Abstract

Mali is a developing country with large water supply and sanitation needs and constraints. My Peace Corps service from August 2002 through October 2004 focused on improving the health of Malians through improved sanitation with the construction of wash areas and soak pits and hygiene education.

While living in Sikasso amongst its 150,000 residents, I learned how cultural and non-technical constraints affected sanitation improvements. Wash area and soak pit project implementation may involve a variety of people and factors, each influenced by their geographic locations: urban, rural, or peri-urban. By having the opportunity to work at all three locations with residents, government workers, business owners, women, and youth, the implementation differences became apparent. These locations have different geographic, socio-economic, organizational, and political factors that contribute to the policy makers, private sector, and beneficiary roles.

In this report, the relationship between geographic location, project implementation process, and ten factors were analyzed. In the urban case study, major influential factors included the presence of aid money, education, and concentration of pollution. The greater part of the urban project is carried out by the policy makers, indicating a "top-down" approach to development. In the rural case study, the major influential factors were the presence of aid money, decentralization, and the mobility of people. In contrast, the beneficiaries take the larger role of project facilitation in a more "bottom-up" method. Like the rural setting, the peri-urban case study also indicated a "bottom-up" approach to work affected by factors, such as ownership of property, the standards and costs of living, and education. In addition to policy makers, private sector, and beneficiary roles and relationships, manual of practice and funding is also discussed in the context of implementation of sanitation engineering projects.