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REPORT ON EXPERIENCES IN THE CWSS PROGRAMME WITH HELVETAS AND SNV

SANITATION

WOMEN INVOLVEMENT

and

HEALTH EDUCATION

in

NEPAL

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SANITATION (IRC)

Department of Extension Sciences
Agricultural University of Wageningen
July 1990

Josje Weijters

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PREFACE

One year after my return this report about my experiences in Nepal is completed. I regret to say that due to an accident with my hand and later on my duties towards another research, I wasn't able to finish this report earlier.

While writing this report it was a great help to find the enthusiasm of Marc Nederlof and his always shown interest in my findings.

I want to thank Mr. Tuladhar (SNV) to allow me to contact SNV field workers and Mr. Shrestha (UNICEF) who took me with him to attend his training in the Terai in the East. There I also met Mrs. Rajya Laxmi Nakarmi, Health Education Specialist of the Ministry of Education and Culture. I was very much impressed by the way she is able to endure her position at ministry level. She showed to have great insight in the situation of the rural people.

I am also very grateful to Mr. Bhatta (SCF/USA) in Gorkha for his hospitality in his home. During our long discussions I learnt a lot about Nepali family life.

The most respect goes to Mieke Leermakers (SNV) I enjoyed my stay in the sanitation office in Dolakha very much. My little chats with Radika and Min in my very poor Nepali, and the discussions I had with Mieke about vision and development. She opened my eyes for a lot of things.

Due to her suggestion to go to Pokhara I met Judith Schwierin (Helvetas) for whom I feel the same respect. She and her husband, Markus Engeler, were very kind to invite me in their home and talked with me about their experiences with CWSS. At that time both their contracts nearly expired and they still showed great concern with the continuation of the programme.

Through all these people and the ones I didn't mention my visit to Nepal became an unforgettable experience.

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SUMMARY

As part of my field practise for the Department of Extension Sciences at the University of Wageningen I visited several drinking water programmes in Nepal from January to June 1989.

The aim of my visit was to learn how development projects are implemented with respect to health education, how expatriates have to work in the field and how development organizations among which SNV operate.

Mieke Leermakers gave me the first indications how I could reach my goal. She emphasized the need to have a clear vision on development and how to reach one's objectives in the field realistically. I was very interested in the approaches practised. Soon I found out that it is not only important to see how the project implementation takes place to understand how things work but also the policy making concerning rural development.

I visited several projects to see under which conditions field workers have to work. I saw the limitations which explains why sometimes projects pass so laboriously: (the attitude towards) women involvement, community participation, health and sanitation education and the education of Women Workers.

I also wanted to investigate how extensionists in the field help rural people to learn to express their own questions about their needs. I am convinced of the fact that the way how this process takes place determines if the need of rural people can be realised. However, I didn't succeed. I think my thoughts on this matter were not enough developed to know how I could work out my theory. Nevertheless I had the opportunity to lay the foundation during my stay in Nepal.



CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

As part of my field practice for the Department of Extension Sciences at the Agricultural University in Wageningen I have been in Nepal for 6 months. I was introduced to Mr Tuladhar, programme officer of SNV/Nepal by Marc Nederlof, who worked for VSO in the Community Water Supply and Sanitation programme. This programme is carried out by the Nepali government and additional donors. Mr. Tuladhar gave me the opportunity to meet SNV fieldworkers to be able to meet my expectations towards this field practise.

The aim of my field practice was to see how organizations like SNV operate in Third World countries with respect to development and how their employees work (in the field and in the office).

I was specially interested to see how health education programmes are performed in development projects. The reason why I prefer the topic on health is because I think that health is related to well-being. Also education in general is in my opinion related to well-being: the more people are educated, the better they are able to enhance their own well-being.

Another way to enhance people's well-being is to improve their living conditions. This often happens with a lot of technical help. Despite all these well meant efforts it is proved that the social aspects of development activities are often overlooked which cause disappointments and failures that are not needed. Fortunately more and more the conviction comes up that more time, money and human input are needed for the social aspects of development.

To reach my goal I wanted to visit some project sites of the Community Water Supply and Sanitation programme where also sanitation activities took place.

In the beginning I was more concentrated on how trainings in the villages are performed and what kind of educational material is being used. I had an agreement with Mieke Leermakers, Sanitation coordinator (SC) with SNV to make puppets for a puppetshow which can be used as educational material in the CWSS programme. I also made a design for a training about oral rehydration. This could be used by technical engineers in project sites in the Far West. In that area nepali and expatriate engineers unfortunately still have to work without a person who is expertised in sanitation education.



I also visited other drinking water project where health education was involved. Then I discovered that in principle there is enough information on educational material but there still lacks an appropriate approach in how to reach the people in the villages. This is a structural and organisational matter which has to be solved within the organizations involved together with HMG by developing a policy on health education, womeninvolvement and sanitaion.

Fortunately I can tell that the SC and some other people in comparable positions are working very hard on this matter. In this paper I want to plea that technical efforts to improve people's living conditions can not work if it does not go together with attention for social aspects of development through education and participation of the people who are involved, to activate their consciousness of the situation they live in.

The way people work and programmes are implemented in Nepal, are determined by geographical factors and the political and social structures. In chapter 2 I will dedicate some words to this.

In chapter 3 I will give a brief description of the CWSS programme. In chapter 4 I shall go into the different policies on sanitation, women involvement and health education within the CWSS programme. Next to that I shall describe how the field workers I observed in the field behaved towards the village people and how this has an impact on the activities and the people.

Sanitation education is meant to contribute to the sustainability of the programme in the long run. In chapter 5 I will mention the elements that has to be part of the policy. In the last chapter I will describe my point of view concerning the sustainability and the expansion of the CWSS programme.



CHAPTER 2 THE COUNTRY NEPAL

2.1 Introduction

The following background information about Nepal will explain the circumstances under which Nepali field workers, volunteers and expatriates have to work in Nepal and what they have to take into account while working in the villages. First I will briefly go into some religious, demographic and geographical facts. Then I will give a detailed explanation of the political history and the Panchayat System.

2.2 Geography, religion, language and demography

Nepal is a small country (4 times bigger than the Netherlands) which is enclosed by two giants. In the north the Himalaya mountains rise up and block the way to Tibet (China). In the east, west and south the country is surrounded by the tropical lowlands of India. Adverse physical conditions make communication slow and difficult. Most villages are only accessible on foot (M. Boot and H. Heynen, 1988).

The country is divided into 5 regions which again are divided into 75 districts. Its capital Kathmandu is situated in the Central Region. The other regions are East, West, Mid West and Far West.

Nepal has a population of 18.5 million people (SNV evaluation, 1989), made up of 35 different ethnic communities. They can be roughly divided into two major groups: the Tibeto-Burmese in the Himalayas and the Hills and the Indo-Aryan in the Hills and Terai (the lowlands in the south that is bounded by India).

About 35 different languages of Tibeto-Burmese and Indo-European origin are spoken. Nepali (an Indo-European language) is spoken by approximately 58% of the people although this percentage is much lower for women. The literacy rate was 35% in 1985. Female literacy is extremely low (18% against 52% of male literacy). Families do not send their daughters to school because they depend heavily on them to work in the fields and at home. They also don't reap the benefit of their education because after marriage they live in their husband's households.

