

WOMEN, WATER SUPPLY & SANITATION

making the link stronger

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United Nations International
Research and Training Institute
for the Advancement of Women



INSTRAW

CONTENTS

- 1 Preface
- 2 Introduction: A Lesson in Listening
- 3 I. What do water and sanitation have to do with women?
- 5 II. Obstacles to full implementation
- 6 III. Issues to face in programme and project planning and implementation
 - A. What is community participation?
 - B. Avoiding illogical project plans
 - C. Measuring the Unmeasurable
 - D. After water, what? The question of priorities
 - E. Don't participatory projects cost a lot?
 - F. Doesn't community/women's participation take a lot of time?
 - G. Participatory techniques can speed up the process
 - H. Is this too sensitive?
 - I. What about the children?
 - J. Who is equipped to undertake the projects?
- 15 Bibliography

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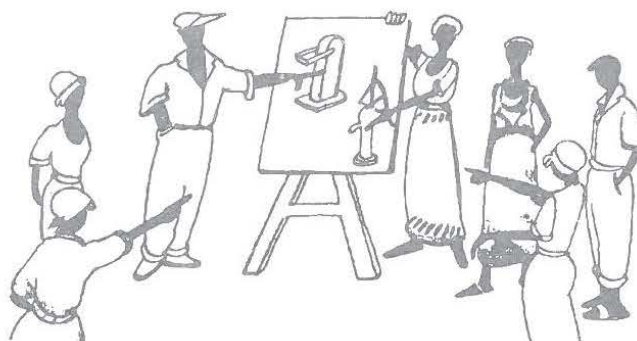
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PREFACE

Women, Water Supply And Sanitation: Making The Link Stronger



This supplement to INSTRAW News No. 13 is adapted from a manuscript ⁽¹⁾ prepared by Ms. Siri Melchior, Programme Manager of PROWESS/UNDP, the United Nations Development Programme's interregional project for the Promotion of Water and Environmental Sanitation Services; she is also Chairperson of the Inter Agency Task Force on Women and the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade (IDWSSD). PROWESS jointly administers the Task Force with the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), and has consulted with INSTRAW during

various stages of its work. Under one of its major programme areas, INSTRAW has prepared training modules on such areas as women in development ⁽²⁾ and women's involvement in water and sanitation and new and renewable sources of energy, often in conjunction with other U.N. agencies ⁽³⁾.

Ms. Melchior summarizes six years of PROWESS's work on drinking water and sanitation needs in well over 700 communities in all developing regions. The supplement describes different issues and approaches involved in encouraging participation by women and communities in water and sanitation projects.

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- (1) This introduction was originally written for a collection of reference materials entitled "Women as Partners in Development", being published on compact disk (CD-ROM) by CD Resources/LIBRARIES-TO-GO, 1123 Broadway, Suite 902, New York, NY 10010, tel. (212) 929-8044.
- (2) To train U.N. and field staff in project design.
- (3) The latter two were prepared with the ILO/Turin Centre.

INTRODUCTION

A Lesson in Listening

On the Indonesian island of Timor, people in four villages were installing new hand pumps as part of a drinking water and sanitation project. Throughout the project, the collaborating agencies -- the Ministry of Health, the nationwide non-governmental organization "PKK", local university groups and PROWESS/UNDP--were naturally watching closely to see how it was going.

Eight months after operations began, researchers returned to the villages to learn as much from the people as possible as to whether and why (or why not) the project was succeeding, if the water was being used, were there health benefits, were women's water-carrying burdens reduced, etc.

To the researchers' surprise, villagers were taking almost as much time as before to collect water, but they were also using more of it. The reason came out when, no matter what they were asked, people started talking of tomatoes and vegetables:

Are your pumps being used?

Oh yes, we use them to water vegetables.
Do you have income?

Of course, we sell vegetables.

What is your opinion of the role of women in the village?

Why, they are very important people -- they grow vegetables.

