



Environment

Water Community



Solution Exchange for the Water Community Consolidated Reply

Query: Developing Communication Strategies for the Drinking Water Sector - Examples; Referrals

Compiled by [Nitya Jacob](#), Resource Person and [Sunetra Lala](#), Research Associate
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From [Dara Johnston](#), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), New Delhi

Posted 03 December 2009

I work with UNICEF's India Country Office as Water Specialist in the Child's Environment Programme. We are assisting the government to develop a communications strategy for behaviour change regarding household drinking water. Most institutions seem to produce products to address what are the perceived issues, and do not research in-depth the real reasons for the problem. The end result is that funds are utilised on products and promotion, but there is no rigorous method of analysing effectiveness.

I am interested to know if any agency has taken the broader approach of developing a communications strategy for water, which the above studies form a part. A communications strategy would begin with development of a baseline in the field, definition of communication objectives, selection of mode(s) of communication, development of creative messages, testing of media, develop materials, implementation and then review, monitor and evaluate.

I would like the Water Community members to share the following information:

- A. What other agencies have developed communications strategies for drinking water, what has been the process they followed and the results?
- B. Can members share the strategies and material already developed?
- C. Please provide inputs on the process proposed above and ways to make it more effective.

Kindly provide your responses specifically to the three questions posed. They will help us in streamlining a communications strategy for the drinking water sector.

Responses were received, with thanks, from

1. [Abhishek Mendiratta](#), Jupiter Knowledge Management and Innovative Concepts Private Limited (JKMIC), New Delhi
2. [Nupur Bose](#), A.N. College, Patna
3. [Sonali Srivastava](#), Arghyam, Bangalore
4. [Rema Saraswathy](#), Institute of Sustainable Development, Chennai

5. [K. Balachandra Kurup](#), Socio Economic Unit Foundation, Trivandrum
6. [J.Geetha](#), Gramalaya,
7. [Eklavya Prasad](#), Megh Pyne Abhiyan, Patna
8. [Minakshi Arora](#), Water Community India-Hindi Water Portal, New Delhi
9. [Nripendra Kumar Sarma](#), Public Health Engineering Department, Guwahati
10. [K. A. S. Mani](#), Andhra Pradesh Farmer Managed Groundwater Systems (APFAMGS), Hyderabad
11. [Ajit K Saxena](#), Energy Environment and Development Society, Bhopal
12. Prakash Nayak, Integrated Nutrition and Health Programme, CARE-India, New Delhi ([Response 1](#)) ([Response 2](#))
13. [Johnson Rhenius Jeyaseelan](#), WaterAid, Lucknow
14. [Kashinath Vajpai](#), Prakriti, Dehradun
15. [V. Suresh](#), Institutional Transformation and Change Management, ODEC (P) Ltd., Chennai
16. [Jyotiraj Patra](#), University of Oxford, United Kingdom *
17. [Neelima Garg](#), Uttarakhand Jal Sansthan, Dehradun, Uttarakhand *

**Offline Contribution*

Further contributions are welcome!

[Summary of Responses](#)
[Comparative Experiences](#)
[Related Resources](#)
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Summary of Responses

Several organizations in India have developed communications strategies involving various aspects of drinking water. The common purpose is behaviour change for water conservation and improved health. They have also developed a range of material for different audiences. They have also critically examined the strategies to make their implementation more effective.

Arghyam in Bangalore, [Karnataka](#) conducted a state-wide survey of water and sanitation practices (ASHWAS). It covered 17,200 households in Karnataka. After the survey, it developed a communications strategy to discuss the findings with the 172 gram panchayats covered. It abstracted the findings from ASHWAS related to the panchayat: water sources, quality and reliability of water, sanitation, solid and liquid waste management, health and hygiene, and governance. The material included panchayat level reports as well a mechanism to capture the discussions and resultant action plans. Some material is available at <http://www.ashwas.indiawaterportal.org/>. Along with its network of NGO partners, it organized a meeting in each panchayat. The audience included key functionaries such as the anganwadi worker, self-help group (SHG) members, ANMs, members of the village water and sanitation (VWSC) and hygiene committees, the village secretary as well as a person from the block headquarters. Simultaneously, Arghyam met officials of the State Department of Panchayati Raj And Rural Development and the chief executive officers of the zilla panchayats. The meetings were consultative, instead of giving top-down advice. Arghyam reviewed the process and felt smaller meetings with different groups in a village would be more effective as a precursor to a larger pan-village meeting. This needs to be followed up by planning for panchayat-specific

actions. The ASHWAS initiative validates the process proposed in query; it is possible to be more effective to develop a communication strategy through an iterative process.

In [Tamil Nadu](#), the Institute for Sustainable Development (ISD) is implementing a project for organising and empowering 12 panchayats for better water governance. The aim is to ensure equitable access to safe and adequate drinking water. ISD works with local leaders from the panchayats, CBOs and SHGs. It conducts an assessment, provides expert support and helps them to conduct debates to raise public awareness. It has developed 16 indicators to measure the PRIs' capacity in terms of water supply service. The first step is a rapid appraisal for working out the baselines using transect walks, household interviews and key informant interviews. This is followed by a one-day workshop on the functions of PRIs, water governance, water management practices, the gram panchayat's current water situation and finally, an action plan for better water governance. The third step is a participatory appraisal of the panchayat's water and sanitation situation from the technical and social perspectives. The fourth step is to help each panchayat prepare an action plan, followed by monitoring. The process is evaluated and documented at the end of one year. The Institute's analysis shows people are interested in discussing specifics and participate in the planning and execution process. This instance again reinforces the process for developing a communication strategy proposed in the query.

The [Institutional Transformation and Change Management](#), also in Chennai, has worked with engineers of the Tamil Water and Drainage Board (TWAD Board) to transform them into 'social engineers'. They have used communications as a change agent in three distinct steps. The first was using communication as information for village people, to inform them about their water situation. Secondly, they used communication for sensitization to raise the awareness of individuals and small groups on specific issues. The objective was to stimulate behaviour change. Finally, they used communication for transformation. Communities developed a heightened sense of ownership, involvement and sensitivity to the catalytic role they could play in democratizing water management. Engineers engaged with communities in a more pro-active, action oriented, forward looking and transformative way. Continuous reflection-review-reformulation methods ensured the learning process was monitored and course corrections were made in the field.

Central to this approach is the concept of the *koodam*, the catalyst that brought together all participants. The term means gathering in Tamil and culturally carries notions of a sacred space where everybody is treated as an equal, everyone's opinions and views are sought, decisions are consensual, monitoring of implementation of decisions is voluntary and collective, and individuals take responsibility for respecting collective norms and acting to enhance ethical values. While this communications strategy approximates what is proposed in the query, the *koodam* is a significant deviation in the method.

In [Kerala](#), the Socio-Economic Unit Foundation (SEUF) has developed several strategies for behavior change communications for the WASH sector. It streamlined these strategies through meetings with VWSC members, school health clubs, elected representatives and officials from government line departments. The principle is to involve communities in planning, implementation, management and operation and maintenance of water and sanitation facilities. SEUF has developed a manual for VWSC members, a book in Malayalam for primary school children, radio programmes, hygiene promotion material for schools and a handbook on water sanitation for WASH trainers. Here again, community involvement has played a major part in developing the communications strategy.