Nepal is the only Hindu Kingdom in the world. 90% of the people profess the Hindu religion. Hinduism is reflected in the caste system

which defines social status and a subsistence economy based on rice agriculture (90% of the population still depends on agriculture) and a ritualized cattle culture (cow worship). Some ethnic groups are included in the system as castes.

Very important in Hinduism is the attitude towards inequality. The Hindu accepts his/her place in the caste system because one acquires the place one deserves. More religions are: Buddhism (8%) which in Nepal is very close to Hinduism (mixture) and Islam (2%). There are only a few Christians living in Nepal because conversion is prohibited in Nepali Law (L.H.M. Umans, 1987).

The ecological situation in the hills and Terai is deteriorating rapidly (erosion). Fast population growth further increases the pressure on land. There are only marginal opportunities in the poorly developed industrial sector. The country suffers from devastating infrastructural services built at much expense (SNV, country evaluation, 1989).

The political system constantly seems to contradict itself thus weakening its credibility. I will explain this in the next paragraph.

2.3 Political History

In the 7th century the economy of Nepal mainly consisted of trade between India and China. An important road was built from India to Tibet through the Kathmandu valley.

In later centuries (1816) the kingdom of Nepal lost its war against China and Britain. In this war the present border was placed on record. Nepal became a semi colony of Britain and Kathmandu lost its important trading position (Ulrich Wiesner, 1976; L.H.M. Umans, 1987).

In 1876 Jang Bahadur Rana became Prime Minister (PM) and established his dynasty by making the PM-post hereditary. The Rana family paid little attention to the development and well-being of their country and its inhabitants. They used large parts of the revenue for their personal benefit and extravagant life style.

With the independence of India in 1947 the basis of the Rana rule was undermined and after the revolution of 1951 the 104 year old Rana regime collapsed. From this moment the political history of modern Nepal can be divided roughly into two phases. The transitional phase between 1951 and 1960 and the phase from 1960 (Kapil Shrestha, 1988).

I would like to add a third phase which starts since the last political evolution in the beginning of 1990, the end of the Panchayat System.

During the period of 1951-59 Nepal experimented with different coalition governments, all to no avail. Nepalese politics was characterized by chronic political instability and incompetence. The self-appointed politicians scrambled for the capturing of power without showing any concern for the people they claimed to have fought and represent. The government changed in this period ten times.

The first general election brought power to the Nepali Congress party, which obtained a two-third majority in the parliament. The people of Nepal hoped that the King and the elected representatives would work unitedly for the development of democracy.

In 1961, however King Mahendra stopped the process of democracy with the help of the Royal Army. Again a wave of repression and terror went over the country. He introduced the so-called Panchayat System. All political parties were banned and the political power was vested in the King. At that time the circumstances were favourable because the King found the back up of the conservative politicians. Also the weakened Indian influence was favourable because the King than was able to play up the patriotic feelings of the Nepalese people.

King Mahendra's son, King Birendra, who came to power in 1972, was confronted with an increasing resistance to the Panchayat System (PS) culminating in violent riots in May 1979. Here after he held a referendum giving the option to the people to choose either the PS or the multi party system. According the opponents of the regime the referendum was manipulated but still the outcome was in favor of the PS with a small majority (54% versus 45%). Since then the absolute power and authority is concentrated with the King (Country evaluation, 1989. SNV: Kapil Shrestha, 1988).

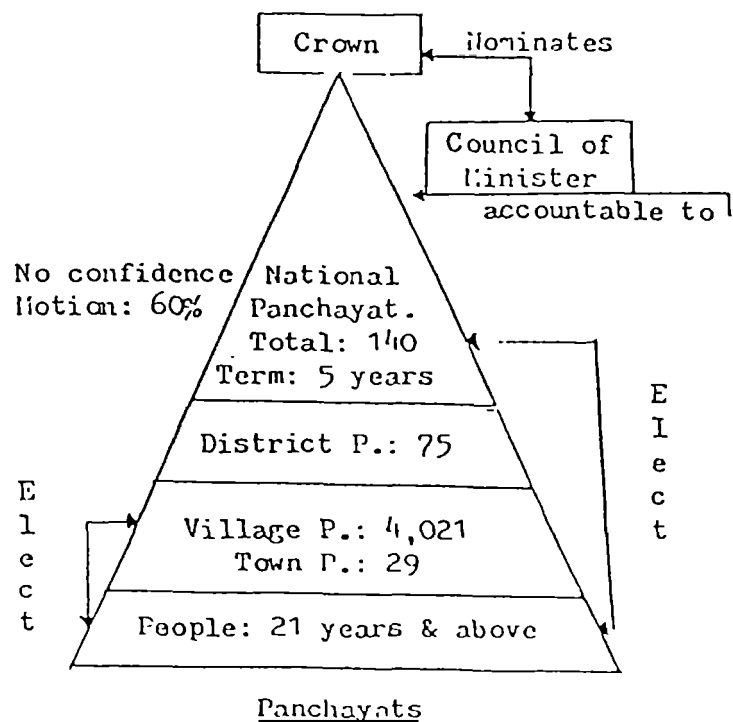
Modern Nepal is economically dependant of India. Nepalese people can pass the border with India without a passport. The other way around also happens and a lot of Indians are working in Nepal. Also politically India intervenes in Nepalese affairs. They never liked the system of their neighbours and tried to exert pressure on the King to introduce a multi party system. In April 1989 the relationship between Nepal and India got worse because the King tried to get rid of the influence of India and bought Chinese weapons without the approval of India. According a treaty Nepal should have asked India before. In answer on this action India announced an economic boycott. This

strengthened the position of the opponents of the PS and the process of the end of the PS was accelerated. Since then many demonstrations took place but it took nearly 1 year before the King abolished his undemocratic system and re-established his relationship with India.

The moment I was in Nepal development organizations like SNV had to work in this system and were under control of His Majesties Government (HMG), in a political climate where historically very little was done for the Nepalese people. Although the PS does not exist any more I think it needs further explanation to understand the circumstances in which development in Nepal takes place.

2.4 The Panchayat System

The PS has a pyramidal structure. The National Panchayat (NP) with 140 members at the top of the pyramid is followed by 75 District Panchayats (DP). Below are 4021 Village Panchayats (VP) and 29 Town Panchayats. Each VP is divided into 9 'wards'. (TP contains 9 to 32 wards). Each Ward has 1 ward chairman and 4 ward members through election.



The Pradhan Panch (village chief, often the wardchief of ward no. 1) is the principal functionary of the VP. These units are mainly entrusted with the responsibility of carrying out village level developmental work and dispensing justice in minor civil and criminal cases in the villages (informant).

The DP is the main agency for implementing all kinds of development and construction activities at district level which are decided by the annual District Assembly.

These political bodies do not have any power to take decisions against the King, neither have the Supreme Court and the Council of Ministers.

Also newspapers are under the control of the King (censuring). All national and foreign bodies, like development agencies and NGO's are under the supervision of the SSNCC (Social Services National Coordination Council) of which the Queen is the chairman.

Many times ministeries changed and also the development programmes changed often from one ministry to another. It is obvious that it is difficult for organizations like UNICEF and SNV to work in this unstable political structure because often their position in the administrative structure is not clear.

