

DAMS IN LESOTHO

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Survivors of Lesotho Dams (SOLD)**

The Lesotho Highlands water Project sold as a way of pulling Lesotho out of poverty while supplying water to the Republic of South Africa failed those who sacrificed everything for the project, and poverty is increasing in communities directly affected by the schemes dams.

Lesotho Highlands Water Project risks not meeting the treaty requirements with respect to resettlement and development that the standard of living of all people affected by the construction of dams should not be compromised and where possible improved.

People affected by the construction of dams in Lesotho are often among the poorest people in the country and surely it seems unfair that the poor, who bear a disproportionately large share of the pecuniary and social costs of dam projects, should receive a disproportionately small share of the benefits. The majority of affected people are left in the horrible state of poverty, some of them cannot afford to send their children to school because of alarming conditions they live under.

In addition, the process of physical relocation is highly disruptive to the livelihoods of the resettles, who have to re-establish themselves in a new area where they often compete with host communities for land, social services and jobs. Restoration tends to ignore a whole range of socio – cultural effects, such as loss of community, loss of social safety nets, stress placed on the elderly and female – headed households.

Most dam projects include a responsibility to ensure that affected people are not made worse off as a result of the project and that lives and living standards are restored, but this minimum standard is rarely met, however, in all the places whereby people are affected by the project, it has left a trail of poverty, hopelessness, discontent and despair, despite earlier promises that communities affected by the construction works of the project (L.H.W.P) would enjoy benefits that would upgrade their standard of living and ensure sustainable development of their areas.

It is important that the structure of development, mitigation and compensation programmes for victims be done at the earliest stage of the project planning so that the appropriate costs can be integrated into the economic analysis of the dam. It is also essential that victims participate in the formation of the structure of mitigation, compensation and development programmes being designed for their benefit. Failure to involve the victims in the design of programmes creates a risk of irrelevance or failure with negative consequences for both parties.

“Lesotho water” through Lesotho Highlands water project transferred from Lesotho to South Africa can not be used for any other purpose in Lesotho, Water is transferred to the republic of South Africa for industrial purposes, while residents along side the dams walk for many kilometers to access water for their basic needs. A good example is of people living in the villages on the west of Katse dam, from Likheleng to Ha Tsepo; equally there is scarcity of water in the Southern district of the country, particularly during the draughts, e.g. Mafeteng and Mhaleshoek. Water is a gift of God and a fundamental human right.

WATER:

Water and sanitations are human rights. All people are entitled to have access to water in order to meet their basic human needs.

We call access to water for productive use by the rural and urban poor which is essential for sustainable livelihoods at the house hold level.

We call for universal access to free water resources with at least 50-60 litres per person per day as a minimum quantity.

We totally reject the privatization of water services, sanitation and water resources .we also reject cost recovery as a basis for effective water programmes.

Water management must be accountable to communities at a local level. People must be part of the delivery process of basic needs.

In ensuring the equitable, just management and delivery of water services the following needs standards should be met:

- a) People affected by decisions must be part of the decision making process.

- b) There must be clear lines of accountability by service providers to those they serve.
- c) There must be skills transfer and development

DEMANDS OF SURVIVORS OF LESOTHO DAMS (SOLD)

- Delayed compensation has adversely affected share cropping systems and host communities refuse to get into partnerships with resettles, saying they do not have money. We demand annual and lump sum compensation immediately with interest as required by law.
- We demand development and training from L.H.D.A to ensure that the lives of all communities affected by the L.H.W.P activities directly or indirectly are restored by sustainable livelihoods.
- We demand water and sustainability for the communities affected by Katse dam.
- We demand that all communities affected by L.H.W.P related activities be sufficiently compensated.

PRESENTATION BY: T.M MAHLAKENG
"Let justice roll down like waters"
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