



Investigating Issues of Rural Water Point Sustainability: A Field Study

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WASH in Zimbabwe



- ▶ 65% of rural water points in the country are not functioning¹
- ▶ Did not meet MDG targets, access to clean water is regressing¹
- ▶ Rural water provision a government identified need²
- ▶ Female burden³
- ▶ CBM framework for rural water⁴

1. Zimbabwe 2010 MDG progress report

2. Government of Zimbabwe, & United Nations. (2010). Country analysis report for Zimbabwe, (August).

3. Agency, Z. N. S. (2009). *Multiple Indicator Monitoring Survey (MIMS) 2009*. Retrieved from papers2://publication/uuid/3ADB232A-4EA5-4DFA-9FE8-45E4221A5187

4. Mtisi, S., & Nicol, a. (2003). Water Points and Water Policies: Decentralisation and Community Management in Sangwe Communal Area .. *Sustainable Livelihoods in Southern Africa: Institutions, Governance and Policy Processes*, 15(March), 36.



Research Description

- ▶ **Purpose:** Improve implementation, accountability, community support
- ▶ **Goal:** Determine factors that affect water point sustainability and identify methods of mitigating those factors.
- ▶ **Objectives:**
 - ▶ Supply evidence to determine the relationship between effective water point user committees (WPCs) and operational water points
 - ▶ Identify best practices of WPCs
 - ▶ Identify areas of improvement that could increase water point sustainability