CHAPTER 3 THE CWSS PROGRAMME

Clear drinking water is a primary need. Fetching the water, which is done by the women, is an heavy task and takes much time. In many villages, especially the ones in the hills there is a shortage of drinking water. Often the water is also polluted which contribute to the fact that particularly the mortality rate among children under the age of 5 years is very high.

To improve the health status of the hill people where the need for water was greatest, the Nepali government started a national drinking water programme in 1971 with the support of UNICEF.

The Community Water Supply and Sanitation (CWSS) programme started in 1976 as a follow-up of the regular HMG/UNICEF water supply programme. It is carried out jointly by HMG and UNICEF with additional donors. Since December 1987 the programme is placed under the Ministry of Housing and Physical Planning (MHPP). The programme covers the hill areas of Nepal and concerns gravity water supply schemes with public tapstands and school and household latrines (M. Boot and H. Heynen, 1988).

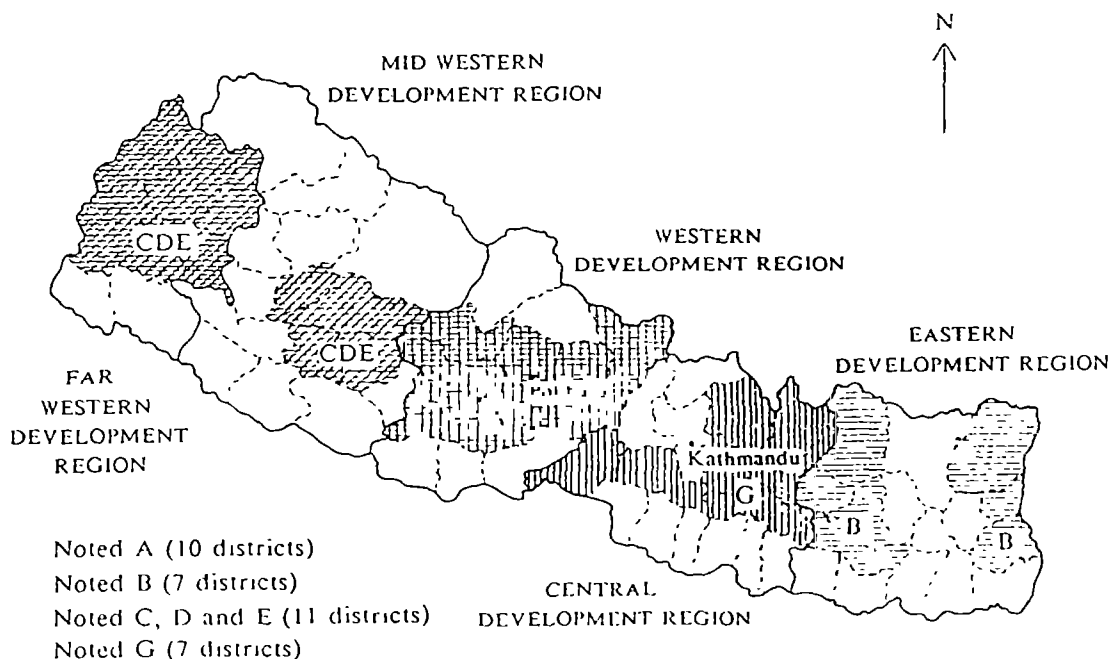


Figure 1 Districts in five regions of Nepal where the CWSS Programme is being implemented

Several parties are working together: Rural communities, Nepali government, UNICEF and donor organisations like Helvetas and SNV.

CWSS

- | | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| - finance | - materials | - voluntary labor |
| - technical support | - technical support | - users committee |
| | | - regular
maintenance |

HMG

UNICEF

VILLAGES

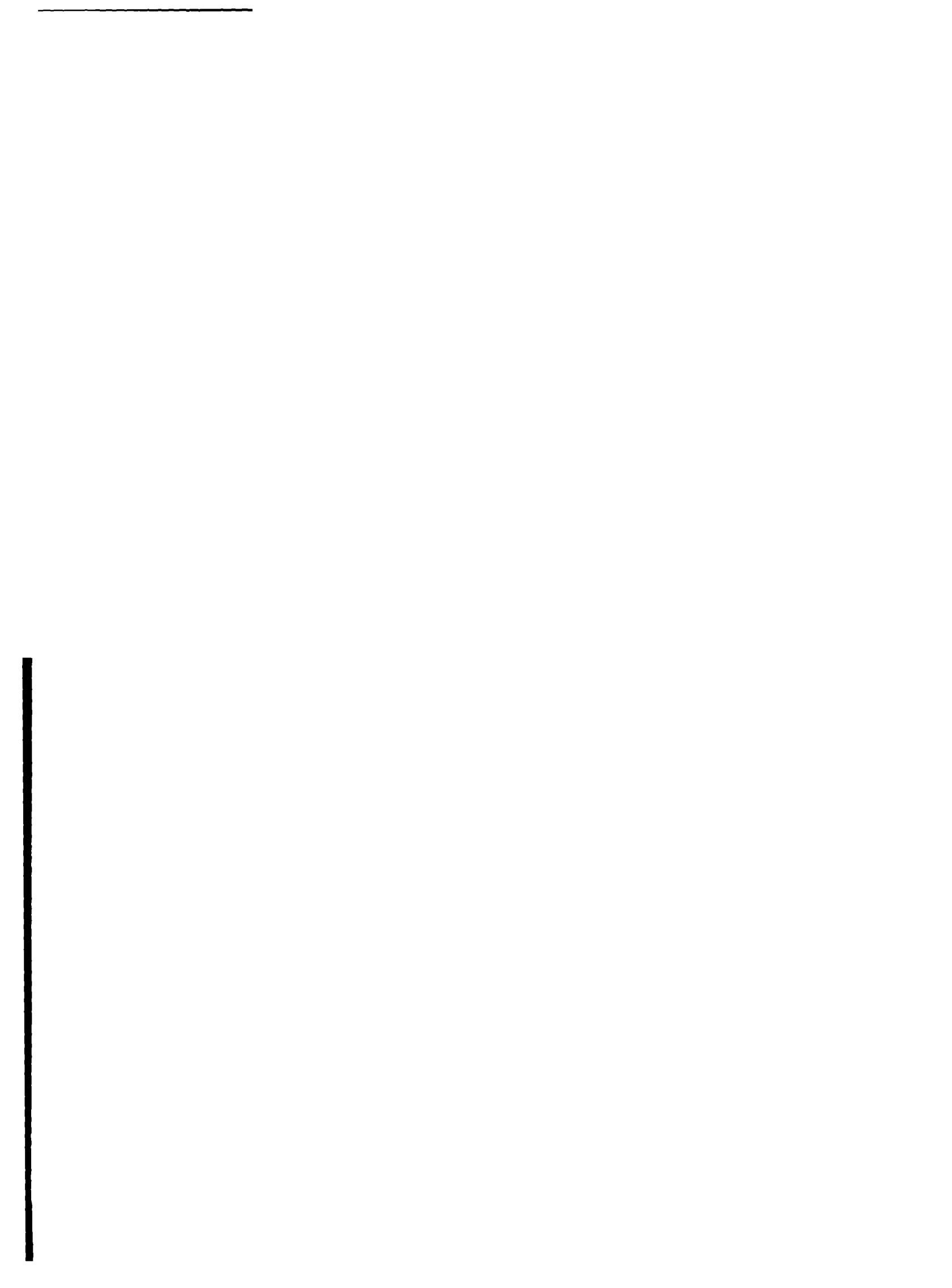
- * Helvetas
- * SNV
- * VSO
- * GVS

In Pokhara (Western region) the Swiss organization Helvetas is supporting the programme. SNV is active in the other 4 regions to develop a policy in cooperation with UNICEF and HMG. The other organizations contribute by delivering qualified people.

