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# Communication in Water Supply and Sanitation Resource Booklet

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This edition, January 1994, revised by Peter McIntyre

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## Foreword Communication Resource Booklet

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Water supply and sanitation programmes depend critically for their success on an effective IEC (Information, Education, Communication) component. The experience of the past decade clearly demonstrates that even the best-designed programmes failed, or produced meagre results, because decision makers and intended beneficiaries were not adequately consulted, informed, educated or mobilised.

However, the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade has also shown that isolated experiments and experiences can indeed have positive results "if political will is charged with ideas that people can grasp as their own. If the common thread is that behaviours must change, then the most critical element in planning for safe water is that of communication." (UNICEF, 1990).

This booklet is designed to support people who are convinced of the need for change in the water sector and who want to know how to put a communication programme into effect, in and for the sector. It cannot be prescriptive or fulfil the role of a manual, as there is considerable variation from country to country in the way the necessary steps should be introduced. What it can do is offer guidance based on the experiences of many people in many countries, and outline the steps that need to be taken to develop and implement a communication strategy. Such a strategy should be designed to support the sector goal of supplying everyone in each country in the years to come with sustainable basic water supply and sanitation.

Included as an appendix is a collection of short advocacy pieces which address some of the key questions raised in and by the booklet and which can be referred to or used as a short summary. Together, these pieces set out to make the case for the creation of a communication culture in the Water and Sanitation Sector.

The booklet has been produced collectively by members from the Working Group on IEC and consultants, and issued by the IRC under the aegis of the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council. The Working Group was established through the Council, a new global forum composed of sector professionals from developing countries, external support agencies, and other institutions active in water supply and sanitation.

This is a new version of the original booklet published as a draft in 1991/92. The earlier version is largely incorporated in this one, although certain chapters have been

restructured, and new ideas on IEC in the sector are included. We have updated the section on basic elements for messages for various target groups. Other Working Group documents, the outline for strategies and some of the communication case studies, are incorporated.

The booklet includes suggestions for advocacy at national and global level, and basic elements for messages on water supply and sanitation to priority target groups. The steps and basic components which have proved to be essential in communication programming for rural development are described in Chapter 7. Chapter 8 provides characteristics and some examples of how different sections of society can be mobilised to contribute to the grand alliance that needs to be forged for Water Supply and Sanitation. A new introduction to alliances and the advantages and potential drawbacks of various allies has been added.

Reactions to the draft indicate that this new booklet has the potential to become the resource booklet for water supply and sanitation communication. Comments on this edition are invited so that the sector reaction and experience can be incorporated into future editions. Please send comments and reports about the use of this booklet, as well as experience with existing and new communication initiatives in the water sector to:

Chairman of the Working Group on IEC  
C/O IRC International Water and Sanitation Centre  
PO Box 2869  
2601 CW Delft  
The Netherlands

In preparation for this booklet, the Working Group on IEC consulted a wealth of literature on communication in development programmes. The following publications deserve special mention:

- *Facts for Life*: a communication challenge
- *All for Health*: a resource booklet for Facts for Life
- *Communicating for Health*: Agent for Change
- Communicating for rural development to improve planning, participation and training

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# Chapter 1: Why Communication?

## Communication Resource Booklet

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The Water and Sanitation Sector has an ambitious aim; striving to offer every community, in every country on earth, the opportunity for safe water and sanitation. This immense human challenge is not simply technological. It demands a change in the orientation of the whole sector.

The International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade (IDWSSD) which ended in 1990 brought safe water and sanitation to 2.1 billion people and scored impressive technological advances, but ended with the job half done. The situation today is that an unacceptable number of people in developing countries still have no access to safe water and proper sanitation, and a large number of people choose not to use the facilities built for them. Faced with increasing populations, higher levels of pollution and resources which are stagnant or falling, the sector has the task of bringing the benefits of safe water and sanitation to another 2.9 billion people.

Achieving success on this scale means changing the way that people think and act. The sector must develop new ways of working so that policy makers, the water and sanitation sector, and users work towards common goals.

There are many people inside the sector who are now convinced that IEC (Information, Education and Communication) is a necessary ingredient of effective water and sanitation programmes. These people know that the seriousness of the current state of water and sanitation provision has not been presented persuasively enough to those who make key decisions. They know that resources fall woefully short of what is needed and that new challenges demand more creative use of available resources. They also recognise that the effective use of improved water supplies and latrines must be based on participation and understanding.

They accept that most water and sanitation-related problems must be tackled by the people in the villages and urban slums, who must be properly empowered and equipped to take actions themselves. This means that field workers must communicate more effectively with women, as well as men, in order to involve communities in planning and managing their own facilities and to make hygiene education effective. It also means that technical support must respond to the real needs in the communities. These lessons, positive and negative, have produced broad agreement that changes are necessary in the attitude and behaviour of the people who make

decisions about development priorities to expand coverage, and of the people in the communities. Therefore, to do this, the sector must create what we can call a communication culture, where dialogue and participation become second nature in sector work. There is broad agreement on the aims of a communication strategy, remembering that the strategy is in support of sector goals, and forms part and parcel of achieving those goals. In that framework, the overall objectives of the communication strategy for WSS are:

- **recognition**  
a broad understanding of the importance and benefits of WSS to the economic, social and physical health of communities;
- **efficiency**  
optimising available human and financial resources, through greater co-ordination;
- **effectiveness**  
full application of the lessons learned during the Decade;
- **participation**  
maximising co-operation and support, both human and financial.

Success stories about the role of communication abound in the health and nutrition fields, a source for inspiration and motivation. Immunisation and oral rehydration campaigns in recent years produced impressive results. Immunisation has reached 85 percent of the world's children, preventing over 1.3 million deaths per year. Oral rehydration is now being used by more than 20 percent of the world's families and preventing over 600,000 deaths a year. Health programme specialists say that use of sophisticated communications strategies and IEC have been crucial in obtaining such promising results.

The changes being sought in the WSS are deeper, more profound, changes in human behaviour and attitude than taking a child for immunisation. The behaviours which will protect drinking water supplies and ensure good sanitation practices are private, daily habits. A village or urban health worker may check that children have been immunised, but there can be no daily checks to ensure that adults and children wash their hands before meals, except those that parents use to teach children.

The changes being sought are deep and subtle, and cannot be brought about through top-down instruction, however well motivated. Effective communication involves dialogue with partners so that the benefits of the new behaviour are understood and accepted.

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## Chapter 2: What is Communication? Communication Resource Booklet

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If you sit ten people down in a room they will agree unanimously on the need to communicate, but will have ten different ideas of what that means. At its crudest, the ability to communicate can simply be seen as the ability to convince other people more quickly, so that they fall in with your own plans as quickly as possible. Other people have some idea that communication is a two way process which involves listening as well as talking - but do not understand the full implications of listening. The most powerful communicators know that the process might result in a wholesale change in their own thinking and plans. Communication is an instrument for partnership and participation based on a two-way dialogue, where senders and receivers of information interact on an equal footing leading to interchange and mutual discovery. Communication is pivotal in the development process because it caters to the human dimension.

### Phrases used in Communication

When we talk about IEC in and for the water and sanitation sector we deal with **programme communication** (also known as **programme support communication**, or **development communication**). This is understood by UNICEF as "the planned communication component of programmes designed to change the attitudes and behaviour of specific groups of people in specific ways through person-to-person communication, mass media, traditional media or community communication."

**Programme communication** is concerned with the delivery of services and the interface between service deliverers and beneficiaries. It may include monitoring the way in which primary health care is delivered, or training water and sanitation engineers in community participation. It recognises that people need to be informed, educated, motivated and assisted in making changes. Providing services does not guarantee they will be used.

We also take in lessons from **social mobilisation** and **advocacy**.

**Social mobilisation** is a process for planning and implementing a variety of mutually reinforcing communication activities to achieve specific goals. In our sector, the process is concerned with mobilising human, financial and technical resources to support large-scale implementation of water and sanitation services that will benefit communities, largely through self-reliant and sustainable efforts. The aims are: getting political commitment and resource allocation from national policy and decision-makers, enlisting the support of senior civil servants, service providers, government agencies and

media, enlisting the support of national and international companies, gaining commitment from local political, religious and traditional leaders, and NGOs and, through community participation, mobilising households and individuals in support of clean water and sanitation.

**Advocacy** is the act of lobbying political, religious and economic leaders for support or pleading a cause. Common techniques involve providing information, persuading people there is a problem which they can solve, indicating possible actions and supporting those in power to take them.

There are other frequently used phrases.

**Health and hygiene education** promotes beneficial changes in health behaviour by providing health information through all available channels.

**Social marketing** uses state of the art marketing approaches to increase demand for a service or to encourage behaviour change.

**Community participation** means empowering people to identify problems, decide how they can be overcome, make plans and seek solutions and to increase the capacity of communities to organise and manage services.

These approaches mutually reinforce behavioural changes that improve the well-being of communities.

Disseminating information is not enough. Water and sanitation planners, experts and field workers must learn to listen to people about their concerns, needs and possibilities. Policy makers need to be personally contacted to benefit from dialogue and interaction to shape opinion and influence decisions. Communication for behavioural change is a complicated process of human action, reaction and interaction.

Communication involves looking at situations from the viewpoint of other people, and understanding what they are looking for. It means understanding obstacles to change. It means presenting relevant and practical options, and it means telling people what the effect is of the choices they make. This is true in the international arena when seeking funds or political commitment, and it is true when installing a pump in a community.

Communication is the golden thread that draws the sector together with policy makers, officials who carry out policy, natural allies in health, agriculture and environment sectors, and the community. It ensures that policy makers, partners and communities are committed to projects and helps to prevent expensive mistakes.

People tend to change when they understand the nature of the change, and view it as beneficial, so that they make an informed and conscious choice to include it in their list of priorities. Unless their circumstances are taken into account, and their felt needs are met, no effort for change will be successful. People need to be informed and consulted, or they do not feel part of the effort. Involving target populations at every level and stage of development - from identifying problems to finding solutions, from resource mobilisation to project implementation - is critical to the success of any development project. Effective communication requires a comprehensive, multi-dimensional strategy. This concept of dialogue and interpersonal communication should apply throughout a continuum of activities. It is as important for advocacy work with legislators as for hygiene education efforts with villagers. The continuum thus provides a framework for mutually supportive activities across a broad range.



Communication helps to design better sustainable projects. It helps to mobilise people for development action, and to promote coordination and linkages. Communication spreads knowledge about successful experiences. It points people to sources of information and advice, education and learning, and planning and decision making. Communication helps to organize and manage systems for exchanging information between rural or urban people, or between technicians, or from planners to grassroots and back from grassroots to planners. Finally, communication improves the reach and impact of training and extension.

Introducing a comprehensive strategy does not mean duplicating elements that are already in operation. The strategy is a framework for action, in which existing efforts - be it fund-raising or hygiene classes for villagers - can be improved through an effective communication approach. New communication efforts may be necessary where a programme lacks some elements in the continuum of activity, whether advocacy, finding out existing knowledge, attitudes and practice, or use of the media.

Decentralisation is a guiding principle. Every segment and sub-segment of audience is different, and each has its own order of priorities and economic, social and cultural perspective on water and sanitation. A decentralised approach to communication activities is better positioned to address the needs of the community and affords a closer aim to solve the problems.