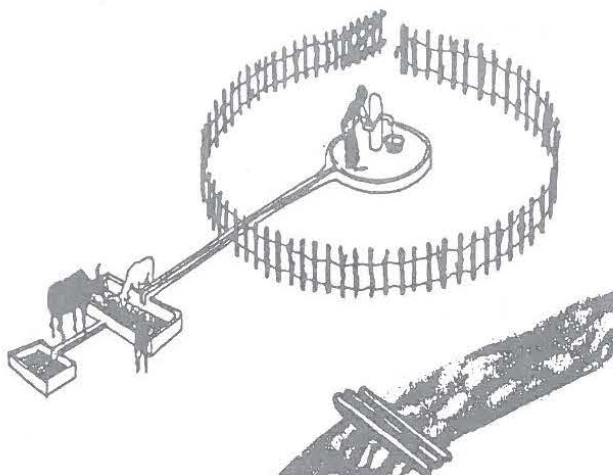
For the researchers, this was a lesson in listening, in hearing what was actually being

said and why, without filtering out the unexpected; pump installers and health ministries do not normally ask or get excited about tomatoes.

More important still, the tomatoes stand for -- no, the tomatoes are -- what people needed and wanted most. The question for project design, which comes

back again and again in participatory development, is clear:

How does one stay focused on people's interests and motivations as the solid foundation of community action?



I. What do Water and Sanitation have to do with Women?

To quote one manager of the World Bank/UNDP water and sanitation programme: "I don't want women to be involved in water/sanitation projects just because I like them, but because otherwise the projects don't work".

With this realization, a lot of progress can be made.

"Water and sanitation are the concern of women" is something we hear increasingly from engineers (often men) working in international aid projects in this field. They say this because they have observed at least some of the following phenomena:

Women (and to a lesser extent children) are the ones who are most involved in drawing water for household use, transporting it home, storing it until it is used, and using it (for cooking, cleaning, washing, watering household animals). It may be a matter of life or death to them and their families to know about water sources, their quality and reliability, restrictions and advantages of their use, acceptable storage methods, and the like.

In Kenya, it is estimated that 3 million women spend an average of three hours a day collecting water; in other areas of the world, that figure may be as high as 6-8 hours. Quantities carried vary greatly, but the World Health Organization usually sets 18-20 litres per person per day as the maximum acceptable. This would mean 108-120 kilos, or 238-264 pounds per day for a family of six.

The energy expended on this task may consume a third of daily caloric intake -- not negligible in populations where malnutrition is already a threat. Apart from various infectious diseases associated with poor water quality, trauma induced by carrying heavy loads is common.

Women are generally the main guardians of household cleanliness and the caretakers of the sick (frequently they are also responsible for funerals and rites of mourning). They are the principal teachers of hygiene behaviour to their children. To quote Dr. R. Rugunda, former Minister of Health of Uganda: "Women are the front-line health workers".

Men, women and children in various societies usually have specific and different customs related to cleanliness and defecation. Frequently, children's faeces are considered harmless and their defecation anywhere therefore acceptable; however, the fact is that millions of children die every year because faeces are not disposed of in a sanitary way. At the other extreme, women's defecation practices in this respect are often surrounded by more shame than men's. Frequently they must relieve themselves in secrecy, for example at night-- a difficult feat in areas with endemic diarrhoea, if defecation has to be done in fields far away from the home. In some societies a husband may not even be aware of his wife's problems in this regard, as it is not considered appropriate for her to discuss them with him.

Whether or not women face greater problems, traditional practices often encourage separation of women and men. Women may be unable to use the same facilities as men (in modern office buildings, for example) or to bathe in the same part of the stream. Programmes which ignore this may therefore be providing services which can be used by one sex only, if that.

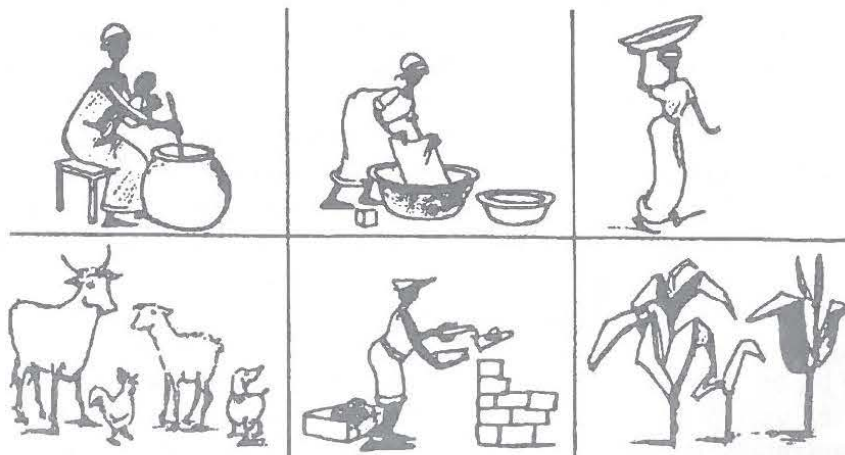
Responsibilities are also traditionally separate, but complementary. Women and men in developing countries sometimes have separate incomes, savings and financial responsibilities. Women may be responsible for buying or producing food, and men for children's education.

