

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 General statistics.

According to the WHO/UNICEF Global assessment , 2000

- In **Africa as a whole** the number of rural people without access to safe water has grown by around 20 million, although 'coverage' has increased by 3% in the past ten years.
- In **Zambia** coverage may have increased by as much as 20% since 1990, but still over 3 million rural people are without access to safe water, only slightly fewer than in 1990. Examples are from Zambia as this is where the research was conducted.

Lined wells with windlasses and drainage serve some 1.8 million rural Zambians



1.2 Coverage in Zambia

Around 44% of rural people have access to protected water supplies according to CMMU/NWASHE figures for 2000 but with considerably under 40% with a reliable supply. In some districts coverage is as low as 10%.

According to both estimates more than half the rural population of Zambia is still without access to protected water supply. Most of these people live in smaller, poorer communities, the larger, more prosperous communities being the



Boreholes with handpumps serve some 750,000 rural Zambians.

first to be served, and most able to sustain recurrent maintenance costs. Even some of these are unable to cope, and have gone back to their traditional sources.

What is the future for those in small, poorer communities? Most are unlikely to be provided with access to a borehole and handpump, or lined well with bucket and windlass in the next ten or even twenty years, nor can most cover long-term maintenance costs. Yet they number well over three million.

Should they just sit and wait, or could they, perhaps be assisted at minimal cost, to improve their situation?