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Water Governance: Does Collaboration Between Sectors Better Meet The Needs For Drinking Water Of Peri-Urban Residents? – Case Study Of Ha Noi, Viet Nam

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Water Governance: Does Collaboration Between Sectors Better Meet The Needs For Drinking Water Of Peri-Urban Residents? – Case Study Of Ha Noi, Viet Nam

Peri-urban areas in developing countries have been underlying tremendous environmental, social and economic transformation in a rapid urbanization context. In the face of the unavailability of public piped water system and large-scale private sector water provider, peri-urban residents have to mainly rely on independent small-scale private sector providers, harvest rainwater, or mobilize collective actions from other community members in collaboration with non-government organizations or public water supply to secure for drinking water. This type of collaboration is basically a new form of water governance that values the partnerships between governance entities rather than the dominant control of the state. The collaboration is also considered as an effective model to enhance and improve the access to water of many underserved people in the developing countries. Applying a new water governance approach, this research examines if residents of Co Nhue commune in peri-urban Ha Noi are benefited from the lease contract signed in 1997 between Cau Giay Water Supply Company and Co Nhue People Committee (local authority)-a new form of water supply in the cities of Vietnam. According to the contract, the company will provide water in bulk to the commune through a master water meter, then the commune Water Management Unit, assigned by local authority will be in charge of managing the network and retailing water to local residents. To explore the story of the collaboration between governance entities in water supply in Co Nhue, this research used primary data, collected from in-depth interviews with local residents, local government representatives, local water management unit members, the director and head of the business section of Cau Giay Water Supply Company during spring and summer 2006. The findings reveal that the collaboration went along well for around eight years (1997-2005) until the local water management unit was unable to pay Cau Giay company the revenue of water volumes recorded in the master meter and the local authority cannot find any funding sources to pay back the debt. As a result, Co Nhue water users have been charged 6,000 Vietnam Dong (37.5 cents)/cubic meter, which is more than double times compared to the standard price set by the city water supply company. Tensions have been intensified between the local authority of Co Nhue, Cau Giay Water Supply Company and the local water management unit when no solution is sought, and especially when the company has threatened and cut the services several times.