Research Question Topics

Factors of downtime

Optimal fee
collection methods

Community trust of
WPC

Seasonality

Breakdown effects

Supply chain of
replacement parts

WPC training

Monitoring systems

Water point sharing

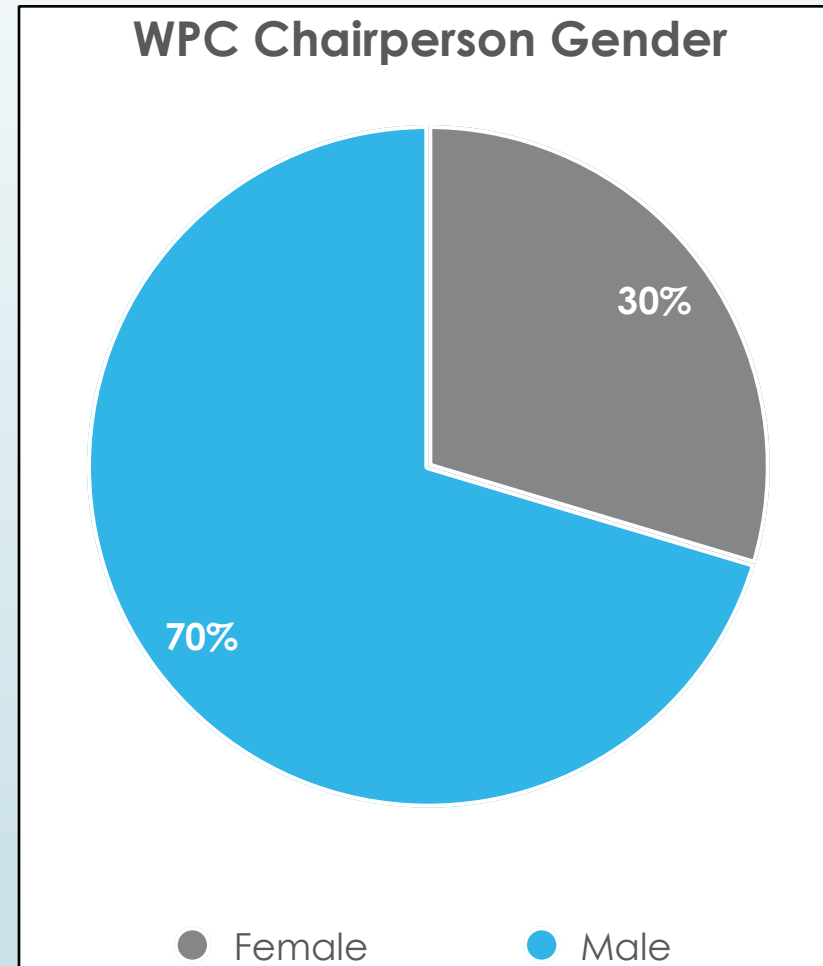
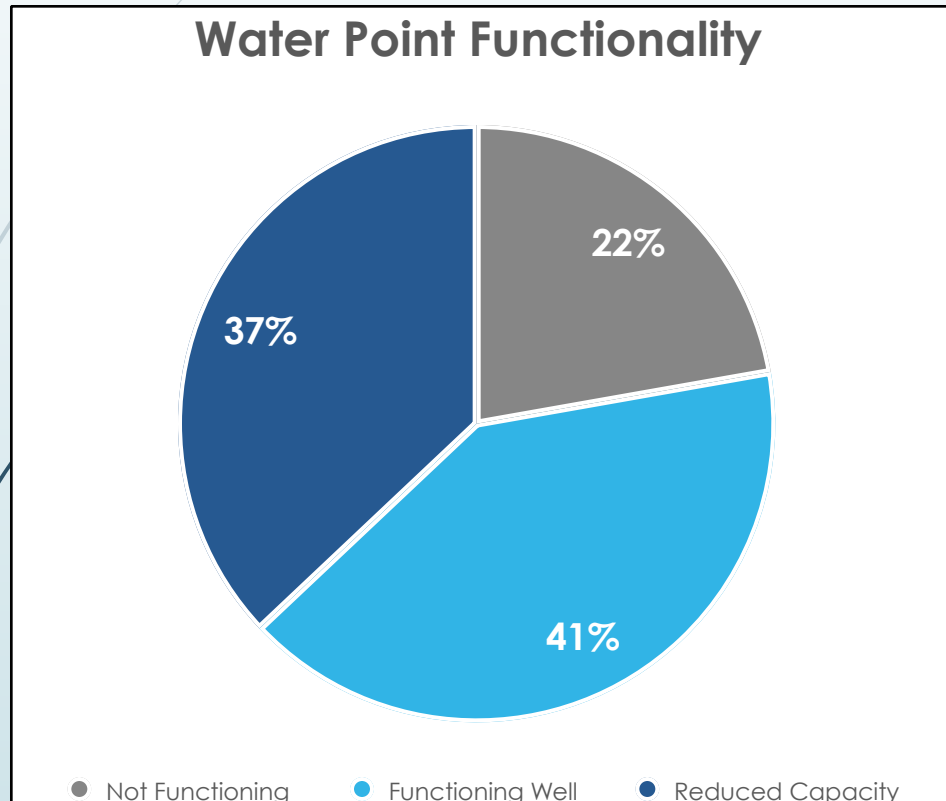


