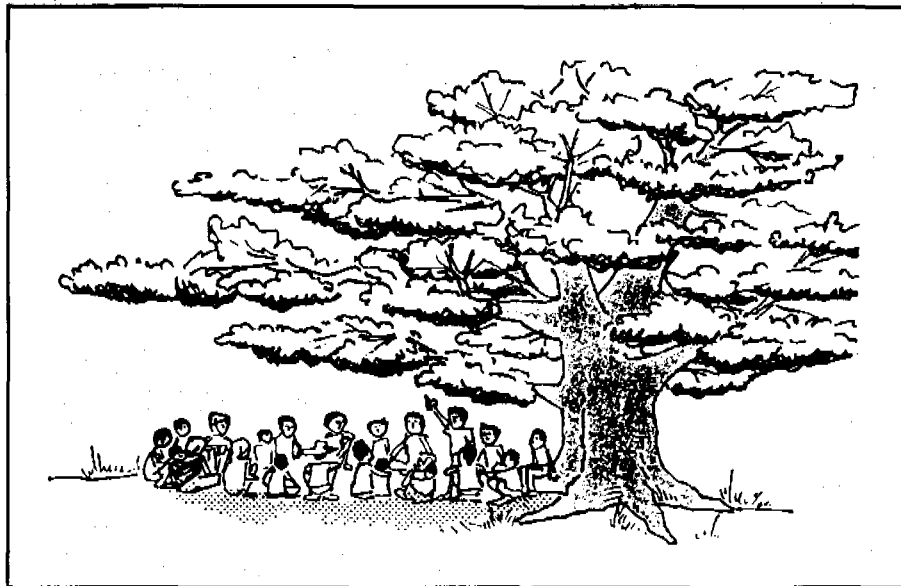


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Association for Appropriate Technologies

INTERNATIONAL REFERENCE CENTRE
FOR COMMUNITY WATER SUPPLY AND
SANITATION (IRC)



**COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION
FOR
SUSTAINABLE WATER AND SANITATION**

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FOR
SUSTAINABLE WATER AND SANITATION**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1.0 INTRODUCTION**
- 2.0 DEFINITION OF COMMON TERMS USED IN THIS BOOKLET**
- 3.0 PARTICIPATION**
 - 3.1 GENERAL**
 - 3.2 LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION**
 - 3.3 KINDS OF PARTICIPATION**
 - 3.4 PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS AFFECTING PARTICIPATION**
 - 3.5 MEASURING PARTICIPATION**
 - 3.6 HINDRANCES TO COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION**
- 4.0 PROJECTS COMPONENTS**
 - 4.1 PROJECT CYCLE**
 - 4.2 BASELINE SURVEY**
 - 4.3 NEEDS ASSESSMENT**
 - 4.4 PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION**
 - 4.5 MONITORING**
 - 4.6 EVALUATION**
 - 4.7 OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE**
- 5.0 RELATED ISSUES**
 - 5.1 INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK**
 - 5.2 INFORMATION TRANSFER**
 - 5.3 CHOICE OF TECHNOLOGY AND ITS IMPLICATIONS TO USER PARTICIPATION**
- 6.0 CONCLUSION**
- 7.0 REFERENCES**

INTRODUCTION

At the end of the eighties the concept of sustainability was developed parallel with that of community participation. The latter was set up as a necessary approach, if projects were to be sustainable. To emphasize this concept where communities play the central role, FAKT proposed a workshop, on "Community Participation in Water Development" to their partners working in local NGOs in East and Central Africa and India. This workshop took place in Nanyuki, Kenya in August 1993. Complete proceedings were prepared.

This workshop pointed out that "Community Participation" is a concept which is employed with quite different meanings. The purpose of this booklet is therefore to:

- Discuss the concept of Community Participation.
- Serve as a key to understanding how the community becomes a major actor in the project's success if adequately involved.
- Show how critical community participation is for sustainability of projects.

This booklet is designed for field officers involved in community led programs in developing countries. Policy makers may also benefit from the content of this booklet.

