



Geothermal Ecosystems in Action: An Ethnographic Exploration of Development in the East African Rift Valley, Eritrea

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Abstract

The East African Rift Valley is a geothermal hotspot, with significant potential for harnessing geothermal energy to address energy poverty and climate change. An ethnographic study employing participant observation, semi-structured interviews (n=20), and document analysis to understand community perspectives on geothermal energy development. Participants expressed mixed sentiments about employment opportunities, with approximately 40% indicating perceived benefits in terms of job creation and income generation. Local communities play a crucial role in the success or failure of geothermal projects by influencing acceptance rates and community engagement strategies. Communities should be actively involved in project planning to ensure sustainable development that aligns with local needs and values.

Keywords: *African Rift, Geothermal Energy, Ethnography, Indigenous Knowledge, Community Engagement, Sustainable Development, Participatory Action Research*

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