Methodology

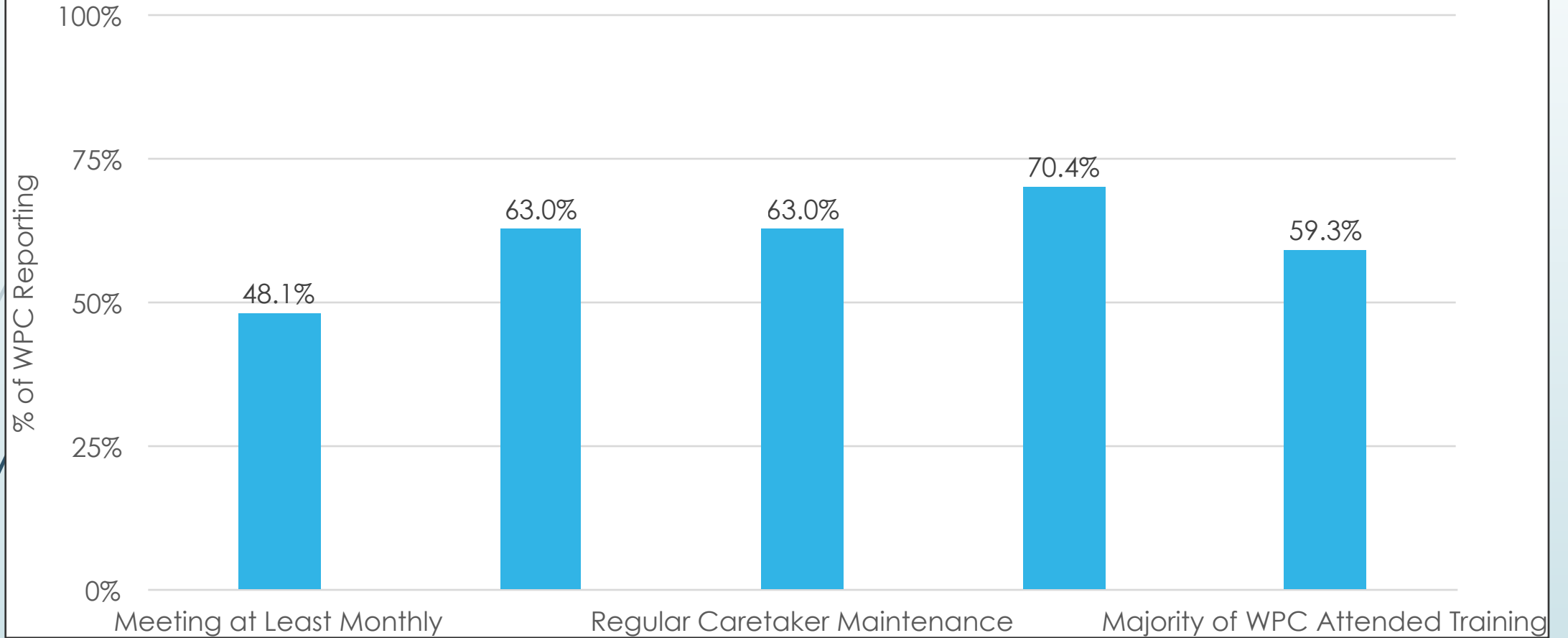


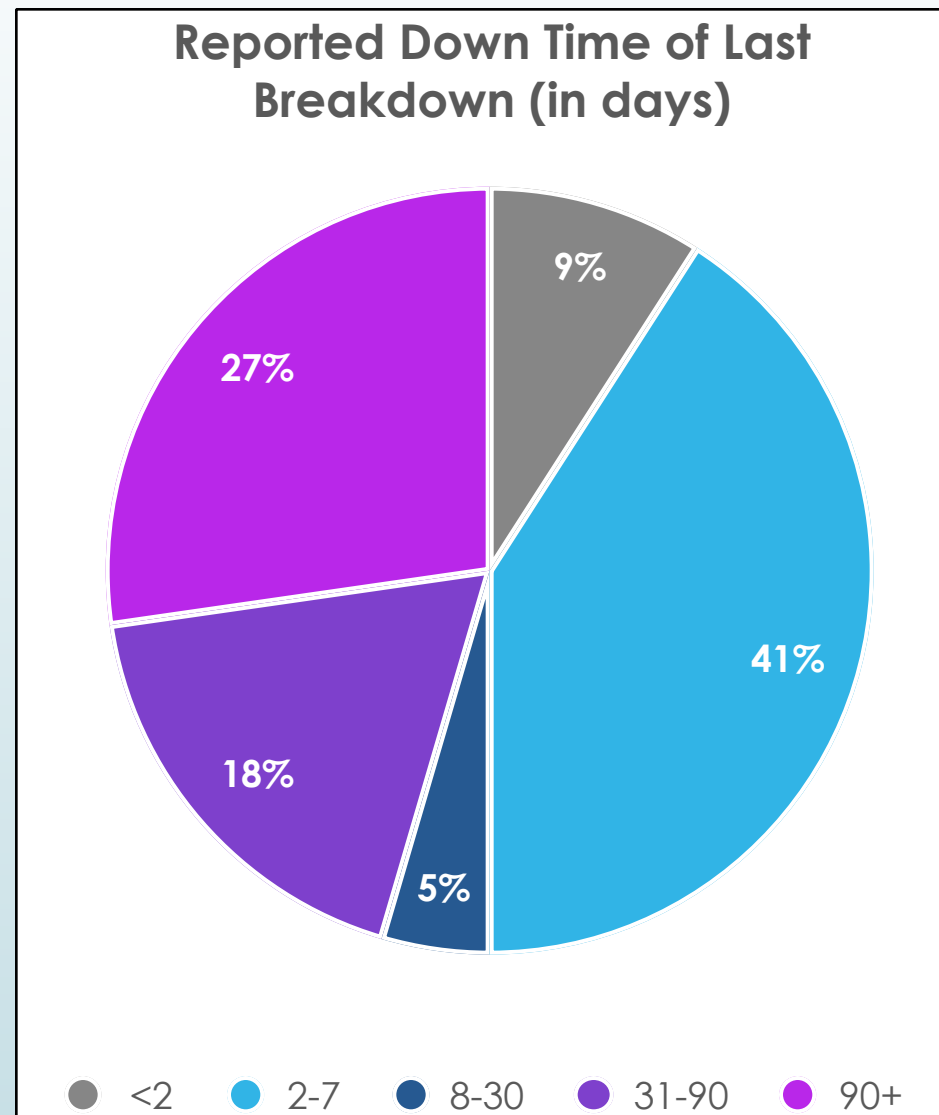
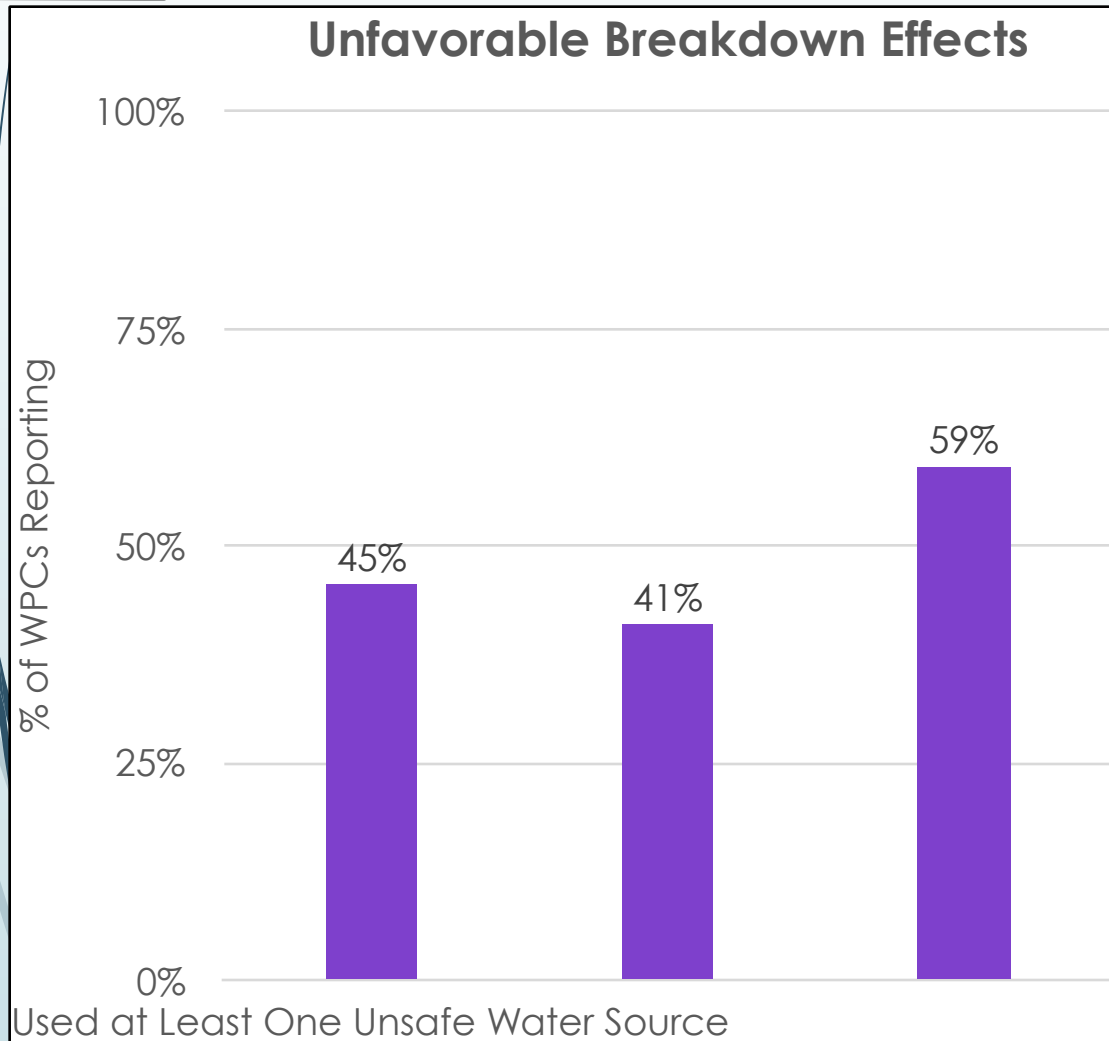
- ▶ Total of 27 **WPCs** interviewed
 - ▶ Gender of Respondents: 66% Male, 33% Female
 - ▶ Average Age: 48 years
- ▶ Five **VPMs** from different wards interviewed
 - ▶ Gender of Respondents: 100% Male
 - ▶ Average Age: 51 years
- ▶ **Key Informants**
 - ▶ WVZ staff
 - ▶ District Water Officer
 - ▶ Ministry of Health Worker