The involvement of the community - in issue identification, message design, dissemination, monitoring and impact evaluation - will provide vital feedback. More important, such involvement will enhance a true sense of partnership, a critical ingredient for the strategy to become successful.

Unfortunately, full and purposeful communication between development specialists and rural and urban fringe people seldom takes place spontaneously. There are barriers to communication, usually of a socio-cultural nature. They involve such factors as the differing uses of language and differing levels of literacy and education. Divergent interests of the parties concerned and their differing perceptions of the realities of a given situation can be other barriers. Appropriate use of communication approaches and techniques can help to overcome these barriers and promote better understanding.

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Those who describe themselves as communicators in a professional sense include some academics, journalists, politicians, TV presenters, and people in development work with a communication officer title. In implementing the strategy outlined above, the water and sanitation sector may have need of all or any of these experts, especially as the current information and communication epoch has accelerated the drive to use the media more purposefully and systematically for development.

However, a communication-oriented sector cannot be realised by grafting on a few specialists. Water sector professionals need to become more communication-oriented than in the past, so that they see themselves as the first advocates for water supply and sanitation and their work and as communicators in their working lives. They must become part of a new alliance of communicators working hand-in-hand with health professionals, volunteers, educators, teachers, media specialists, entertainers and artists, publishing and advertising professionals, leaders of women's and youth groups, development and social workers, and with politicians at all levels of government. Mobilising the political will of nations to put water back on the forefront of the world's agenda as part of the current environmental concerns will be a priority.

An understanding of this need for communication takes place in an uneven way. The people who are first convinced may be field workers or in the middle of the sector structure. This does not mean that they should simply wait for those above them to become convinced. At every level there are things that can be done to change a way of working. They can also approach those in positions of greater influence and use the elements of messages outlined in this booklet to convince them. Although anyone in the sector can make a start, it is also true that the changes outlined above will only have their full effect when the whole sector has become involved.

Sector leaders can not only become effective advocates for WSS at the highest policy level in their respective country or agency, but also persuade other sector staff to accept communication as a key component in their work. Managers should be able to articulate more forcefully, with data, the benefits of their programmes and projects. Field workers must communicate with the communities to provide feedback and to bring about involvement and action. If a critical mass of concern and interest is generated within the sector, communication will become a new and powerful thrust.

Responsibility for changing the agenda lies with the sector itself. The more that this communication culture penetrates the sector, the better will its people become mobilisers of policy makers within developing countries, allies of sectors with complementary aims, trusted partners of the community and international advocates for the sector.

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Safe latrines have been promoted in Bangladesh for nearly 30 years - but until the end of the 80s they won little acceptance amongst the majority of the population.

This was in marked contrast to the success in bringing safe water supplies to villages. Safe water covered 80% of the population while sanitation coverage was only 8%.

Cole Dodge, UNICEF representative in Dhaka, set out to find out why the UNICEF and Government sector programme for the previous ten years had used all its available funds, yet failed to meet a single annual target for sanitation.

Between 1964 and 1978 all of Bangladesh was included in a water-sealed latrine programme, with promotion based on the health and germ theory.

However, research showed that, for the 75% of the population who were illiterate, the main attractions of latrines were privacy, convenience, comfort of women and prestige.

To change this mismatch between the sector and the community, a process of social mobilisation was launched.

Advocacy was used to mobilise senior Government staff, Members of Parliament, the media, NGOs and the community.

The phrase 'pathogen overload' was used to describe a situation where every sector of society was prone to water borne disease.

Politicians and senior government decision makers were told that sanitation was a top priority in the drive against diarrhoea, which accounts for 300,000 child deaths each year. This advocacy was successful. There was even a report that a cabinet minister had appropriated a whole district's production for his own village.

UNICEF found allies to help promote sanitation.

- The leadership of a village based organisation, Ansars, with four million members, trained its officers in sanitation.
- Islamic clergy allowed a UNICEF communications officer to address 1.5 million people at a religious gathering and to distribute half a million leaflets

on sanitation.

- By 1992 the Prime Minister agreed to launch a logo for the new communication drive at a national rally.
- Sanitation promotional material now highlighted women's preferences and cultural values, rather than simply repeating health messages. A strategy for participatory planning was agreed, and courtyard meetings were used to explain the benefits to 25 or 30 families at a time.
- The popularity of the tubewells programme was exploited. Groups of ten families had to show that they had installed latrines, before a tubewell would be provided.
- At the same time the sector and UNICEF agreed that they would stop promoting the waterseal latrine as the only hygienic option. Although sold at a subsidised price, it was still out of the reach of many families. A smaller version was designed, less than half the price of the original, but suitable for stable soil formations. A do-it-yourself latrine was also introduced as an acceptable option. It has a life about five years and can be produced at little or no cost to the family.
- The new Integrated Approach adopted in Bangladesh will cover the whole country by 1995. Even before national coverage, the percentage of rural families with a sanitary latrine rose from 10% in 1989 to 26% in 1991. A recent survey of 10,000 randomly selected families showed good results, compared to 1985.
- Use of sanitary latrines was up from 4% to 25%.
- Use of tubewell water for drinking reached 92% (up from 80%).
- Hand washing with soap or ash after defecating, up from 5% to 27%.
- Where coverage had been high and more than 70% of families had latrines, use of the latrines was reported at over 90%.
- The survey also showed challenges ahead.
- Hand washing before handling food had remained unchanged at 3%.

The Bangladesh example shows that resources can be used more effectively where the efforts of the sector are closely tuned to the knowledge and beliefs of the community, and where advocacy persuades allies to encourage a real change in people's thinking and behaviour.

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## Chapter 4: Target Audiences Communication Resource Booklet

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The overall goal for the Water Supply and Sanitation (WSS) sector in the 1990s is to increase sustainable and effectively used water and sanitation services, including healthful and environmentally-wise use. Effective communication enhances the possibility of achieving this goal. [Chapter 1](#) explained that the communication strategy aims to promote sustained public awareness of the urgent need for WSS, to maximise the utilisation of resources, and, in due course, to meet unmet needs, by increasing efficiency, effectiveness and participation.

Specific, realistic, prioritised and measurable objectives evolve in the detailed planning and programming phase of the communication strategy. This stage is described in [Chapter 7](#), Basic Steps for Preparation and Implementation, and the elements on which the messages for each segment of society will be based are described in [Chapter 5](#).

Segmentation of audiences and their communication needs is essential for effective communication. Without understanding the differences among various segments, or sub-segments, it is difficult to design effective messages that call for change. While themes remain essentially the same, the fine-tuning of the message content, the choice of media mix, and the designing and packaging of the messages will vary. The variation will depend on the circumstances in each case.

The communication strategy should in the long run encompass all sections of society. In the short term, priority targets should be those who make and influence decisions: policy makers, sector professionals and users. It is the sector which has to take responsibility for action and play the leading role.

### Sector professionals

The sector includes all those who work in the water and sanitation field, from planners to field implementers in voluntary agencies, governments and External Support Agencies (ESAs). More than the others, they must recognise the need for communication and apply it in their work. Hence, an intensive and persistent orientation and training effort is required. In order to face the challenges ahead, sector professionals must first internalize the lessons of the last decade and make the necessary changes in their outlook. They should also improve their ability to

communicate effectively with other levels and beyond the sector. Everyone can and should play a role in communication on an interpersonal basis.

Sector leaders can be effective advocates for WSS at the highest policy level in their respective country or agency, and help persuade other sector staff to accept communication as a key component in their work. Managers should be able to articulate more forcefully, with valuable data, the benefits of their programmes and projects. Field workers must communicate with the communities they serve in order to provoke feedback and to bring about involvement and action. If a critical mass of concern and interest is generated within the sector, communication will become a new and powerful thrust.

## **Policy makers**

Those who make policy decisions and influence development priorities include political leaders, legislators, top civil servants and economic planners. They are generally subject to pressure from all sides.

To mobilise them, it is important to have the data and information that they need to discharge their respective responsibilities.

They include data on why water and sanitation needs constitute:

- a politically viable priority with a broad base, supported electorally or otherwise,
- a sound investment in human development that is cost-effective and yields health and economic benefits,
- a social imperative that can no longer be ignored.

They also need to appreciate the importance of community involvement and decentralization and encourage such operational principles. Assigning the sector the necessary resources and obtaining the commitment to sustain it, require effective communication activities on a broad scale and on a continuing basis.

Included in this segment of audience are opinion makers and influential personages, and those in the mass media, who help set the agenda of the public and that of politicians and public servants.

## **The users**

The people who use water and sanitation facilities are what this whole effort is about. Their needs and perspectives constitute the most important elements of programme communication. Their circumstances - economic, social and cultural - must be first taken into account in designing any intervention. Communication with the communities is needed for situation analysis, identification of issues and problems, mobilization of resources, specific message design and delivery, and constant feedback.

Having the wells and latrines located at the right places for convenient use and proper maintenance certainly requires a process of communication and consultation that leads to decisions shared by the community about the planning, building and management of these facilities. If field workers do not know how to communicate effectively with the community, they cannot ferret out the underlying causes that block community actions. Nor can they succeed in facilitating learning about bacteria

in polluted water and human excreta for the villagers to adopt an informed choice of behaviour.

Community management represents an important involvement practice, leading to sustainability. Since many communities are new to their facilities, communication is needed to acquaint the people with their management. Cost recovery is new to many communities, and effective communication can help them understand the reasons for payment of services.

## Other segments

There are many groups who can help the sector reach these three main targets. These groups, including mass media, health workers, traditional healers and religious leaders, are discussed in Chapter 6, Building Alliances. However, in order for these groups to become allies they must first be convinced, and they must therefore also be a target audience for the sector, with specific approaches and specific message components.

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## Case Study: Organising for change in Guinea Bissau Communication Resource Booklet

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Guinea Bissau has embraced the new communication culture which is being advocated for water and sanitation. In the early stages great attention was paid to the need for an organising centre and the need to increase the capacity of the sector for communication.

The Minister for Natural Resources took the lead to launch IEC activities to improve the performance of the water sector. (Water supply and sanitation is the responsibility of the General Directorate of Water Resources, within the Ministry.) The Minister nominated a coordinator to lead the initiative.

At the same time the government established an inter-ministerial working group to coordinate IEC actions in different sectors. The group is now integrated into the National Environmental Committee and is coordinated by The Secretary of State of the Information Ministry. Secretaries from the Planning Ministry and Ministry of Health, as well as two Directors General from the Natural Resources Ministry, participate. UNDP coordinates IEC efforts of donor agencies. The working group includes representatives from the Rural Radio Programme, the World Bank, and UNICEF.

A national communication strategy will be introduced to sector staff through a national workshop.

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# Case Study: Eradication of Guinea-worm disease

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Guinea worm disease was for many years under-reported and neglected. Before the international campaign to eradicate it gained momentum barely one case in 20 was known, although guinea worm disease is a major cause of disability and the third biggest cause of tetanus.

The effect on the economy of endemic countries, including Nigeria and Ghana has been devastating. In Nigeria it is estimated that 50 million working days, in the cultivation of rice, cassava and yams, were lost each year, and that children missed 40 million days a year because of the disease.

The key messages which people needed to know and act on if guinea worm is to be eradicated are:

- guinea worm comes from contaminated drinking water;
- infected individuals should not be allowed to bathe in or contaminate water sources used for drinking;
- guinea worm wounds should be cleaned and bandaged;
- drinking water should be filtered or boiled.

