

Assignment Seven Discussion

Online Learning: OL 343 Adapting to Climate Change: The Community Focus.

Center for Sustainable Development

<https://csd-i.org/ol-343-the-community-focus/>

Assignment Seven. Sustainability through Community Management Committees.

Ownership of a program by the community and using a tailor-made approach are essential factors in the successful implementation of programs. Like other health programs, the management of nutritional programs should follow three consecutive stages: planning implementation and evaluation.

Managing nutritional programs in developing countries. R. Sheikholeslam 1, Z. Abdollahi 2 and F.N. Haghghi 2.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/7433472_Managing_nutritional_programmes_in_developing_countries

Without people's participation, a community-based health program would be just another "Band-Aid solution". Community-based health programs give primacy to the organization of the local people before they are implemented. Organizing the people would include activities such as education or consciousness raising and leadership formation. It ensures people's participation in the planning, implementation and evaluation of the program. **UNDP Community Based Health Programs.**

A key lesson from global research over the past decade is the strong relationship between a demand responsive approach and overall project effectiveness. External support agencies... around the world are relying upon community level organizations to respond to community demand and assist in the planning construction and maintenance of water projects. Based upon evidence that these community level organizations can lead to more effective projects... projects were designed to have committees that functioned at the village level.

This study suggests that if beneficiaries are able to express their views and set up water projects that meet their needs, they are more likely to work and pay to sustain the system. The village committees can enhance demand-based approaches by bringing decision-making down to the village level where users can decide, among other things, the type of technology, location of the facility, level and hours of service, tariff charges and how they should be used

A careful reading of literature suggests that four key committee features are associated with Project success -- transparency, participation, inclusion and ownership.

Participation is important because a critical mass of community members must understand the potential benefits of the scheme and participate in setting project rules. Moreover people's participation contributes to the achievement of the five main objectives of water supply projects: effectiveness, efficiency, empowerment, equity and coverage.

It is also important for the community to feel a sense of ownership for the resource; the community as a whole should believe that this is their project and they are responsible for keeping it operational.

Community involvement was emphasized from the very beginning of the project, and a lot of time was spent selecting members and the technology type in village.

The projects... were designed on the premise that establishing Village Water and Sanitation Committees would lead to more effective management at the village level. This study provides evidence to suggest that this is correct.

Why Some Village Water and Sanitation Committees are Better than Others

<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/690b/7be012e39bf0311b5f1ec6dde543273912cd.pdf>

These quotes continue to show us that community-based participation is necessary for long-term sustained development—and that community-based management committees are an effective mechanism for connecting participation to implementation.

In many development projects, as the project nears completion, the beneficiaries have not been prepared to receive the continuation of project activities. It is estimated that 50% of subsidized latrines remain unused or are put into alternate uses other than sanitation—e.g. grain storage. In another recent report, it was noted that almost 50% of village water projects in developing nations fell into disuse within two years. One of the reasons cited is that community members were not trained in the management of the systems nor in their maintenance. The study suggested the formation and training of community-based management committees could work to solve this challenge.

Community committees can be set up at different levels of sophistication—depending on the demands of the project that you are executing. A committee can be as simple as electing a group of community members to oversee the implementation, takeover and management of our project—to setting up a formal committee with bylaws, governing rules and regulations, fiduciary responsibilities, and state registration.

A Classic Series of Steps in a Forming Village Committees:

- 1.a. Facilitating a community assessment
- 1.b. Fostering community commitment
- 1.c. Incorporating local knowledge

- 2.a. Introducing the concept of a specific village committee in a participatory workshop setting. Helping participants to gain a better understanding of the rationale and importance of forming this committee
- 2.b. Going through the step-by-step procedure of forming a committee with the workshop participants
- 2.c. Electing or appointing committee members

- 3.a. Learning the importance of organizational building and development
- 3.b. Training and organizational development
- 3.c. Initiating the governing status of the organization

- 4.a. Training in the skills sets that committee members will need within the specific focus of the committee (agriculture, forestry, water, health, etc.)
- 4.b. Setting goals and management responsibilities
- 4.c. Implementation of committee goals
- 4.d. Monitoring and evaluation of implementation successes

In the past few courses and recent assignments we have worked on section 1 above. In this assignment and the next assignment will work on section 2. In OL 344 will work on sections 3 and 4.

In this assignment and in the next assignment we will look at choosing leaders and people representative of the diversity of the community to form a committee. This committee would be to include not just village leaders—but also representatives of marginalized members of the community—and most importantly—women.

There is a fair amount of information on community committees on water, sanitation and health projects. Let's analyze why you would want a village water committee. If an NGO arrives in the community with funding to develop a water system, spends a year designing and installing water system, and then leaves, who will oversee and maintain the water system into the future?

Without involving the community needs for water, a design and location appropriate for the village, and training in maintaining the system, evidence shows that there may be a 50% chance of failure of the system within two years. On the other hand studies show that when a community is engaged in developing a system that meets their needs, and is involved in project implementation, is trained in the system's maintenance—and when this process is overseen by a responsible committee -- the system has a much greater likelihood of being successful in the long term.

It's up to you to evaluate the level of involvement that your committee has in your project—partially based upon the complexity of the project. Last week we asked you to speak to your community contacts in an effort to get ideas for people who did serve on a committee. This week will be an opportunity to develop a workshop for meeting with your contacts and with their suggested committee members in order to form the committee itself.

So the workshop should have three basic components:

- 1. Introducing the concept of a specific village committee in a participatory workshop setting. Consciousness-raising about the importance of having a committee and about skill sets that will need to be developed by committee members in order to manage the outputs of the project
- 2. Going through the step-by-step procedure of forming a committee with the workshop participants
- 3. Electing or appointing committee members

I look forward to seeing your work this week -- please move on to assignment 7.

Sincerely,
Tim Magee

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