

Introduction

Effective community mobilisation is essential if a project, and the broader RWSS Programme, is to achieve its primary objective of improved health. Projects can put in water supplies, raise awareness on health and hygiene issues and put in improved latrines but without genuine motivation from the communities these will not be sustained, integrated and built on in order to make a significant impact on health. To be particularly effective, community mobilisation needs to begin at the earliest project planning stage. In Phase I many NSAs did this where they had a longer term commitment to the community, or had been working there already. Smaller NSAs new to the community however faced the problem of having to plan a project without spare funds to manage this process. As a result some projects were planned remotely without too much community participation. Lack of enthusiasm towards the project manifested itself in a very slow collection of the community contribution and slow project implementation.

Participation is a key principle of community mobilisation. Participation needs to be real, not just a motivational exercise. This means that communities need to be involved in all stages of the project process, from identification of needs, through planning of interventions (basing decisions on technical advice), implementation, monitoring and evaluating. They need to be genuine partners in the decision making process, not just consulted occasionally. Similarly it is important that a representative from all voices are heard; women, the young and old; very often is it the louder more confident voices that are allowed to dominate. A number of times in Phase I NSAs responded that participation involved "leaving it to the communities to decide" This is not participation, at best it represents considerable faith in the capacity of local institutions, and at worst it is a way of allowing the most powerful stakeholders in a community get their way. Participation is a process that needs to be actively and skilfully facilitated so that all voices are heard— it is not a passive process to be left to the community until/unless local institutions have the capacity to facilitate it.

Participation as an approach

"A growing family of approaches and methods to enable local people to share, enhance and analyse their knowledge of life conditions in order to plan and act"

There has been a marked shift away from the reliance on external surveys as the main method of research and planning for projects. Robert Chambers in particular has documented and promoted more participatory techniques developed first in east Africa and later in Asia through the NGO sector. These approaches combine a range of tools and methodologies which can be adapted according to local needs and preferences. They include a range of tools which are often, visual, active, immediate & widely communicable.

RWSSP has produced a Toolkit 5.6 which provides some information on these participatory processes. In addition, the programme promotes PHAST and CLTS, both of which are participatory planning tools

The arguments for the use of participatory approaches include:

- Motivates immediate action by the NSA/community.
- Data more closely reflects local realities so more accurate planning
- Analysis is quickly and immediately available to the beneficiary.
- Interpretation can be checked easily in situ.
- Promotes inclusive participation from all members of a community.
- Communities have a greater sense of ownership and understanding of the project.
- Appropriate and acceptable solutions to local issues
- Implementation can be better scheduled to suit the beneficiary community.

The end result being hopefully more sustainable and relevant development interventions. RWSSP places a very strong emphasis on a participatory approach to project planning and implementation for the reasons mentioned above.

Three pillars of participation

Good facilitation skills are important if participatory approaches are to work, just using the tool is not enough. Participatory tools can be used in a non-participatory or dominant way. There is a big difference between trying to extract data more efficiently from building people's capacity to analyse their own situation or the two-way

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exchange of expertise and results in a way which fosters trust, confidence and mutual respect.

The 3 Pillars of Participation are:

- Having the right Attitude & Behaviour
- Using the right Tools
- Sharing the information with the community

SEVEN LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION

Jules Pretty deduced that there are 7 levels of participation practiced in development.

- **Passive**, Looking on, no real involvement
- **Information Giving**, eg 'where is the spring?'
- **Consultation** e.g. do you want latrines? (remote designing)
- **Material Incentives** e.g. food for work
- **Functional** e.g. water committee
- **Interactive** joint analysis eg PHAST/CLTS
- **Self Mobilisation**, communities taking a lead in their own development initiatives

It is useful to clarify what your organisation means by 'participatory' and the driving forces behind that. It is likely that different levels of participation are appropriate for different activities and at different stages of the organisations' life cycle.

Community Mobilisation suggested approach

The process below details one particular process for promoting community mobilisation. How for each NSA it does depend very much on individual circumstances, and their relationship to the community, whether they have been working for some time in the area or if they are new. It is not a blueprint model but is here to provide some ideas and guidance if needed.

First of all you need to identify if there is a need for a RWSS scheme

Start with a day on CLTS,. This will help you determine the sanitation habits of the community and also help you make an assessment of their level of motivation to change. Those communities that are motivated after CLTS to go

and build latrines are likely to be good partners to explore RWSS options with.

Conduct a timeline exercise to demonstrate the importance of gender consideration in hygiene and sanitation initiatives. Use this exercise to promote the voices of women in subsequent planning sessions.