Messages have to be acted on at village level, but they need action national and global level. The campaign needs money to repair wells and pumps, nylon to make filters, training for village health workers, and vehicles and equipment to spread the message. This requires cooperation between donors and government departments.

President Jimmy Carter has been a leading figure internationally in helping to mobilise resources, sometimes able to open doors and gain a hearing when a lower profile approach would have failed. He has been able to act as an ambassador for the campaign, inviting heads of state and government ministers to view a video film outlining the problem and potential for eradication, before discussing what can be done.

At national level the role of Heads of State and Government ministers has been crucial in focusing attention. In Ghana the Head of State visited 21 endemic villages

in the Northern Region soon after the national programme began. In Nigeria the Vice President unveiled commemorative stamps and ordered that local government areas allocate 10% of their health budgets to the campaign.

The State Commissioner of Health in Kwarea in Nigeria watched a guinea worm being extracted and then took the worm with him to show to the military governor of the state. The Governor immediately approved the money for a well.

The national effort which laid the groundwork for a successful campaign was a village by village search for cases, which in 1989 identified more than 800,000 cases in the two countries, and showed where they were concentrated. Now village health workers make monthly reports on the number of cases, so that the campaign can be monitored nationally and internationally.

The results have been spectacular. In Nigeria the number of cases fell by 76% in four years, and in Ghana there was an even steeper decline as cases fell by 81% in three years.

Ghana is now on course for eradication by the end of this year, while Nigeria expects to eradicate the disease by 1996. Mobilising the community at village level, Government departments at national level, and agencies and Governments at international level has been a communications success story. Advocacy at Global and national level has been a key element in turning the tide of events.

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## Chapter 5: Basic Elements for Messages Communication Resource Booklet

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In [Chapter 2](#) we saw that target audiences must be segmented, so that approaches and messages can be tailor-made. This is not a mechanical process. Shaping messages to the particular audience means taking into account the current knowledge, attitudes and practice of each audience.

There are some basic elements for messages which are primary examples of what will usually be relevant for each of the three priority audience groups. These elements are outlined here in the hope that they will be helpful in the formation of specific messages.

These elements do not constitute a complete list of what may be needed to produce messages. There will other information including local knowledge, and local experiences.

So far as is possible, data presented at national level should be national data. How many people in each country are deprived of their right to clean drinkable water and sanitation? How many deaths can be attributed to unsafe water and sanitation? How much illness is there from unsafe water? How much avoidable human misery do deaths and illnesses cause and how much do they cost the economy of the country?

Sector professionals will also be influenced if local examples can be produced which illustrate some of the elements for messages which are printed below. Communities and users will certainly be more strongly influenced by examples close to their own circumstances, than by generalisations or by examples from other countries.

### Policy makers

Key elements for messages to convince national policy makers are:

- Water is essential for life, and disposing excreta a daily bodily function.
- Access to safe water and sanitation facilities is a basic human right.
- Besides human consumption and waste disposal, water is used for irrigation, fishery, animal husbandry and small- and large-scale industries.
- Water being such a basic need for life is an easy entry point for community

action and involvement for broader scale development.

- Water supply can support more independent management in communities, for which decentralised decision making at all levels is needed.
- Accessible safe water saves women's time, which improves the welfare of women, and provides more time for family care or income-producing activities.
- Policy makers have to encourage and provide a framework for the sector to flexibly respond to community demands and possibilities.
- Water is becoming a political issue. Competition between agriculture, households and industry must be dealt with.
- Urban water conservation is becoming an essential policy and strategy issue that, unless integrated into government programmes, threatens to hamper economic growth.
- The World Health Organisation recognises that improvements in water and sanitation facilities constitute the most effective measure in controlling cholera, typhoid, parasitic and other endemic diseases.
- Control of disease and removal of constraints on economic growth are essential steps in the eradication of poverty.
- Environmental problems facing the country cannot be solved without recognising the environmental benefits of effective sanitation.
- Effective integration of technical and social factors is essential to maximise social and environmental health benefits.

## **Sector professionals**

Water and sanitation professionals need to know and understand the elements for messages being used to convince policy makers and opinion leaders. They also need to assimilate the lessons of the last decade, which saw the New Delhi, Dublin and Rio de Janeiro statements and declarations. These all call for a more participatory way of working where effective communication is recognised as the factor that can make a real difference to outcomes.

The elements which will be most useful for the production of messages can be grouped under several headings, covering integration and water resource management, linkage with the community, organisation of the sector and the communication process.

### **Integration and Water Resource Management**

- Effective integration of water supply and hygiene education is essential to maximise social and environmental health benefits.
- Water supply and sewerage investment must be planned together, since the collection and disposal of human and solid wastes have important links with water supply.
- Provision of safe water can only be guaranteed if water resources for future generations are safeguarded through conservation and protection.
- Women's participation must be ensured. Capacity building and skill

development will enable them to play their role.

- Water should have an economic value in all its competing uses and should be recognised as an economic good.
- It is vital to recognise the basic right of all human beings to have access to clean water and sanitation at an affordable price.
- The level of service they want and are willing to pay for will have to be negotiated with communities.

### **Linkage with the Community**

- A partnership approach with communities results in better targeting, more efficient implementation and greater sustainability.
- If services and good practices are to become sustainable then they must meet the felt needs of the users.
- Local 'community' management of facilities is the key to sustainability and proper use of most water supply systems.
- Long-term sustainability of a WSS system can only be achieved if users take responsibility for operating and maintaining the system and contribute adequate financial resources.

### **Organisation of the sector**

- The sector needs well-established, well run, flexible institutions, responsive to local initiatives.
- Trained staff are essential, and capacity building and skill development at all levels are a must.
- Community management organisation requires time and effort in training, follow-up and consultation.
- Government departments and NGOs can facilitate community management through communication, advice, education, training, and support for planning and implementation that would ensure equitable representation of all interest groups in the community.
- Better coordination between government departments, and between implementing agencies contributes to more effective water supply and sanitation programmes.
- More use should be made of the experience and contribution of non-governmental organisations and the private sector.

### **Communication process**

- IEC (Information, Education and Communication) forms an essential ingredient underlying all sector work.
- Communication is a powerful means to communicate more effectively with policy people and to engage in real dialogue with consumers.
- Evaluating relevant information will identify better ways of spending resources.

- Information exchange provides an important opportunity for efficient development of water supply and sanitation projects.
- Alliances and coalitions need to be built with other sectors to tackle the multiple tasks in water supply and sanitation.

## **Users**

Two-way communication with the users of water and sanitation is one of the most profound changes that is being sought in the sector and is one of the cornerstones for a strategy of successful communication. Effective messages will be those that are tailored to each community, which address themselves to the felt needs of the community. If the link between good sanitation and health is not understood or acknowledged, the advantages of privacy and convenience may still succeed in bringing about a change in practice.

Elements for messages for communities include:

### **Health**

- Water is essential for life, and disposing excreta a daily bodily function.
- Access to safe water and sanitation facilities is a basic human right.
- Improved water and sanitation technologies will only lead to health impacts if linked with appropriate behaviour and proper use.
- Drinking clean water protects family members from sickness.
- If no improved water supply is available it is safer to use upstream water for human use, and downstream water for waste disposal.
- Protection of water sources, and water containers safeguards health.
- Illnesses can be prevented by washing hands with soap or ash and water after contact with faeces and before handling food.
- Illnesses can be prevented by using latrines.
- If it is not possible to use a latrine, adults and children should defecate well away from houses, paths, water supplies and anywhere where children play. Faeces should be buried.
- Latrines should be cleaned regularly.
- Illness can be prevented by burning household refuse or burying it in a special pit.

### **Convenience**

- Latrines in the house or nearby are more convenient and provide privacy.
- Pumps or taps provided nearby eliminate the wearisome labour of women and children who may otherwise walk two to three hours a day to gather water for their families.
- Cleanliness at home and in the compound, village or city prevents disease, loss of work days, loss of income, and heavy medical expenses.
- Water is precious and sanitation facilities are necessary, and are worth paying



for.

## Other benefits

- Accessible safe water saves women's time, improves welfare of women and provides more time for family care or income-producing activities.
- Waste water from handpumps can be used to irrigate a little vegetable garden.
- Water, being a basic need for life, is an entry point for community action and broader scale development.
- Once a village can get its water supply organised it can also take up other basic services and income-generating activities.

## Management

- Water and sanitation facilities belong to the community, and individuals in the community must assume responsibility for them.
- In partnership with sector agencies, communities must assume management of the facilities.
- The communities' own resources should be mobilised as much as possible.

NB: The Division of Global and Inter-regional programmes of UNDP in 1991 published a test version of a manual aimed at improvements at the household level, "Water gardens and Health, a guide for community educators", which employs simple dialogue, messages and illustrations. The manual can be adapted to fit local conditions.

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## Chapter 7: Basic Steps for Preparation and Implementation Communication Resource Booklet

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A sector which is listening and learning as well as giving information and teaching is a sector that is essentially flexible. However, when new methods of work are being adopted, it is also important to have a structured approach which will prevent the sector from floundering. Experience has taught others who have set out on this road that there are some basic steps which almost always need to be undertaken to prepare, plan and implement a communication strategy for the sector.

These basic steps can be divided into five basic phases, each of which contains some key activities. Written down, this process may appear to be one linear event with a starting and finishing point. In operation, these divisions become blurred and steps and stages need continually to be repeated. The overall pattern is that the sector is constantly evaluating and re-evaluating what it is doing, and how it is doing it, so that messages and impact are constantly improving. The five basic phases in the development of a communication strategy can be categorised as:

- [Analysis](#)
- [Planning and programming](#)
- [Message development](#)
- [Implementation, monitoring pretesting and revision and assessment](#)
- [Evaluation](#)

### Analysis

Situation analysis, the first step to effective communication, includes reviewing:

- what policies and programmes exist
- which problem you want to solve; which behaviour patterns you are trying to influence, based on existing knowledge, attitudes and practices
- what constraints need to be tackled
- which agencies can assist your communication programme
- which media and communication resources are available

Situation analysis will help you and the various target groups to decide in dialogue which messages are most important, and what are the current knowledge, attitudes and practices of the target audience. For example, if you are to launch an initiative on sanitation, you should know what people already believe are the causes of diarrhoea, and what they know about latrines.

Situation analysis will tell you whether your target audience gets its information about water and sanitation issues from TV shows, other family members, or respected elders in the community. It will tell you whether the audience has been approached in the past over a projected behaviour change and the outcome of that approach. It will tell you whether an allied sector has recently distributed a message that will support or conflict with the one you were intending to give.

This analysis should be carried out using a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods such as questionnaires, focus group discussions and direct observations by field investigators.

## Planning and programming

This stage should result in an overall strategy and plan that defines the following components:

- objectives (specific, realistic, prioritised and measurable)
- audience segmentation
- media selection, multiple and coordinated for impact and timing
- interpersonal reinforcement, by community workers, religious leaders and other influential groups work schedule, including monitoring check points
- budget, with line items for personnel, materials development, pretesting and revision, production, field worker training, equipment, travel and evaluation
- management plan, indicating specific responsibilities for major tasks.

