

Visit to Valley View –Mutendere East

Valley View is a community in the East of Lusaka with an estimated population of 35, 000 people. People have settled in this area some being retired government workers, and others are involved in various small businesses which assist in raising funds for the upkeep of their families. The Community Development Officer (Mrs. Mercy Muyenga Daka), based at the district office in Lusaka, was not available to accompany us for the community visit, since she was out of town, she made arrangements for the Community Development Assistant for the area, Mr. Kingsley Ngosa to accompany us into the field.

Upon entry into the community we came across a borehole with a manual hand pump which had stopped working. The community Development Assistant was not able to explain why it had been locked. Further down the road a man (retired soldier) had sank a borehole about two years ago; this was a water source for the community. The man charges K200 per 20litres of water for community members who come to draw there. He explained that on average the borehole services about 50 households in a day. Some households draw using 200litre drums which they charge K2500 for filling it up.



Broken down borehole as we entered the community which had been locked



The Borehole sank by the man to provide water to the community at a fee.

We drove further on into the community for 5 minutes and found another borehole which is a community bore hole. This borehole was cheaper than the first with people paying K100 for every 20litres of water drawn. The home across the borehole had sunk a well where people were also drawing water.



The community borehole, where people were paying K100 to draw water



A well across from the community borehole



Just before arriving at the school where we were scheduled to meet with some community leaders we found another water source at the house of a community member where people were found drawing water. There were quite a number of people and this was after 11 hours in the morning.



Another water source at the house of community member.

Finally we met up with the community leaders unfortunately there were no women present in the meeting. The CDA explained that the ladies who he had talked to were not available and that some of the ladies complained of visits from possible donors who did not finally carry out the project for various reasons.



Meeting with 4 community leaders and the CDA.

The leaders complained of the water problem being a long standing issue for them, they explained that during the rainy season schools were closed due to cholera outbreaks, because of lack of good water. After some deliberations it was concluded that most of the water sources in the community were wells and the owners had put pumps and taps for drawing water as a business. The leaders identified 6 water sources where 4 were privately owned and the other 2 owned by the community and sank by other donors/ngo's.

The leaders were uncomfortable with the water situation because the women in the community had to wake up as early as 04hours in the morning to line up for water, they were afraid that the women could be attacked or raped. Though the women woke up that early, they were only able to start getting water at 7 hours in the morning. The owners of these water sources had a specified time they opened and closed water collection this was usually from 7 to 12 hrs. In fact most of the water sources were dry during the hot season thus our conclusion that some of the water sources were in fact deep wells. This led to the people washing from a nearby stream.

They further went on to complain about the lack of roads in the area making them feel like they were not in Lusaka. This and the need for water was a source of concern for the community as the lack of water also affected children and teachers where they first had to line up for water, and sometimes this caused them to be absent or late. Water was necessary for every household unfortunately it had become expensive. At homes where water was available, some landlords demanded an additional \$10 to the rentals for water.

The community leaders suggested that a water tank in addition to a borehole for storage would help in providing water at a faster rate and avoid the situation where people were lining up for long time to pump the water. This would mean installing an electric pump, I encouraged them to make as many suggestions as possible and later on we would make a decision based on how viable and availability of funds.

Asked about the maintenance of the borehole, the leaders assured us that a committee would be put in place and a caretaker who would charge about K100. These monies would be used for maintenance and for paying the care taker/treasurer.

It was observed that one of the community boreholes was not operational, asked whether repairing it would be an option; the leaders felt that given an option they would rather have a new one as there might be a conflict in interest with previous donors.

We thanked the leaders for their time, I further explained to them that we were looking at 3 communities and would determine the community which would get a borehole after wards.

Conclusion

The distance between the different water sources was not bad though the issue of women waking up early was a major source of concern. Every community given the opportunity wanted the borehole in their area as the water problem is everywhere. As and after thought a meeting with community development office with the CDA's v of the communities visited was important and therefore use that meeting to rank the area which needed the water intervention the most. This would allow for transparency and would give the communities confidence in our decision making capabilities