

“KNOWING WATER INITIATIVES FOR PEOPLE IN BENJAMÍN ACEVAL, CHACO, PARAGUAY”

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ABSTRACT

In the area of Benjamin Aceval (district), Paraguay, drinking water supply, is made of different ways of managing people in the community.

Each water supply system, is unique and has its positive features and negative supply efficiency of users and end users.

In each management model are striking existing gender relations, both those associated with executive committees as users and nonusers. As well as the transparency of the processes of water analysis and the administrative processes, and too, involving people in decisions related to water.

There are three types of management models of drinking water:

- a) Sanitation Boards, community organizations and volunteers.
- b) Private water seller company is constituted as a company with specific rules by the Paraguayan State.
- c) Qom Toba indigenous community: This community presents different management from the previous two mentioned. In times where they had no deep well water, women were women and children. Ran responsible for fetching water from shallow hole single community of the community, as many times as necessary.

KEYWORDS

Water supply, participation, gender, transparency

INTRODUCTION

Paraguay is divided into two geographical regions divided by the Paraguay River. The Eastern region has 40% of the territory and 98% of the total population. The western region or Chaco has 60% of the land and 2% of the population. This difference in the population's distribution is due to the characteristics of natural resources.

Chaco is characterized by the highest average temperatures throughout Paraguay and a high percentage of salt water, both surface and groundwater. Rainfall is considerable but the evaporation is higher. The collection of rainfall water is made only by a small group of people, especially in the center zone of Chaco. The study area for this analysis corresponds to a portion of Benjamin Aceval District. The area is known for being the only area that has a local freshwater aquifer (approximately 90Km²), surrounded by salt water. Salt water is most common in the area.

About 16,000 people, with different ways of managing water supply, bring water from the local aquifer (Fig.1: Location of study area).

Each water supply system is unique and has its positive and negative features for efficient supply of the final users.

In each management model the existing gender relations are striking, those associated with executive committees as well as users.

Three types of models of water management have been identified:

- Boards of sanitation, community and voluntary organizations.
- Private water seller companies: established as a business, with specific rules by the Paraguayan State.
- Toba Qom aborigine community: This community presents a form of water management that is different than the previous two mentioned.