You will use the information from the situation analysis to:

- i. Define, in clear and simple terms, what behaviour is being promoted. The aims should address the needs and concerns of the intended audience.
- ii. Decide to which audience the messages are directed. They will vary according to the target group - whether villages, field workers, politicians or engineers. Segmentation of audiences and their communication needs is essential. Without understanding differences among various segments, or sub-segments, it is difficult to design effective messages that call for change. While themes remain essentially the same, the fine-tuning of message content, the choice of media mix, and design and packaging of messages will vary.
- iii. Determine whether the desired behaviour change requires new skills or knowledge.

In selecting the most appropriate channels of communication and media you will need to identify those that are most effective in reaching and influencing the target audience. Campaigns should combine interpersonal and multi-media channels that reinforce and mutually support one another. Campaigns usually have a limited duration, need repetition and are most effective when supplemented by continuous IEC efforts that can be sustained over a long period of time, as part of regular WSS project planning and design.

## Message development, pretesting and revision

Message development should be based on the analysis and design conducted in the first two stages. The steps to be followed are:

- develop message concepts (preliminary illustrations, words, phrases and theme lines or slogans)
- pretest concepts with groups or representatives of intended audience, especially pictures and other visual materials, which are easily misunderstood
- create complete messages and materials (e.g. radio programmes, posters, drama/puppet shows)
- pretest messages and materials for comprehension, recall, strong and weak points, personal relevance, with representatives of the intended audience before final production
- re-test existing materials before reproducing

WSS messages should address the needs and concerns of the intended audience and should be appropriate to their level of knowledge and awareness. They should be:

- simple and easily understandable
- culturally and socially appropriate
- technically correct
- brief
- relevant
- practical
- positive
- 

Pretesting materials is an important step before production and will save cost and time by determining whether the target audience:

- understand the messages
- can see and verbalise the meaning of pictures or audiovisual material easily and quickly
- can understand a story from a sequence
- find the pictures or visuals culturally acceptable

Audio-visual materials should be entertaining as well as informative. Images and speakers should be given locally appropriate names, dress and local dialects. Programme staff at all levels must be flexible and ready to make unanticipated changes as a result of testing.

## Implementation, monitoring and assessment

These three processes overlap so that lessons learned can quickly be translated into improvements in the programme. Implementation is usually the most costly stage of a communication programme. Steps include:

- produce final messages and materials based on pretest results
- schedule and integrate distribution through appropriate channels to maximise impact

- train those who will be using materials, as necessary
- circulate implementation schedules and reports widely to harness alliance building

The IEC programme should be synchronised with other water and sanitation services.

Monitoring steps include:

- monitor volume of materials production;
- monitor distribution in media and through personal communication;
- monitor the work plan;
- monitor and strengthen relationships with other agencies;
- make necessary revisions.

Assessment steps include:

- measure and track audience awareness, comprehension, recall and practice using affordable research techniques to obtain
- rapid feedback;
- analyse results in terms of specific objectives;
- make necessary revisions in project design.
- Monitoring and assessment should be seen as essential ingredients for improving effectiveness, not as tests of staff performance.

## Evaluation

This stage entails both the analysis of overall impact and application of analysis for planning future activities. Steps are:

- review and analyse information gathered in each stage of the process
- analyse project impact on the proposed audiences, the sponsoring organizations and others involved
- identify significant changes in the national environment
- evaluate skills acquired by local personnel
- estimate resources of future support and funding
- redesign continuing communication activities
- recycle assessment data into new programme design

Evaluation and monitoring may overlap. You will want to monitor whether a new behaviour is being carried out. You may also want to evaluate whether the new behaviour has changed the outcomes that were your initial concern. For example, if people are not using a new clean water supply, you will need to address the lack of knowledge or the concern that has made the supply unattractive. If the target audience has switched to the new clean supply but this has not made any difference to diarrhoeal rates, you will need to review your approach to the initial problem and consider for example whether appropriate hygiene messages have been prepared and delivered.

Once target audiences and populations are motivated and mobilised to react, it is important to ensure continuous communication supplemented by extension efforts to sustain interest. Seminars and training on communication and inter-personal skills help to improve outreach and passing on of information to wider networks.

IEC campaigns rely heavily on audience research, continuous feedback, monitoring and evaluation and the redesign of messages on the basis of the feedback. This means that skilled communication specialists must be involved at all stages of project planning, implementation and follow-up.

The communication process is a continuous one. Operations research at all stages helps shape the direction it will take. Significant changes in attitude and behaviour take time and repeated effort. This process is cyclical, adjusting to the changing needs of audiences and building systematically on past experience.

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## Chapter 6: Preparing the Sector and Building its Capacity Communication Resource Booklet

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It has been stressed that responsibility for increasing the effectiveness of the sector and raising its profile rests with the sector itself, through the introduction of a communication culture. To achieve this means making a sustained effort to increase the capacity of the sector and its allies to make effective communication interventions.

### Scenario for a simplified in-country communication development approach

Since the communication strategy is new to many, it needs introduction and promotion. Even with strong consensus and enthusiastic support at the global level, spontaneous activities in countries are unlikely, and deliberate efforts are needed to promote and sustain them. Individual high-ranking officers in developing countries can play a decisive role in the promotion of a communication strategy among their colleagues at policy and programme level. The following steps form part of a scenario for communication development, which should be adapted to the prevailing situation.

- A senior executive or managing engineer, but probably not the final authority in the sector, starts with a briefing session for his/her senior colleagues to review the WSS Collaborative Council's recommendations about the communication strategy and to reach general agreement on the new approach in the sector.
- On the basis of 1. she/he will promote and work toward a clear decision by the top authority that communication must now form an essential element of the sector's work.
- She/he will convene a meeting of division and section chiefs, along with representatives of the Ministry of Planning and, as appropriate, donor groups, to announce the decision and acquaint them with the overall implications for the various functions of the sector.
- A general survey of the communication needs of the sector at community, district and national level, and of possible allies for the strategy, will be conducted and a report prepared.
- Based on the report, a review involving division and section chiefs will be held. It may reveal that advocacy and promotion regarding the sector need to be introduced or stepped up. In a number of existing areas of work, the review may show an inadequate application of the communication process as the cause for

insufficient fulfilment of the various objectives, and remedial action may be called for. In other areas it may become clear that no adequate capacities exist in terms of skilled communicators, and training efforts may be required. In other areas, there may be a total absence of communication, in which case it will have to be introduced as an integral part of the work. In still other areas, gaps in communication will emerge that require new communication inputs. Decisions at the review will have implications in a number of areas, e.g. re-orienting priorities, redesigning aspects of projects, training, and personal redeployment.

- The top authority of the sector will designate one officer to be responsible for the communication strategy and to initiate action. Alternatively, an appropriate institution or a centre may be charged with this responsibility, or a team be formed. Adequate authority and support services (including financial support) will be provided. At an early stage, the responsible officer will make contact with the global work force of the Collaborative Council for support and guidance.
- The responsible officer will begin to make an inventory of areas in the programme that require the most urgent action, and recommend priorities. This will probably include an overall approach towards raising the profile of the sector in the country. It may also include introducing cost recovery in an affluent urban area, strengthening community management of the water and sanitation facilities in a rural district, or developing political will in an area where little attention is paid to water and sanitation needs. It is important to emphasize that communication inputs should form an integral part of existing efforts. Only where there are critical gaps are new communication activities with distinct objectives called for. Technical support from specialists within the sector or other sectors, or consultants from voluntary agencies or external aid organisations is sought, as needed.
- Where advocacy for the communication strategy is particularly difficult at top policy level, it may be possible to focus on geographic areas where introduction is feasible, or, alternatively, a pilot communication effort in a community may be undertaken to gain experience and data to support advocacy.
- The responsible officer will organise a seminar for senior officers in the sector and related sectors, on a communication development approach integrated into sector action in the country, to generate broader support. Representatives of External Support Agencies in the country should be included, so that ESAs recognise the new priority, for which external resources will be required.
- For those who are directly concerned with communication activities, training workshops will be needed to strengthen their capacities.
- Training curricula to be used by technical schools and universities should also be developed for future workers in the sector.
- Operations research is needed to ferret out underlying causes of blockages and to design specific effective communication inputs. External assistance may be needed.

A new capacity will almost certainly be needed to bring together people inside the sector with the main allies. There is a need to explore, articulate and outline the approach by the sector and the nature of the cooperation between all the different partners in the sector. On that basis the communication initiative goals can be advanced.

At a country level a high level committee is one option, bringing together government, NGOs, and external support agencies within the sector. This body may exist in a number of places, within a planning or line ministry, or responsible to someone in the Prime Minister's office, or convened by the water and sanitation sector itself. However, it should be positioned where it will have a fast-track access to the highest level of policy makers.

The aim of this body may be to play a leading advocacy role for the aims of the



sector, or even to develop the broad targets for WSS programme coverage, once a situation analysis has been carried out. A good part of its mandate will be to provide leadership in this process and advocate for an enhanced role for communication within the sector.

A high level committee cannot act without ongoing, professional support. There is a need for a focal point to provide the communication support for the process. Using pooled resources, an organising body, existing or new, should be charged with the responsibility of acting as secretariat to the high level committee and with putting decisions into effect. It will also have the role of coordinating and tracking initiatives and should be involved in monitoring and evaluating the work, so that results can be fed back. How the committee and organising body will be formed, and where they will be positioned, may vary from country to country.

A key task at this early stage is a situation analysis of the present state of communication in the sector. This could be the first task of the organising body, or be carried out by a group responsible to it. The aim of the analysis is to identify constraints and possibilities for effective communication.

Going ahead with a new programme of work without conducting a situation analysis will almost certainly result in the wrong aims being pursued.

Some in the sector may object to organising a new structure to pursue what are seen as abstract communication aims. It should be stressed that these aims are not abstract, but are designed to achieve more effectively the overall aims of the sector. They are closely tied to existing programme aims, and will enable those aims to be more precisely defined and better targeted. Given that these communication inputs are intended for programme areas, activities must be built on resources that are available within the public, private and community sectors.

A communication plan of action, integrated into programme work, can be drawn up, including advocacy through mass and traditional media. The precise targeting of this work and the steps needed to ensure it is carried out effectively will be outlined in the next chapter.

## **Capacity Building**

New ways of work require re-orientation and training for the key staff, and education and training initiatives for key allies. Sector staff must have answers to tangible questions. What will communication mean to my job? What am I expected to do? What am I expected to know? How am I expected to act? How does this new approach help programme objectives? Some of the new skills may already be within the sector, but it is likely that outside resources will be needed. Skills may include communication techniques, personal communication skills, graphic design, mass media, traditional media and anthropology. Many skills will be bought in and do not need to be part of the skill base for individuals within the sector. However, sector people need to be familiar with them and sensitised to new ways of working.

Complementary sectors, such as health and the environment, may have addressed some of the same issues and have communication training modules set up which could be easily adapted. NGOs and external support agencies will almost certainly have tackled training similar to that needed, but probably not on the scale required. University departments, or polytechnics may be willing to set up courses for sector staff to help teach some of the new skills. Some training may be set up in house.

Outside experts will need to be precisely briefed and the course contents carefully prepared so that the aims of the sector are met, and so that the courses are seen as relevant and empowering by the sector people.

It will usually be beneficial to ensure that training is multi-disciplinary; that it addresses water sector people and key allies at the same time. By this process the sector and its allies will develop a common approach to the work which will make for closer cooperation in the field.