There is apparently a growing number of female-headed households; most countries fall in the range of 10-40 per cent. In many countries women may be unable to own land (for placement of pumps) and have no

access to credit (for purchase or maintenance of facilities). Finally, almost universally, by practice or by law, women have less decision-making power than men, both in private and public spheres.

Women are not a special interest group in the field of water and sanitation; they are a mainstream interest group. They need to be both partners (without their involvement, projects risk being inappropriate, and failing) and beneficiaries (lessening their burdens is a prerequisite to their contributing more to other development activities).

Unfortunately these facts are as yet rarely translated into action in terms of projects. Water and sanitation may be a women's sector, but most projects do not reflect this, and fail to reach their full potential. Why is this?



II. Obstacles to Full Implementation

Working with development planners, sectoral specialists, project practitioners and community leaders from all over, we hear many problems, obstacles and unanswered questions being voiced about women's (and community) participation. In a search for what works, and works most effectively, both their objective observations and their subjective attitudes present real issues we have dealt with. Here are eight representative quotes:

"I don't understand what women's participation is."

Women's participation is still seen as something mystical, something that only women can do. Just what that participation consists of must be explained, and it must be broken down into components described in the usual language of projects and related to the basic "Decade approaches".

"Women's participation is marginal to project success."

Many still do not really believe it makes a difference. Indicators of progress are needed with respect to many of the "fussy" concepts involved (such as women's level of participation) and to show, in a rigorous manner, that it does make a difference as to maintenance, use and impact.

Demonstrations are of little value without data.

"It costs too much, takes too much time, is too complex managerially."

There is a need to show how much it costs (and how much it costs not to do it), and to devise practical work plans which will allow field managers to manage responsibly a flexible process (which water projects necessarily are) even if there is uneven progress in women's participation. Indicators of success following service installation need to be developed, or the field managers will face pressure from their superiors who wish to hear how many pumps were installed each month.

"Coming from outside the community, I can't work on encouraging

community/women's participation; it is too sensitive an issue."

We must find ways to strengthen rather than weaken the social fabric in order to make it less threatening.

"I tried to get women to participate, but they wouldn't come to my meetings."

This is a statement I hear often from project managers in the field. Guidelines are needed, drawing on tested methodologies for community and women's participation, which describe "how to do it".

"Those engineers don't care about development", and its flip side, "Those social scientists are too academic, too micro-level oriented".

We have to recognize that we are trying to reconcile very different approaches. This takes trust, which only develops over time by building up respect for each partner's technical abilities and needs.

"It's all very well that you have successful projects on a small scale, but basically all demonstration projects are a success; can you do it on a large scale?"

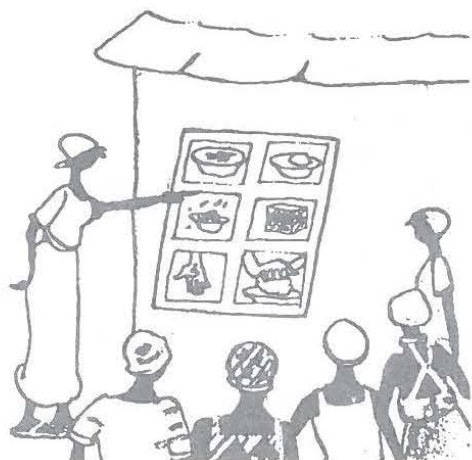
There is a need to implement such large-scale projects, to find methodologies which, even if not perfect, are realistic, and to establish their cost in financial, social and political terms.

"We've 'done' women in our agency; there is a policy statement which says women are important, and we have a Women in Development office. Now we want to get on to other matters."

Generally, policy statements do not go beyond overall statements, and need to be translated into concrete programme terms.