Programme staff includes field engineers, overseers, women workers (sometimes called sanitation workers or sanitation assistants) technicians, foremen and expatriate engineers (technical and social like maintenance and sanitation coordinators).

Technicians and foremen are responsible for the day to day guidance and assistance of construction at project sites. They live in the village during the entire construction period. Overseers are in charge of 3 to 5 projects. They visit the sites regularly to guide the technicians and villagers on technical and organizational matters and administrative procedures. Under the guidance of field engineers, the overseers participate in project surveying, design and costing. One field engineer is assigned to each regional zone. They have overall responsibility for all projects in their Zone. Volunteers compensate for the shortage of overseers and engineers.

Helvetas has only two expatriate field engineers. SNV covers a larger area and thus contributes more qualified people. In some project



sites a maintenance coordinator is appointed dependant on the phase of the programme at that particular site. There are also sanitation coordinators who have the same responsibility with regard to the sanitation component.

In 1973 overseers got a 3 year course at the Institute of Engineering of the Tribuvan University, initiated by HMG/UNICEF. According to my opinion women workers need the same length of education, paid by the government. However, the procedures of the sanitation component and the tasks of sanitation staff is not defined yet in the same details as has been done for water supply schemes (in 1989 when I was there).

The programme shows an increasing appreciation of the value of community participation for the success of water supply and sanitation activities. However, it was only slowly understood that programme success depended on partnership of programme staff and communities in every aspect, from initial request to operation and maintenance. To this end the programme has placed emphasis on communication and the active involvement of both men and women.

Sanitation education and latrine construction were included in the programme in 1980. This component is still in a developmental phase and only implemented in a few pilot project sites. Awareness of the need for sanitation is still needed by villagers as well as decisionmakers in the relevant ministries.

In the next chapter I will describe the evolution of the procedure of community participation and women involvement, sanitation motivation and health education. I also will describe how the experience gained so far lead to the different policies on women involvement and sanitation education of Helvatas and SNV.

For the reader who is interested to know more about the origin and objectives of the programme and the technical project implementation procedures I refer to 'Ten years of experience' TP 26 by M. Boot and H. Heynen, 1988. IRC. The Hague, Netherlands.

In this paper I want to concentrate on the implementation of the sanitation component of the programme and the topic on women involvement.

CHAPTER 4 COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION/WOMEN INVOLVEMENT, SANITATION AND HEALTH EDUCATION

4.1 Introduction

To describe the evolution of the two approaches I use among others the discussion paper, 1988, of Mieke Leermakers, Sanitation Coördinator (SC) of SNV, and the approach paper, 1987, of Judith Schwierin, Advisor Women Development Officer (WDO) and Yam Gurung, WDO of Helvetas.

First, in & 4.2, the beginning of the 'sanitation decade' which is the sanitation component performed by technicians, will be described. The description of the final approaches (& 4.3 and & 4.4) of Helvetas and SNV is a summary of above mentioned papers. I will also describe my own observations in the field about how Mieke and Judith performed their approaches in practise.

4.2 Sanitation motivation by technicians

Due to the Water Decade 1980-1990 it became clear that a technical approach only was not enough to reach the aim of the programme to improve the health situation of the poor rural population. Shortly after the end of the technical implementation, tapstands were dirty or even broken and there were no maintenance activities.

An explanation was that the users of the water supplies, the villagers, didn't feel responsible, didn't have the knowledge or in another way were not motivated to maintain their supplies.

It was realised that more efforts had to be taken towards sanitation motivation with respect to the appropriate use of the water supply and health education concerning the prevention of water borne diseases.

In the beginning sanitation motivation was mainly seen as latrine promotion by technicians. It had a technical approach where emphasis was given to the hard ware part. After the approval of the ministry for inclusion of a village in a project, technicians were sent to the selected villages in order to explain and discuss the forthcoming project activities with all villagers (village preparation)

Things that had to be discussed were among others locations of the tapstands and the expected village contributions to construction. They

invited the village to form a users committee which happened at general meetings of all villagers. However women do not attend general meetings because of sociological and cultural reasons (see chapter 1) so they were automatically excluded from this 'participation'.

The tasks of these committees were:

- organizing labourers for the technical implementation
- organizing porters of material from the road to the village
- clarifying the reasons for the proposed location of tapstands by the programme team to the villagers
- regular consultation with villagers and programme staff.

Throughout the construction period the technicians were expected to conduct hygiene education meetings and informal discussions on these subjects.

Helvetas was the first organization that recognised the problem of communication and motivation in general. They appointed a Swiss advisor Women Development Officer who had experience with setting up training activities and conducting groups etc. They also appointed a Nepali counterpart as a WDO. Both were women to make the gap between village women and foreigners (men and women, Nepali and ex-patriotes) smaller.

*the other way around!
first Nepali, then Swiss.*

A few years later SNV followed. In the beginning their policy resembled the Swiss' approach. They appointed a Sanitation Coordinator (SC) who had a comparable task in the Mid West. However, she didn't have a counterpart which made her job more difficult. She had two Nepali Sanitation Assistants, called Women Workers (WW) though, who were appointed to assist her in the field. In 1988 a second SC was appointed who figured out a new approach in the Central Region.

In the next paragraphs it will be explained how each approach is worked out. I want to compare these approaches and see in which case advantages and disadvantages will lead to one of these approaches. The objective in both approaches is to train illiterate women to become sanitation volunteers in their own village.

4.3 The approach of Helvetas: Theoretical Background

Helvetas realised that it had been a mistake not to involve the women in a proper way because all tasks related to water are basically within the responsibility of the women:

rather a need!

Problem: could not find qualified, able women who could undertake work in the field also (culturally difficult)

- women fetch the water
- women handle and store the water in the house
- women take care of the water fetching points
- women take care of the hygiene of children
- women are involved by contributing physical labour during the construction of a water supply

Therefore the women will be the first who suffer from problems related to water and its supply. The well-being of the family is dependant of the knowledge and awareness of the women, so the succes of the programme (improve health situation) is dependant on the development of the women. Thus the main instrument of the programme has to be the awareness building of women with regard to the appropriate use of the water supply in order to reduce the incidence of water related diseases.

To meet the 'subgoal' awareness building of women other objectives come up. These objectives are:

- to enable the women to talk about their ideas
- to make the women aware of personal and environmental hygiene
- to encourage the women to use the time gained in water collection for other activities to raise their living standard.