Materials will need to be prepared to support training. Budgets will have to be identified. The task of initiating and tracking the development of communication training packages could be undertaken by the organising body. No two countries will adopt precisely the same pattern of organisation. However it is possible to outline a possible model which can be used or adapted.

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## Chapter 9: Advocacy at Global Level Communication Resource Booklet

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A key objective for the rest of the 90s is to change the way that the water and sanitation sector is perceived nationally and internationally, to secure its proper share of resources and attention. The water sector has to be seen as a sector concerned with meeting human need and solving human problems; concerned with people and their health, children and their growth, women and their welfare, families and their enrichment, communities and their environment. The link between clean water and health, and between effective sanitation and efforts to protect the environment must become clear to policy makers at all levels.

Advocacy at this level must be one of the main concerns between now and the end of the century. International awareness can be heightened through use of global or regional ambassadors to act as advocates, and through use of The World Day for Water.

### Field Examples

- in Mexico the Ministry of Agriculture produces video cassettes on health topics such as hygiene and water supplies.
- in Swaziland the Ministry of Health has organised training workshops for folk healers on prevention of common childhood diseases. As a result the healers have increased their knowledge of, among others, the use of latrines, hygiene and the importance of safe water in preventing disease.
- in Nepal, where there are 600 doctors for 17 million people, Gurkha soldiers, who retire and return to their villages aged 36, were trained to train faith healers in oral rehydration.
- In Uganda all primary schools now teach basic child health knowledge as part of science lessons (including safe water and sanitation).
- in China the All China Women's Federation runs 120,000 parents' schools where 5 million parents learn about pregnancy, child birth, child health, hygiene and sanitation.
- in Yemen mothers learn through literacy classes about hygiene, sanitation and diarrhoeal control.
- in Colombia thousands of school children took the role of "health scouts" to help disseminate important health information to parents, friends and neighbours.

- Bangladesh reported an astonishing reduction of diarrhoeal-related deaths by 26% after women community health volunteers taught families simple hygiene practices such as washing hands with soap before eating or preparing food, safely disposing of garbage and defecating away from the family compound.
- In Guatemala, women volunteers attend 40 hours of training over five weeks and learn about immunization, malnutrition, diarrhoea, basic hygiene and family planning. They make house to house visits and try to teach what they have learned to others - in fact - becoming communicators themselves. Not only has this health education programme provided health benefits to the community, it has also fostered in the women a sense of accomplishment and self-confidence.
- OXFAM, WaterAid, and many other Northern NGOs raise significant sums of money to help implement projects in developing countries.
- In Kenya, the Kenyan Water for Health Organisation, KWAHO, and in India the Lutheran World Service India, are two examples of community initiated and managed projects.
- In Sichun Province, China, the All China Women's Federation trains 800 family education workers each year on child care, including better hygiene and sanitation.
- in Botswana, Burkina Faso, Hong Kong, India, Jordan, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka and Thailand, unions have organised workshops and short courses informing their members about, among others, home hygiene.
- in India business houses regularly sponsor advertisements and feature articles in national newspapers on, among other things, prevention and treatment of diarrhoea.
- in Nepal the Agricultural Development Bank publishes a wall newspaper for display at 20,000 village sites, covering topics such as water supply and hygiene.
- in Egypt the Al Azhar University has researched messages from the Koran in support of child health.
- in Thailand Buddhist monks trained in primary health care help give advice on basic hygiene and sanitation, water supplies and family planning to millions of faithful followers.
- the success in Colombia and Brazil in the dissemination of health and nutrition messages is largely due to the active involvement of the Catholic Church, who have committed thousands of bishops, priests, nuns and lay people, using the Church's formidable influence to promote child protection, health and development.
- In Lesotho, a "Theatre for Development" acting troupe uses active audience participation in plays to underscore the importance of improved sanitation and hygiene. A project evaluation in the Mhales Moek of this participatory approach revealed increased discussion and awareness of VIP latrines and heightened demand.
- in India once every week over 10,000 groups of 35 women listen to a 30-minute radio broadcast on child health, including environmental hygiene, and diarrhoea prevention.
- in Algeria the national newspapers "El Moujahahid" and "Revolution Africaine" run regular features, news stories, editorials and cartoons covering the government's drive to reduce infant mortality through among others improved water supplies, sanitation and hygiene.
- since 1980 the Ministry of Health in Nicaragua has printed and distributed over 3 million of comic books on health topics such as diarrhoea, hygiene, water supply, sanitation and malaria.
- in Nepal UNICEF has published an Instant Illustration workbook with over 600 line drawings by several of the country's best artists. Topics included hygiene, water supply.

In February 1993 the UN General Assembly declared that 22 March would become World Day for Water with three key global messages.

- All social and economic activities rely heavily on the supply and quantity of fresh water.
- Many countries are rapidly reaching conditions of water scarcity or facing limits to economic development.
- The promotion of water conservation and sustainable management requires public awareness at local, national and international levels.

Policy makers at a global level need to become convinced that water and sanitation needs constitute:

- an investment in human development that is cost-effective and yields health and economic benefits,
- a social imperative that can no longer be ignored, and
- a key element in breaking the cycle that leads from pollution to a degraded environment, disease and the waste of natural resources.

## **Key message elements to convince policy makers globally**

Global advocates can make use of the following facts to motivate policy makers.

### **The problems**

- 1.5 to 1 billion people, one in three in the world, are without access to safe water and sanitation, and the number without access is increasing.
- at this moment 26 of the world's countries get less water than they need. Over the next 30 years another 40 nations are expected to join them, as populations outstrip their rainfall.
- each litre of polluted water contaminates clean water in the river or lake that receives it. Three quarters of Poland's rivers are too contaminated even for industrial use. More than two thirds of China's rivers are seriously polluted, while 40 of Malaysia's rivers are said to be 'biologically dead'.
- Deforestation destabilises water supplies. When mountains and hills were covered in rain-capturing forests, Bangladesh used to suffer from overwhelming floods once every 50 years. By the 1970s they were happening every four years, and the pace continues to increase.
- Eighty per cent of all diseases, four out of five cases of sickness, in developing countries can be attributed to unsafe water and inadequate sanitation.
- Three to four million children under five die of dehydration each year, a result of diarrhoeal diseases caused by polluted water and unsanitary environment. In India three young children die every minute from dirty water, and waterborne diseases cost the economy 73 million working days a year.
- Vector-borne diseases kill millions and maim millions more. Guinea worms alone afflict 20 million sufferers. Schistosomiasis affects 200 million, and malaria 500 million. Loss of productivity from these diseases is staggering.

## Some solutions

- The World Health Organization recognises that improvements in water and sanitation facilities constitute the most effective measure in controlling cholera, typhoid, parasitic and other endemic diseases.
- A global movement involving communities, governments and international agencies is under way, begun by the International Drinking Water and Sanitation Decade, which is gathering momentum, but lacks resources to reach the yet to be reached.
- During the last decade water was made available to 1.3 billion people and sanitation facilities were built for 750,000,000 people. If everybody puts in his or her best efforts the job of serving the unserved can be done in the 1990s.
- Improvement in drinking water supply has helped to reduce diarrhoea-related morbidity by 40 per cent, and improved sanitary waste disposal has contributed to a decrease in child morbidity by 25 per cent.
- Accessible safe water saves women's time, which improves the welfare of women and provides more time for family care or income producing activities. Collecting water and fuel costs a woman in a waterless village in Burkina about 500 calories of energy a day, a quarter of what she gets from sparse meals.

Global advocacy has had an impact, although not yet a sufficient one. Agenda 21, the basis for action arising out of The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio in June 1992 included recommendations about promoting the water and sanitation sector, and promoting participatory ways of working. What came out of the World Summit was not enough, but puts down a marker for the future.

A Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council joint Report with the World Health Organisation and UNICEF concluded: "Due to inadequate advocacy and promotion of the sector in the past, the unserved population continues to grow. Therefore to reach "universal access" advocacy will have to be aggressively pursued to attract a larger share of national and external resources to the sector in future."

To support IEC activities at country level, the sector must ensure that action is taken to develop the appropriate approach towards global advocacy of the Water and Sanitation Sector to ensure that appropriate supporting action is taken on a continuous basis. Previous experience from within the sector and the experiences of other sectors which have set out down the same road should be used as a basis for this work.

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## Chapter 8: Alliances and Country Examples

### Communication Resource Booklet

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The communication culture begins within the sector, but must not stop there. Once sector people are motivated and equipped to communicate freely in their own working environment, they will begin to spread the communication web to partners. They will recognise the benefits of effective communication with potential collaborators. At the same time, links may be established with integrated sectors such as health and environment, and with policy makers and politicians who influence sector development and strategies.

A grand alliance of all sections of society can and must be formed in each country to broaden and intensify efforts to achieve safe water and sanitation. All those who influence or control the principal channels of communication must be challenged by the water sector to assist in creating informed community demand for, and participation in, the provision of safe water supply and adequate sanitation. Teachers and educators, mass media, government and community leaders, non-governmental organisations, employers and business leaders, artists and entertainers, and religious leaders all play a vital role in the process of involvement and empowerment for water and sanitation.

Not all alliances are of the same sort. Alliances with communities take time to develop and must be created anew with each community. Policy makers require consistent advocacy by sector people, to push forward sector aims. Long term alliances need to be sought with the health and environment sectors to improve the ability of each sector to achieve its aims and to reduce potential for conflict. Alliances with NGOs may be short term, for the length of a programme. The media can act as an ally but must first be convinced that it should use its skills and influence to promote the sector aims.

It would be unrealistic to expect the aims of the sector automatically to be reflected in the aims of these other organisations and groups. Each has its own agenda and needs, which may overlap with, but not be identical to, those of the sector. Some allies may be obvious. Others may be more obscure. Part of the situation analysis, which was outlined in Chapter 7, must describe potential allies, and their potential contributions.

In this way efforts will not be duplicated, fresh organisations will not always be needed and the sector can build on existing country campaigns.

The UNICEF/UNESCO/WHO Facts for Life campaign provides a range of examples. Since 1989 a great number of countries have taken action following the wide dissemination of key messages for improved health. This campaign includes water supply and sanitation messages.

In this chapter we attempt to identify potential partners and the key roles they can play. Each section also outlines some of the opportunities and difficulties that this work can involve. There is no formula which can be applied to working with partners. Creativity, sensitivity to the culture and needs of the partners and a sharp eye for a good opportunity are all essential.

## Potential partners

- [Government departments and community leaders](#)
  - [Teachers and educators](#)
  - [Health workers](#)
  - [Non-governmental organisations](#)
  - [Employers and trade unions](#)
  - [Religious leaders](#)
  - [Mass media](#)
  - [Other media, including artists and entertainment](#)
- 

## Government departments and community leaders

**Target challenge:** to raise public awareness about WSS issues, and to ensure implementation.

The task of implementation and of disseminating critical WSS knowledge does not rest on Ministries for Water or Public Works alone. Other Ministries such as those of the Environment, Health, Interior, Social Welfare, Information, Agriculture and other government departments at local, regional and national levels must assume responsibility for ensuring that each citizen is adequately informed, and receives an adequate water and sanitation service.

Local government and community leaders have special roles to play as driving forces in their own communities, especially where traditional norms and practices rely mostly on village elders, chiefs and local "sages" to impart important information.