It has been recognized that a technical or "hardware" approach --one that simply considers the physical machinery -- is not enough. What still must be recognized fully is that approaches concerned with applications and training are, in their way, as technical as the hardware approaches. Developing and implementing them takes time, funding and expertise.

III. Issues to face in programme and project planning and implementation



A. What is community participation ?

One problem with past community participation efforts was that they often reflected only a very narrow cross-section of the community--namely, most participants were men.

Communities have been taken as a homogeneous mass: if you talk to the headman, you know what the community wants/needs/can do. Yet within a given community there may be many different groups--old/young, rich/poor, Hindu/Muslim, men/women/children--each with different priorities, vulnerabilities and talents.

Participation has been seen as a contribution of labour, ideas and materials, not as a partnership for such decisions as to what type of facility, when, where, whether or not to participate in the project in the first place and who the community representatives will be.

"Decision" is an operative word. With some encouragement, many people realize that water tends to be a woman's task. However, it may take more effort to demonstrate that her task might also involve decision-making outside the home.

A broad range of methodologies is presently used to improve community involvement in water and sanitation projects. For example:

- ❑ A *didactic approach* might be a health education programme where villagers are informed about health hazards and taught to wash their hands after defecation.
- ❑ Another approach is *social marketing*. This basically relies on extensive research into beneficiaries' views, beliefs and skills, and tailors education programmes to overcome obstacles in accepting the planned programme.
- ❑ The *participatory approach* has a different basic objective: to strengthen and enlist local problem-solving and decision-making capability (individual and communal). In turn, the communities use this skill to sustain and benefit more from development activities, such as water and sanitation.

Our experience at PROWESS is primarily with the participatory approach, to which the following remarks pertain.

Each approach has merits and costs, which depend on the task at hand; often a combination of approaches may be desirable. They are all intended to reduce the gap between the "supply" of services presented by governments, donors, etc., and the "demand" for services by the intended beneficiaries.

As one PROWESS project manager has noted:

"Communities always have the last word; if they don't like the project, they won't use it" (see Item No. 16 in the Bibliography).

B. Avoiding Illogical Project Plans

First, a few clarifications. For better or for worse, governments and donors often operate in terms of "projects" or "programmes". These are often described in project "documents" or plans.

We reviewed a large number of such project documents from various organizations. Some examples follow.

Example 1

Many project documents give as justification for their existence the fact that 80 per cent of diseases are caused by unsafe water and inadequate sanitation. The projects call for activities that deal with installation of facilities-- pumps, for example--and the budgets deal with the people and materials needed to install them. Thus, progress will be measured against the indicators of the number and timing of installations. The implied logic seems to be that the number of installations has a direct bearing on health.

Rather than accepting this heroic leap of faith, we find it essential to analyse the intermediate steps. One might believe, for example, that the following sequence holds: number of installations--per cent maintained--per cent used--hygienic use--health.

In reality, this is a very simplified model, and not everyone may agree with it. Very few projects will be able to show any impact on health within the proposed timeframe. Clean water may be a prerequisite for health, but so many other factors intervene that a simple relationship can rarely be found. However, it is clear that installing facilities will not bring any benefits unless they are effectively maintained and used.

Example 2

A project has been ongoing for three years. So far, different types of technology or hardware have been developed and chosen, but no application or training component have been introduced yet. The next phase calls for villagers to contribute 25 per cent of the cost in cash. To achieve this, project management will rely on community participation.

This would be ambitious even if the application methodologies had been developed and tested during the first phase. However, part of the difficulty comes from thinking that community participation can simply be "released" at a later stage, once decisions on the parameters of the project (such as institutions involved and type of technology) have been taken.

Example 3

A project document states that 50 per cent of pumps in a given country are not functioning at present because they are not being maintained. To improve the situation, the document calls for the project to place greater emphasis on community participation. However, whereas other budgets, work plans, etc., are specified, activities designed to improve community participation are not. The explanation given is that this will be the responsibility of the Government.

Example 4

A project document recognizes that women's involvement is essential to the health impact of a water project. It also states that women will be "involved" in its planning. The planned activities, however, are merely a survey of women's knowledge, attitudes and practices with respect to health

-- women are not intended to take part in decisions.

These are examples of apparent shortfalls in planning; we have a lot of experience in that area. There is less, but ever increasing, experience in more effective ways of planning projects with women.