In [Bihar](#), the Megh Pyne Abhiyan (MPA) has adapted conventional wisdom and blended it with sustainable technical innovations for water management. Its aim is behaviour change among the flood-affect people in north Bihar. It begins by understanding the survival mechanisms of people in Bihar's flood affected regions and deciphering their social, economic, political and other

nuances. Based on this information, MPA has focused on the lack of safe drinking during floods as their most serious problem. They decided to promote rainwater harvesting (RWH) as a possible solution. This is not widely practiced in north Bihar, so MPA evolved a set of communications activities for behaviour change. This also gave people space to discuss their water-related problems. MPA institutionalized planning and implementation in the campaign panchayats. It used local people as facilitators for better acceptance. MPA's review indicated RWH had to be part of a wider approach to water and sanitation, and their initial mobilization gave them the leverage to work towards water security based on RWH.

In [Andhra Pradesh](#), the Andhra Pradesh Farmer Managed Groundwater Systems (APFAMGS) developed farmer water schools (FWS) as a communications tool. Its aim was to demystify the science of water, build skills and capacities of communities to manage shortages and demystify technical data on groundwater. It also aimed at better groundwater governance. Farmers who have passed through the schools have become a pressure group for better demand side groundwater management. The process involves bringing together farmers from a hydrological unit to explore, discuss and experiment with their groundwater resources through a hands-on approach. Each session is preceded by a planning meeting to adapt the FWS curriculum to local needs. Farmer facilitators identify locally appropriate content, develop session guides, determine how to make the training more useful and identify suitable locations for demonstrating geological concepts.

WaterAid India (WAI) has developed a communication strategy of using self-help groups (SHGs) to promote its hygiene messages in [Chhattisgarh](#). Its partner in Raigarh has strong links with SHGs. WAI developed a water sanitation hygiene manual. It began a training of trainers (TOT) programme, and trained 20 SHG leaders. These trained another 350 SHG women each. These 350 women were trained to handle the manual in their SHG meetings. The team also regularly got feedback on the manual, and finally revised the manual. This strategy was very successful in reaching a large number of women with hygiene messages.

In most of these instances, the baseline was taken from another programme, of which the communications strategy is a part. It is clear the agencies have developed strategies for specific ends and are aware of the need to monitor and change them as required. Communications has formed an important, if not central part, of these organisations' projects and is the key to successful implementation. This is a change from an earlier time when it was an adjunct to programme implementation, and underscores the need for a well thought out adaptive strategy. Most of the strategies endorse what is proposed in the query. However, it is significant they all have a strong element of community involvement and are not top-down, with an emphasis on involving women and other excluded groups.

Comparative Experiences

Andhra Pradesh

Andhra Pradesh Farmer Managed Groundwater Systems (APFAMGS) Project helps Farmers to deal with Water Scarcities (from [K. A. S. Mani](#), *Andhra Pradesh Farmer Managed Groundwater Systems (APFAMGS)*, Hyderabad)

APFAMGS developed Farmer Water Schools as a communications tool to help farmers deal with the problem of water crisis. It aimed to build capacities of communities to manage shortages. The process involved bringing together farmers to discuss and experiment with their groundwater resources through a hands-on approach. Farmers who have passed through the schools have now become a pressure group for better demand side groundwater management. Read [more](#).

Bihar

Megh Pyne Abhiyan evolves Communication Activities for Behaviour Change (from [Eklavya Prasad](#), *Megh Pyne Abhiyan, Patna*)

The Megh Pyne Abhiyan (MPA) aims at behaviour change among the flood-affected people in north Bihar who lack safe drinking water during floods. MPA is promoting rainwater harvesting as a possible solution and has evolved a set of communications activities for behaviour change. It uses local people as facilitators for better acceptance. This initiative has also given people space to discuss their water-related problems. Read [more](#).

Chhattisgarh

Self Help Group Members successfully involved in implementing Communication Strategy, Raigarh (from [Johnson Rhenius Jeyaseelan](#), *WaterAid, Lucknow*)

WaterAid India has developed a communication strategy by involving self-help groups (SHGs) to promote its hygiene messages. With its partners, WAI developed a water sanitation hygiene manual and began a training of trainers programme. These 350 women were trained to handle the manual in their SHG meetings and received feedback on the manual. This strategy was very successful in reaching a large number of women with hygiene messages. Read [more](#).

Karnataka

Review of the Communication Strategy for Arghyam Water and Sanitation Survey stresses on an Iterative Process (from [Sonali Srivastava](#), *Arghyam, Bangalore*)

Arghyam conducted a state-wide survey on water and sanitation practices. After the survey, it developed a communications strategy to discuss the findings with 172 gram panchayats. The material included panchayat level reports. The process was reviewed and it was observed that smaller meetings with different groups would be more effective. The initiative validates that it is possible to develop an effective communication strategy through an iterative process. Read [more](#).

Kerala

Community involvement plays an important Role in Communication Strategy (from [K. Balachandra Kurup](#), *Socio Economic Unit Foundation, Trivandrum*)

The Socio-Economic Unit Foundation (SEUF) has developed several strategies for behaviour change communication for the WASH sector. It streamlined these strategies through meetings with school health clubs, elected representatives and officials from government line departments. The principle is to involve communities in maintaining water and sanitation facilities. Community involvement has played a major part in developing the communications strategies. Read [more](#).

Tamil Nadu

Institute for Sustainable Development ensures Community Participation in planning Water Projects, Chennai (from [Rema Saraswathy](#), *Institute of Sustainable Development, Chennai*)

The Institute for Sustainable Development (ISD) is implementing a project for organising and empowering 12 panchayats for better water governance. It aims to ensure equitable access to adequate drinking water. ISD works with local leaders from the panchayats, CBOs and SHGs and helps them to conduct debates to raise public awareness. Its analysis shows that communities are interested in planning and executing water related projects. Read [more](#).

Institutional Transformation and Change Management, ODEC (P) Ltd uses Communication as a Change Agent (from [V. Suresh](#), *Institutional Transformation and Change Management, ODEC (P) Ltd., Chennai*)

ODEC worked with engineers of the Tamil Water and Drainage Board (TWAD Board) to transform them into 'social engineers'. It used communications as a change agent by using communication as information for people, communication for sensitization and communication for transformation. As a result engineers engaged with communities in a pro-active way. Communities developed a sense of ownership and involvement in democratizing water management. Read [more](#).

Related Resources

Recommended Documentation

Kids Walk for Water (from [Abhishek Mendiratta](#), *Jupiter Knowledge Management and Innovative Concepts Private Limited (JKMIC), New Delhi*)

Article; by Press Trust of India; New Delhi; 2009;

Available at <http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/environment/cr/res-25110901.pdf> (PDF; 120KB)

Water advocacy campaign organised by UNESCO and WWF-India, in which over 5000 students participated in a rally to create awareness about water conservation

From [K. A. S. Mani](#), *Andhra Pradesh Farmer Managed Groundwater Systems (APFAMGS), Hyderabad*

Demistifying Science for Sustainable Development: Andhra Pradesh Farmer Managed Groundwater Systems (APFAMGS) Project

Report; by Andhra Pradesh Farmer Managed Groundwater Systems (APFAMGS) Project; Hyderabad; May 2007;

Available at http://www.apfamgs.org/upload/pdf/RE7907_40108.pdf (PDF; 1MB)

Describes the unique initiative of educating farmers about the existing groundwater resources and managing the same by themselves by sustainable farming

GIS Technology - A tool towards empowerment of Farmer's Knowledge

Manual; by Andhra Pradesh Farmer Managed Groundwater Systems (APFAMGS) Project; Hyderabad;

Available at http://www.apfamgs.org/upload/PDF/kiosk_manual.pdf (PDF; 996KB)

Presents data organized as graphics, GIS maps and animations to help farmers to take pro-active actions for managing water crisis

Guidelines on National Rural Drinking Water Quality Monitoring and Surveillance Programme (from [Prakash Nayak](#), *Integrated Nutrition and Health Programme, CARE-India, New Delhi; response 2*)