Those who can help include:

- Ministries of Water/Public Works - can use the basic information kit to train water and sanitation technicians to prevent water-related diseases.
- Ministries of Agriculture - by training agricultural extension workers in the essentials of WSS, hygiene, health, and waste disposal.
- State-owned public utilities - can print WSS messages on bills and invoices.
- Ministries of Defence - can disseminate WSS messages to members of the



Armed Forces and their families.

- Ministries of Health and the Interior - can organise orientation sessions and seminars for health professionals, community health workers, traditional leaders and village heads.
- Ministries of Women's Affairs, Family Welfare and Social Affairs - can use the messages to develop training materials for mothers' clubs, women's organizations, youth movements.
- Political parties - by incorporating WSS messages in training of their party officials, cadres and volunteers, and to educate community leaders in what they can do to promote basic health of children, mothers, and families.

### **Advantages of working with government departments**

They are powerful and normally cover the whole country. Cooperative work with allied departments increases efficiency, cuts costs and prevents duplication. Collaborative work ensures that contradictory messages are not given.

### **Potential drawbacks**

Government departments are large, and can be bureaucratic and slow to move. They have their own agendas and careful work is needed to ensure that an approach is not seen as infringing on another ministry's territory.

## **Teachers and educators**

**Target challenge:** no child should leave school without knowing that safe water and adequate sanitation are life saving basic needs as well as conveniences.

Today's children are not only tomorrow's parents, but also our future politicians, teachers, doctors, engineers and other influential leaders. Clearly, schools and the educational system provide the widest channel for disseminating key information and knowledge about water supply and sanitation. If basic knowledge on WSS were made part of the regular school curriculum and imbibed by each child attending school, the children could also teach their parents and friends.

Those who could help achieve this include:

- Ministries of Education - by revising syllabuses and setting guidelines for teaching materials.
- Teacher training colleges - by educating trainee teachers in the essentials of child health, including the importance of WSS.
- Textbook publishers - by commissioning authors to write textbooks incorporating WSS/health/hygiene messages.
- Makers of educational audiovisual materials - by incorporating key messages.
- School teachers and principals - by promoting key messages in their lessons and in promoting health within the community.

### **Advantages of working with teachers and educators**

- A programme that is built into a school curriculum has a huge reach, and access

to the population that it is most important to inform and educate.

- Children who learn about the sector aims will become teachers of parents and others in the community.
- Motivated and educated teachers are a powerful resource in support of the sector aims.

### **Potential drawbacks**

- Changing the school curriculum can be a slow business, taking several years.
- There are many competing claims on teachers' time as educators for the public good.
- Teachers themselves do not automatically have the right knowledge or attitude. Training is required and it is difficult to monitor quality. The sector may need to give some direct support to teacher training.

### **Health workers**

**Target challenge:** health workers communicate and reinforce WSS messages as part of their daily work.

There are literally millions of health workers, doctors, nurses, para-professionals and volunteers throughout the world who are committed to achieve the "Health for All" goal set by WHO in 1978. They are in effect "messengers" of health with whom WSS workers should be inextricably linked. They have become the linchpin of health education and communication efforts and continue to play formidable roles in conveying important information to the public. Correct WSS messages can be reinforced by health workers and practising health professionals, who themselves must be educated in communication techniques and in imparting those messages. Training and refresher courses provide opportunities for incorporating new communication materials and techniques.

Those who could help achieve this include:

- Traditional health practitioners, folk healers, and other health workers can also become responsible promulgators of WSS if provided with the right materials and treated with dignity and respect.
- Community health workers and volunteers, traditional birth attendants and other indigenous groups can be mobilised to communicate effectively for WSS. The medical profession has, of itself, large and effective communication networks that could be enlisted to promote and communicate WSS information. Several worldwide associations already perform this function on health matters, such as the International Paediatric Association, the International Council of Nurses, the International Confederation of Midwives and the Federation of International Pharmacists, among others.
- Health workers of all kinds can be trained to communicate WSS messages as part of the regular health information disseminated daily to their various constituents. They can train parents, children and others on these basic facts. In communities where there are water projects, women can be trained as health volunteers to teach other women in the community better hygiene, sanitation and health practices for themselves and their children.

## **Advantages of working with health professionals and traditional health workers**

- There are millions of health workers throughout the world, many of whom already see their role as communicating health messages.
- They often have prestige and authority within communities, and also have the ear of policy makers. Many of the key water and sanitation messages are already key health messages.

## **Potential drawbacks**

- In many parts of the world informal health workers may be under resourced and poorly trained. They may lack knowledge of the WSS key messages, or lack the resources to add them to a heavy workload.
- Professionally trained health workers have a tendency to resist new knowledge from non-health specialists. An approach through professional associations or training colleges may be useful.
- Traditional healers may have beliefs which conflict with the new messages. Sensitive training is necessary.

## **Non-governmental organisations**

**Target challenge:** tens of thousands of NGOs are already involved in promoting child health/rural development.

Incorporating key WSS topics and messages, suitably adapted for local needs, can help these organisations to empower parents with the basic knowledge they need to protect their own health and that of their children.

Non-governmental organisations have the capacity to mobilise millions of ordinary people both in the rich and the poor worlds into purposeful action. The Decade experience has shown that if properly harnessed, the resources and energies of NGOs actively working in the water field can contribute significant sums of money to development and the sector. International NGOs alone have invested over \$5,000 million a year in development activities, thus making a substantial contribution to the welfare of people in the developing world. Added to this, the talents and capacities of indigenous NGOs are helping ordinary people change their lives through self-reliance and providing opportunities for "ownership" in managing their own water and sanitation projects. NGOs are also powerful catalysts for change and can be enlisted to become dynamic vehicles for conveying as well as supplying WSS information.

Many NGOs and private voluntary organizations have the capacity to develop and produce educational and public information materials and conduct training programmes. Together with mass media and other potential communicators, a partnership with NGOs and government can form a dynamic network of motivated and trained individuals to promote WSS. Since NGOs mostly work at "grassroots" level they have enormous on-the-ground expertise. NGOs have the adaptability and capacity to produce materials that are well-suited and understood by local communities. Their broad constituency can be a virtually untapped resource for information sharing and exchange. In some cases, NGOs are better than government bodies at marshalling the support of the general public to draw particular attention to pressing social concerns. The environment movement has of late become high on the

political agenda of many nations as a result of heavy lobbying by NGOs.

Those who can help include

- Voluntary organisations can use key WSS messages to develop courses and training materials for community health workers and volunteers, religious and community leaders, school teachers, and members of women's, youth and other community groups.
- Women's organizations - can use key WSS messages to help educate young mothers in ways of protecting their own health and that of their children.
- Youth organizations - can make these messages available to the next generation of parents.
- Village heads, traditional leaders - can use the basic information kit as an authoritative source of essential information.
- Neighbourhood associations and health committees - can make key WSS information available to their members as learning tools and memory aids.

### **Advantages of working with NGOs**

They are community-based, flexible and can respond creatively to new initiatives.

### **Potential drawbacks**

May be small. Potential for lack of continuity in less well organised NGOs. Links with government departments may be poor.

## **Employers and trade unions**

**Target challenge:** to promote WSS, health and hygiene behaviour with employees and workers.

Employers and business leaders hold positions of authority and are logical choices for communicating social messages and WSS fundamentals. The private sector and industry leaders are increasingly involved in promoting issues of social concern. Eager to improve the company image, industry leaders are making commitments to issues that promote 'sustainable development' by adopting business policies and charters that call for environmental protection. In sharing WSS information with employees, business partners and 'lobbyists' in government circles, private companies and businesses can become potent advocates of WSS. Water, after all, should be part of sustainable development - which satisfies today's needs without depriving future generations. For employers, good health and welfare of employees is enlightened self interest, resulting in less absenteeism and consequent economic loss.

Trade unions in many societies play an educative and community-oriented role. The need for clean water and sanitation can become a worker's 'right' which unions seek to achieve.

Those who can help include

- Employers - by disseminating key messages through posters and newsletters, films and videos, public addresses, pay slips, time sheets and company mail systems.
- Business and commercial leaders - by sponsoring advertisements in newspapers, magazines, radio and television and cinemas, and by sponsoring

production of WSS training and educational materials.

- Advertising and market research firms - by studying the knowledge, attitudes and behaviour of target audiences, and helping to develop professional communication plans, by developing and testing specific messages and materials and by evaluating the impact of health educational programmes and campaigns.
- Trade unions - by including water and sanitation in their education work, and seeking to achieve clean water and safe sanitation through campaigns.

### **Advantages of working with employers and with trade unions**

Businesses (and unions) have access to people at the point of production where they are already organised. Employers can set standards of good water and sanitation in workplaces. Unions can seek to achieve them.

### **Potential drawbacks**

The sector has its own agenda and may be a competing user of water resources.

## **Religious leaders**

**Target challenge:** to promote key WSS messages and behaviour, suitably adapted for their own religious, social and cultural situations.

For decades, the pulpit in a church, synagogue, mosque or temple has been the place for millions of followers to hear "the word" that is respected and adhered to. Religious leaders and holy men and women are sometimes more respected than government leaders or secular heads. In many Moslem countries, imams and other mosque teachers routinely read passages from the Koran to illustrate the need for child protection and care and give practical advice to families on health and hygiene.

Those who could help include

- Leaders of national and international religious organizations and movements - by promoting key messages at conferences, meetings and interviews with the mass media.
- Training colleges for religious leaders and lay workers - by using WSS topics in training courses, seminars and workshops.
- Publishers and radio stations belonging to or aiming at religious organizations - by presenting WSS messages through a wide variety of media and formats.
- Religious ministries - who could place the key messages and topics in the hands of every religious leader and every teacher at religious schools.

### **Advantages of working with religious leaders**

They have authority and are often listened to closely by communities. They can reach people in remote areas and in poor communities.

### **Potential drawbacks**

Careful preparation of material is needed to ensure that sector goals and religious teachings are in harmony.

## Mass media

**Target challenge:** long-term commitment by media to ensure that every listener, viewer and reader becomes aware of what they can do to protect their children and themselves for survival and a healthy development.

Recent world events have demonstrated the power of the mass media to inform, mobilise and capture the attention of the public. Mass media include: radio, television, video, cinemas, magazines and newspapers, billboards and folk media. Once mobilised the mass media can be a powerful ally. But it is also very much a target audience for sector messages, in order to ensure that it acts in the interests of sector aims.

In general, the more powerful the medium, the greater potential there is to reach audiences. However the more powerful the medium, the harder it is for an outside body to influence output, or to have influence over when messages are put out. Education for journalists is important, especially where journalists are not able to afford to travel freely. Field visits and well-planned information and education sessions are essential. Television and national newspaper journalists may be hard to persuade that they need education.

Those who could help include radio, television, and print.

**Radio:** The power of radio to reach and captivate large audiences has long been realized by communicators the world over. Although rapidly being replaced by television, radio is still the medium with the capacity to reach millions of people simultaneously at very low cost. In addition to entertainment programmes, radio has been successfully used for educational purposes as evidenced by literally hundreds of "Schools in the air" programmes broadcast daily in a variety of languages and dialects in different parts of the globe.

### Advantages of radio

- Radio has a long reach and is heard in remote rural areas as well as cities.
- Radios can be taken outside the home. People can be active while listening.
- There can be many stations, some of which may specialise in your target audience (eg. rural broadcasts, or schools programmes).