The ideas are developed hereafter with special reference to water development and results from the workshop mentioned above, but can be easily generalized to other development areas. Also they are not static and strict definitions but key issues to discuss with all partners of development prior to beginning a program or a project.

CHAPTER 2

DEFINITION OF COMMON TERMS USED IN THIS BOOKLET

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The workshop participants defined the above term as "That development process that ensures meeting needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

COMMUNITY

Community was defined as a body of people living in the same locality or people having religion or profession in common or even a body of nations unified by common interest.

TARGET GROUP

It was agreed that a project should be focussed on a particular group of people. Therefore target group was defined as an identifiable group of people which the project is expected to influence in a predictable fashion. This group may be defined by some distinguishing characteristics eg. location, age, occupation, sex, or income.

PARTICIPATION

The participants did observe that the term participation is discussed a lot these days among development planners. And that it carries different meanings to different people. However participants agreed that basically, participation simply means having a share or taking part.

It was observed also that participation to many planners means simply communicating ideas from planners to communities. And that when communities support the project in kind, labor or cash, the project is labelled community driven or supply driven etc. The members agreed that effective participation takes place when the local people's ideas are communicated to the planners and indeed influence their agenda.

Participation is summarized below using letters of the word participation:

- P** - People centered not project centered.
- A** - Arises from the people not imposed from outside.
- R** - Reflects the core social norms.
- T** - Transfers decision-making to the ultimate beneficiaries.
- I** - Involves the majority not a selected few.
- C** - Consultation not coercion based on action.
- I** - Inclusive of all the phases of development projects.
- P** - Positive rather than negative response.
- A** - Allows for flexibility.
- T** - Translates local ideals into activities.
- I** - Institutional strengthening.
- O** - Organizationally simple rather than complex.
- N** - Natural rather than artificial.

MOBILIZATION

Mobilization was simply taken to mean preparation for active service or the act of putting into movement or even assembling and making ready for action. It is therefore obvious that mobilization is the first stage in the direction of achieving a sustainable project. During mobilization, communities are activated to take part in seeking solutions to the problems affecting their welfare.

SAFE WATER

Water that does not contain harmful chemical substances or micro-organisms in concentrations that could cause illness will be termed as safe water.

ADEQUATE WATER SUPPLY

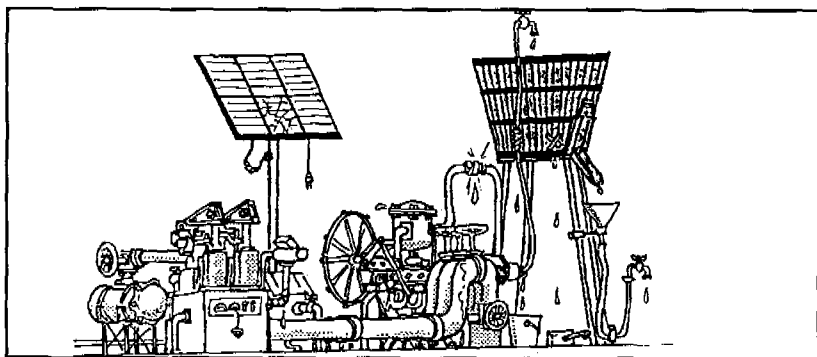
Provision of safe water in quantities sufficient for drinking, domestic and other household services so as to make possible the personal hygiene of the members of the household. Such a water supply should be reliable and within reasonable distances.

SANITATION

Collection and disposing of excreta and community liquid waste in a hygienic way so as not to endanger the health of individuals and the community as a whole. Examples were given of dry and water borne systems.

APPROPRIATE TECHNOLOGY

Of all definitions above, this was the most difficult one. Some of the participants looked at it as cheap and simple technology meant for the poor rural people. However at the end participants agreed that, to select and design an appropriate technology required skillful planners and engineers as it is more demanding than conventional work.



CHAPTER 3

PARTICIPATION

3.1 GENERAL

The essence of participation is that the local people are part of development projects in a far wider sense than being passive “beneficiaries”. They should not only receive the benefits but they should also be intimately involved in the planning, implementation and monitoring of the work.