Guidelines; by Department of Drinking Water Supply; New Delhi; January 2006;

Available at <http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/environment/cr/res-25110902.pdf> (PDF; 336KB)

Guidelines with the objective of ensuring monitoring and surveillance of all drinking water sources in the country by communities

Scaling Up Wastewater Management in Marginalized Communities in Madhya Pradesh: Recommendations for Success (from [Kashinath Vajpai](#), *Prakriti, Dehradun*)

Case Study; by Erica Hagen, Agnete Kofoed, Shubham Kumar and Anne-Katrin Skambraks; UNICEF; New Delhi; 2007;

Available at http://waterwiki.net/images/6/64/07_WWM.pdf (PDF; 1.78MB)

This study describes the situation of water scarcity in the rural areas of MP and documents the challenges faced by the tribal population in relation to water availability

Communication for Information or Transformation? Lessons from the state-wide governance reform programme, 'Democratisation of Water Management in Tamil Nadu – from Drinking Water to Water Resources' 2004-2009 (from [V. Suresh](#), *Institutional Transformation and Change Management, ODEC (P) Ltd., Chennai*)

Paper; by V. Suresh; Institutional Transformation and Change Management, ODEC (P) Ltd.; Chennai; 2009;

Available at <http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/environment/cr/res-25110903.doc> (DOC; Size:)

Describes the lessons learnt from the state-wide governance reform programme on water service delivery in Tamil Nadu

Recommended Organizations and Programmes

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), New Delhi (from [Abhishek Mendiratta](#), *Jupiter Knowledge Management and Innovative Concepts Private Limited (JKMIC), New Delhi*)

B 5/29, Safdarjung Enclave, New Delhi 110029; Tel: 91-11-26713000; Fax: 91-11-26713001; newdelhi@unesco.org; http://portal.unesco.org/geography/en/ev.php-URL_ID=5972&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

Organised a water advocacy campaign in New Delhi, including a rally which was attended by over 5,000 children

Arghyam, Karnataka (from [Sonali Srivastava](#))

#599, 12th Main, HAL 2nd Stage, Indiranagar, Bangalore 560008, Karnataka; Tel: 91-80-41698941; Fax: 91-80-41698943; info@arghyam.org; <http://www.arghyam.org/ASHWAS>

Devised a communication strategy to back the findings of its survey on household water and sanitation, ASHWAS, to the 172 participating Gram Panchayats

Institute of Sustainable Development, Tamil Nadu (from [Rema Saraswathy](#))

2/221, TSP Road, Veerapuram, Chennai 600055, Tamil Nadu; Tel: 91-44-26840209; info@isd.org.in; <http://www.isd.org.in/activities.htm>

Developed a project on Community Organization for Water Governance (COWaG), aimed at empowering grassroots community for better water governance

Socio Economic Unit Foundation, Kerala (from [K. Balachandra Kurup](#))

Socio Economic Unit Foundation, A1, Belhaven Gardens, Kowdiar P.O., Thiruvananthapuram 695003 Kerala; Tel: 91-471-2315907; Fax: 91-471-2325914; seufhq@sify.com; <http://www.seuf.watsan.net/page/120>

Has developed communication strategies with the participation of water and sanitation committee members, in the drinking water, rural development and social welfare sector

Gramalaya, Tamil Nadu (from [J. Geetha](#))

No 12, 4th Cross West, Thillainagar, Tiruchirapalli 620018, Tamil Nadu; Tel: 91-431-4021563; gramalaya@hotmail.com; <http://www.gramalaya.in/aboutus.php>

Advocates safe drinking water supply through hand pumps installation, gravity flow system in the hilly region, rainwater harvesting structures in water scarcity areas

Megh Pyne Abhiyan, Bihar (from [Eklavya Prasad](#))

Gramyasheel, Behind Jail, Nayanagar, Supaul 852131, Bihar; Tel: 91-9430858277;

graminunatti@gmail.com

A network of four grassroots organizations, has devised behaviour change campaigns pertaining to drinking water among the flood affected population of north Bihar

Hindi Water Portal, Karnataka (from [Minakshi Arora](#))

#599, 12th Main, HAL 2nd Stage, Indiranagar, Bangalore 560008, Karnataka; Tel: 91-9250725116; water.community@gmail.com; <http://hindi.indiawaterportal.org/>

Hindi portal on water related issues, engaged in advocacy and awareness campaigns on water and sanitation

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), New Delhi (from [K. A. S. Mani](#), Andhra Pradesh Farmer Managed Groundwater Systems (APFAMGS), Hyderabad)

55, Lodi Estate, New Delhi 110003; Tel: 91-11-4628877; Fax: 91-11-4620115; fao-ind@field.fao.org; <http://www.fao.org/countryprofiles/index.asp?lang=en&ISO3=IND>

Supported the Andhra Pradesh Farmer Managed Groundwater Systems project which implemented the Farmer Water School (FWS) concept as a communication tool

Andhra Pradesh Farmer Managed Groundwater Systems (APFAMGS), Andhra Pradesh (from [K. A. S. Mani](#))

Block No. A-2(C), First Floor, Huda Commercial Complex, Tarnaka Hyderabad 500007 Andhra Pradesh; Tel: 91-40-27014730; Fax: 91-40-27014937; plapfamgs@sify.com;

<http://www.apfamgs.org/Default.aspx>; Contact K. A. S. Mani; Project Leader; Tel: 91-40-27014730; info@apfamgs.org

Launched in July 2003, the APFAMGS project is a partnership with farmers for implementing demand side groundwater management concept

From [Ajit K Saxena](#)

Energy Environment and Development Society, Madhya Pradesh

R-12 GTB Complex New Market, Bhopal 462003, Madhya Pradesh; Tel: 91-755-4768369; eeds@rediffmail.com; Contact Ajit Kumar; aksaxena123@rediffmail.com

A technical support organisation, developed an educational mobile van for creating awareness among children about the need for hand washing

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), New Delhi

73, Lodi Estate, New Delhi 110003; Tel: 91-11-24690401, 24691410; Fax: 91-11-24627521, 24691410; newdelhi@unicef.org; <http://www.unicef.org/india/wes.html>

Supports the national and state governments in developing and implementing a range of replicable models for water supply and sanitation

Orissa State Water and Sanitation Mission, Orissa (from [Prakash Nayak](#), Integrated Nutrition and Health Programme, CARE-India, New Delhi; [response 1](#))

3rd Floor, Setu Bhawan, Bhubaneswar 751015, Orissa; Tel: 91-674-2395202; Fax: 91-674-2395423; ceswsm@ori.nic.in; <http://oswsm.org/website/about-us/introduction.htm>

Provides overall policy guidance for community led and participatory WATSAN projects in Orissa

WaterAid India, New Delhi (from [Johnson Rhenius Jeyaseelan](#))

C-3 Gate 1, Above Nursery School, Nelson Mandela Marg. Vasant Kunj, New Delhi 110070; Tel: 91-11-46084400; Fax: 91-11-46084411; wai@wateraid.org;

<http://www.wateraid.org/india/default.asp>

An independent organization enabling people to gain access to safe drinking water, has developed a communication strategy on water by involving self-help groups

Swajaldhara, New Delhi (from [Kashinath Vajpai](#), Prakriti, Dehradun)

9th Floor, Paryavarn Bhawan, CGO Complex, Lodhi Road, New Delhi 110003; Tel: 91-11-24361043; Fax: 91-11-24364113; jstm@water.nic.in; <http://ddws.nic.in/swajaldhara.htm>

Programme focuses on decentralised implementation of rural drinking water supply, involving the participation of panchayats and communities

