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**PARTICIPATION as a HUMAN RIGHT:  
IS KEY  
TO SOLVING  
WATER PROBLEMS  
IN TONGA**

A thesis  
submitted in partial fulfilment  
of the requirements for the degree  
of  
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## **ABSTRACT**

The aim of this study was to identify the equity issues that hinder the participation of the people in the management and the maintenance of the rural water systems in Tonga. Five villages in Tongatapu were selected for the study as well as the appropriate Tongan Government Departments and donors. Participatory observation and interviews were techniques used for collecting information from the participants. Published and unpublished materials on water and other related materials were referred to in this study as well.

Despite the need for water supply systems in rural areas of Tonga and the increasing demands for water, it was found that many systems, which were delivered in a very top-down manner, were not working effectively. The major finding was that economic, social and political structures in Tonga impeded the participation of grassroots people in the management of water systems. Although modern technologies are being introduced to solve water problems in Tonga, their successes are partial. Previous studies that were carried out in Tonga in trying to find ways of solving water management problems in Tonga also have had partial successes. This study concludes that unless participation is considered a human right, water management problems in Tonga can not be solved.

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## GLOSSARY

CLD	Crown Law Department
CPD	Central Planning Department
DCC	Development Co-ordination Committee
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organisation
H.M. Cabinet	His Majesty's Cabinet
MIRAB	Migration, Immigration, Remittances, Aid and Bureaucracy
MLSNR	Ministry of Land, Survey and Natural Resources
MOH	Ministry of Health
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MOW	Ministry of Works
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
PHS	Public Health Section
RBDF	Rural Business Development Fund
RDU	Rural Development Unit
SCDF	Small Community Development Fund
SPF	Small Project Fund
TWB	Tonga Water Board
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VWCs	Village Water Committees
WHO	World Health Organisation
WRC	Water Resource Committee

## TONGAN WORDS

<i>'apo</i>	traditional respect paid by relatives and friends to the deceased before burial in Tonga
<i>faka'apa'apa</i>	respect
<i>fahu</i>	a system whereby women are higher in rank than men in Tonga
<i>fatongia</i>	obligation
<i>ha'a</i>	means lines of ancestry with <i>Ha'a Tu'i</i> for the Kings' line, <i>Ha'a 'Eiki</i> refers to the middle class, and <i>Ha'a Me'avale</i> for commoners
<i>hou'eiki</i>	noble or chiefly class
<i>kainga</i>	people who are related as in extended family
<i>kalapu</i>	form of fund-raising in Tonga using <i>kava</i>
<i>kavenga</i>	another term used for obligations
<i>kava</i>	pounded roots of <i>kava</i> plants for drinking in social and traditional events- <i>Taumafa kava</i> is for the king, <i>'Ilo kava</i> is for the nobles and the middle class, <i>Faikava</i> or <i>mamakava</i> is for the commoners
<i>lapila</i>	fresh water fish
<i>mana</i>	spiritual or supernatural power
<i>mateaki</i>	loyalty
<i>me'avale</i>	commoners
<i>pule</i>	the authorities
<i>Pulotu</i>	pre-Christian concept for heaven or paradise where ancient Tongan gods and goddesses were residing
<i>ta'ovala</i>	wrap around waist mat (customary dress)
<i>tapa</i>	cloth made from bark of <i>hiapo</i> (mulberry tree)
<i>Tu'i</i>	Tongan word for King
<i>tukituki</i>	<i>kava</i> drinking of commoners especially in a funeral

*uiaki*

when the town officer is walking around the village calling out  
to inform the people that there will be a village

*fono*, where and when the *fono* will be and the purpose of it.

*'ulumotu'a*

head of the extended family