It is important to note that the people themselves, their enthusiasm, their ideas, their labor and their leadership are the primary resources and participation is the engine required to bring about the right mix and the right environment for sustainable development.

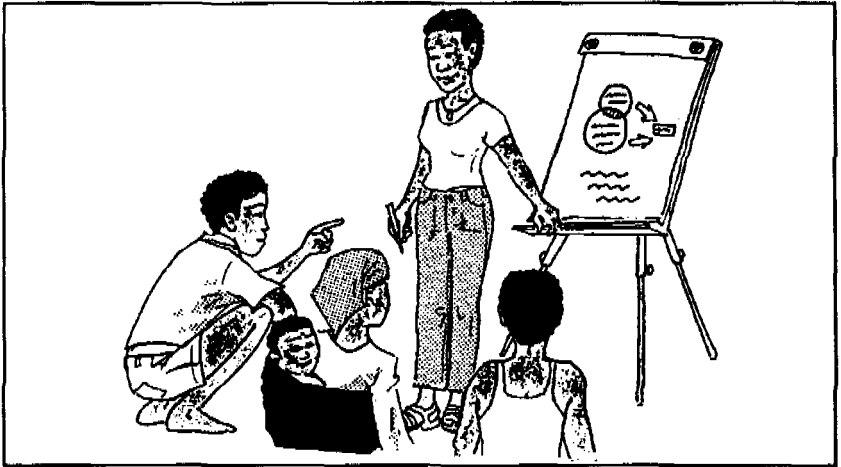
At the communities level, potential participants may be:

- a) Beneficiary groups with diverse characteristics of:
 - age and sex.
 - educational level.
 - social division, ethnicity, religion etc.
 - occupation.
 - level of income.
 - length of residence.
 - land tenure.
- b) Local leaders usually local elites such as land owners merchants and professionals.

These leaders are in three types:

- (i) Informal leaders, clan chiefs, religious figures, influential professionals and local notables.
- (ii) Voluntary leaders such as leaders of trade unions, cooperatives, school committee chairmen.

- (iii) Local office holders e.g. headmen, elders, councilors, party leaders etc.



- c) Government personnel: bureaucrats with higher social status than locals e.g. district administrators, district officers, chiefs and government officials.
- d) Foreign Personnel: Heads of Private Voluntary Associations, e.g Missionary personnel and expatriates.

3.2 LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION

Six levels of participation are identifiable. These levels are dependent upon the degree of user involvement in decision making, planning, and implementation.

- a) **Communities have control**
Where External Support Agency (E.S.A.) asks the community to identify the problem and to make all of the key decisions regarding goals and means. E.S.A. is willing to help the community at each step to accomplish its own goals.

- b) **E.S.A. has delegated Authority to the Community**
The organization identifies and presents a problem to the community, defines the limits and asks the community to make a series of decisions which can be embodied in a plan which it will accept.
- c) **Joint Plans (E.S.A. and Community)**
There are cases where E.S.A. presents a tentative plan subject to change and invites recommendations from affected communities. It expects to change the plan at least slightly and perhaps even more substantially.
- d) **Community is consulted for Advice by E.S.A.**
The organization presents a plan and invites questions. It is prepared to modify the plan only if absolutely necessary.

or

The organization (E.S.A) tries to promote a plan and seeks to develop the support which will facilitate acceptance or give sufficient sanction to the plan so that administrative compliance can be expected.

- e) **Community only Receives Information**
The E.S.A. makes a plan and announces it. The community is convened for informational purposes; compliance is expected.
- f) **The community is told nothing by E.S.A.**
Levels a,b,and c, above present a degree of involvement that has high chances of achieving sustainable projects.

But levels d, e, and f, according to this workshop, had very little chances of success. Such projects were the ones labelled donor driven or supply driven and not community led or driven projects. This category was declared unsustainable.