Tamil Nadu Water Supplies and Drainage Board, Tamil Nadu (from [V. Suresh](#), Institutional Transformation and Change Management, ODEC (P) Ltd., Chennai)

No.31, Kamarajar Salai, Chepauk, Chennai 600005, Tamil Nadu; Tel: 91-44-28416420; Fax: Fax No. twadboard@eth.net; http://twadboard.gov.in/main_public_aboutus.html

Vested with the task of providing water supply and sewerage facilities to the entire state of Tamil Nadu except Chennai Metropolitan Area

Indian Space Research Organization, Gujarat (from [Jyotiraj Patra](#), University of Oxford, United Kingdom)

Satellite, Opposite To Bhav Nirjar, Satellite Area, Ahmedabad 380015, Gujarat; Tel: 91-79-26748783; Fax: 91-79-26915827; pradeep@sac.isro.gov.in; <http://www.isro.org/scripts/currentprogramme.aspx>

Published communication briefs on drinking the water and sanitation issues of Gujarat, including a televised series titled 'Jal-e-Jivan'

Uttarakhand Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project - SWAJAL, Uttarakhand (from [Neelima Garg](#), Uttarakhand Jal Sansthan, Dehradun, Uttarakhand)

Mussoorie Diversion Road, Makkawala, Dehradun, Uttarakhand; Tel: 91-135-2744022, 2733380; pmu_uttaranchal@rediffmail.com; <http://gov.ua.nic.in/swajal/programme.htm>

Implements water and sanitation programmes in the state and facilitates panchayats activities under the Total Sanitation Campaign

Responses in Full

[Abhishek Mendiratta](#), Jupiter Knowledge Management and Innovative Concepts Private Limited (JKMIC), New Delhi

Recently UNESCO carried out a Water Advocacy Campaign. The Chief Minister of Delhi inaugurated the Kids Rally, which was a part of the campaign. Such a communication strategy is good but in addition to the rally these children need to be trained/educated to conserve water/make best use of water. These children will further educate and spread the message through word of mouth to family and friends. Five thousand children participated in this rally but the impact of this rally is dependent on the audience. However, by training and educating these children the impact will be much more long lasting. Please find the details of the event at <http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/environment/cr/res-25110901.pdf> (PDF; Size: 120KB).

[Nupur Bose](#), A.N. College, Patna

In Bihar, the government agencies have issued warnings on arsenic contaminated drinking water sources in the affected villages. Different mitigation strategies adopted do have details and the purpose of such mitigation structures put up in letters. However, in the absence of door-to-door awareness programmes, the community is largely bereft of the purpose and knowledge of the technology in place. Along with the failure of different agencies to monitor and sustain awareness programmes about the risks of consuming arsenic contaminated water, communication failure is also responsible for the failure in reaching mitigation targets.

The following reformative measures may help in bridging this communication divide in the case of arsenic contaminated drinking water sources in rural Bihar:

- **Acceptability:** this denotes acceptance of the communicator as well as the communication media by the rural people. Hence, it is always preferable to hire local educated youth for effective communication, and use communication methods easily understood by the largely illiterate, impoverished population.
 - **Local involvement:** must be mandatory for adoption of mitigation techniques, with checks and balances in place.
 - **Participation of women in communication strategy:** this being a closed society, the affected female population relate better to their counterparts, rather than to the male members.
 - **Awareness programmes in schools:** this should be compulsory considering the greater vulnerability of children to health problems arising from contaminated and polluted water.
 - **Obtaining feedbacks to guarantee communication effectiveness and sustainability:** this would be followed by innovative measures seeking to enhance community participation. The queries of the affected community must be adequately addressed.
 - **Communication strategy ideal platform for public-private partnerships:** this calls for integration of institutions and NGOs in all facets of the communication strategy.
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[Sonali Srivastava](#), Arghyam, Bangalore

Arghyam has recently conducted a survey on household water and sanitation in Karnataka. As a follow up of the survey, a 5 month exercise ensued with the participating gram panchayats, to communicate survey findings and to facilitate action planning to address emerging issues. This exercise is detailed below, structured as responses to the three questions asked:

What other agencies have developed communications strategies for drinking water, what has been the process they followed and the results?

Arghyam, Bangalore has devised and implemented communication strategy with the view to take back the findings of the recently completed survey on household water and sanitation, ASHWAS, to the 172 participating Gram Panchayats. ASHWAS covered 17200 households in 172 Gram Panchayats across 28 districts in Karnataka.

While a large but thinly spread communication effort to the citizens of all 172 GPs may have created hype and excitement, we felt it may be more effective to focus on the Gram Panchayat body, the PRI at the grass roots level. Accordingly, we took this as an opportunity to understand and strengthen the PRIs through providing information and facilitating them to prepare plans for addressing emerging issues, which would in turn affect the larger population. The process followed can be summarized as:

- In addition to the State report, Arghyam also generated reports for each participating Gram Panchayat, which contained the key findings related to the GP. For e.g., Water sources and their sustainability, quality and reliability of water; Sanitation – % households using toilets and solid and liquid waste management; Health and Hygiene issues and also governance related matters.
- A 4-5 hour session was planned at each GP to share findings and facilitate action plans. The idea was to mirror the findings to the GP members, so that issues can find their place in the GP action plans. Additionally, a snakes and ladder game was designed for the local school children to play and learn water and sanitation related issues. In addition to the GP members, other key people such as Anganwadi workers, select SHG members, ANMs, VWSC and VHSC members were requested to participate. The presence of a Taluka representative was also requested.
- NGO partners were identified who are working in the local areas, to conduct the sessions. In this case, the same NGOs who partnered with Arghyam to conduct the ASHWAS survey were

to take the findings back to the GPs. To supplement the process, staff from Arghyam took part in about 20 such meetings.

- With a view to keeping the govt institutions in the communication and planning loop, Arghyam shared the plan with the State RDPR, which sent communications to all ZP CEOs to help the NGOs schedule meetings with the GPs. The consolidated Action Plans for 172 GPs will be submitted to the RDPR for follow up.

Can members share the strategies and material already developed?

- In addition to the GP reports, Arghyam prepared detailed reference material on 11 key aspects of the ASHWAS findings and also formats to be filled, for the NGOs when they were conducting the meetings. Primarily, the formats developed were for capturing discussions and action plans, and also to understand the GP planning and budgeting process. The material can be shared if required.
- Training was provided to the NGOs, covering knowledge on ASHWAS findings and their implications, skills of communication, and the importance of attitude of empowering, listening and facilitating GP and other members to plan, rather than giving top down advice.

Please provide inputs on the process proposed above and ways to make it more effective.

- Preparation of GP specific reports created lot of interest, and findings related to their own surroundings and problems generated discussion (agreement and/or disagreement), which is the first step to action.
- In hindsight too, smaller meetings with the GPs rather than large meetings with all village citizens turned out to be a good idea; as the 4-5 hour meetings were quite in-depth and meaningful. A meeting with the larger village population can be the next step, with the GP members assuming a key role in organizing such meetings.
- Senior NGO people with good communication skills are required for the exercise, as the meetings are fairly complex and require skilled facilitation.
- If we are aiming towards behavioural change, restricting communication to dissemination is not enough. Action planning to address issues puts the situation somewhat in control of the GP and is empowering. If there is resultant action to be ensured post communication, two pronged strategy should be followed. Firstly, close coordination with the local govt bodies for larger programmes and also for fund allocation. Secondly, and equally important is to evolve GP specific solutions from the members which can be implemented locally. For e.g., how to convince citizens to use toilets, or to take care of their water bodies etc. require some ingenious thinking at the GP level itself. The idea is get out of the cycle of citizens complaining about government inaction and continuing sub-optimal conditions related to water and sanitation in the villages.
- Finally, the effectiveness of the dissemination in the GP depended only partly on the preparation. The key was how active and informed the GP was. While it was heartening to see lot of participation, many a time, members were not suitably informed, especially on plans and budgets submitted to the ZP and funds received. There is need for prolonged working with GPs, to bring more transparency and for strengthening these bodies. If the GP becomes a vibrant and effective body, local change can be expedited.