To reach these objectives at least two women had to be selected as members of the water committee. They should work as mediators between the programme and the village women. It was also important that the villagers could notice that the programme had an impact. This could be reached by drawing attention to clean tapstands, clean latrines in use, two women actively involved in the committee etc. So a pyramid of objectives can be distinguished:

- * improve living conditions
- * improve health situation
- * clean drinking water and health education
- * community participation with special attention for women involvement
 - * awareness building
 - * training for committee members
 - * health related activities in the village

Helvetas tries to involve the women as well as the men without making any difference. They realise though that women need special attention due to cultural and social factors. Therefore the women get a training apart from men so they can become equal to men due to their 'expertise' on health related subjects. Because health concerns everybody the men will accept their women's authority on this matter. Helvetas doesn't want to involve men and women separately because they are afraid that men will get suspicious about a separate women group. Their approach started in new projects so that they can start from the beginning with the involvement of women. They do not believe in women involvement afterwards because then the women have 'to fight in' in the meanwhile built up structure of men.

4.3.1 The set up of sanitation education and women involvement in Pokhara, Western Region

The programme is built up in three phases and lasts for 2 years. In the first phase the Nepali WDO and her advisor are active in visiting villages to motivate the women of the committee. Their first concern is to build up the confidence of the women members (1st visit). They support the two women in achieving the necessary authority in the committee and thus in the village. During the second and third field visits of the WDO several health topics are discussed, like open defecation, faeces born diseases, the use of smokeless chulos with respect to lung diseases etc. A demonstration latrine and a smokeless chulo is installed at the house of the two women members as an incentive for the women. These educational meetings are given to the whole committee.

The second phase consists of a special training for the women members, together with the women of other villages. This one week training is conducted in an existing water supply project near Pokhara where a farm house is rented in order to provide an environment which is familiar to the participants and thus helps them to transpose the training issues to their own environment. All the issues are taught by the principle of 'learning by doing' thru simple informal teaching methods which are understandable for the illiterate women.

The advantage of this approach is that women of several villages meet each other and can exchange experiences. This will motivate them

to continue their task of mobilising the village on sanitation. A disadvantage can be that the women don't know each other and the large distances make it difficult for the WDO to conduct the meetings. Besides it is not always possible for the women to leave their house for one week.

Hereafter the third phase starts which is called the follow-up phase and takes place in 3 steps of 4 months. After each step the WDO visits the village and monitors the activities. After the training the women members will try to adapt the habits they have learnt in their own village (step 1).

When the WDO comes for monitoring she will at the same time conduct the women members to form an informal group consisting of women living near their tapstand (step 2). In this group the women members should hold meetings once a month to discuss the things they have learnt themselves in the training. For this work the women get teaching material from the office.

Once the construction of the water supply project is finished the construction/users committee is changed into a maintenance committee. At this point it is the task of the women members and the WDO to keep up their gained responsibility in the new committee (step 3). Here after a 2 days 'refreshershop' is organised where all the women involved come together and again exchange experiences. The first day of this course coincides with the last day of the training of the 'new' women in order to give the new women a chance to hear the experiences of the 'old' women during their last two years. Here after the women will continue their work in the village but will no longer receive assistance from the WDO unless they ask for it.

4.3.2 My own observations during a field visit

I got the opportunity to come with Judith and Yam during one of their (in this case a two day) field visits. I think that the way they get along with villagers is very important for their succes with the programme. The WDO (Yam Guring) is a Nepali high educated woman with field experience. This is quite exceptional because high educated people often perform office tasks and are not aware of limitations in the field.

Yam =
(primary
school
teacher)

In the field Judith wants to play a background role to assist Yam. When Yam conducts a meeting on health issues Judith goes away and from a distance she will observe the activity. This has two advantages. In the first place Judith will draw attention as few as possible to show village women as well as Yam that this activity is a Nepali matter. Second, she can observe how the village women react to all the information given. Hereby the effort of communication skills is very important. Later she can give advise. Sometimes she felt this is difficult because Yam's position and her position as an advisor are at the same level and advise is sometimes felt as criticism. Attention should be given to the fact that this is a sensitive issue.

The day before the meeting took place we went to the village to tell we would come back the next day. Yam asked the women members to gather the whole committee for the next morning. This visit was also used to look around and see what had happened since their last visit. We looked at some latrines, asked if they were in use, if not, it was asked why. The women members asked questions about the use of their smokeless chulo because there were some problems. Yam went with the woman to look what was wrong and explain why. In this village the houses were quite close to each other but the reader must realise that this is a very time consuming activity because sometimes you have to walk more than 30 minutes before reaching a house.

When we returned the next day the committee wasn't present but again the women were asked to get them to the meeting. While we were waiting informal talks were held with the women. By the time the committee was present the whole village knew we were there. Besides the committee members many village women gathered around Yam to see what the educational meeting would be about. They all sat in a circle with the men on one side, the women at the other. Yam sat in between. This time the educational meeting was about the use of smokeless chulos. Posters and a flipp chart were used to build up a story. Yam started a story about smoke and health problems. The trainees had to finish the story.

Although it is known in Nepali culture that the men talk a lot and the women are shy, this was not the case here. One reason is that Yam paid much attention to the women by asking them questions directly. She sat most of the time with her face towards the women which invited the women to react while the men were listening most of the time. Also on the posters used, many women were pictured to appeal to the women.

I also noticed that Yam keeps up informal contacts (e.g having dinner) with the women although she doesn't live in the village herself. This will undoubtedly contribute to the fact that trust and self esteem can be built up because the women feel they are taken seriously.

4.3.3 Results in the Helvetas approach

In some villages this approach was very successful: the women gained respect for their responsibilities. In other villages the women were very active but they didn't get any back up from their committee chairman. It is amazing though what they nevertheless reached in their village. It sure can be said that these women are very active and know what they are talking about and what they want to reach in the end. They were also active in searching support when they found out that they were not able to motivate the other committee members on their own. All women were very enthusiastic about their training.

Helvetas wants to expand their programme to other districts (18). Therefore Women Workers need to be appointed. At this point some problems arise. The WDO was personally assisted in developing her communication skills, developing a vision on rural development and women involvement. She is a well educated woman and she had been working with the assistance and under guidance of her advisor for two years. It is easy to see that low educated WW need at least the same supervision which will take much more time. Although the first pilot projects showed positive results, it is difficult to figure out a policy with regard to the sustainability of the sanitation component in the CWSS programme, covering a large area.

4.4 The approach of SNV: Theoretical Background

The approach of SNV to this day is developed by Mieke Leermakers based on the experiences of her colleague in the Mid West, Eveline Bolt, and other projects she visited among which Helvetas. I can give a more detailed description of this approach because I stayed in Mieke's village to attend a training for nearly 2 weeks. This long period and the many discussions I had with Mieke gave me time to get a better

insight in the activities Mieke set up and the way her WW are operating in the field.

The policy regarding women involvement is based on Mieke's conviction that women will never be able to have the same voice in decisionmaking as long as they don't have more self-esteem, self-consciousness self-respect and respect from the side of men. If you don't get this respect, you have to compel it. So awareness building about one's own capabilities is a keyword in her approach.

To be able to raise awareness women have to be in a situation where they can develop their own ideas, learn to express their opinion and talk about it. Therefore they need to be among each other in a group where they are not hindered by inequality. I think it is important to realise that not all women are equal to each other. There is a difference between high and low caste, old and young women, mothers (in law) and daughters (in law). To separate men from women is not a mere keyword for success in this approach. I think though that it is a good start to prove that this approach can work so that later it can be adapted and applied to all kinds of backward groups.