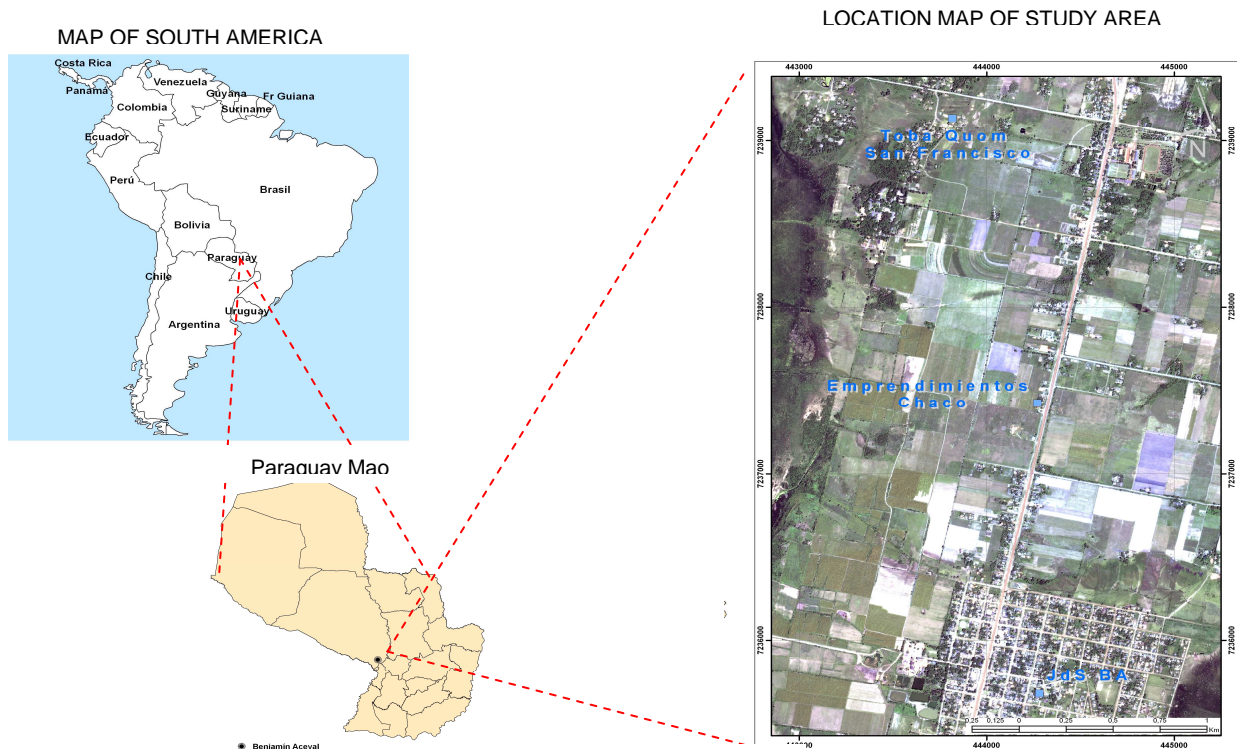


Fig. 1: Location of study area

Main Objective:

To analyze different models of water management in the community of Benjamin Aceval, Chaco, Paraguay, on the axis of the analysis of transparency, participation and gender relations.

METHODOLOGY**Analysis design, Nature of the Design**

The research is descriptive; it focuses on registration and collection of data that is necessary for obtaining a general assessment of the current situation of different water management models found in the study area.

The approach is qualitative and quantitative. Some work has been done primarily with the analysis of the obtained qualitative data from interviews and direct observations. In addition, research was complemented with the analysis of numerical data obtained from primary sources and in other cases from secondary sources such as statistical data.

Methodology and techniques used

The research process included the following methodology activities:

- a. Literature review of existing information about the main features of the area, historical community use and natural resource management, water use, etc.
- b. Identification of key informants.
- c. Design of data collection instruments (interviews, direct observation guide.)
- d. Validation of instruments by a representative of the Environment Sector of the Directorate of Equality and Opportunities of the Ministry of Women.
- e. Determination of the number of interviews to be conducted in each model of water management in the community.
- f. Application of structured interviews.

Techniques used for data collection.**Unstructured interviews**

They have been applied mainly to key informants identified in the first contact made, questions were made to these individuals without having a predetermined content, and the issues to be addressed were built according to information provided by the subjects. This tool generally sought the background of formation of each management model, and it was the basis for the design of the structured interviews.

Structured interviews with open and closed questions

They were applied to representatives of each organization with the purpose of obtaining information with the highest accuracy possible on the current situation of the organization, it was also applied to users of the Health Board of Benjamin Aceval and the users of the private water company called *Emprendimientos Chaco*, who were elected at random per neighborhood, having the intention of having knowledge on their opinion about the quality of the resource, service and community ties existing with the water suppliers. According to Corbetta (2003), the interview is to obtain information by questioning people, but with the typical purpose of entering into the individuality of the person and see the world through their eyes.

Focus Group

The implementation of this type of interview to the aborigine community of Toba Qom was necessary because according to the results of personal interviews with key informants, it was identified that in the community there are 2 acting Leaders (Chiefs) and in order to clarify all relevant information and

respecting the organizational structure of the community, this technique was used so that the leaders themselves were the ones who clarified it by consensus any kind of ambiguity in this regard.

Direct observation

It was important to develop a guide to direct observation to validate the information provided by users. The following was observed in the users' homes:

- Presence of faucets on or off the field.
- Presence of water measurers.
- Location of wells.

Audiovisual documentation

All interviews were recorded in order to gather information accurately, without losing any data .A photographic record of the area has also been made and there has been a significant collection of historical photographs that were taken at the beginning of the formation of the Health Board. **Data Processing**

For the analysis of collected data proceeded these steps were followed:

- Once the interviews were done, the transcription of these recorded interviews was developed, respecting the views of respondents.
- The information obtained was divided and it was classified into sections for further analysis.
- Quantitative data was analyzed in a spreadsheet.
- The photographs supplied by the Health Board have been fully digitized for presenting them in the final document.
- A comprehensive comparative analysis of management models and the existing legislation was carried out.

Ethics in the Research

The data collected during the investigation have been fully reflected in the document respecting the answers of respondents, and the identity of users was kept confidential.