[Rema Saraswathy](#), Institute of Sustainable Development, Chennai

What other agencies have developed communications strategies for drinking water, what has been the process they followed and the results?

At the Institute of Sustainable Development, Chennai, a project on Community Organization for Water Governance (COWaG) has been developed and is being implemented on a pilot basis in 12 Village Panchayats (VP). The project is aimed at organizing and empowering the grassroots community for better water governance. The project encompasses capacity building of the

Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs), to ensure equitable access to safe and adequate drinking water through a reliable water supply system, and to effectively deal with the technical, institutional and financial issues by ensuring effective participation of all stakeholders.

The strategy in a VP (defined geographical locality) includes involving the community leaders (PRI Members and community-based organization, CBO, leaders). We assess their situation, provide them the expert support, enable them to sensitize the larger community by holding public debates that should enable them to draw the participation of the stakeholders, and take appropriate decisions and execute them. At every stage, community development practitioners who can communicate in the local language are involved in working with the community.

We have developed 16 key indicators to measure the capacity of the PRIs in terms of water supply services, institutional, technical and financial aspects. The project has been piloted in 12 VPs and has had a considerable impact, even though the final evaluation is pending.

Can members share the strategies and material already developed?

The processes given below were taken up in the same order to organize the community for better water governance:

Step 1

Rapid Appraisal was conducted as a first step not only to get the required baseline information about the VP but also as an introduction of the project to the VP. Rapid appraisal of the water situation using selected key indicators in the VP included methods like transect walks, observation, a small number of sample households interviews, key informant interviews and secondary sources to get the required information. More importantly, the key informants included were the VP President, VP Assistant, and other selected people like WUA and SHG-PLF representatives.

Step 2

Workshops to sensitize PRI Members and representatives from CBOs. It was a one-day workshop that included all the members of the PRI, representatives of SHG-PLF, WUA, youth group, TSC representative, ICDS Centre Worker and the ANM. The resource persons included trainers, community development specialists, and engineers specialized in water supply with considerable experience in the field. At the end of the day's session, another date was fixed to do a Participatory Appraisal at the village level in the VP. These sessions were planned to contextualize the COWaG and the contents included:

- **Session 1:** Introductory session
- **Session 2:** Functions of PRIs and Administration of PRIs. This session was essential because many of the VP Presidents and the members expressed their lack of awareness about general administration issues and wanted guidance.
- **Session 3:** Water situation and the concept of water governance. By the end of the session the participants were able to realize the status of water and the need for sustainable management of water by understanding various issues related to water governance.
- **Session 4:** Present water management practices in India. This session enabled the participants to understand the evolution of different water supply schemes in India and the involvement of communities in water management at different levels.
- **Session 5:** Present water situation in the selected VPs – an analysis and presentation. The water situation and other relevant issues at each VP level were discussed in this session. The baseline details collected from the VP was analysed and presented in this session.
- **Session 6:** Role of PRIs and CBOs in water governance. Presidents of model VPs from Tamil Nadu shared their experience about the water governance measures taken under their leadership in the village/ community.

- **Session 7:** Action Plan for better water governance at each VP level. Joint and participatory session facilitated by engineering expert, president of model VP, and Community Development Specialist.
- **Session 8:** Consolidation.

Step 3

This involved participatory appraisal of the water and sanitation situation, including social mapping, water mapping and sanitation mapping. Observations at tap stand at different level of the distribution line, random checks at individual household connections, etc., along with the VP-level decision-makers were part of the exercise. This whole exercise was used as a communication tool to create awareness among the larger community in the VP as well as to sensitize the VP level decision makers who have already participated in the one day workshop discussed above.

Step 4

Helping each VP to prepare an action plan taking into consideration the public view and enabling them to get approval for the same in the Panchayat Council and the *Gram Sabha*.

Step 5

Periodical revisits to the VPs to monitor implementation of the prepared action plan.

Step 6

Evaluation at the end of one year for each VP.

Step 7

Documentation and dissemination of the lessons learned from the exercise.

Please provide inputs on the process proposed above and ways to make it more effective.

Grassroot-specific discussion of issues created interest for the community to participate effectively in the discussion, draw up the action plan, and the execution of the action plan. Involving the community in participatory assessment to analyse the situation was found to be very effective in sensitizing them.

K. Balachandra Kurup, Socio Economic Unit Foundation, Trivandrum

The Socio Economic Unit, Kerala was involved in integrated water, sanitation and hygiene promotion programmes since 1987. In fact this was the first integrated water project in India supported by the Governments of Netherlands and Denmark. The organization was registered as an NGO in 1996 and the name was changed to Socio Economic Unit Foundation (SEUF). Later this was adopted in the bilateral programmes supported by Netherlands and Denmark in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra, Gujarat and Orissa. We have developed a range of communication strategies for behavioural change as an integrated manner for the WASH sector from 1988 onwards. This was field tested with the support of London school of Tropical Medicine in 1996.

What other agencies have developed communications strategies for drinking water, what has been the process they followed and the results?

As a pioneer organization functioning for more than two decades in community-based WASH interventions, SEUF has not only made original contributions but also has a wealth of information and experience. We have developed communication strategies with the active participation of water and sanitation committee members, school health clubs, elected representatives, various government departments in the health, education, drinking water, rural development, social

welfare sector, NGOs, etc. A series of consultation meetings were organized for streamlining the IEC strategy in a participatory manner.

The principle of the strategy was to involve communities in the planning, implementation and management of water and sanitation facilities and in their effective operation and maintenance (O&M). They were also extensively involved in the hygiene promotion activities. The community's role was central in these initiatives and the beneficiaries played an important role in decision making and managing the local level activities through the Village Water and Sanitation Committees (VWSCs) at the village level and Scheme level committees in the surface source schemes where multiple villages are involved.

A partnership approach involving the village community (both women and men), appropriate community sub-groups and project organizations was developed with each partner agreeing to and understanding their roles and responsibilities. However, these initiatives are still confined to the externally aided projects. GOI and state governments tried to integrate the communication strategy in the Sector Reforms and Swajaldhara programmes but were not able to make a major headway. Some of the examples are given below:

- Community Participation and Management Strategy in Integrated Water Supply and Sanitation Programme: Methodology for Implementation, October 1998, prepared for Royal Netherlands Embassy and BKH Consulting Engineers, Delft, Netherlands.
- Developed Sanitation and Hygiene Promotion Strategy for Tamil Nadu for the proposed World Bank supported Tamil Nadu Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project.
- Development of IEC strategy for water and sanitation for the World Bank supported programmes in Kerala
- IEC Strategy formulation for the Kerala Sanitation Programme, Government of Kerala.
- Strategy formulation, planning and implementation for the capacity building component of the Clean Kerala Programme for the entire state
- International study on Sustainability of Changes in Hygiene Behaviour supported by the European Commission
- Kerala Hygiene Evaluation Study for London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
- International action research programme on Women, Well Being, Work, Waste and Sanitation- Alternative Strategies for peri urban and coastal areas funded by the European Union.