3.3 KINDS OF PARTICIPATION

Depending on the stage of the project, community participation may be of various kinds. Some examples were identified during the workshop (there are many more).

a) **Participation in Decision-Making**

This kind of participation centers on the generation of ideas, formulation and assessment of options and choosing among them as well as the formulation of plans for putting selected options into effect.

b) **Initial Decisions**

The identification of local needs and how they will be approached through a particular project. Such involvement at an early stage can provide vital information on the local area and can prevent misunderstandings as to the nature of the problem and the strategies proposed for its resolution.

c) **Decisions on Ongoing Programs**

Searching out new needs and priorities that the project might respond to as well as operating the project in ways that best meet participants' needs.

d) **Operational Decisions**

Participation with regard to such matters as membership composition, meeting procedures, leadership selection and influence of specific local organizations which have been established by the project or linked to the project.

3.4 PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS AFFECTING PARTICIPATION

a) **Technological Complexity**

Choice of technology influences the level and degree of user participation e.g. a solar powered bore hole in a remote area as opposed to a hand dug well using windlass technology for water lifting.

b) **Resource Requirements**

A development project may require resources (e.g. management, operation and maintenance skills) outside the beneficiaries' ability to provide or demand financial needs for operation and maintenance outside local affordability.

c) **Tangibility of Benefits**

The community members will be reluctant to use improved water and sanitation facilities until benefits are clear and individually impressive. Improved seed variety profits have to be tangible to persuade farmers to try.

d) **Probability of Benefits**

Communities will take risks only after a careful analysis of the risks involved; benefits must be made clear.

e) **Immediacy of Benefits**

Projects will receive effective participation if they will give immediate results like drilling a bore hole or building a bridge across a river.

f) **Distribution of Benefits**

Projects with clear individual benefits will enjoy support from beneficiaries e.g. household or family based hand pumps or roof catchment projects.

g) **Program Linkages**

In a community with diverse needs, a program that is comprehensive in nature will attract support from a wider range of people.

h) **Program Flexibility**

A project that is not flexible enough so that various categories of target groups can be accommodated will only have limited support. The program should be adaptable to the various needs of the target population.

i) **Administrative Structure**

The project must allow user contribution in its administration structure. If it is not accessible and flexible, local contributions in coordination, information and management will not be possible by local people.

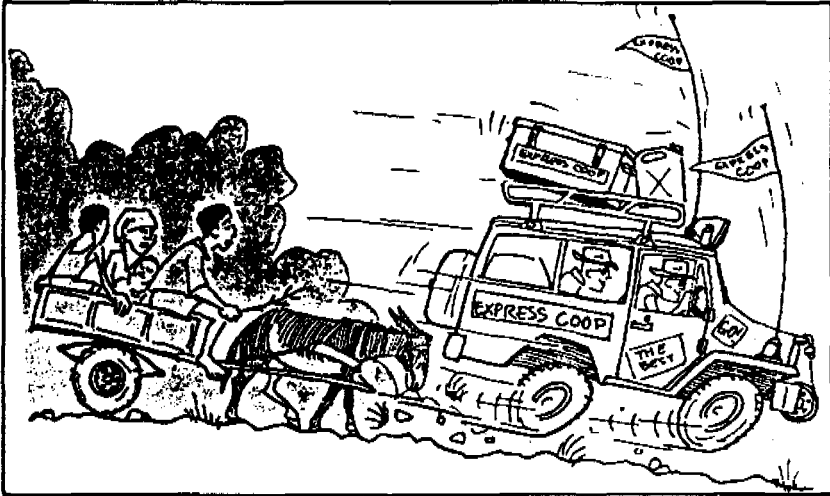
3.5 MEASURING PARTICIPATION

Some indicators to measure participation:

- Number of people involved in development process (decision, labor, payment...) over number of people benefiting from the improved situation. This ratio gives a good idea of the real involvement of people. It can be applied to sub-groups such as gender people from different socio-economic or geographic classes.
- Amount of money provided by the community (including labor and in kind evaluated in currency) over the overall cost of the project. This ratio gives more of an idea of the project's affordability rather than the real participation of the community. A low percentage is not automatically a sign of low participation but can show that the technology used is not appropriate.
- Recurrent costs per monthly water consumption over the average family income per month. *These recurrent costs are the costs related to operation and maintenance activities: they can be labor or time evaluated in money. The ratio shows if the water supply system is affordable by the community. It defines well in advance the future participation of the community after completion of the project implementation.*

Of course other indicators can be identified more specific to the project concerned, while more general indicators apply to all projects such as:

- Sense of social justice.
- Improved quality of life.
- Sense of honesty and integrity.
- Improved economic base, organizational ability and knowledge of the outside world. The target group will defend their resources and markets.



3.6 HINDRANCES TO COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Many problems in water development are more or less linked with community participation. There is no ideal approach to avoid them. But identifying them is half-way to solving them. Good communication, clear and mutual comprehension is the other half.

Participation in a community is never homogeneous. There are always discrepancies between the involvement of the members. Conflicts of interest appear rapidly. Cultural and political constraints also segregate the participation. Gender is a common issue in development. All these aspects should be discussed within the whole community at the beginning to:

- be sure that all members are aware of what participation is.
- verify that the “participants” are the real beneficiaries of the project.

Several people in a community may be a hindrance to the participation of others. There are anti-development minded people for one reason or the other. Several members seem to be quite lethargic and refuse to be concerned. Others just have negative interest because the proposed development will reduce their power or worse, their income, etc. All these people, if they are ignored, can cause great damage in the development process. Therefore time and energy must be planned to identify and integrate them in the development process.

Scattered habitat with long distances between the people involved makes participation difficult. Scale of projects must be small enough to enable people to participate.

Interference of local politicians, church leaders or other NGOs, can influence the participation of the communities. The best way is to give partners clear roles and to integrate them in the participation process.

As information and communication are fundamental for participation, many problems occur due to weakness in these two fields.

CHAPTER 4

PROJECTS COMPONENTS

This section of the booklet is designed to familiarize the reader with certain important stages, issues, and aspects which involve participation in projects.

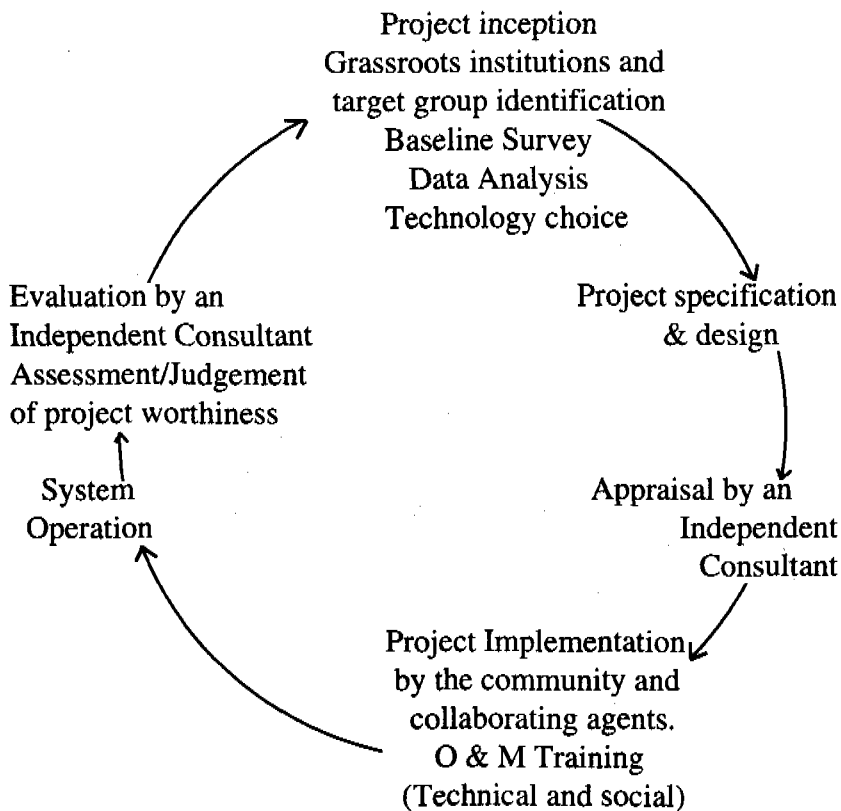
Areas such as needs assessment, project and technology identification, monitoring and evaluation are particularly important where effective participation is critical for success. Critical areas for effective participation were identified in the Nanyuki workshop.