Water Point Committee Results

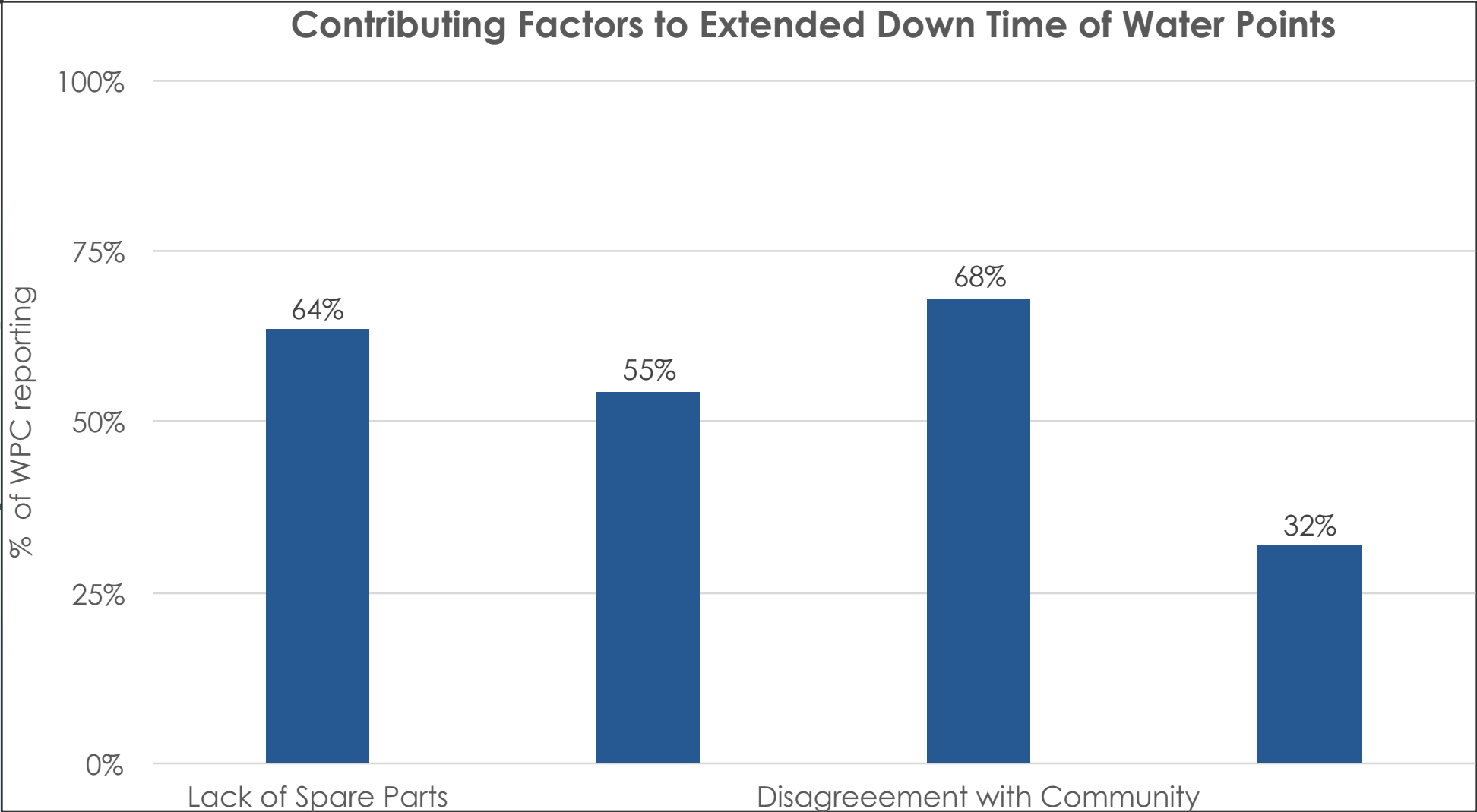


Elements of a Functioning WPC





Contributing Factors to Extended Down Time of Water Points



Maintenance Fee Collection Results

- ▶ 90% of WPCs reported attempting to collect fees, only 55% said the collection was effective
- ▶ 70% of WPCs had \$0-20 in their fund (the majority of those having \$0)
- ▶ Most common method of fee collection were community meetings
- ▶ Income generating activities were not prevalent
- ▶ 63% of WPCs have penalties for non-payers but they are not always enforced
- ▶ Treasurer is most likely to hold the money and be responsible for keeping financial records

WPC Trainings



- Areas of trainings respondents liked/ found helpful
- Need for refresher courses
- Expansion of curriculum
- Request for more sharing of information between WPCs



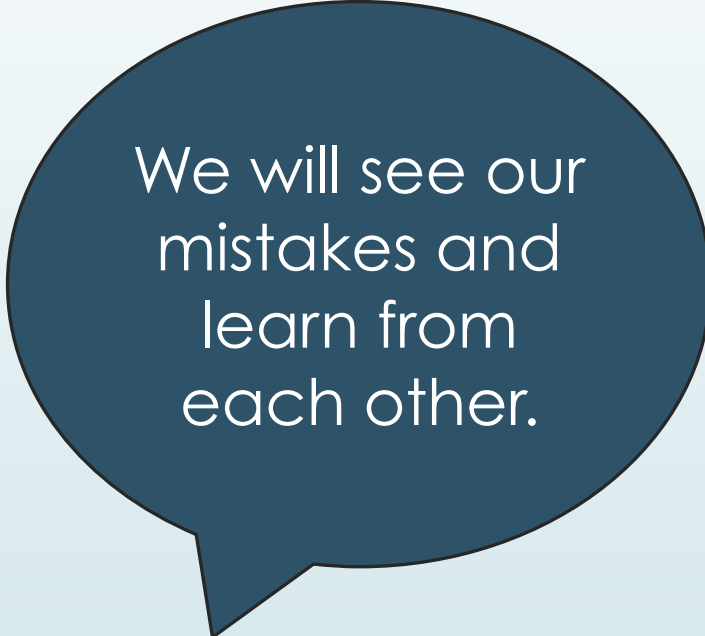
WPC Trainings Respondent Quotes



Knowledge is
meant to be
shared.