Other communication strategies and materials:

- Water and Sanitation Committee Manual: Water and sanitation committees are an integral part of the programme and a source book was developed, including roles and responsibilities, step-wise implementation, location of water and sanitation, technology, costing, supervision, monitoring, use and maintenance, etc in both the water and sanitation components.
- Book on Water (in Malayalam language): A comprehensive book on water made with the intension of possible inclusion in the curriculum for primary school children. This was pre-tested in the 5th standard students for an academic year.
- Jeevandhara (Fountain of life): A radio broadcast on Water and sanitation programme was developed which was telecasted on all radio stations in Kerala. This was continued in the radio for almost a year. This also got the best award at the national level. The same programme schedule was telecasted in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu through the initiatives of DANIDA and All India Radio. This was later on published as a book and circulated among the legislatures in the Kerala Assembly.
- Hygiene promotion materials for schools: Developed innovative hygiene behavioural materials such as time table cards, snake ladder games, etc
- Lesson Plan: A training handbook on water and sanitation prepared for use by WASH trainers at local level for elected representatives and functionaries.

Can members share the strategies and material already developed?

Some of the documents are available but it may take some time to collate and organize them. Secondly, most of these documents are in typed form and not computerized. If these are used, we would like proper acknowledgement and recognition.

Please provide inputs on the process proposed above and ways to make it more effective.

These documents need to be updated and our organization has trained and competent people who will be able to take up this task. We can discuss the formalities and the process with those who are interested in proceeding further on this issue.

J.Geetha, Gramalaya

Gramalaya is an NGO working in Tamil Nadu along with the support of Tamil Nadu Water Supply and Drainage Board (TWAD) in the drinking water sector. The TWAD board provides a water quality testing kit to every rural panchayat. However, in some areas, the Panchayats cannot make use of the kits properly. Even the Overhead tank (OHT) operators who have been trained in water quality testing do not have adequate awareness about the water quality test kit.

Gramalaya has taken up this issue and has trained women's self-help groups and AWASH (Association for water, sanitation and hygiene) committees on the use of the water quality testing kits. The training has covered villages in the Thottiyam, Thatheingarpet and Thuraiyur blocks of Tiruchirapalli District in Tamil Nadu with the support of Water.org and WaterAid.

About 300 members got the training and they are testing the drinking water sources in their respective villages. The TWAD board water quality testing kit is very easy for testing the water. Even people who have low levels of literacy can use the kits and understand the results. With the community and PRI participation, Gramalaya tested 2,600 water sources over the past two years and the results were shared with the community, the TWAD board officials and PRIs. Based on the results, mitigation measures were taken by the panchayat. This will enable the people to know about the quality of drinking water.

Gramalaya's communication strategies in water

Gramalaya's current project areas are provided with good water coverage in terms of piped water networks, hence individual water connections promoted among the target communities. However, Gramalaya is advocating safe drinking water supply through hand pumps installation, gravity flow system in the hilly region, rain water harvesting structures in the water scarcity areas and through open well in the coastal areas. Funding and technical support will be provided to the communities for establishing the drinking water source at the household on loan basis. Gramalaya advocates individually maintained water sources for drinking water and other domestic needs. These services could be locally made using the piped water supply system of the local government either the bore well source or the combined drinking water supply from river sources using the over head tanks and main pipelines for connecting wayside villages or single village. For inaccessible areas where piped water system is not possible, it is suggested to go for deep bore wells with hand pumps. In the case of tribal areas where natural springs are available, it is suggested to go for gravity water flow system.

Technological options for drinking water supply include,

1. Individual tap water connections for the families.
2. Hand pump drinking water sources for the families or communities
3. Bore well with motorized pumps with or without OHT or water tub facilities
4. Gravity flow water system in the hilly terrains using natural springs

5. Roof top rain water harvesting for drinking water

Gramalaya would ensure

- Appropriate, affordable and acceptable technology in water
 - Locale specific and need based technology
 - Successfully demonstrated models
 - Replicable models
-

[Eklavya Prasad](#), Megh Pyne Abhiyan, Patna

I represent Megh Pyne Abhiyan – Cloud Water Campaign (MPA), a functional network of four grassroots organizations (Gramyasheel in Supaul and West Champaran, Kosi Seva Sadan in Saharsa, Samta in Khagaria, and Ghoghardiha Swarajya Vikas Sangh in Madhubani) and social development professionals working in 22 flood distressed panchayats across Supaul, Saharsa, Khagaria, Madhubani and West Champaran districts in north Bihar. MPA works with the modality of a campaign on water management through sustainable technological innovations and adaptation of conventional wisdom. The Abhiyan's motivation is about inspiring a behaviour change among the flood affected rural population of north Bihar in order to construct a congenial social environment and stimulate collective action and accountability towards a 'shared good' amongst the local habitants. However, much beyond that, the wider mandate is to stimulate collective action and accountability towards a 'common good' amongst the local habitants.

MPA has been addressing safe drinking water concerns since 2006 with the help of following practices:

1. Developing an argument through a field action research (beginning March till December 2005), with the fundamental motivation to understand the existing survival mechanism/s adopted by local communities in the flood prone region of north Bihar.
2. Deciphering the nuances of social, economic, political and governance insecurities and challenges through frequent and regular interactions with villagers
3. MPA was aware of the challenges it would be confronting in laying down process and practice in the villages. Therefore, it decided against re-inventing the wheel of existing social and economic issues, instead it agreed upon highlighting the issue of safe drinking water during floods. Inability to access safe drinking water during floods is one of the most serious problems confronted by people staying in safe locations during floods. The prevailing disgruntlement and impression of hopelessness amongst people, dissuaded MPA from addressing a complex problem, due to the possibility of it could becoming counter productive
4. It is imperative to mention that rainwater harvesting as a technique to access safe and secure drinking water in north Bihar had never been explored because of the assumption that water is in abundance irrespective of its quality and its impact on health well-being. Therefore, the campaign had taken up the challenge of treading an undiscovered path, which was expectedly strewn with suspicion, skepticism, and evasiveness. Secondly, introduction of an alternative technique for accessing safe drinking water during floods was also a medium for initiating a process of *swa-nirnay* (self-decision), *swa-prabandhan* (self management) and *swa-raj* (self governance) in the region.
5. During the initial phase the campaign had adopted a multi-faceted approach towards bringing about a behaviour change through varied activities. The activities extended from door to door contact, focus group discussions, public meetings, jal samvad yatra (a journey to promote a dialogue on water), rainwater harvesting demonstration, building association with people, especially women (as they are the household managers when the male members migrate in search of livelihoods) and enhancing capacities of field associates regarding the complexity of water related problems. Demonstrations of temporary rainwater harvesting systems were set up to propagate the technique in 20 strategic places in each panchayat of the campaign districts. The demonstrations were situated at the hamlet level in