Suggestion 1 -- Objectives

At the very least, objectives, indicators of success and the relationship of activities to objectives should be analysed. This of course could be true for any project. We have found it useful to use the objective sustainable and effective utilization of services, looking also at replicability (see also Items 11 and 17 in the Bibliography). Analysing sustainability, for example, naturally brings up questions regarding women's role as a way to reach objectives.

There are constraints to this. The organization(s) initiating the project must at least tolerate such an approach. Many still simply analyse plans in terms of installation cost per capita, with no indicators for sustainability -- in which case, for example, health education may be considered a luxury.

Suggestion 2 -- Who Formulates the Plan?

A project, a project plan and those who formulate the plan are closely connected. In the past, plans were often formulated by one or more technical specialists. Increasingly, organizations attempt to bring applications specialists into the process. However, often they are not brought in until a later stage, after major decisions have been taken, institutions defined, etc. Their findings may be presented in a separate chapter under "special considerations",

and often wind up being irrelevant or even disruptive to the rest of the team.

We have to recognize that there is a communication gap. There may be many applications specialists, but their working premises, styles and jargon differ from those of technical specialists. To build up "creative tension" rather than "abrasive tension" between the two, time is needed. Our experience shows this happens much often when the applications specialists are there from the beginning and become part of normal working patterns. Of course, they also need appropriate working tools that are adapted to bureaucratic and other realities.

Suggestion 3 -- Be Specific

It can be argued that it is even more difficult to plan community participation precisely than to plan construction of a water system. Certainly, many aspects need to be left undefined, but one can at least furnish the means to develop answers and act on them. A project document incorporates many such provisions and can:

- ❑ identify *institutions* and staff to undertake these activities;
- ❑ plan a sizeable *budget* for them;
- ❑ leave sufficient *time* for the activities to start up before installation begins (for example, if a budget is approved in phases, approved applications costs first; if vehicles are to be ordered, order them for community participation field work first (see Item 19 in the Bibliography for an example); and
- ❑ establish a *work plan* which discusses how "software" (applications and training) and "hardware" (the actual technology or machinery) can be woven together. If possible, describe the types of decisions in which communities have a role (e.g., will communities be able to

decide whether they wish to participate? Will women be involved? Who will give the green light for the drilling of a well -- the engineer, the community extension workers or the villagers?). In addition, methodologies for hard-to-reach groups, such as women, can be described or at least the situation analysed.

C. Measuring the Unmeasurable

Many experts consider rural surveys to be less than perfect and in fact view them as one of the least efficient undertakings, since data collected tend to be late, inaccurate, irrelevant and costly -- especially if they have been collected inappropriately.

However, surveys can be a superb tool if well crafted and sensitively used.

- ❑ Demonstration projects require that major emphasis be placed on the quality and quantity of data. Other projects may need less data, but they still need some.
- ❑ We have found the collection of some types of data particularly aggravating to field staff and villagers. One example of a hated question: precise type of water use (how many litres used for what purpose). Field staff consider this tedious and intrusive to collect. This is why adjustments should be made in timing and style, to arrive at realistic plans. As one PROWESS staffer puts it: even staying in the village one night can give you wonderful insights -- they may be biased, but are probably better than nothing.
- ❑ Obtaining good data on a village -- priorities, beliefs, attitudes and other facts about its various population

groups -- is crucial to making a project appropriate in design and monitoring.

- ❑ The act of participatory data collection (less so for traditional data collection) is in itself a method of energizing a community to deal with its problems, as the community members discuss and think through the situation.
- ❑ Project planners fear data that are too academic, too late or too critical. Our experience is that collecting data under the auspices of the project itself (rather than of a separate research institution) makes it more likely that the data will be helpful rather than threatening or useless. Some of the data do not even need to leave the community; making the feedback circle of data producers and users as small as possible can improve efficiency.
- ❑ The reality is that in the past, many studies of more "sensitive" issues, such as knowledge, beliefs, attitudes and practices, were biased. There are two reasons for this: The powerless members of the community, such as women and children, were hard to reach for comments (although they may be the primary intended beneficiaries); and answers to direct questions are notoriously wrong, as respondents try to please the interviewers. Examples: the woman who says she washes her hands after defecation, although she has no water; and the project planner who says s(he) includes women's concerns, although s(he) does not know how to do it. In our experience, participatory techniques and other open-ended techniques are particularly helpful in uncovering some of these facts (see Item 12 in the Bibliography).

