



Motivation and mobilization for sustainability

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THIS PAPER IS based on my experience in southern Sudan (1984-1988) with ACROSS water development programme in two districts of Yei and Maridi. It was realized that proper selection of the water site plus early community mobilization approach are essential for sustainability of any water project. The aims of the ACROSS water project are:

- To serve the community, enabling them to have clean water sources, so promoting their ability to improve health. The community should make their own decisions, technicians giving advice when necessary. The community must feel that they own the source, it is not something from outside.
- Improve civilization and enable people to live as God intends.
- Finally - the technicians should first of all become convinced themselves that what ACROSS water development is doing with the communities is good and appropriate.

They should be the first to demonstrate their willingness.

Community understanding

The technician should find out:

- The community interest in social economic and physical (structural) development.
- Their community potential resources, i.e. local skilled men people with understanding of work to be done, availability of local materials e.g. sand stone, bricks, wood grass.
- Has a project been initiated previously in the area? If yes, what type of project, did the community participate in. Was it self help voluntary or fund raising?
- Why did the community apply for their water source construction? Was it to reduce distance to collection point, for easier water collection, to provide enough water or to eliminate some health hazards.
- Is the community concerned about their health? If so to what extent, measure this by home visits and observation of personal hygiene. Water demand from existing sources.
- Does the community have an early or late dispute with each other? How do you know
 - a) Ask directly during discussion.
 - b) Sometimes the community will show signs of not being able to do the work even in most possible location. Upon investigations this may be seen to be the result of community differences.

c) Sometimes a few people may force others to agree for work to go ahead. But eventually work will stop until a meeting is organized to find out the causes, i.e. community differences.

d) Ask the history of the place from one of the people who talks facts and is sincere. The community must be united (reconciled) before work starts.

- What accommodation can be provided for the technicians and later, for the health promoter.

Population distribution

- Locate the site as near the centre of the community as possible in order to avoid the following:
 - a) No proper turn up to work. Some people may think the site is being selected on the basis of a few peoples' interest rather than on actual needs of the whole community
 - b) Poor use of source. It will not be in constant use, will be poorly maintained and will become contaminated as people will not care for it properly.
- How big is the community? Does it need more than one source?
- Do a survey of the area yourself, do not really on what they tell you.
- Note positions of all houses, all existing water sources.

Summary of community approach

- During your preliminary survey before the general meeting pay regular visits to local chiefs, headmen, religious leaders, headmasters, teachers, elders, influential people, as well as ordinary community members.
- Talk to as many people as possible-in the markets, tea rooms, gatherings and in their homes.

General meeting

- The time, place and date of the meeting should be agreed upon by the community.
- Involve the community in the organisation of the meeting by assigning to them roles.
- Explain to the community:
 - a) Self help policy and its application in various developments. Why self-help.
 - b) Brief look into the country's development and how much the government can contribute. How the community can contribute to their own development.
 - c) How we have worked in other places and what has been learnt through working on self-help basis.

d) The danger to health from using contaminated water . The diseases that are related to water and how they are transmitted .

- Are the people in agreement with the policy?
- Discuss approximate location of first source . If there is a dispute settle on priority.
- Be frank and sincere. Don't make a promise about what you know is an impossibility.
- Form water committees for both men and women. Assign one member of men's committee to be responsible for organising well maintenance in the future and one woman to be the leader in promoting better health .
- In the general meeting and during contact with the people, involve as many people as possible to comment on the relevant topic discussed in the meeting. In this way you can tell their understanding, cooperation, zeal for work and whether it is possible to proceed with the work or not .

While work is on progress

- How to keep the community spirit for the work constant. Never disappoint the community by:
 - a) Making empty promises related to the working policy or your relationship with the community while living with them.
 - b) Changing your technical plans of work continuously which the community will realise to be unworthy as it will bring them extra work.
- Failing to transport necessary tools and materials to the site in time.
- Not informing them before hand if you need to be away from work due to health or office emergency cases.
- How to promote spirit of work in case of weak leadership:
 - a) encourage them by you joining hands with them in the work;
 - b) involve the community leaders and water committee in joining hands with the rest of the community;
 - c) suggest changes in the leadership depending on community interest;
 - d) provide continuous, necessary education related to the matter .
- Technicians should maintain good relationships with community while in the field in order to avoid lack of trust . Note - they are marking you from the beginning.
- Some obstacles to effective self - help work in communities:
 - a) demand for payment or incentives;
 - b) unwillingness to provide constant labour;
 - c) lack of co-operation and coordination among the community members, local administrator and extension workers;
 - d) some social functions. like dances, long funeral rites etc.
 - e) Periodic activities like hunting etc.