### Possible drawbacks

- It is difficult to monitor broadcasts for accuracy.
- Compared to TV, there are few people listening to each channel (although a high total overall in many countries).
- Poor people may not be able to afford radios or batteries.

**Television:** Considered to be the most powerful of all mass media, there are 200 million TV sets worldwide, thus offering a growing potential for communicating WSS messages. Although expensive and still beyond the reach of many people in certain parts of the developing world, television, more than any other medium, attracts attention, arouses emotions and educates while it entertains. Recognising its power, advertising companies spend millions of dollars to carefully market consumer products, knowing full well that carefully designed TV commercials will bring back profits many times over their original investment cost.

*Telenovelas* or television dramas in many Latin American countries, such as Peru, Mexico, Colombia and Brazil, have increased viewing audiences and led to greater demands for health services and products because of their local appeal and acceptance. Other programmes in Asian countries and in some parts of the Middle East have witnessed the same responses to TV serials on child survival and the environment. The television appearances and the involvement of public figures such as entertainers, politicians, artists and other popular personalities can provide a boost to communicating for WSS. Studies have shown that the public responds to credible role models, and special care needs to be taken in selecting the appropriate person(s) to convey these messages.

### **Advantages of television**

The most powerful medium on earth, with the greatest impact.

### **Potential drawbacks**

- Difficult to influence.
- If inaccurate, powerfully inaccurate.
- Public information broadcasts may have second class status in quality of production or timing of output.
- Poor rural people still unlikely to have access.

**The printed page:** Newspapers, magazines, books and periodicals are key sources of information for almost every literate person. Even those who cannot read or write can obtain information from comic books and cartoons. Politicians, decision-makers, educators, the general public and ordinary individuals have made a daily habit of reading newspapers, magazines or books. The printed page is a very powerful mechanism for forming and changing public opinion, as well as for influencing people's attitudes and behaviour. Editorials, special features and news stories on WSS help keep the reading public well informed and up-to-date with important developments.

### **Advantages of Print**

- Influences policy makers.
- Huge variety of titles and methods (eg comics).
- A permanent record which can be used again and whose accuracy can be monitored.

### **Potential drawbacks**

- Inaccessible to illiterate people, which may discriminate against those with less schooling (in many countries, women).
- Patchy coverage in rural areas.
- Journalists may have low level of knowledge of subject.

## **Other media, including artists and entertainment**

**Target challenge:** to help transform WSS messages into words, symbols,

music, images, stories and plays which not only entertain but educate.

Interpersonal communication should be used, where possible, to complement mass media channels which are basically one-way and do not allow immediate feedback or interaction.

One-to-one communication in small groups can be supported by small media commonly known as audiovisuals. These are: videos, films, sound-cassettes, posters, photographs, flipcharts, flashcards, etc.

Another exciting medium in this category is folk or traditional media - very popular in rural areas and villages. Dramas that depict local situations using puppets, folk theatre, music and story-telling by local entertainers are increasingly being used in "education for development" and hygiene education for rural communities.

Entertainment has been used as a teaching tool for thousands of years. Involving celebrities such as artists and entertainers in a mass media campaign for WSS can prove beneficial to both the campaign and the celebrities.

The approach is based on the premise that the powerful appeal of public personalities who are considered credible and trustworthy sources of information can attract millions of audiences, stimulate news coverage of the issues and generate profits for both the entertainer and the sponsors.

This 'entertain-educate' approach, with effective performances by entertainers incorporates the 5 Ps: personal, popular, pervasive, persuasive and profitable. In addition to performers, a variety of personalities and other artists, such as painters, puppeteers, cartoonists and folk story tellers, can make outstanding contributions by communicating WSS messages by transforming them into specific forms: soap operas, dramas, paintings, comic strips, music and other forms of artistic expression.

Sports personalities such as swimmers, divers and other well-known celebrities in aquatic sports can be mobilised, for example, to promote water and environmental messages or engage in fundraising activities to draw attention to water concerns. Other spectator events can also be used to attract mass media coverage through endorsements by popular personalities who relate most especially to younger generations.

Those who can help

- Actors, comedians, singers, writers, painters, poets, musicians, story tellers can weave key WSS topics into their particular forms of expression, and can act as goodwill ambassadors.
- Graphic artists can produce books of "instant illustrations" on WSS, health, hygiene and waste disposal themes.
- Government ministries, international agencies and NGOs can organise creative workshops for artists and entertainers, and commission materials.
- Sporting teams and personalities can use their prestige with young people.
- Broadcasters, producers, film makers and scriptwriters - by incorporating key WSS facts and messages into radio and television programmes, films video and sound cassettes; messages can be repeated in a variety of programme formats, including dramas, comedies, news stories, advertising spots or documentaries.
- Newspaper and magazine editors, journalists, cartoonists and photographers have to be fed with key messages and a basic information kit as a source of



ideas and background information for feature articles, news stories, editorials, photo reportage, cartoons.

- Graphic artists and illustrators can work WSS messages into comic books and "photo novels".
- Ministries of Public Works or Water Resources (and other Government Ministries responsible for WSS) can prepare background materials, briefing notes, and audio-visuals for use by their constituents, for other Ministries and for distribution to print and electronic media.

### **Advantages of using other media**

- Entertainment can be a powerful mobilising and teaching tool.
- Variety suggests that some hard-to-reach people will be reached.
- Visual arts appeal to people who are illiterate.
- Alternative media can be low cost and low tech., reaching places where TV and radio may not reach.
- Traditional media will appeal to traditional communities.
- Entertainers may have particular prestige with the young.

### **Potential drawbacks**

The very variety of this media, means that messages may be fragmented, difficult to track, and difficult to monitor for quality and consistency. (But don't let this put you off!)

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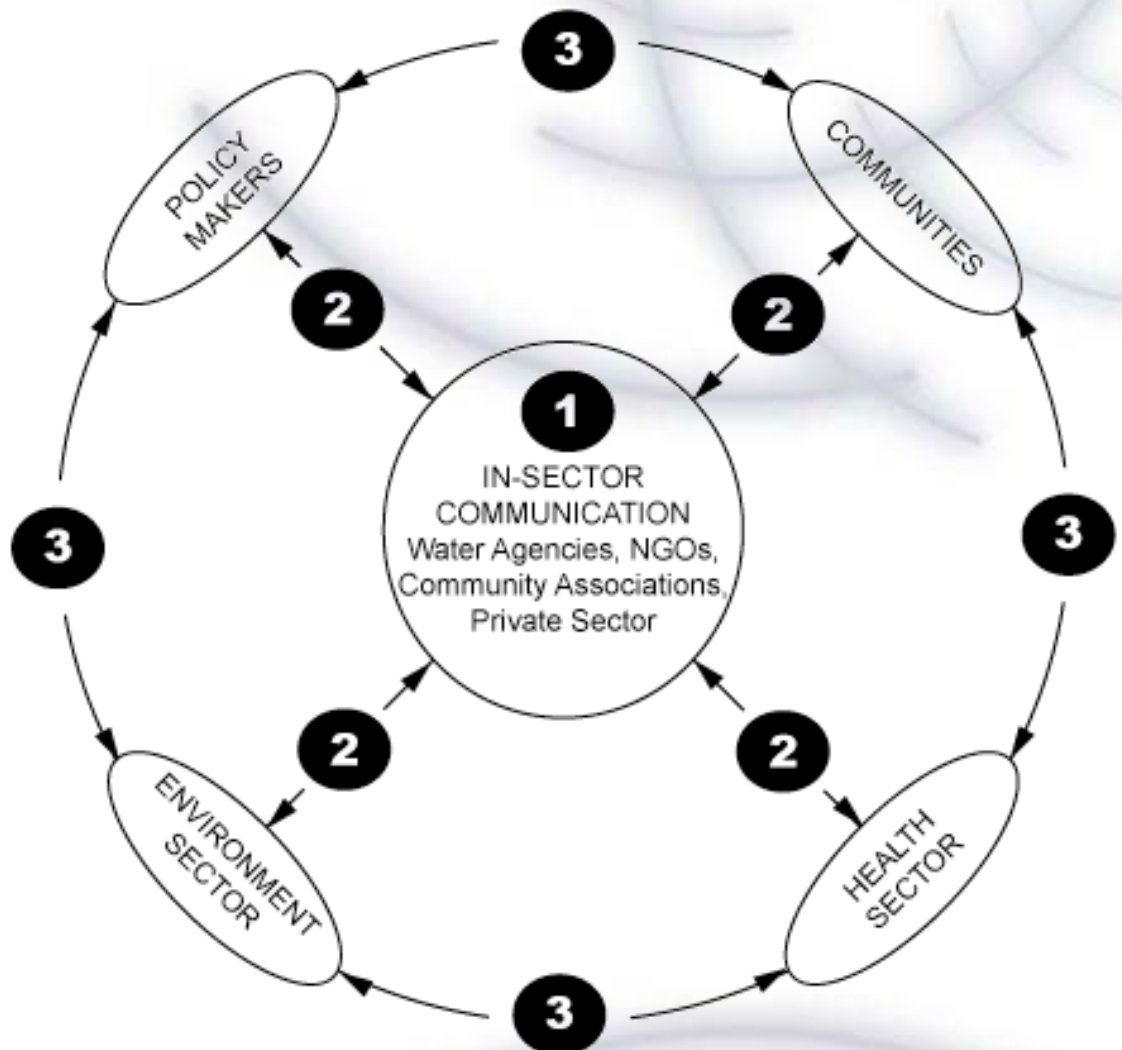
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# The sector role in a network of communication

## Communication Resource Booklet

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The following diagram illustrates the web of communication that can develop. Within this matrix, communication takes place within and between the sector, other sectors, the community, and policy makers. The diagram shows different ways in which these four different groups interact, to make a network of communication.



1. Communication within the sector; between water agencies, NGOs, community associations and the private sector.
2. A two-way flow of communication; between the sector and policy makers; between the sector and other sectors, such as health or environment; between the sector and communities.
3. Communication between these other groups, influenced by the communication agenda set by the sector, but not controlled by it.

This does not imply that the water and sanitation sector is at the centre while other players spin around it like satellites. It does illustrate that the sector must take responsibility for building the links, and must place itself at the centre of its own communication strategy. Other sectors will have their own maps, in which they take centre stage.

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### Towards a Communication Culture in the Water and Sanitation Sector

The Water and Sanitation Sector has an ambitious aim; striving to offer every community, in every country on earth, at least the possibility of safe water and sanitation. This immense human challenge is not simply technological. It demands a change in the orientation of the whole sector.

The Decade which ended in 1990 brought safe water and sanitation to 2.1 billion people, but ended with the job less than half done. Faced with increasing populations, higher levels of pollution, and resources which are stagnant or falling, the sector now has the task of bringing these benefits to another 2.9 billion people. Achieving success on this scale means changing the way that people think and act. The sector must develop new ways of working so that policy makers, the water and sanitation sector and users work towards common goals.

An important component of these new methods is a commitment to communicate. Communication in its broadest sense begins with listening and learning. It involves looking at situations from the viewpoint of other people. It means understanding obstacles to change. It means presenting relevant and practical options, and it means telling people what the effect is of the choices they make. This is true in the international arena when seeking funds or political commitment, and it is true when installing a pump in a community.