Review the community map developed in CLTS and conduct another transect walk to help you complete the RWSSP Community Needs Assessment Form. Support this with group interviews, focus group discussions, a health analysis, your own observations and secondary data sources. This needs assessment should tell you whether improved hygiene and sanitation is a priority need of the community, equally importantly it should inform the community if it is a priority need. Form a village committee to help facilitate the development of a community RWSS plan

Then begin making a plan

Discuss with the village committee possible water and sanitation scenarios, share this with the broader community and get consensus. Discuss the potential cost implications and labour implications as well as any land issues. Develop the outline of a rural water supply and sanitation project and ensure you have full community consensus and that their responsibilities, and yours are well understood. Use this plan as a basis for your RWSSP application.

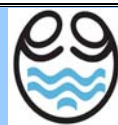
This is not yet a community action plan – this needs to be done once your proposal is approved and the contract signed. When this happens'

Finalise a Community Development plan.

Continue to support the construction of latrines being built as a result of the CLTS. Now that you can spend money you may be in a position to pay for some materials.

Review the role of the village committee; perhaps decide on some more formal Terms of Reference for the project planning and implementation stage of your project. Ensure you have the right people on the committee and plan for their capacity. Continue to develop the capacity of the village committee to facilitate

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change and development, do not just use them simply as your voice piece or to help you arrange meetings, this is not their primary role.

Conduct PHAST . During Phase I we suggested PHAST should take about a week, this is actually far too long for people to attend. Instead use shorter session of a couple of hours over 2/3 days. Agree a time through the village committee that is most suitable. Focus on developing commitment to particular hygiene and sanitation initiatives: Washing hands, safe water storage, solid waste management and possibly animal fencing (latrine use should have been covered already during CLTS)

Facilitate an improved water supply planning meeting. Remember that the aim of the water supply is to promote improved sanitation, hygiene and health, so it is important to have addressed this issue first through PHAST and CLTS and then see how the improved water supply can support this. The planning meeting is best done with broad participation from the community. This is best done, as are most of the exercises, in separate groups of men and women. (Do not allow the men to interfere with the women's discussions). Your initial proposal will have contained some details of the water scheme, but now is the time to finalise these.

This planning meeting will need to address a number of important issues, for example:

- What is the water supply for – what will it be used for?
- What type of water points are needed: taps, showers, laundry areas?
- Where will the water points be best located? (use the village map prepared by the community earlier in order to visualise this). Clan based, needs based, both?
- What will be the rules of use for the water and how will these be enforced (may result in further amendments to the community committee)
- What are the maintenance implication? How will these be addressed?
- Agree the final design of the supply – where will the tanks be, where will the pipes go etc.

Remember that these decisions cannot be left to the community alone to decide. The process needs to be carefully facilitated to ensure all

voices are heard, it also requires technical input from your engineer.

Finally...

The results of CLTS, PHAST and the water supply meeting needs to be brought together into a comprehensive Community Plan. This, if possible, should be facilitated by members from the community committee so that from the start it is their plan and not the NSAs. Separate tasks need to be identified for all the activities that have been identified through CLTS (for improving sanitation) through PHAST (for improving hygiene) and installing the water supply.

The plan should identify:

- Key outputs – for example number of latrines built, rubbish pits dug etc
- Key activities required to achieve each output – for example: order materials, take delivery, make latrine form work etc
- Dates when these activities should take place (a seasonal calendar is a useful tool to assess whether these dates are realistic)
- Responsibilities – who will do what?
- Monitoring data – How will they keep on track?

This plan should contain as much detail as possible and stay in the village.

The Community Contribution

It is a requirement for RWSSP that participating communities contribute 10% of the costs of materials for their project. This helps ensure that the communities have prioritised rural water and sanitation as a development needs and are committed to the project. Phase I demonstrated that failure to pay was nearly always due to low commitment rather than an inability to pay. Commitment is fostered through a process of ensuring that improved hygiene, sanitation and water supply are really seen by the community as a priority need, and that they are involved, not only in the need identification, but also in the subsequent planning of appropriate solutions. Difficulty in raising the 10% is often a symptom of low commitment, and should start ringing alarm bells for the NSA. What are your choices when this happens?

Firstly you need to make an assessment on the commitment of the community. Are there enough people within the community, committed

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to improving hygiene and sanitation? Remember that you need a critical mass to really make a difference, not just a few individuals. If the level of commitment is not there, and you have done all you feel you can to motivate and inspire – then it should be time to realise that this is not a priority need of the community. Often NSAs only realise once they are too committed to continuing, that they are going to have problems. Maybe they have already transported all the materials to the site, or even started work on the water supply. If this is the case they then often have to resort to a really hard sell to get the money from the community. To try and avoid this, make sure the community and the NSA agree together during the planning stages to an appropriate deadline for the 10% collection and that you both agree that the project will not proceed if this deadline is reached. Similarly it might be advisable not to move water supply materials to site, or to begin earthworks. It might be better to start on hygiene practises and improved sanitation, building latrines, whilst you wait for the money to be collected.

