on the cultural ecology is on a complex relational impact between the indigenous material and non-material resources, with culture-mediated effects in the modern environment.

The three development theories are relevant because they hinge on advocacy and advance education approaches that provide knowledge and skills. This enables communities to recognise and mobilise non-human material resources while strengthening their potential in self-service. The example of Illoodo-Arriak community meeting its water needs, is a case in point.

Our investigations indicate that participatory development by the community in Illoodo-Arriak water programme emanated from the community's desire to resolve its water problems. This collective desire brought together a collaboration of stakeholders in a dialogue to design a relevant development agenda with a capacity to meet community needs. The dialogue process in the community led to the discovery of indigenous resources and its empowerment. An initial baseline survey conducted at Illoodo-Arriak served as an important tool for community education.

Water in Illoodo-Arriak is the critical resource which is stimulating further ongoing changes in the community. The changes include community re-organization, socio-political, economic and technological change. The availability of water is also enhancing livelihoods, besides changing attitudes towards lifestyles. There is also a host of creative activities such as crop-irrigation, personal hygiene, and education. More opportunities like improved livestock and its marketing opened up the community socio-economic life.

Recommendations: stakeholders and in particular the community members should play a key role in matters that concern them in all development projects such as water, health and agriculture. The external change agencies' inputs ought to be appropriate in timing and relevant to the community initiative, to justify the change as authentic. We believe project ownership and its critical sustainability lies in the community identifying with their primary stake in the programme, being introduced or undertaken by change innovators within the local area.

It is equally true that informed communities need little or no patronage in their change agenda. Education is the avenue that creates awareness and enhances the community level of participation, which is a decisive factor on the projects' outcomes and an energised water advance including its multiple secondary development. The project paper concludes with recommendations based on its research findings, policy implications and proposes areas of further research in its conclusion.