Communication is the golden thread that draws together the sector with policy

makers, officials who carry out policy, natural allies in health, agriculture and other sectors, and the community itself. It ensures that policy makers and communities alike are committed to projects and their success. It makes partnerships possible and prevents expensive mistakes. Communication is not a substitute for technical expertise, but allows that expertise to be applied more effectively, by helping to change human attitude and behaviour. When the problem is creating a new understanding in human beings, communication is the right tool for the job. Communication in this broad sense means:

- mobilising key sectors of society, the policy makers, government officials, non-government agencies, the media and others in support of the sector and its broad objectives;
- creating dialogue with men and women in the community to find out what they believe, want, and are able to sustain; and involving them in finding a range of solutions, from which they can choose;
- working with allied sectors, notably health, agriculture and environment, so that each understands the other, and so that complementary efforts are co-ordinated;
- ensuring that sector people learn what works and what does not.

Responsibility for changing the agenda, so that communication is put first, lies with the sector itself. The more that this communication culture penetrates the sector, the better will its people become advocates for its work internationally, mobilisers of policy makers within developing countries, allies of sectors with complementary aims, and trusted partners of the community.

## Does Communication really make a difference?

There is strong evidence inside and outside the sector that communication brings results. The global effort to immunise children against common killer diseases is one of the most successful communication efforts the world has ever seen. In many poor countries immunisation rates now rival those of the affluent west. The campaign for universal immunisation did not succeed by focusing on technical aspects of syringes and vaccines. It mobilised communities, policy makers, the media and every level of society to prevent children dying needlessly. Efficient service delivery was essential, but first the campaign had to make communities want and demand vaccines for their children. The water and sanitation sector has the same agenda, and can use the same means.

Inside the sector there are also solid examples where communication transformed a programme. Guinea worm disease affected 10m people across the world, but until an international campaign

### Survey Identifies Perception Gap

The Indian Market Research Bureau surveyed 7,900 water users and talked to those implementing a safe water programme. Four out of five had access to a handpump, but only a third used it as their main supply.

Some pumps were too far from home. Users judged pump water by look, smell and taste, and sometime chose polluted water instead. A quarter believed they would see germs in impure water and fewer than one in five understood the link with diarrhoea and cholera.

Two thirds of women judged water by whether it 'cooked well', a concept alien to those planning and installing wells. Implementors underestimated how far communities were willing to contribute towards installation or maintenance of pumps.

Understanding how the community thinks is a key communication requirement and in India has led policy makers to change their own thinking about how to plan and implement water programmes.

gained momentum, barely one case in 20 was known. Now eradication of the disease in Nigeria and Ghana is likely by the end of 1995.

- At international level former US President Jimmy Carter acted as ambassador for the campaign, opening doors to ministers and other key figures.
- At national level political leaders played a crucial role. In Ghana, the Head of State visited 21 endemic villages to launch the campaign. In Nigeria, the Vice President told local government to allocate 10% of health budgets to eradication.
- At community level advocacy was translated into action. In Nigeria and Ghana a village by village search identified more than 800,000 cases in a year, and village health workers made monthly reports. Health education was tackled on a wide front, with radio jingles, school lessons and village meetings.

Both Nigeria and Ghana reported a drop in incidence of over 30% between 1989 and 1990, and in one district in Ghana there was a 77% reduction in the disease after the installation of 150 wells. The eradication programme is one of the success stories of the decade.

## Making Partnerships and Convincing Allies

The sector has to convince all sections of society that changes are desirable and achievable and that each section has a vital role to play. Before society can be mobilised it must be convinced. The New Delhi Statement, drawn up in 1990, and subsequently endorsed by 71 Heads of State at the World Summit for Children, and by the UN General Assembly, said: "Political commitment is essential and must be accompanied by intensive efforts to raise awareness through communication and mobilisation of all sections of society."

- Political leaders and policy makers need to be convinced to put the water sector high on their agendas;
- Fund givers need to be convinced that the sector has a convincing strategy which will make effective and efficient use of money;
- Social, religious and traditional leaders need to see how the aim of providing safe water and sanitation fits with their own welfare aims for communities;
- The mass media needs to be shown that this is an exciting and relevant story which should be near the forefront of its coverage;
- Other sectors, including health, environment and agriculture, need to be convinced of the need to collaborate;
- Communities need to be convinced that they can have confidence in the sector.

The sector needs a plan to mobilise groups and individuals. Sector people need to know:

<b>Who is going to be approached?</b>	<b>How will they be approached?</b>
<b>What will they be asked to do?</b>	<b>How long will their support be needed?</b>

Each target group needs its own plan. Making partnerships with communities needs long term commitment and repeated approaches, while there may be only one opportunity to convince a political leader to give the sector the same profile as health or education. Examples of necessary approaches are:

- Convincing political leaders to establish a national task force, or to widen the brief of an existing body;
- Seminars for senior civil servants to discuss legislative or administrative change, and field visits to show the reality behind the discussions;
- Discussions with religious leaders to show how the aims of the sector fits with their religious teachings;
- Briefings and field visits for journalists to help them gather accurate and persuasive information;
- Community surveys to discover what people know and believe about the water supplies they use;
- Approaches to other sectors who are trying to mobilise sectors of society in related fields to ensure that messages support each other.

These approaches require the development of high quality communication training, as outlined on the next page. Successful communication also includes feeding back results so that each success strengthens and confirms the message that the sector has been giving.

## **Building the Capacity of the Sector and its Allies**

People who work in the water and sanitation sector are proud of their existing skills, but are often unsure how they can put this new communication approach into practice. They are used to practical methods of working, and want to know how this new method is applied. They need skills, for example, to help them:

- Approach and convince political leaders;
- Listen to women and men at community level;
- Approach the health or planning sector, to bridge any gap between them that could be damaging work.

These skills can be acquired in the same way as the existing skills of the sector - through training and practice. A comprehensive training programme should be drawn up for sector staff and the partners who are being mobilised to work with them.

The first step is to identify who needs to be trained, and what new skills they will need. The sector must also identify who is available to provide the training. Most universities and national training centres have communication departments, and other sectors may have experience in communication training. However, it is important that the training is practical, interesting and relevant to the sector.

If the purpose of training is to help staff to develop skills for a participatory approach to communities, the best way to achieve this is to make the training itself interactive and participatory. Guidelines on how to set up and conduct such training exists and is available to people in the sector.

The sector needs to offer quality high quality training to its own people in communication, and also needs to build the capacity of its new allies. The

communication activities on the previous page will be improved where the training on sector issues is offered to civil servants, religious leaders, journalists, community leaders and others. Real partnerships can of course only be fully developed in the real world, but they can be prepared and practised at seminars and courses.

Capacity building should follow the same path as the mobilising strategy drawn up by the sector. Political leaders may not need or want lengthy seminars, but will probably value tailor-made briefings which will arm them with the knowledge they need to convince their colleagues.

New knowledge and approaches need reinforcing. Training needs to be followed up so that those who are implementing new skills can discuss and overcome problems.

The immediate nature and sheer scale of the task facing the sector means that there is pressure to 'get on with it' so that communication and mobilisation can be speeded up. However, the scope and quality of training will determine the improvement in the capacity of the sector.

Preparing communication courses and materials, and providing the resources for developing skills is an essential pre-requisite for success.

## **Connecting with the Community**

Many communities have learned how to survive in difficult circumstances, and the water and sanitation sector should respect the knowledge and beliefs that have allowed them to do so. When outsiders come to the community with plans and agenda for change, they must first be prepared to listen and learn.

- What is it that people already know, do and believe?
- What is that they want?
- Who are the main users of water and the main decision makers about sanitation?
- Who are the key people within a community who influence its actions?

This involves an approach that is acceptable to both men and women. In many communities the men play a leadership role in discussions with outside people and in decision taking. However, in most parts of the world it is the women who fetch, carry and use the water, and who teach the children where to drink, where to go to the toilet and how to wash. Community participation is very much more effective when it involves key people from both groups in taking decisions.

This process takes time but pays dividends. Communities need to trust those making an approach before they will be willing to share the whole of their thinking. It may be that a previous initiative from the sector, or from a sector that is seen by the community as being similar, failed, and that this has made the community distrustful. This trust will take time to regain. Communication is essential to those who are trying to build cost recovery into a programme, or who are developing hygiene education messages. In these two areas there have been many false starts. Only a sector which understands what a community knows, believes and practices can hope to succeed.

Where costs recovery has become a priority, it is for the community to make a realistic estimate of what it can afford to sustain. It is for the sector to offer options for solutions, including real choices at different costs. If behaviour change is the objective, then the target audience needs to be defined and understood, and the



message needs to be precisely drawn.

Materials, whether posters or leaflets, must be carefully prepared and tested before being introduced. Mass or traditional media can be enlisted to support a new approach or to help change community thinking, but first it is important to be clear about which media are popular within a community and which have influence with those people whose behaviour has been targeted. In most cases a TV drama or a traditional play will succeed in delivering a message more effectively than a leaflet from a sanitation official. Detailed guidelines are available on preparing messages for use in a community. Monitoring the success of work within a community is also important and has a double benefit. It protects against failure, by allowing the community and the sector to correct programmes that are going wrong. It also reinforces success, by providing materials that can be fed back to those who are supporting a community effort.

## **Convincing the Sector and Convincing the World**

A key objective for the rest of the 90s is to change the way that the water and sanitation sector is perceived nationally and internationally, to secure its proper share of resources and attention. To achieve this, the sector has to change its image from an industry mainly concerned with hardware, to a movement concerned with people and their health, children and their growth, women and their welfare, families and their enrichment. The sector must show that its main concern is meeting human need and solving human problems.

This was one of the lessons which flowed from the successes and weaknesses of the Water and Sanitation Decade, and which must now become part of the knowledge of the whole sector. Sector people must show that community orientation has reached every part of their work, so that they become leading advocates for its promotion. In this way they take responsibility for convincing policy makers of the importance of the sector to their plans, and for convincing communities of the need to share the responsibility for water and sanitation decisions.

Of themselves, pumps, pipes, boreholes, and latrines have a limited appeal outside the sector. However, health and the eradication of disease are of universal interest, and the water and sanitation sector is involved as deeply as the health sector in achieving these aims. When people learn that a community has removed a health risk, or that women no longer have to walk ten kilometres to fill their water buckets, or that an urban community has begun to agitate to remove the smell and filth of inadequate sewers, then they understand more clearly the human dimension of the sector's work.

As this approach becomes part of the everyday knowledge of sector people and influences their day to day work, then they can become advocates for the sector in the outside world. If the sector is to arm its people to do this work it must monitor its work closely.

A Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council joint report\* with the World Health Organisation and UNICEF concluded:

*Due to inadequate advocacy and promotion of the sector in the past, the unserved population continues to grow. Therefore to reach 'universal access' advocacy will have to be aggressively pursued to attract a larger share of national and external resources to the sector in future. Effective sector monitoring can play a vital role in advocacy by providing updated*

*relevant information.*

When it is seen by politicians and civil servants, and by those who hold the purse strings for development, that the sector is reaching out to the community, and to other related sectors such as health and environment, then the prospects for water and sanitation will be transformed.

This will lead, for the first time, to the possibility of bringing safe water and sanitation within the reach of every family on the planet.

\* Water Supply and Sanitation Sector Monitoring Report 1990. Produced Nov 92 by the WHO, Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council, and UNICEF.

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