4.1 PROJECT CYCLE

A project is a human endeavor which creates change, has clear goals and objectives, is limited in time and scope and involves a variety of resources which include people with different skills, responsibilities and competence.

Therefore, a project is designed to execute an assignment of work which will create change. The assignment will vary considerably from one project to the other.

The project cycle shows various stages a project undergoes during its development. It is referred to as a cycle because after every stage, monitoring results may require a re-planning. Or even some difficult circumstances may arise (eg. natural disaster or civil war) that demand re-orientation.



4.2 BASELINE SURVEY

The workshop identified the base line survey to be a very important stage which is often ignored in a hurry to get started. Poor understanding of the actual root cause of problems leads to development of programs that are simply “treating the disease by worsening the causes”.

Regional and sectoral studies provide the starting point for planning and thus a base for assessing the worth and impact of a project among the beneficiaries.

There is need for core information which can be collected from the national population statistics. Such informations include size of population in the proposed project area, population density, population growth characteristics, average size of households and family ethnic structure, labor market structure, ownership patterns and structure of migration patterns.

Other useful data specific to the project planning and design include:

- Land tenure.
- Soil and water resources; Mineral, agricultural, forestry and fishery resources.
- Location and type of rural roads.
- Livestock resources.

In the analysis of the above baseline data and needs assessment (see next section) priority setting, project identification, goals and objectives are established.

Constraints to deal with may be categorized as shown:

1. Those about which something can be done in short term (e.g.improving water sources, using high yielding varieties, applying fertilizers)

2. Those which require a longer period before change can be expected to occur (e.g. afforestation and re-vegetation of eroded areas).
3. Those about which little can be done in the foreseeable future (e.g. need for a highway linking major towns in the area).

Another categorization which could help in project identification is classification of constraints as **national, regional or target group** (farm level and household level ones).

Finally, classifying them as biophysical and socio-economic constraints may help in setting clear objectives.

4.3 NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Needs assessment is also an important stage in as far as community participation is concerned. It also offers very valuable time for the external support agency to understand the communities involved. Enough time must be given to this stage.

Needs assessment seeks to identify and prevent conditions which precede and/or cause problems .

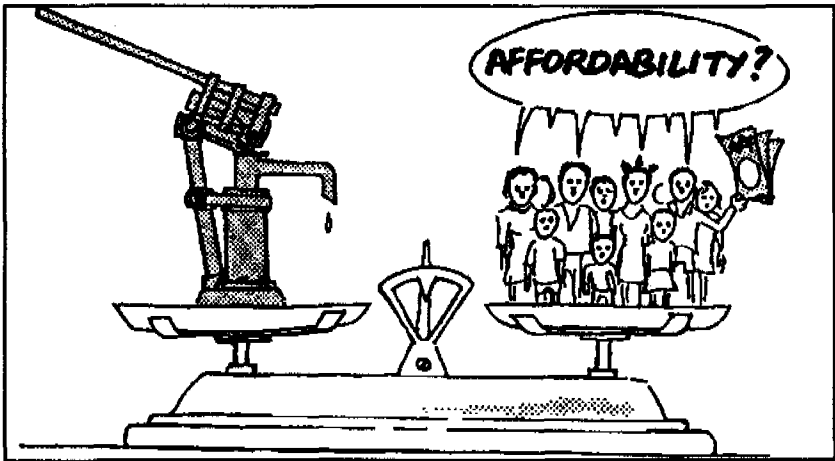
Needs assessment will also be used to determine the problems and goals of the residents of a given community in order to plan services which will respond to their needs.