D. After Water, What? The Question of Priorities

One of the most important questions to be determined for each community and for sub-groups of communities (where men and women often differ) is that of priorities. One has only to listen to the election speeches of local politicians to hear that improved water supply is a priority for most communities. Improved sanitation very rarely is, although it is more so in highly populated areas.

Usually, little connection is seen between health and improved water/sanitation. Instead, the reasons often cited for desiring improved services are to reduce burden (e.g., time spent in drawing water) or to improve aesthetics and cleanliness (to avoid smelly latrines, to be able to bathe one's family and oneself). Any person will avoid drinking water if it can be demonstrated to contain otherwise invisible faecal matter, even if s(he) does not believe in any connection to health; health itself may not be a top priority for villagers and Governments. Most cultures have strong rituals surrounding cleanliness and purification, although the manifestation of this may not be clear to outsiders.

In the activities we support, we try to build on such priorities and habits, so that we meet a need, rather than "create" a demand. In other words, we bring the process as close as possible to what is commonly called "demand-driven development".

In a community where women walk six hours a day to collect water, more convenient water is a first priority. It is a precondition for liberating them for such activities as income production and other

desired improvements. On the other hand, in a community with plentiful but polluted water, women may see income production as the priority and consider water less important. Ideally, one could decide to go to another community where water/sanitation is a priority; this would be a true response to demand, but many do not find it practicable. Instead, one can tailor the project to bridge the gap in perceptions. For example, some practitioners feel that health education actually increases the priority placed on water/sanitation demand. In particular, it is our experience that associating income-producing activities with water and sanitation projects may increase their attractiveness/priority to community members. It also reduces reliance on volunteers -- a practice which, in our experience, makes projects less sustainable. Furthermore, the participatory process usually strengthens a community to the point where it is ready to use its new strength for other ventures, and it would be a waste not to recognize this. As Margaret Mwangola of KWAHO in Kenya says: "After water, what?"

Many donors are beginning to recognize this fact and are experimenting with approaches. Logically associated activities, such as vegetable growing, composting and recycling of human waste (what we call "brown gold"), or small-scale forestry, are components of at least some donor projects.

E. Don't Participatory Projects Cost a Lot?

A quick answer would be: "Yes, but not nearly as much as projects with no participation, which are manifestly wasteful."

Cost estimates are becoming available which indicate start-up costs for software activities on the order of 10-25 per cent of

total cost, depending on the situation (see, for example, Items 5 and 6 in the Bibliography).

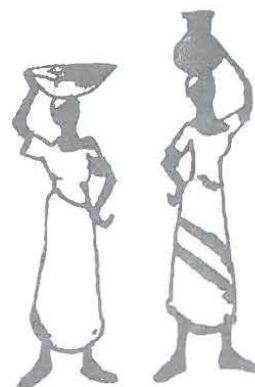
A few factors to be considered:

- ✧ Conventional projects often underestimate actual costs, for example by not including costs for maintenance or spare parts or costs to the community (time, labour, finance).
- ✧ In all projects assisted by PROWESS/UNDP, communities are contributing financially, at least for maintenance and sometimes for capital costs. Our overall conclusion is that communities are willing and able to pay, so long as they like the project. They are, of course, more skeptical if they have had experiences with failed projects in the past, and also if they see another donor in a neighbouring community providing "hand-out" projects.

What is women's role in this? As stated at the outset, this varies from society to society, and little can be taken for granted. As a very general rule, women are more interested in water and sanitation and therefore more likely to want to pay. They may, or may not be seen as capable of handling money: In one African country they were perceived as too soft for that, while in another they were considered more trustworthy community treasurers than men.

F. Doesn't Community/Women's Participation Take a Lot of Time?

There is much discussion of how long participation activities take. Some believe two years are needed before pumps are installed, for example. In our experience, it depends very much on how it is done.



If community/women's participation is seen as an integral component from the beginning, and its results are woven into the technical plan, then it may not be necessary to plan for more than a few months of activities to start with. In fact, it can sometimes be undertaken faster than the technical activities, and then the issue becomes one of the villagers being impatient with the pace of hardware installation. If, on the other hand, it is turned on like a tap, well into the project, then indeed disruptive readjustments and slowdowns may occur.