The sanitation programme in the Central Region was implemented in 7 pilot project sites in the Dolakha district. In that area the technical component had already be transmitted to the villagers while the sanitation component was not successfully carried out. Only a few latrines were built of which most of them were in a bad shape.

Besides that there was the opportunity to work in an area where other projects were implemented (Women Development Section and Small Farmers Development Project).

The area had to be small as well as each project site (only consisting 5 to 23 tapstands) so that a small team can perform their activities in the villages. Even more important is the advantage that Mieke is able to supervise her WW intensively. She made a time schedule for each field visit and training to be given. Another advantage in her approach is the fact that in the centre of the area they cover, she set up a sanitation office where the WW live (like the technicians do during the construction).

4.4.1 The set up of sanitation education and women involvement in Dolakha, Central Region

Before starting a water supply programme a village meeting has to be held to inform all concerned people about the programme and what they can expect from it. It is important that men as well as women are present. This can be stimulated by forming a water committee (mostly men) and a sanitation committee at the same time. The latter consists of one female representative of each tapstand to be built. In this way women can participate from the beginning while at the same time they can work on their awareness building without excluding the men (they have their own committee).

The members need to be married so they won't leave their village. must be respected and have some influence on their neighbours. They also should not be shy. it is not necessary that they are literate. There are some exceptions though, for example in a case where an unmarried girl insisted to become a member.

The sanitation members will get trained in the coming 2 years. Their first meeting is called a need assessment meeting. In that meeting a list is made of the most important and existing health related problems they feel. The women themselves point out priorities in this list with the aid of posters on which health related problems are shown (e.g. dirt, malnutrition etc.). It is striking to see that visible problems like scabies are considered as a problem, while environmental hygiene is not.

The next period there are monthly meetings for 1 or 2 hours. The health related problems on the list will be discussed and the women are taught how to get along and solve these problems. There is a hand washing programme. oral rehydration programme etc.

Slowly a link is made from visible problems to non-visible problems which also have an effect on health. Every meeting has a follow-up tapstand meeting within 2 weeks. The committee members have to explain to their neighbour tapstand users what they have learnt. These meetings are strongly supervised by the two WW. Mieke designed a agenda of field visits and rainings which explains why the area has to be small.

The aim is: * to reach all houses

- * to check if the women understood what they have learnt
- * to address their sense of responsibility
- * in the long run the women will get more self esteem and dare to speak in front of a meeting (to begin with their own well known woman neighbour)

After 6 months the women will have a 4 day training in their own village. They will get paid for this to compensate the income of their work on their farm. At that time they know already something about the relation between behaviour and diseases. In the training new subjects will come up next to old subjects, dependant on the phase of the total project (e.g. maintenance of the tapstands).

This training also will have a follow-up by tapstand meetings. After the training the regular monthly meetings will continue. It is noticed then that the women are less shy to speak out their opinion. They also feel more responsible for their task as a sanitation member since they are paid for it.

One year later a 2 days training will be given. More and more attention will be drawn to maintenance activities related to health (e.g. building, cleaning and maintaining latrines and tapstands).

The final aim is to involve the women and men equally in the drinking water programme and to make the programme sustainable. One way to reach this is a cooperation between the sanitation committee and the maintenance committee. Ofcourse this only possible when the women are able to resist the men's preponderance. Maybe it is even possible to have women maintenance committee members.

In the older projects the water committee changes into a maintenance committee. Their task is to have the maintenance worker (until now this has always been a man) perform his duty towards the water supply and that problems beyond his power are known at the office so that a technician can be sent to the village.

4.4.2 My own observations during a 4 days training

In February the first 4 days training was given in Sunkhanı. Dolakha district. I was very lucky to be able to attend this training.

In contrast with Judith. Mieke's appearance was very dominant. She has a reason to do so. In this phase of the programme the WW still have

to learn a lot about group meetings and communication skills. Mieke wants to motivate and support her WW by being an example to them herself. She had been in the luxury position to appoint her WW herself. Thereby education was not the most important criterium. Her criteria were enthousiasm, reliability, creativity and devotion. Her close guidance has the aim to make the women workers work independantly. Therefor the WW have to develop more self-esteem just as the village women. Thus a long education is needed. I saw in other projects that WW only will get a few weeks training about the subjects they have to dicuss in the villages. Although these trainings might have a regular follow-up, this is not comparable with an education like the technicians receive (3 years). Mieke tries to compensate this with what she calls '~~on-the-job-training~~'. Particularly in the beginning she guided them in the field.

Before the WW have to perform a new task. Mieke is practising with them for hours by role play. Not only communication skills are discussed but also the basic rules in extension sciences. The most obvious example is the change in questioning. In Nepal people are used to ask questions which already includes the answer, e.g. 'Scabies is a skin disease, isn't it?'. More appropriate would be: "What kind of disease is scabies?". So Mieke teaches the WW only to ask questions starting with Why. How. Which. What. How much. Every time that they forget to do so during their village meetings, she corrects them unconsapiously. I think this is a very good approach because in this way the WW can improve during one meeting and show it! In other projects WW were judged by an observer afterwards. Then I noticed that a lot of them became irritated because they always had the feeling they were not doing well. One should realise this is a quite sensitive matter. By now the WW are very familiar to work like this and Mieke doesn't need to come with them in the field all the time. To use such a methodological approach the WW had to change mentally to understand the need of this approach. After 18 months cooperation with Mieke the WW understand the intention and objectives perfectly well and they even come up with suggestions when new methods are tried.

I also noticed that Mieke tried to combine sanitation and construction by involving the technicians. She only asks them to help with tasks they are familiar with e.g. latrine building or explaining a tapstand construction. The way she approaches the technicians and the way they cooperate with the WW make them also familiar what sanitation

education is about although they will never be able to set up such activities themselves. The point is that they can contribute with the expertise they are educated in and where they are familiar with, and that they comprehend why sanitation motivation is performed in this way. They accept that the WW are the skilled persons on this subject. The relationship between the technicians and the WW in Dolakha can be described as good and cooperative because they respect each others contribution to the programme. They both have a clear job description.

Mieke's presence was not only felt by the WW, also the villagers notice her contribution in the training. To make the lessons more attractive the WW sang songs about disease and health. One of the technicians too made a song and was willing to sing it for the trainees. Next to that Mieke started singing and dancing in Nepali style and the trainees liked it very much. In the end all the women got up and started to dance. I have seen this no where else in Nepal and compared to the first day of the training these women mutated in completely different persons. The aim is to built up a situation of joy and trust where the trainees feel comfortable so that it is easier to remember what they have learnt.

The last remarkable fact during that training was that at that time a maintenance coordinator wanted to visit this project site to talk about the formation of a maintenance committee. In order to stimulate the women to attend this village meeting Mieke contacted him before and asked if he could come to the village directly after her training. He had also been invited to come the 3rd day of the training to explain technical aspects of a tapstand so the women knew him already. She was convinced that more women would come. And so it happened. It was crowded with men and women. Although merely the trained women were not too shy to sit with the men, a lot of women sat aside to watch the meeting. Again Mieke paid severe attention how the process of this meeting took place.

It was noticed that the technicians felt very comfortable because they were in a situation they are familiar with. They were expected to explain the use of a maintenance committee. But as soon as they would start to talk Mieke was afraid that the WW would not have a chance anymore to tell their part of the story.