- Prominent public space – temple/mosque/village market
 - Panchayat bhawan (office of the decentralized governance unit)
 - Primary and secondary schools
 - Private areas selected by the community on the basis of their accessibility by a larger section of the population
6. The campaign created an opportunity and space for discussion with and amongst the villagers to share their concerns and especially to relate them with water. As a result, people started to acknowledge water related problems existing in the region, correlating them with their health and economic conditions and their socio-political environment
 7. The basic approach of institutionalizing strategic planning and implementation based on *samvaad*, *vichar vimarsh* and *paramarsh* with the rural communities as the campaign's modus operandi, helped in creating an inclusive environment in the campaign panchayats. Though this modus operandi is a universal norm in the development sector, the political-economic-social and physical character of north Bihar had largely restricted the evolution and intensity of the social development processes in the region
 8. Developing access to the villages with the vision of *swa-nirnay*, *swa-prabandhan* and *swa-raj* was bound to have repercussions. Therefore, to avoid a conflict situation, the campaign had strategically planned the intervention wherein the involvement of these self-appointed guardians was limited to village level deliberations and their efforts to hijack the process were dealt in a calculative manner. The campaign had taken a collective decision of limiting their interaction with the middlemen at a community level, establishing personal relationships, accepting their sops, and moreover considering/highlighting them as village leaders was completely restricted. The first phase of the campaign was a new beginning for all involved in it, therefore it was a challenge to develop a common coherent understanding largely amongst the field associates (FAs) about the social dynamics and its impact on the campaign's processes.
 9. The fact that all the field associates were locals and were adequately exposed to the strength and potential of the middlemen, made them skeptical about the alternative processes that the campaign was trying to develop. It was observed that most of FAs did agree with the campaign's argument of marginalizing the middlemen, but they were unable to transform the argument into action for obvious reasons. They felt threatened because for the FAs this was a new approach of working in the villages. In order to inculcate confidence and develop resilience within them towards the campaign's modus operandi, the district coordinator along with the development practitioner regularly visited the campaign villages to demonstrate the mobilization process. Alongside, constant guidance was provided to the FAs for clarifying their doubts and queries. The frequent visits, interaction and support prompted the FAs to overcome their tentativeness.
 10. Authenticating the quality of rainwater for drinking purpose through scientific testing
 11. Motivating individuals to further innovate and simplify the rainwater harvesting technique
 12. Developing cadre of Jal Doots (Water messengers) to popularize the concept of 'temporary rainwater harvesting'
 13. Establishing Jal Samitis in villages as a facilitation platform for people to openly converge at the community level to deliberate on local development patterns and practices
 14. Introduction of the concept of do-it-yourself at the community level
 15. Eliciting women's partnership to highlight their perspective in managing water
 16. Nurturing the field associates with additional required knowledge and skill
 17. Sensitizing the media regarding the potential of rainwater harvesting in context to the flood prone districts of north Bihar
 18. Developing pamphlets, and manual on rainwater harvesting along with a testimony on people's own experiences of drinking rainwater

As the campaign grew from four to 21 panchayats, the following strategies were adopted.

1. The planning and designing of the second phase meant building up a strategy that was addressing the challenges experienced during the first phase and incorporating the constructive and critical feedback coming from
 - a. Team members
 - b. Primary stakeholders
 - c. Representatives from donor agencies
 - d. Development practitioners
 - e. Senior bureaucrats.

During the interim period between the first and the second phase, as a preparatory strategy, MPA's core team organized internal training on SWOT analysis for the FAs in all the four partner organizations. The reason was to facilitate an improved understanding of the impact of the first phase amongst the FAs.

While the campaign partners were advocating for comprehensive plan involving water and sanitation issues, on the other hand, there was a shared understanding that rainwater harvesting in isolation cannot change lives, but it can provide an alternative survival mechanism to the locals. This standpoint reiterated the campaign's belief of addressing small yet genuine issue in the beginning and later adapting a wider approach.

While ensuring that the feedbacks were being adequately addressed in the strategy, the campaign simultaneously had to prepare itself to deal with following internal challenges:

- To stand by its conviction of 'changing mindsets' in a space and time when the local people continue to increase their perpetual reliance on external support for survival
- The present social and economic environment of dependency, instigated by the annual recurrence of 'floods' and the modality of relief work, getting manifested in the expectations of the locals from MPA despite its continuative presence.

MPA's second phase was designed based on the experiences, observations and learnings of the first phase along with the crucial feedback from different stakeholders. The core principles of the campaign remained the same just that the approach was broad based. Apart from propagating rainwater harvesting system, the campaign as per the initial planned strategy intended to:

- Monitor water quality and quantity during monsoon/floods
- Build a database of water source in villages and its impact on the health of the local population – May
- Promote temporary rainwater harvesting
- Contextualize the introduction of the temporary rainwater harvesting system in the flood prone villages
- Dialogue on rainwater and its potential as a drinking water source keeping in view the specific village problems with the locals in all the 21 panchayats
- Identify the public spaces for installation of temporary RWH with help from the village community

Mass awareness campaigns through

- Jal Goshthi – With all key panchayat workers, opinion leaders, government functionaries and representatives of different civil societies at the panchayat level
- Jal Mahotsav with women in all 21 panchayats
- Jal Samvad Yatra
- Jal Bhaithak - Meetings at only those block where the campaign is being executed
- Installation of rainwater harvesting systems through local contribution
- Maintenance and management of the RWH system by the people and field associates
- Motivating people and the jal samitis to take up water harvesting at individual levels
- All partners to compile panchayat level database of the rainwater users' along with the inputs and suggestions of Jal Doots

- Jal Katputli
- Jal Siksha for school children
- Participating in local mela

Water testing in all the 21 panchayats

- Developing capacities of the field associates and other members of the Abhiyan
- Carrying out the water testing at the village level
- Physical
- Chemical and
- Biological
- Compilation of data and preparation of consolidated report
- Highlighting the issues of water contamination at block and district authorities and state level

Developing matka filters for filtering iron from groundwater for drinking purpose

- Develop the technology at the organizational level
- Test the water quality
- Introduce the system at the village level
- Develop capacities of the locals to constantly monitor the water quality
- Motivate the villagers for adopting the system at the individual level. Disseminate the potential of matka filter to mitigate the problem of groundwater with excessive iron content
- Monitoring the increase of matka filter users in the community

Introducing the concept of ecological sanitation in the flood prone region

- Developing a culture of personal hygiene and sanitation
- Bringing attitudinal change for sustained use and maintenance of the asset by the local communities

Generating awareness building local capacities for attitudinal transformation amongst the workers and village communities

- Generating awareness amongst the village communities
- Rainwater harvesting
- SODIS
- Matka filter
- Ecological Sanitation
- Local water management planning and execution
- NREGA
- Building capacities of the campaign workers on following issues
- Social mobilization and group formation

[Minakshi Arora](#), Water Community India-Hindi Water Portal, New Delhi

The Water Community India is a Delhi based non-profit social organisation comprising group of journalists concerned with water issues. It is engaged in advocacy and awareness campaigning on water issues through communication. The messages change locally and are community-specific. This should be in the local language for greater impact.

We are using some games and field demos like pictures, road shows and skits focused on the issue. These are more effective and click in the mind of the audience. Besides this, we have used Web-based technology for communication. We have developed a database of over 200,000 people to whom we send our information. We also interact with some of them on the phone as well.

We also work with students and youth in schools and colleges. With them, we use some quizzes, video, audio, paintings and competitions. We train them to conduct water audits at home and in their schools. They learn to visualize water issues through acting, and learn to present related problems through the same medium. We organise free workshops for youths and students for 2-3 days, and over this period build a relationship that helps to motivate them.

We also hold free workshops the public and journalists to discuss the issues. During these sessions, we discuss how to write on environment effectively to reach out to the people at large and the authorities. This communication strategy is useful and has an impact, bringing more people to your cause.

Nripendra Kumar Sarma, Public Health Engineering Department, Guwahati

With reference to your request on Communication Strategy, I would like to put forward few points as follows.

The communication strategy for behaviour change in connection with household Drinking Water should be based on two basic points:-

1. Water stress
2. Water safety against contamination

At first, a proper baseline survey will be necessary to reveal the main issues of Habit and Behaviour on water use in a specific area / region. Such a baseline survey can be conducted by engaging properly trained data collectors from local CBO / NGO / field level government officials, etc.

Then the Communication Objectives should be drawn up based on different issues

- For water stress, more importance should be on minimising the loss of water, reuse option, alternate sources, Rain Water Harvesting etc. along with the water & health linkages and source protection.
- For water safety against contamination, more importance should be on microbiological contamination with a focus on the water & health linkage and source protection.