In some cases the community may be genuinely unable to collect the money. You then have to either reduce the cost to them, by reducing the amount of materials used, or assist them in raising the 10%. Remember that this 10% MUST come from the community. As an NSA you may accept money from other sources but this must be declared on the grant application form (section 1.5) and does not replace the 10% commitment to the beneficiary community.

Concluding comments

It is important to internalise the meaning of participation and not just give it lip-service. Goals and approaches need to compliment each other. Any of the tools can be manipulated or used in extractive ways. Real participation combines attitude (values) and technique. Who owns the participatory process? Why do you use them? Who owns the outputs? Who uses the outputs? Who holds the power? Inclusive approaches need to be adopted and planned realistically from the outset rather than being trendy add-ons or token gestures. Problems can arise when the organisation does not have clarity about the purpose of using participatory approaches or their role within that.



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**PERSONAL ATTITUDES; EXTRACT
FROM ROBERT CHAMBERS 2002,**

I wrote this section with facilitating PRA/PLA fieldwork in mind..Self-critical awareness is one of the principles of PRA. In the mode of 'use your own best judgement at all times', each of us can list our own questions for self-examination. I have enjoyed dreaming up my list. You could enjoy making your own, and it should serve you better than mine. In the spirit of pluralism, let diversity rule.

Please treat these questions lightly. And do better yourself. The danger with any list is stopping or delaying action. I like the saying 'start, stumble, self-correct, share'. Or the business executive's motto 'Ready, fire, aim'. We learn most by doing, by committing to action, by making and recognising mistakes, by gaining experience the hard way. We learn little by tying ourselves into knots with critical introspection before daring to act, still less by carping with academic critiques from safe sidelines. So, these questions are not to inhibit. They are simply one person's checklist for reflection on the run. (Throughout 'I' can also be 'we').

1) Should you draw up your own questions?

Yes, yes, yes, Yours should serve you better...maybe when you have listed them you can encourage others to draw up and share theirs too ... still, here are some of mine.

2) What is in it for me?

What am I hoping to gain from this? What are my expectations? Am I putting my interests above those of participants?

3) What am I doing here?

Why here and not somewhere else? Why this community, workshop, course, class or group and not another? Where these people and not others?

4) Why do they think I am here?

Have I explained to them? Adequately?

5) What are their expectations?

What do they feel is in it for them? What fit or misfits is there between what I think they can expect and what they do expect? How can I help them to be realistic?

6) Who is participating in whose programmes, project, workshop, course, class or group?

Who feels it is theirs? Are 'they' participating in mine or ours? Or am I, or are we, participating for theirs?

7) What are the significant 'axes of difference' in the community, workshop, course, class or group?

Gender? Age? Wealth? Social, ethnic or religious group? Education? Language or fluency? Technical ability? Or what? How do these combine?

8) Who are the lowers?

Who are marginalized or excluded? Those less fluent in the language? People who lack confidence? Females? Those of lower social, ethnic or religious status? Younger people and children? People with disabilities? The 'uneducated'? The very old? The poor...?

9) Who are the uppers?

Who are dominant? Those more fluent in the language? Those who are more confident Males? Those of higher social, ethnic or religious status? Older people? The better educated? The relatively wealthy?

10) Who are the stakeholders?

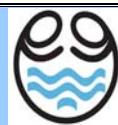
Who are the people affected or who might be affected by the process? Who are likely to gain? Who are likely to lose?

11) What is a good time and place for whom to meet?

When and where is convenient for them (especially lowers) to meet? Whose convenience takes precedence? Would it be better for them to meet on their own? Would they like me to go and come back later?

12) Who am I meeting and who am I not meeting?

Am I meeting uppers or lowers? Who is being left out? Who is not here? Why not? Where are they? What are they doing? Are they sick, weak, distant, busy working and earning, looking after theirs, socially excluded..? Would it be good to approach them and involve them? How?



13) What am I being told and shown, and what am I not being told and should?

How does the person I am and how I am seen affect what people tell me and show me? Do people think I could bring benefits or penalties? Are people being polite, prudent or deferential? Where am I going and not going? What am I being shown and not shown? What am I seeing and not seeing?

14) Is my behaviour empowering or disempowering?

What effects am I having on people, especially the lower status (those of lower status, weaker, more vulnerable or less articulate)? Will they be stronger/weaker and more or less able to stand up for themselves when I have finished?

15) How did I behave? (as a question to them)

And how should I behave? What should I do and not do?

16) What questions would 'they' (local people, participants, class or group members) like to ask me?

About myself? About my organisation? About anything else?

17) What will happen after I leave?

What sort of process is likely to continue in the community workshop, course, class or group? Who will follow up? Will anyone be penalised?

18) What have I left undone?

What did I miss, leave out? What remains to be done?

19) What am I now going to do?

What commitments have I entered into? What are people now expecting? How can I fulfil these?

20) What lessons can I learn from this experience?

What would I do differently, knowing what I do now? What advice would I not give to others?

21) What other questions should be asked?