

The Problem of Access to Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in Small Island Towns: The Case of Foundiougne in Senegal

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Abstract : In Senegal, access to water, hygiene, and sanitation in small island towns is a particular problem, which is still poorly understood by the public authorities and development aid actors. The main objective of this study carried out in the Municipality of Foundiougne is to contribute to the knowledge of the problems related to the supply of drinking water, access to sanitation, and hygiene in small island towns in Senegal. The methodology adopted consisted of a literature review and quantitative surveys of a sample of 100 households in the Municipality. Semi-structured interviews using interview guides and informal interviews were also conducted with mechanical and manual emptiers, municipal authorities, public toilet managers, and neighbourhood leaders. Direct observation with photography was also used. The results show that, with regard to access to drinking water, 35% of households have unimproved water services, 46% have a limited level of service, and 19% have a basic level of service. Regarding sanitation, 77% of households are considered to have access to basic sanitation services, compared to 23% with limited sanitation services. However, these figures hide the dysfunctions of the sanitation system. Indeed, manual emptying is practiced exclusively by 4% of households, while 17% of households combine it with mechanical emptying. In addition, domestic wastewater is mainly evacuated outside the sanitation facilities, and all the sludge extracted from the pits is discharged directly into the environment without treatment. As a matter of fact, the surveys showed that 52% of households do not have access to a basic level of hygiene-related to handwashing when leaving the toilet. These results show that there is real work to be done at the level of small urban centres if we want to achieve MDG 6.

Keywords : Foundiougne, Senegal, small island, small town, water-sanitation, hygiene

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