She proposed that the WW would open the meeting by introducing themselves to the other villagers. Then they would tell what they had been doing in their village so far. Hereafter all the trained women

would introduce themselves one by one by telling their name and which tapstand they represent. The women, however, looked very shy again (they were hiding their faces behind their blankets just like on the first day of the training) because the attention of all villagers, men and women, was focused on them which they are definitely not used to.

Due to the training only one day earlier and the introduction speech of the WW one of them stepped forwards and introduced herself. At that moment Mieke started klapping and called for the representative of tapstand number 2. Again the same happened and all the villagers reacted enthusiastically and klapped their hands. By the time the expatriate maintenance coordinator invited the villagers to formate a maintenance committee it was clear for everybody that the sanitation committee members had to become the maintenance committee members. This was above all expectations and a problem arose because the field engineer didn't feel comfortable with only women in the committee.

It was decided that next to each tapstand representative a man was chosen. This is the best prove that women and men are able to work together and that the separation of women in advance didn't harm the relationship between men and women.

4.4.3 Results in the SNV approach

In the above mentioned village the programme was very succesful. However, in the beginning there were many problems to gather the women for meetings. Often it ended up in visiting each house one by one to motivate the women to come. The same happened with the training although the women were already used to have meetings. The reason might be the length of the training: 4 days of training means 4 days no income activities. Ater the training there was an evaluation. It was found that mainly mothers in law resisted the activity of their daughters in law. Mieke solved this problem through an allowance but not everybody agrees on that because money is considered as the wrong motivation. The women declared that they prefered to have a training in their village with a lower allowance above a training outside their village with an higher allowance. So the money is not the only motivation. Since they are expected to undertake sanitation activities in their village I agree with Mieke that it's only fare to give a small compensation.

Mainly in the beginning the WW were under close guidance. More and more the WW expressed their need for more independancy in their work. For Mieke her work at the SNV office in Kathmandu and the field work succeeded each other every 3 weeks. Her attention in the field was in the villages and in the district office. Thus it is clear that the WW don't need this close guidance forever.

Would it be possible however, to use this approach when the programme is going to be implemented in other areas? Is it possible to guide more WW at the same time? When I left Nepal a female Supervisor was appointed to assist Mieke. Is it realistic though to expect that she can supervise the WW as Mieke did? Again questions arise concerning the sustainability of the sanitation component in the CWSS programme.

The forthcoming chapter is dedicated to this issue.

CHAPTER 5 SUSTAINIBILITY, WHY AND HOW

After the construction the project can be transmitted to the villagers. They have to maintain and to manage their water supply without the help of donor organizations. Therefore it has to be clear:

- * who is responsible for what?
- * who performs the maintenance activities?
- * what is maintenance?

The last question is difficult to explain in a language where the word for maintenance doesn't exist. Practical instructions are needed like repairing and cleaning but arising a sense of responsibility, which is a social process, is also part of the transmission. It is important that this process starts at the moment of request for a water supply.

A prerequisite is that the villagers want this responsibility and second that they can bear the responsibility. The ultimate aim of the CWSS programme is to develop the rural areas in Nepal. Policy makers have to consider what exactly development means and make sure that everybody involved has the same approach. To me it means that villagers themselves can decide independently what they need. Therefore they first need to be aware of their living conditions, to be able to speak out their ideas and to be able to wonder 'What can I/we do about it?'. It is obvious that educated people learn how to express their needs. Many people in Nepal never had the opportunity in his or her life to wonder 'what do I need' or 'what do I want'. Even when the opportunity is suddenly created it is not possible that somebody will suddenly be able to answer this question. One has to learn to express his or her needs.

I think the way villagers participate in the programme according the approaches of Mieke and Judith, is a contribution to teach villagers to express their needs. This can be summarized with one single word: *(adult)* education. A drinking water programme can be a starting point for sanitation and health education but the objectives and the instruments to reach the objectives should not be mixed up and confused, be misunderstood, or even abused.

The next elements should be taken into consideration in the CWSS programme.

5.1 The final aim of the CWSS programme

In chapter 4 I enumerated several goals to be reached in the CWSS programme: 1) to improve hill people's living conditions

- 2) to improve health situation by clean drinking water
- 3) community participation
- 4) awareness building
- 5) training for committee members

My question is if there shouldn't be another sequence in this list of objectives: above all people need education to build awareness. The instrument could be any programme: water, forestry, family planning etc. If they are aware of the fact that they can play an active role in their own development the sustainability of a programme is ensured.

I think it shows the wrong attitude to think that education of women is an instrument. It sounds as if they do not have the right to have some education when it does not benefit the project.

5.2 Community participation

UNICEF considers the community participation through committees a bottom up approach. I think that the formation of committees only, has nothing to do with participation. It is an instrument to tell the villagers what is going on in their village. if they are told. Participation of villagers is a sociological **process** which needs to be conducted by experts who have experience with the formation of groups and conducting them. who have a sociological background and who have developed communication skills. Community participation depends on how this process takes place which again is dependant on how the expert gets along with the people.

The promotion of sanitation improvement by technicians is an impossible task. It seemed that when they were given constant encouragement and support by overseers and engineers the motivation was most succesful. However, that hardly ever happened. That can be expected because technical engineers are not the right persons to motivate and teach technicians on a subject where they are not familiar with and are not educated in themselves. In the worst case they were not even interested and motivated themselves. I think that it shows a lack of insight in the importance of sanitation by organizations and

policy makers if the same policy makers let people with a technical background accomplish this task. The enthusiasm of some good willing technical engineers should not be confused with the needed expertise to conduct sociological processes.

5.3 Women involvement

In the CWSS programme women were overlooked so far. The reason is that bringing a water supply doesn't necessarily mean that all villagers benefit from it. This problem is recognised with high caste and low caste issues. It took more time for Nepali policymakers as well as foreign donors that the same problem comes up between men and women.

In Nepal tasks and responsibilities are divided by sex, more than in western countries. Rural women in Nepal are not educated, in contrast with men. They have never learned to voice their opinion openly, in fact they look very shy. They look even more shy when they meet strangers, especially male and white strangers. One can easily understand that it is difficult to build up a close relationship with Nepali women as an outsider. This is also a problem due to the long working days of rural women. They don't have much time for themselves. Previously it is indicated that the CWSS programme wouldn't work without the participation of women. They have to participate from the initial request to the end of maintenance the supply.

This can not be guaranteed before the project starts and staffpeople can conduct the process of participation with special attention for the women. The staff people have to be female to bridge the gap with the village women as far as possible. I have this feeling that this is not only necessary from the side of the village women as well as from the organizations involved. Until now policymaking is a male dominated matter. There should be more women on policy level to draw attention to women issues.

5.4 Education of Women Workers

On paper there is often attention for women involvement and women education with the aid of Women Workers. Practically however, only a few efforts are made due to a lack of money input and 'womenpower'.

When I visited other health related development programmes I became aware of the fact that the appointment of Women Workers encounters a lot of problems. Why? Because the criteria to find the right women are difficult. Until now, I think, the wrong criteria are being used.

In some projects it is demanded that the WW have an education of at least ten year. As explained in previous chapters this hardly takes place. Even when WW would have this minimum of education it is not assured that the right criterium is used. The more a person is educated, the more it is difficult to cooperate with them as I noticed in some projects. An expatriate field worker once used the word 'talim lagio' (education disease) to explain this problem in the field.