Workshops lead
to changes,
more workshops
mean more
development.



We will see our
mistakes and
learn from
each other.

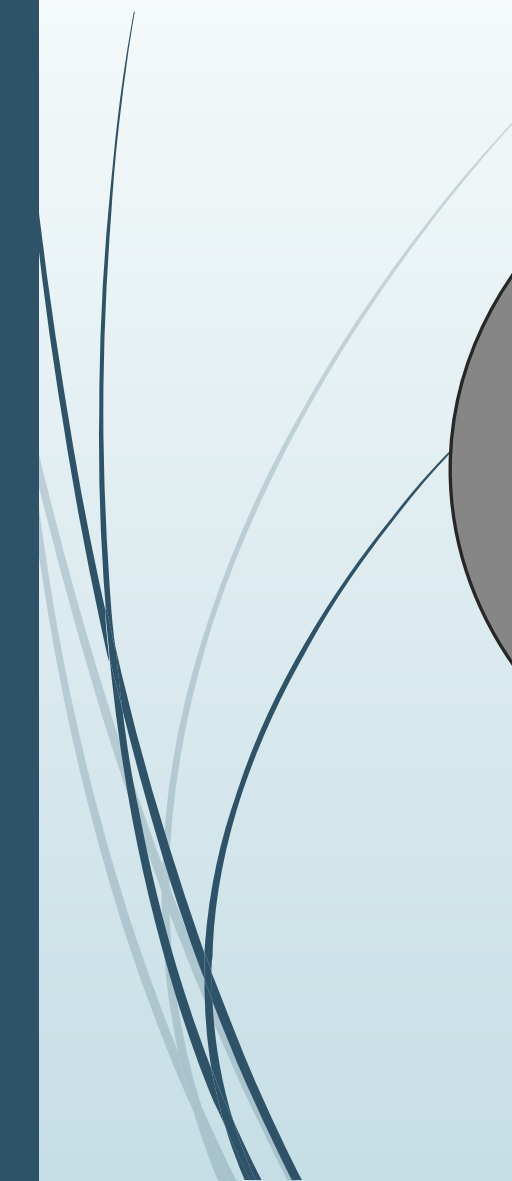
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Village Pump Mechanic Results

- Wide variability of experience (5 months to 15 years)
- Number of water points serviced also varied (1-21)
- Distances traveled for repairs ranged from 1-10 kilometers
- Major challenges: Lack of spare parts, lack of adequate tools
- Minor challenges: Payment for services, communication problems with WPCs
- 80% of VPMs surveyed requested refresher trainings at least once a year.



Village Pump Mechanics Quotes



I see it as an important job because if the villages go without safe and clean water there are many diseases.

Most of the VPMs do the work for free because water is life and we want to help the community.

WSO Interview Results

- Receive maintenance requests every 1-2 weeks
- Major challenges: Lack of spare parts and adequate tools
- Additional issue: Transportation over large service area
- Need for better trained/more effective VPMs



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Key Informant Results

- ▶ Interviewed Environmental Health Officer, District Water Technician and World Vision WASH staff member
- ▶ Key points of agreement
 - ▶ Focus needs to be on '**software**'
 - ▶ Need to **capacitate** people at the community level
 - ▶ **Limitations** exist that do not allow their suggestions to be implemented



Recommendations

- ▶ Avoid “water is free”
- ▶ Improve supply chain of replacement parts
- ▶ Provide skills for income generating activities
- ▶ Pre-breakdown collection of fees with an increasing fee schedule
- ▶ Annual refresher courses for WPC
- ▶ Increase WPC legitimacy
- ▶ Develop partnerships, communication mechanisms and monitoring

Research Limitations

- ▶ Limited time
- ▶ No budget
- ▶ Timing during the end of the BMZ project and end of year for WV
- ▶ Translation



Unintended Effects

- ▶ Inspired WPC action
- ▶ Provision of spares for rehabilitations
- ▶ Increased communication between WV and partners about needs



Acknowledgements

- ▶ Research Participants
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