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Project implementation management and community participation

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PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

by EPHRAIM M CHIMBUNDE

Project implementers must choose Technologies that are acceptable to the user. In most cases people will have seen ideas that have not worked and implementers should demonstrate the viability of the Technology in question.

Implementation embraces socio-cultural and socio-economic aspects and therefore cannot be discussed in isolation of Technology options.

While this topic is very often discussed in general it is very important to remember that very often the exercise may need to be project-specific. Equally important is that the implementers must have the goals and objectives of the programme very clear from the beginning, eg is the programme fully funded by the Government or other Agencies or orientated towards self-reliance?

Training

Training is an essential component of any programme. People who are going to be involved in the programme should be acquainted with the technology to be used in the exercise and very often the training is project specific.

Motivation

The success of any sanitation programme depends to a large extent on how motivated the community is and how much awareness has been created in the community about the sanitation programme.

Awareness is achieved in many ways. Normally information is communicated to the people by radio or television. Very often films and videos are used to convey information. This method can be very effective although not all the necessary details can be included. Information can also be passed through political channels by asking politicians to promote sanitation during their rallies.

By far the most effective method of convincing the people is by setting demonstrations in central positions and asking local people to take part in these demonstrations. Demonstrations have many advantages attached to them.

They convincingly show the simplicity of the design and its adaptability. Motivation is a temporary factor which will not last long unless there is quick response while it is still burning. Once lost it takes a lot of effort to be regained.

It is extremely important to be able to demonstrate the diversity of the Technology, showing how materials available locally are made use of. Equally effective is to demonstrate how Technologies locally known to the people are harnessed into the programme.

In a way of persuasion people should be made aware of the relationship between certain diseases and unsanitary conditions, and be enlightened on the health benefits connected with technologies being advocated.

Community Involvement

Community or individuals should be involved in the programme from its onset. People must feel it is their programme or their installation and the success of a programme hinges very often on this point. Trained personnel must play the roll of advisers, the local people playing their part as implementers even in the Administration and Management of the programme.

The involvement of local people at all levels also helps to ensure continuation of the programme.

Incentives

Incentives are an essential component of any programme and very often they help to speed it up. These incentives should be provided by Governmental Agencies in the form of imported materials that are not available locally.

Ideally people should be involved in planning and implementing programmes, as well as using and evaluating any improvements in water supply and sanitation.

Maintenance

Constant supervision should be maintained during the course of the programme. This is afforded by making frequent visits to ensure that implementers are not going astray with the technology.

There should never be a breakdown of communication between technologists and implementers during the course of a programme as this may cause unnecessary delays.

Obviously no technology is designed to be maintenance free. It is therefore advisable to choose technologies that work with the minimum of maintenance and have a long life. Maintenance must be at least affordable by the user.