

ENHANCING COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF WATER AND SANITATION FACILITIES



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SUMMARY OF PRESENTATION

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INTRODUCTION

1. Community participation has of recent assumed an increasingly important role in rural water management as a whole and O&M in particular
2. The International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade (1980-1990) propelled issues of community participation in water management to a high level and emphasised community participation early in project planning and decision making. The Decade pushed for the generation of affordable, socially relevant, self reliant and self sustaining projects clearly perceived and accepted by the users and the community
3. Communities have both the right and responsibility to be involved in planning and implementation of their own water programmes
4. Communities are not passive recipients of water facilities that are most times planned and provided by government or NGOs. They are active and alive
5. Government realised that community participation is essential for water projects to be successful
6. The MWE has since recognised the role of communities in O&M hence the establishment of the CBMS, the DIM and various significant changes in policy

WHAT IS COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN O&M?

1. The involvement and responsibility of the people in a community in managing rural water point sources (protected springs, shallow wells, boreholes). Rural communities assume control and responsibility for the day-to-day running of their water and sanitation facilities. Routine and preventive maintenance is emphasised as contrasted to repair after break down
2. It involves four key areas:
 - Involvement of the communities in the planning of the water supply and sanitation projects
 - Communities being responsible for the implementation, operation and maintenance of the projects
 - Communities able to share the benefits of the water project
 - Communities able to participate in the evaluation and modification of the water project
3. Community participation fosters closer relationships between government water authorities and the people and encourages people to select water projects in relation to their priorities

ADVANTAGES OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN O&M

1. Encourages community self determination and provides for opportunities to positive or progressive attitude among the people
2. Empowers, enables and helps to bring out people's potential
3. Relocates the power to plan from the top and brings it down to the bottom. That is, communities are elevated from the state of being "thought for, planned for and dictated to" to one of actual involvement in decisions that affect their lives
4. Enhances cooperation among the people in the community and between the people and water professionals.
5. Ensures that more is accomplished and the water services are provided at a lower cost
6. Guarantees that people's felt needs are considered
7. Leads to a sense of responsibility and ownership by the communities
8. Enables the people to understand and question the nature of constraints that may be hindering their escape from poverty including water scarcity
9. Leads to sustainable water services – that is water services that last

CURRENT SITUATION OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN O&M

According to the CBMS model

1. The *community* is responsible for management and maintenance of their water facilities. It does this through participation in planning and contribution of O&M funds for preventive maintenance and repairs as well as payment of the caretakers.
2. The *sub county* prepares plans and budgets incorporating O&M aspects and supervises the private sector carrying out such activities. The sub-county should hire and train HPMS or Scheme Attendant and provide custody for the tool kits. It should also enact byelaws on O&M.
3. The *district* budgets for major repairs/ rehabilitation; provides the required guidance and supervision in ensuring established standards for O&M; responsible for routine water quality monitoring and performance of O&M; plans for and co-finances training of HPMS, plumbers, masons and scheme attendants and provides tool kits for O&M and stocks spare parts

CURRENT SITUATION - CONT

4. *NGOs and CBOs* finance construction and maintenance of water facilities and are also involved in capacity building of LGs and monitoring the functionality of water facilities and conducting studies.
5. *The private sector* carries out maintenance and repair work. It supplies and distributes inputs and spares-parts as well as undertaking community mobilization and training
6. *Central government* is responsible for:
 - Policy formulation, legislation, regulation, setting standards and guidelines for O&M.
 - National level planning and budgeting for O&M, mobilization of funding, capacity building of local governments, supply of inputs and implementation.
 - Ensuring that policies are followed, and approaches used contribute towards the attainment of sector objectives.

CRITICAL ISSUES IN COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION FOR O&M

1. It is not easy to convince communities to contribute towards construction and maintenance of water facilities when they are not being asked to do so in other sectors like education, health and roads.
2. While the National Water Policy (1999) describes the community as the owners of a water facility, the Water Statute vests the ownership in DWD, with the community managing and maintaining it for their joint benefit. Ownership is thus still a question
3. Communication to the community members by the service authorities and providers is sometimes confusing and very top down
4. Communities need to be motivated to understand and appreciate their roles and responsibilities in water and sanitation
5. Aspects of power, control and influence are still misunderstood by many
6. The top down approach is still evident and interferes with community interests and expectations
7. Inclusiveness is still illusive. Are all participants in the community really represented?

RECOMMENDATIONS TO ENHANCE COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN O&M

1. Strengthen and work with TSU 2 to ensure that learning to improve community participation trickles down to all the districts in the region
2. Support DWOs to take up and scale up the good practices and innovations in community participation
3. Create awareness of the link between increased community participation in water management and increased functionality of water sources and ultimately improved sustainability of the water facilities to ensure water services that last
4. Strengthen regional learning and use it to promote community participation in the management of the water sources
5. Initiate steps and processes to institutionalise regional learning as a strategy for sharing information, identifying good practices and innovations and as a way of generating advocacy issues to influence policy change at the national level. With scarce resources, regional learning can even be an alternative to the IDM
6. Put in place practical strategies for feedback. Learning is a loop and one process feeds into each other

CONCLUSION

1. This regional learning forum is an achievement from numerous efforts and contributions by many individuals and institutions. Many preparatory meetings were organised and many individuals made lots of contributions in terms of time, information and knowledge and resources
2. There is need for concrete follow-up of the deliberations and decisions from such a learning forum. What next after this learning is an important question to consider. In practical terms we need to define what we are going to do after this forum. Various districts need to identify what to take on from here and how to scale up the learning in their respective areas. This calls for definite action plans that are feasible and can be managed at the district and sub county levels
3. Sector learning is the mandate of government and in the DIM it is part of monitoring and reflection in the sector. Non state actors are only making a contribution and government is taking the lead. This requires good strategies on how the non state actors can feed into learning in the sector



Thank you for Listening