Some findings:

- ✧ If financing is approved in several stages, then software aspects should be included in the first phase to facilitate early start-up.
- ✧ Projects usually gather data of some sort or another -- such as on water resources -- before start-up. If the community participation field staff is put in charge of certain aspects of this (for example, data that can be collected from household members), they can give useful additional data for planning -- such as how community members perceive the location, quality, reliability and seasonality of sources.

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- It is useful if the technical planners can set down certain parameters within which the applications technicians can fine-tune operations. Thus, in an area of 300 communities, applications software technicians can help to identify 100 where preconditions dispose to implementation. Stated differently: let the plan be event-driven rather than calendar-driven; when a community signs a contract, it gets a pump. This presupposes some co-ordination among project personnel and an acceptance of uneven progress in different areas.

G. Participatory Techniques Can Speed Up the Process

There is no magic to participatory techniques, nor are they new. Part of it has to do with listening.

"We introduced the idea of maintenance funds, but we had to be very cautious about how we did it. People can get the impression that this is a Government project and that the Government will take care of everything.... We had to make the people realize that they themselves will have to take care of this water source. They will have to take the responsibility.

"We asked them exactly what they would do if a part of the pump broke. 'We'll need to get a spare part.' 'How will you get it?' 'Oh, we'll need money then.' 'Where do you think you'll get this money?' 'Aha! Just give us time and we'll let you know what we have done about it.'

"Many villagers now have sufficient maintenance funds under the control of their water committees."

Rose Mulama, KWAHO, Kenya

One problem in the past has been that development workers are not encouraged

or used to listening to people at the village level, and villagers in turn are not used to telling development workers what they know. If a good listener stays in a village for two years, s(he) can probably develop a relationship of mutual trust with villagers, discuss views and help groups get organized to undertake improvements.

However, often we do not have the luxury of two years' preparatory time.

Acknowledging this, many people working in the field have developed "tools" to help speed up and improve the process. A hammer is not the same thing as a house, but if you want to build one, it helps to have one. In this case, the "tools" are not mechanical, but managerial.

These tools have many purposes, one of which is simply to act as a "hearing aid"; field workers who use them have an easier time listening. More important, they are tools for the community members themselves: they can be used to plan, to gather statistics, to discuss and negotiate.

Let me give an example: "Story with a gap". This is a well-known method which uses visuals to simplify the planning process. A problem situation is shown in one picture (e.g., a dirty, broken-down latrine), and another picture shows a desirable situation (e.g., a clean, functioning latrine). Smaller pictures show steps that could be taken to overcome the problem, and villagers can handle, discuss and prioritize these actions. One can open up the process further, for example by adding cards that may seem unrelated, or blank cards for villagers to bring their own solutions; it depends on the situation. (The main description of such methodologies is in Item 13 of the Bibliography. See also Items 9 and 11, which

give sample adaptations at the country or regional level, and Item 10, which is a short video film.)

We find that women who otherwise do not speak up or believe themselves able to take decisions are surprised and delighted when they find ways of doing so through the participatory techniques (and this delight is generally shared by their husbands). The delight in and enjoyment of the process promotes creativity, which is essential for problem-solving.

H. "Is This too Sensitive?"

Development implies change, including some social change. However, it is naive and counterproductive to think that participatory approaches can or will be allowed to play a social awakening role in a society which is not ready for them.

Our experience is that many measures can be taken to maximize benefits and minimize disadvantages.

One is to work as much as possible with local organizations and expertise. Such local expertise will generally choose to (and has long experience in) approaching communities through established channels and traditional, often male, leaders. When such approaches are used, we find that men are generally very supportive of the women, hold them in greater esteem and may even follow their example (especially if income is produced). Another approach which we have encouraged is training and consultations that bring together highly heterogeneous groups (e.g., several levels of local hierarchy, staff of different ministries). One of the most striking pieces of feedback we have had is that field practitioners are very pleased with the training of heterogeneous groups; it may

necessitate some adjustments in the early stages, but ultimately leads to better complementarity and mutual respect.

In the long run, this institution-building -- where the different parties, including communities, function better together -- is perhaps one of the most cheering aspects of the participatory process.

