



## Triggering social accountability for failed groundwater supply infrastructure in rural Malawi: Chiradzulu case study

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The Malawi 2018 Sector Performance Report produced by the Ministry of Water and Sanitation found that the proportion of people with access to safe water in the country was 86%, with 57% of improved water points in rural areas being boreholes with hand-pumps. However, a persistent sustainability challenge plagues the water sector: for over 20 years, the functionality of improved water points has remained between 69% and 77%. A study on borehole forensics conducted by the CJF programme found that 30% of hand-pumps fail within five years of installation.

Over the past decade hand pump non-functionality has been attributed to poor community ownership and lack of responsibility to manage the operation and maintenance of the wells. However, in some cases this has been merely hypothetical as the non-functionality of some boreholes has been due to factors that are beyond what communities can manage in terms of operation and maintenance.

BASEflow with support from the Scottish Government conducted Borehole Forensics, which is a detailed investigation of a borehole and hand pump performance. Twenty one (21) boreholes were technically assessed and out of these, 13 were found to have unacceptable low yield as per the required Government constant pumping rate test standard of 0.25 liters per second for not less than 4 hours. The failure of the 13 boreholes indicate that the boreholes were developed and constructed to completion and handed over to users when they did not have enough water to meet the required standards.

These findings were shared with the relevant stakeholders at Community, District and National level. One major policy recommendation at National level is for the need for adherence to water infrastructure construction standards and the need to empower citizens of rights to water and to hold service providers accountable for failed groundwater supply infrastructure.