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***“INVESTING IN WATER AND SANITATION
INFRASTRUCTURE: SOCIAL
PARTICIPATION AS SOCIAL INCLUSION,
THE CASE OF WATER PROVIDER
ENTERPRISES IN BOLIVIA”***

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*“Si el hombre es un pueblo, el agua es el mundo
Si el hombre es recuerdo, el agua es memoria,
Si el hombre está vivo, el agua es la vida”
(Joan Manuel Serrat)*

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“INVESTING IN WATER AND SANITATION INFRASTRUCTURE: SOCIAL PARTICIPATION AS SOCIAL INCLUSION, THE CASE OF WATER PROVIDER ENTERPRISES IN BOLIVIA”

ABSTRACT

One crucial element within infrastructure is water and sanitation access for its direct impact reducing poverty and increasing the opportunities of poor people. This research focuses on infrastructure in the water and sanitation sector (WSS) from a wider perspective considering the important role of social participation on sustainability. In this sense, two case studies were chosen within the Bolivian context: the water provider enterprise Mancomunitaria¹ MANCHACO in the region of El Chaco and the water provider enterprise COSMOL (cooperative) in the city of Montero, Santa Cruz. These cases are instructive examples of how social participation, transparency and commitment are decisive elements for contributing to sustainability.

The paper argues that water and sanitation infrastructure and service provision are related to two intertwined elements: social participation and efficiency in providing the service. Both elements intersect in different dimensions with determinant elements which are part of dynamic processes in the provision of water and sanitation and contribute a long term and sustainable perspective. Sustainability with managerial, environmental and social dimensions needs to be understood as a dynamic process. This research specially focused on social sustainability and identifies social inclusion and water governance as essential pillars based on participation for achieving a long term perspective.

The quantitative approach shows that higher income inequality levels are related to lower levels of water and sanitation access. The quintile and the Gini coefficient analysis show that the poorest strata is more adversely affected by income inequality and lower levels of water access and the combination of both aspects represent a perverse circle of poverty and negatively affects the sustainability of services.

Key words: Infrastructure, sustainability, social participation, inequality, water access.

¹ Mancomunitaria is a group of water enterprises (Cooperatives and Municipal) which provide water and sanitation services to a region.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

	Spanish	English
<i>EPSA</i>	Empresa Prestadora de Servicios de Agua y Alcantarillado	Water and sewerage Provider Enterprise
<i>GDP</i>	Producto Interno Bruto	Gross Domestic Product
<i>WSS</i>	Sector de Agua y Saneamiento	Water and Sanitation Sector
<i>GTZ</i>	Agencia de Cooperación Técnica de la Republica Federal de Alemania (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbei)	Technical German Cooperation
<i>KfW</i>	Banco de Desarrollo de la Republica Federal de Alemania (KfW Entwicklungsbank)	German Development Bank
<i>FNDR</i>	Fondo Nacional de Desarrollo Regional	National Fund of Regional Development
<i>IDB</i>	Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo (BID)	Interamerican Development Bank
<i>SPM</i>	Gestión Político Social (GPS)	Socio-Political Management
<i>GSB</i>	Junta General de Accionistas	General Shareholders Board
<i>S.A.M</i>	Sociedad Anónima Mixta	Mixed Public Limited Company
<i>VC</i>	Comités de Vigilancia	Vigilance Committee
<i>OTB</i>	Organizaciones Territoriales de Base	Territorial Grassroots Organizations
<i>DESCOM</i>	Componente de Desarrollo Comunitario	Community Development Component