

**AN ASSESSMENT OF THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENTAL AND  
NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS IN THE PROVISION  
OF WATER SUPPLY IN UMUNNEOCHI AND ISUIKWUATO  
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS OF ABIA STATE, NIGERIA**

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## ABSTRACT

The study assessed the role of governmental and non-governmental organizations in the provision of water supply in Abia State with a view to ascertaining their contribution in the provision of portable water and constraints therein. It further identified the various sources and quality of water supply and health related problems in Umunneochi and Isuikwuato Local Government Areas of the state.

Data were obtained from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were generated through oral interviews\_ focus group discussions and participant observation. The population of the study comprised 94 communities out of which 25 communities were randomly sampled. Ward leaders from each of the 25 sampled communities were interviewed. Interview guides were used for executive members of the existing 8 community development associations at the town level in the two LGAs. The available 10 water vendors; 5 from each of the two LGAs were also interviewed. On the official side, the General Manager and the Head of the Water Resources Department of Abia State Water Board as well as the Chairman and the Head of Water and Sanitation Unit in both Umunneochi and Isuikwuato Local Government Areas were also interviewed. Three Focus Group Discussions were conducted with selected women and children in 12 of 25 sampled communities. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistical methods.

The result showed that there were 9 official pipe borne eater schemes in the two LGAs constructed by the Federal Government and the old Imo State Government when the two LGAs were under Isuikwuato LGA. The study revealed that the water schemes collapsed due to poor maintenance, corrupt practices among the authorities responsible for the management as well as non-involvement of the host communities in their operation and maintenance. Consequently, households that could not afford to buy a 20-litre can of water at the cost of

N25.00 trekked long distances of about 10 kilometres (to and fro) to fetch water from streams, rivers and springs. The results showed that some of the households constructed non-mechanized rainwater harvesters. The study also showed that there was loss of man-hours which had adverse effect on educational development of the children as they spent several hours in fetching water for their household. The result of focus group discussions emphasized the burden that households bear in search of water, while pointing out health risk associated with water from streams, rivers and springs. In addition, the study showed that, the respective community development associations (CDAs) were not concerned with water provision except in Akoli-Imenyi under Isuikwuato LGA where the existing CDAs and the traditional ruler constructed a bore-hole on the basis of 60:40 percent fund ratio respectively. Other CDAs assisted in maintaining the traditional sources of water. These traditional sources of water were inadequate both in quality and quantity as there were reported cases of water borne diseases such as diarrhea and cholera in the study area.

The study concluded that governments abandoned their role in the provision of water supply in the study area, while households, water vendors and a number of CDAs emerged as the main providers of the same service for the people.