The reason is that Nepali education is based on the idea of hierarchy and authority (see also chapter 2). When a person reaches an higher social position she will behave in accordance with her social status. This includes often a patronizing attitude towards the rural population, something which would destroy approaches based on community participation.

Thus other criteria are much more important like loyalty, creativity and devotion. One needs enough knowledge of human characters to recognise this with applicants. When an organization is big, problems arise because the one who appoints the women will often not work with them in the field. Mieke had the chance to appoint WW by herself. Mieke appointed two WW she trusted and realised that she had to educate the WW herself which led to an extremely close supervision in the beginning of the programme. Not everybody agrees with her due to the opinion that it is not correct to patronize nepalese staff because development has to be done by the inhabitants of the country themselves. In this situation though, I think Mieke's approach is not objectionable.

Besides education there are more criteria used to select WW.

These criteria are: * mobility

* married, so that she won't leave the area by the time she gets married

* no ties with domestic duties or /and children

Women who meet these requirements are often financially motivated because their husbands left them. Most women though don't meet these requirements: they marry very young, live in their husband's household and soon get children. How can one ever expect to select women because of their female sexe who further on must have male qualifications (no ties, free to go where ever they want and educated)?

CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSIONS

Besides the CWSS programme I saw several projects all over Nepal. It seemed to me that it hardly made any difference which approach was most successful but that the people's attitude towards development made each approach work. If the sanitation component of the CWSS programme has to expand with the same positive results as in the pilot projects, much more human input is needed. This also involves the need of more money (salaries, education) and equipment (housing, education materials). The most important elements are the people who work in the system. Therefore action is needed on several levels.

A lot is changing in Nepal. Policy makers seem to alter their attitude towards rural development and take sanitation seriously. This is shown by appointing for example a secretary for sanitation at the ministry. The CWSS programme is now under the technical MHPP. Sanitation education doesn't seem to fit here.

It would be a loss though, if the SC and WDO had to start all over again by a change of ministry, since they have been developing their policy for several years now. A drinking water programme is a good entrance to the people when it coincides with health and sanitation education.

As mentioned before the education of Women Workers is a prerequisite. At the same time it is difficult to find women who are able to do this heavy and difficult task. I think that especially in the beginning the WW need close supervision very badly. Only when you teach them an attitude to respect the interests of the rural people and to work independently you can 'trust' them later to work on their own.

The supervisor has to select the WW herself because she will be the one who will work in close cooperation with them in the field and most male policy makers in Nepal don't have enough field experience. They don't notice and have the experience that if the situation is adapted to the living conditions of women they will convert into independent persons who very well know what they need.

For that reason I prefer the approach of SNV. It gives a clear insight in how to select WW, how to teach them communication skills, how to supervise them and how to train them. At the same time the sanitation expert has to cooperate with Nepali policy makers to transmit her experience to them. I think the involved ministry has to recognise that they have to invest a lot of money in the education and

salaries of Women Workers. As long as this won't occur I don't think the sanitation component is genuine taken seriously. It will only make the job of the SC more difficult because she needs a lot of energy to 'prove' her work needs more human input. In that case I don't think it is usefull to expand the sanitaiton programme to a larger area. I would prefer a good project on small scale then a bad project on large scale.

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to/a

Ms. Josje Weijters
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date 11 July 1990

ref /ref 45.814/HH

your ref /votre ref

Dear Ms. Weijters,

Thank you for sending IRC a copy of your study of experiences in women involvement in the CWSS Programme in Nepal. Allow me to make a few comments on some sections:

pl2. Bottom para. "Helvetas has only two expatriate field engineers. SNV covers a larger area and thus contributes more qualified people.

Helvetas to my recollection employs only one expatriate project manager (and for the period 1987 - 1989/90, a WDO on a local contract -Judith Schwierin) and a number of Nepali staff it contributes to the development of the programme (sociologist/trainer, engineer, WDO, etc.) Since 1981 no volunteers have been working in the Pokhara programme as part of a policy to transfer skills and responsibilities to our Nepali colleagues. In the same fashion the Helvetas expatriate inputs were decreased from three engineers in 1982 to one only in 1985. For a variety of reasons a Swiss project manager continues to head the programme.

I suggest that also within the SNV programme a reduction of expatriate staff and a shift towards non-engineering skills would be advisable. Knowing that the shift is taking place, I do not know how the reduction in the absolute number of expatriate staffs engaged in the CWSS programme is being effected.

The fact that this sentence caught my eye and particularly the section on "contributes more qualified people", wil probably give you an indication that personnel development policies and practice (by the various agencies involved) in the programme and the related institutional aspects, may still be subject to considerable debate.

On page 15 you mention that Helvetas "appointed a Swiss advisor WDO who had experience" Actually it was the other way around. Since 1983 I have been trying to get a Nepali women in the programme staff to gradually develop a women component. I did not want to advertise as I would probably only get applicants who would be interested in an office job. Also they might have an academic background whereas I felt a common-sense woman was needed, possibly

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a teacher, who would be able and willing to function in a field posting as well. After a few disappointments (ladies who were interested in the job but did not get permission from male relatives), we were able to employ Yam Kumari Gurung in the autumn of 1984. Yam was employed as a primary school teacher, spoke good English, was Nepali, but had lived in Malaysia when her father had been posted there as a Gurkha soldier. Obviously it was quite difficult for Yam to develop her work, moreso because nobody really had experience in this field at the time. A lot of brainstorming was done, and together with the Nepali sociologist some activities gradually came about. Initially Yam was part of the communication group that travelled through the project areas to support project information and hygiene education. She also had a lot of contacts with the Production Credit for Rural Women Programme in the Western Development Region. However to really start making some impact in a village, one woman is simply not enough, while also travel to remote project areas is difficult for a woman alone. Thus, when my successor (Markus Engler) came, I suggested that Judith might want to form a team with Yam so that ideas for women involvement could be developed somewhat more rapidly. The suggestion was taken up and resulted some time later in a local Helvetas contract for Judith. I think they did a great job together and indeed brought the whole women programme a step further.

Your comparison of the two approaches as developed by the general UNICEF SNV-supported programme and the Helvetas supported programme is quite interesting. It shows that we certainly have not found the ultimate (sustainable) solution to the involvement of women projects in Nepal. Contacts between the various agencies working in water in the rural areas have been fairly good with respect to the exchange of experiences on women development. But probably it is time now to sit together, evaluate the experiences and work towards a situation in which the roles of WDO's in the CWSS programme are clear, their institutional integration is ensured and a number of strategies and goals in women development are agreed upon. A national consultation might well be organised by the Ministry with the assistance of UNICEF, in the same fashion as this was done earlier in Jhapa (1980) and Pokhara (1982, 1986).

I made that suggestion already earlier to SNV-WDO's who came to IRC in the past year, and maybe such an activity has already been undertaken. If so, fine; if not, it still sounds a good idea to me.

Finally, I would like to ask you to send me an extra copy of your report for Helvetas/Switzerland. I will take care of sending that copy on with a copy of this letter. Maybe Helvetas can consider to organise a workshop to exchange the experiences in women involvement in the water supply programmes so far.

With kind regards,

Han Heijnen
Senior Programme Officer

cc. Christine van Wijk

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