Needs assessment includes data analysis to identify and prevent problems. Each problem is therefore analyzed with respect to a number of elements which call for answers to questions such as:

1. What is the problem?
2. Who is suffering from the problem?
3. Where is the problem?
4. When does the problem present itself?
5. What is the magnitude of the problem?
6. How serious is the problem?

All these points can be developed in a Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA). Answers to the above questions will assist in prioritizing problems and deciding the order in which they should be addressed, taking into account the budgetary and other constraints.

Information from needs assessment will establish the project's baseline.



4.4 PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

Rural people can participate in the implementation of projects in a number of ways:

- (a) Resource contribution (local materials, labor, and finance).
- (b) Administration and coordination (particularly with village level activities).

The implementation phase usually ends with official "commissioning" of the installation. The ownership is now completely transferred to the community. However this transfer can be done smoothly: ownership for instance, moving progressively to the community. This step is important because on the one hand it offers the opportunity to verify the quality and effectiveness of the facility and, on the other hand, the community can confirm whether or not the facility, once in operation, answers to the initial requirement.

4.5 MONITORING

From the very beginning of a project a baseline is established. This baseline of the project states time involved, quality of its output and cost implications.

Monitoring therefore involves controlling project activities with regard to time cost and quality objectives as set out during the setting of the baseline.

In many cases, monitoring is also seen as a continuous internal control mechanism that ensures project progress is as per the desired objectives.

4.6 EVALUATION

Evaluation is a special tool with which to examine and judge the worth, quality, conditions, significance and amount of development taking place. Evaluation involves obtaining, describing and analyzing relevant information systematically and objectively to judge the worth of a program or project, and to make decisions on the basis of this information.

Evaluation is based on monitoring results. Together with monitoring, it is also a tool for learning and an integral part of the program management process. It helps to identify strength, weakness and relevance, plus assessing impact of a project on the lives of the target group.

4.7 OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

The E.S.A.'s support will have come to an end or is by now greatly minimized. The beneficiaries are now faced with playing roles they might not have been prepared adequately for. It is at this stage that the communities' preparation and degree of participation is tested.

The introduced water supply facility should be able to give the intended services reliably. However, for this to happen, the relationship between technology and social organization must be understood particularly by the system planners. This is because a well designed system which has taken into account most of the necessary social and technical factors for smooth running will have already solved many operational and maintenance problems.

Operational issues to consider include:

- fuel or electricity (if required).
- salaries of operators, attendants and watchmen.
- transport (if needed).
- offices.

Maintenance issues to consider include;

- spare parts.
- tools.
- costs of repair.
- location of competent repair personnel.

Once the technology is chosen, an infrastructure for satisfactory operation and maintenance must be set up.

In addition, a procedure should be established for preventive and corrective maintenance of facilities. Also important is the availability of operators with good quality of training in operation and maintenance.

CHAPTER 5

RELATED ISSUES

5.1 INSTITUTIONAL FRAME WORK

Institutional and legislative measures should be developed to strengthen management and to promote the improvement of communities' performance through appropriate incentives.

During this workshop the participants made the following observations based on experiences.

- a) Water supply and sanitation sector agencies are often not decentralized enough to be able to serve rural communities. (e.g. national or district based maintenance crews).
- b) Central Agency staff are often not willing to work in locations where water and sanitation systems have to be built and operated.
- c) Water supply and sanitation agencies often use traditional engineering approaches in project design and implementation. Their organizational patterns do not encourage adequate community involvement and building up community level competence.
- d) Efforts must be put into motion to ensure that adequate capacity is developed to support activities at community level.
- e) In many countries certain program areas as e.g. rural sanitation are left out without a particular agency being responsible. In such circumstances there is need to establish an inter-sectoral action group. It would provide essential coordination for participation of user communities and collaboration of various actors in water and sanitation.

- f) For a water supply and sanitation agency to perform its functions effectively, an adequate legislative framework is necessary. In many instances this does not exist and institutions are handicapped in their operations.