I. What about the Children?

We find that children are often disregarded in projects. Although this paper is about women, the village reality is that women and children are too closely related to separate. Yet the children's situation is special.

For one thing, we find children are very knowledgeable (after all, they are their mothers' helpers in this field). They know about water sources, health habits and health risks in the environment. They are often franker than adults, sometimes have more time and are more open to innovations. Projects often have a special impact on them -- e.g., if new water sources are closer, children may be sent for water instead of the women going. Attendance at school is of course affected by the children's duties.

The conclusion is simply this: take special notice of children. In our experience, they are important partners too (see Item 8 in the Bibliography).

J. Who is Equipped to Undertake the Projects?

Water and sanitation projects are traditionally undertaken by organizations such as the Ministry of Public Works or of Water, or by a technical department within the Ministry of Health. Staff has generally been engineers and technicians, and field

staff has been few -- only those needed for drilling boreholes, constructing latrines and so forth.

On the other hand, for community participation, you need more field staff and staff trained in skills related to community participation rather than in "technical" skills.

This is an absolutely critical question, once you try to implement activities on a large scale. Enthusiastic personnel can be found and, if necessary, trained for small-scale activities. What happens when you upgrade?

In our experience, there are several major possibilities, none of which involves hiring new staff:

- ▣ Train the existing extension workers (say, in the Ministry of Water Development) in participatory techniques.
- ▣ Identify and link with other government agencies that have a stronger field presence, and whose extension workers have community-level experience, e.g., the Ministry of Community Development or Health Education, or primary health care workers in the Ministry of Health. This can be bureaucratically difficult, but we have a number of examples where it works.
- ▣ If such a link-up of organizations is difficult, some governments actually place responsibility for community water/sanitation with a ministry or agency which already has a strong field presence (such as the Rural Development Department of the Ministry of Agriculture).
- ▣ Identify and link with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that have grass-roots experience.

Which of these models is appropriate obviously depends on the situation (and is

not necessarily a matter of choice, at least not for outsiders). For example, there is a question of the scale and stage of the programme: a small-scale pilot or test, a sub-national "dress rehearsal" under replicable conditions or a full-blown national programme.

This is particularly important with respect to NGOs. Right now, there is justifiable interest in further developing the link between governments and NGOs. Most countries have literally thousands of NGOs with unparalleled experience in community participation, and they are potentially very helpful. However, an examination should be made of what their most useful role can be, and this depends on the country situation: in many countries NGOs are particularly helpful in developing methodologies at the pilot or test level, but do not have the capacity for large-scale action. For that scale of action, the crucial question of institutional responsibility must be faced as early as possible.

Tomatoes Again

So this is where the tomatoes come in again, demonstrating a form of "speaking out". In the Indonesian case described earlier, tomatoes irrigated and grown by women were seen in the community as the main positive outcome of a water supply hand pump project. Women had "spoken out" and "taken decisions" not by words but by actions, by their actual use of water.

So my opinion is that if you want to see the real success of the Decade, then you should count tomatoes as well as pumps. Water and sanitation projects will be more successful, and be seen as more successful, if they are seen and planned as entry points for development -- meaning development in the directions that communities themselves define and seek.

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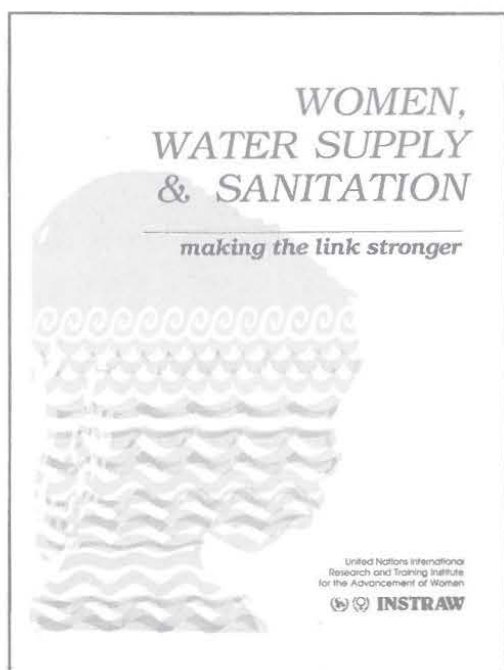
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Printed in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, 1989
8,500 - English