CONCLUSIONS:

In order to simplify the way of sharing of the findings, they are going to be presented as a list, with a brief explanation.

- Among the three water management models analyzed, two were classified as communal, and they are the Health Board and the Aborigine Community, the other observed pattern is classified as a business.
- Regarding the management and transparent management of water, it can be concluded that:

To measure or to make a comparison in relation to the transparency of the processes in the analyzed organizations, the following table is made and a few words of reference for the analysis per analyzed step are added:

In order not to write down everything that is identified, a table of reference words that are read as follows is made:

To be constructed means it must be done, it is to be made and not yet started.

In construction process means the process that has started.

Actively building means that the process is consistent with observations made in the analysis and it moves on.

Not applicable is referred to as the type of structure or culture cannot be tested.

Added in

Transparency in the processes and decision making,

Transparency in the Management

Institutional Characteristics

Transparency in the water quality given to the user.

	Toba Qom Cerriteño Community	Benjamin Aceval Sanitation Board	Emprendimientos Chaco Water private seller
Transparency in the Management	To be constructed	In construction process	Actively building
Institutional Characteristics	In construction process	In construction process	Actively building
Transparency in the water quality given to the user.	To be constructed	In construction process	Actively building
Transparency in the processes and decision making	Not applicable	Actively building	Not applicable

- In relation to the participation of people in decision making on water, the following can be said:

In Qom Toba aborigine community, there is a traditional culture, where in relation to water, the decisions taken by the leader or chief is respected, and that for certain situations, they resort to the opinion of the advisers or the elderly, formed only by men.

In the event there are complaints for faucets loss or broken pipes the leader responsible for the management of the faucet from which water is consumed is being noticed.

In the Health Board, the ultimate authority is the Council, meeting as required by its articles of association. For decision-making on technical issues is the executive committee the one leading the decisions. For major issues, the Council is asked for an opinion. Regarding the question of attendance at the meetings, 80% of respondents surveyed, answered that they wouldn't like to participate, so only 20% attends the meetings.

And each respondent surveyed had a reason not to do it. In this case, the users are the ones who do not exercise their right to participate through the Council.

If the user brings a claim for water leaking or a broken pipe, everyone said that there is a quick solution for the problem.

Concerning Emprendimientos Chaco water private seller, since it is a company there is then no direct mechanism for participation of users in the decisions of such. But there is a direct communication between users over the complaints in case of breakage or poor service.



Elevated tank of Emprendimientos Chaco



Administrative Staff of Emprendimientos

- In terms of gender relations in relation to water the following has been learned:

In the aborigine community "San Francisco de Asis" Toba Qom, people who primarily make decisions regarding water are leaders or Chiefs, who are men. And the water commission is composed entirely of men and that with regard to water use, it is women who have more contact with it, and they are responsible with children from carrying water to their home. The faucets are on community courts and a faucet supplies from two to eight families.



Indigenous children drinking from the tap community



Indian woman working craft

The women are organized and they make decisions, specifically in the commission of craftsmanship, where they developed the product and they are in charge of selling them.

- In relation to the knowledge of those laws that govern in relation to water and related issues could be seen:

Leaders or chiefs and directors of the community, "San Francisco de Asis" Toba Qom, are very into the law 904/81 Aborigines Communities Statutes, but they did not refer to the legislation on water resources.

The Health Board shows ignorance in regard to existing laws related to water, but it shows a strong interest in learning more and wishes to participate in training courses on it.

The owner of Emprendimientos Chaco water private seller demonstrated knowledge of current legislation related to water.

Regarding equity mechanism, it has been informed and it has proven that Emprendimientos Chaco water private seller created a mechanism together with users to collect the invoices to the elderly and those who are physically removed from office. The days are scheduled in the calendar, but before each visit they are notified through a text message.

LESSONS LEARNED

For the three models of water management it was planned to implement the structured surveys, both for the executive committee that directs the management and for the users. But with the aborigine community Toba Qom, it was necessary to make a restructuring of the instrument, since the current cultural model in that community is vertical, where the leader or chief decides what to do.

This difference was understood only in the field when the instrument was being implemented, and it occurred due to a lack of knowledge about specific aborigine culture by those responsible for the analysis.

Ignorance of the laws found by the heads of two models of community water management and users in general, is due to a lack of continuing education by the authorities responsible for regulating water in national scale.