Several examples were quoted. In Uganda for example, it is almost impossible for a community based group to be registered in order to open a bank account. Kenya was also quoted as making registration of NGOs almost impossible.

5.2 INFORMATION TRANSFER

There are deficiencies in information transfer related to water supply and sanitation technology in developing countries.

1. Dissemination of existing publications, to specific target groups, e.g. Intermediate Technology books, IRC reports etc.
2. Distribution of newsletters and technical periodicals such as *Waterlines*, *Raindrop* etc.
3. Continuing education of development technicians, planners, and managers. The training should be short, intensive workshops.
4. Dissemination of information from project evaluations and demonstration projects.
5. Exchange of information and coordination among developing countries.
6. Visits to similar projects at grassroots levels have proved useful in gaining awareness through exposure.
7. Promotion of production and distribution of learning materials.

Public education on the importance of water and sanitation to health, and on the proper use of facilities is not being given sufficient attention in many projects.

To achieve greater public awareness, appropriate forms of information and practicable information transfer must be identified and tested. Successful results can bring about fruitful changes of attitude that will in turn help to increase the willingness of communities to participate to a greater extent.

In particular, school children and youth, through health clubs and women, have proved effective agents in the promotion of safe water supply and sanitation.

5.3 CHOICE OF TECHNOLOGY AND ITS IMPLICATIONS TO USER PARTICIPATION

The choice of technology and its application should be consistent with the social economic and cultural attitudes of the people concerned. This choice must bring about improved health and better prospects for social economic progress.

Several examples were given where technologies have been imposed on people who are resistant to, or are unable to make the necessary adaptation to such technologies within their socio-economic circumstances.

The user communities must be encouraged to participate in the choice and development of interventions. At local levels cultural patterns with their associated attitude and perceptions and religious beliefs will have considerable influence. Technology imposed on users who are not fully informed on the social and cost implications of technologies could be compared with the poor lady shown overleaf who has to carry such a heavy load.

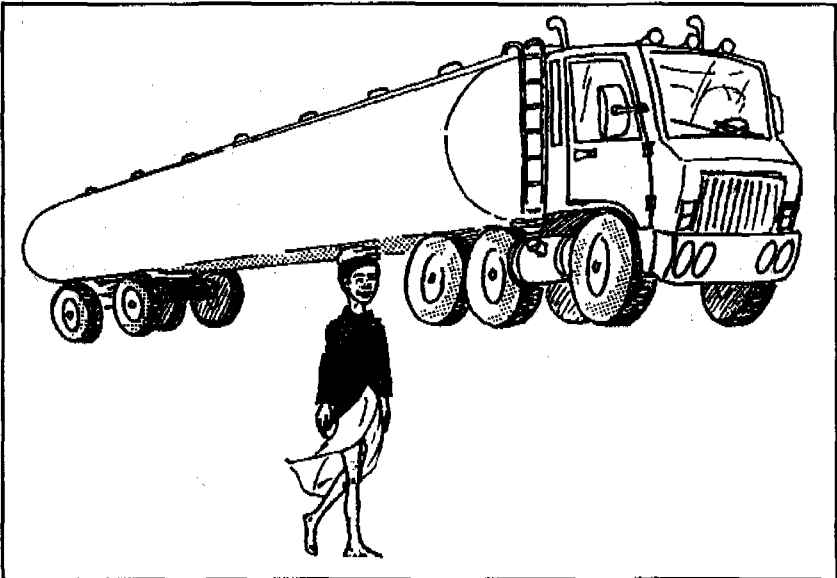
CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Pierre de Coubertin said about Olympic games: "What is important is to participate". This motto could also apply to water development. Success comes from community participation. Communication shows that human beings are the masters of their development and have the moral and physical capacity required to sustain it.

Community participation facilitates networking, transfer of skill from group to group and expansion of development to the surrounding areas. To increase the results brought by the dynamics of community participation, water development should also be incorporated into integrated rural development.

More technical information on how to handle water projects may be found in the FAKT's booklet *CHECKLIST FOR WATER PROJECTS*.



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