Based on the objectives, the communication materials should be designed with due importance on mass communication and most importantly, the themes of such materials must be region / community specific.

The process of implementation of the action plan based on the communication strategy should target women and children, in addition to the public. Such a plan can include:

- Repeated forceful messages over a long period till habits are changed
- A blanket approach to cover all sections of people through inter personal communication as well as mass media
- Regular monitoring of health indicators
- Reorientation of different approaches
- Third partly evaluation

For carrying out grassroot level communication activities, a CBO / NGO / female oriented organization may perhaps achieve better results. Sometimes a small resource group of local people, who are conversant with the issue, may also prove to be quite effective in ensuring behaviour change in villages. The implementation may also involve a community-based facilitator (e.g. ASHA worker under NRHM).

K. A. S. Mani, Andhra Pradesh Farmer Managed Groundwater Systems (APFAMGS), Hyderabad

What other agencies have developed communications strategies for drinking water, what has been the process they followed and the results?

The FAO-funded Andhra Pradesh Farmer Managed Groundwater Systems (APFAMGS) project has successfully implemented the Farmer Water School (FWS) concept as a communication tool for demystifying the science of water, building skills, capacities of communities for managing water shortage, removing the secrecy and confidentiality with respect to technical data all leading to improved water governance for effectively managing water distress in 638 villages spread over 7 districts in Andhra Pradesh. Over a period of 4 years more than 40,000 farmers have benefitted from the FWS. The focus of the project has been in building/strengthening institutions at the habitation (Groundwater Management Committee-GMC) and at a micro basin level (Hydrological Unit Network-HUN) to act as a pressure group to enable farmers to adopt Demand Side Groundwater Management concepts (reduce wastage and improve water use efficiency). Local art forms like *Kalajatha* have been successfully used in communicating with the society, demystifying the science of hydrology.

Can members share the strategies and material already developed?

As part of FWS, Farmers within a hydrological unit come together to explore, discuss, experiment, and thereby, become better informed about their hydrological unit, concepts of groundwater, and crop-water management. Usually a group of 30 farmers meet once in every 20 days to engage in a discovery and experiential learning activity. The group consists of both men and women farmers. The group provides an ideal opportunity for sharing of experiences and mutual learning. Further, these periodic meetings strengthen existing farmer institutions or may lead to the formation of new institutions for sustainable groundwater management.

The FWS curriculum comprises of practical, hands-on topics. In FWS, the hydrological unit, and the farmer's field are the primary learning material.

The curriculum includes

- Long-term experiments & Short studies – especially those related to crop-water, soil moisture, water-levels measurement, etc.
- Special topics based on farmers emerging needs
- Icebreakers
- Energizers, and
- Team building exercises.

FWS curriculum reflects the local needs of the farmers and the physical features of the particular hydrological unit. Adaptation of the generic FWS curriculum to the local needs is made possible by organizing FWS planning meetings before the conduct of each FWS session. In these planning meetings, farmer facilitators:

- Identify and discuss content appropriate to local needs;
- Develop session guides - identify methods and develop appropriate models, and posters;
- Brainstorm ways of making farmer training sessions an exercise in discovery-learning;
- Identify locations where farmers could observe geological formations and structures; and
- Identify special topics relevant to the local needs.

All learning activities are based on experiential (learning-by-doing), participatory, hands-on work. This builds on adult learning theory and practice. Observation, analysis, discussion, and decision making are the key learning principles. The emphasis is not only on "how" but also on "why".

Before the conduct of each FWS session, farmer facilitators participate in a planning meeting to discuss the content, methods, materials (models, posters, etc.), and finalize session guide. Using the aid of the session guide, farmer facilitators facilitate the FWS session. FWS participants

organize Crop Water Budget (CWB) Workshops at the Hydrological Unit level. The workshop acts as a platform for sharing information pertaining water balance, cropping pattern, and groundwater dynamics of the HU. Following this, the farmers discuss the crop plans and make informed decisions in accordance with the available groundwater balance.

Completion of the FWS training cycle is followed by a graduation ceremony and presentation of certificates. Graduation takes place at the end of the hydrological year and this marks the climax of the learning process. During the graduation ceremony, the graduates showcase their experiences and learning from participation in FWS to the members of their community. Farmer institutions take lead in organizing and conducting the Field Day. Government officials and people's representatives are invited. Thus, the Field Day gives these farmer institutions greater visibility and provides them a platform to emerge as a critical pressure group on groundwater management in the district.

Get further information on FWS at http://www.apfamgs.org/upload/pdf/RE7907_40108.pdf

APFAMGS project has organized over 4000 farmers to collect hydrologic and crop data voluntarily adopting globally accepted data collection norms and make available real time data to larger community for use in crop planning and improved water use efficiency. NGO's organizes farmer collected data into computerized data base. The farmer collected data is further available in a consolidated easy to understand form for a regional area (Hydrological Unit) through the Information Kiosk. The kiosk presents the data in an organized form as graphics, GIS Maps and animations for helping farmers to take pro-active action for managing the water crisis. This has led to the establishment of an open forum where farmers from 638 villages in 7 districts contribute to and access data and processed information freely. Today, based on new knowledge farmers have been able to successfully manage groundwater distress by adopting cropping systems. The Information Kiosk is a totally screen driven (touch screen) facility with large icons displaying limited but focused data, supported by graphics and animations. The language is local (Telugu) with very simple and intuitive navigation paths. The Kiosk carries out basic computations to answer various queries raised by the farmers and displays the results as animations, graphics and charts, which the users can understand and appreciate.

Get further information on Kiosk at http://www.apfamgs.org/upload/PDF/kiosk_manual.pdf.

Ajit K Saxena, Energy Environment and Development Society, Bhopal

I am associated to an NGO known as Energy Environment & Development Society. This conceived design and developed a MOBILE UNIT APPROACH for on-site IEC, Capacity Building and Production. This is one of the up-coming approaches, which has a basket of communication tools. It can be applied in an integrated manner for water and sanitation to create impact on target communities and excluded groups in remote locations. It covers the lifecycle of the project, from baseline data to monitoring.

The mobile unit has been designed first, then various tools have been developed and pilot tested in collaboration with UNICEF Bhopal at the grassroots.

Now, we are planning to pilot test all the tools developed in a holistic manner. The components of the approach includes preparation of the baseline and pre-orientation of the teams at the village, followed by a three-day extensive mobile unit field camp to establish communication, capacity and team building. Subsequently, every month there will be public monitoring and review of the tasks achieved, work to be undertaken, filling gaps, and awards and rewards. In each stage of this approach, different communication methods and tools are used.

For water, we have been focused on its use but a lot still has to be done. We are currently focusing on water security aspects. This includes communication on access to water, sanitation, environment health of the water points, resilience to drought, flood climate change and its sustainability.

I am sure this initiative could be instrumental to develop a model for programme communication on water and with modifications; it could add values to test it with a national perspective. We welcome any suggestions in this regard.

Prakash Nayak, Integrated Nutrition and Health Programme, CARE-India, New Delhi
(response 1)

Nice to see a discussion on communication strategy for the drinking water sector. I take this opportunity to share my association in water sector as the State Coordinator (Communications) in Orissa State Water & Sanitation Mission. From August 2005 to October 2006, there was no such strategy in place for the state. However one communications needs assessment was initiated but the findings and suggestions were never included in strategizing communication activities at the district level. GramNet, Bhubaneswar, led by Biren Das conducted the study and tried to identify barriers and bottlenecks in the sector. The study was sponsored by UNICEF with participation of government and is available with the mission as well as UNICEF, Bhubaneswar.

At the district level, there were no such strategies followed by the District Water & Sanitation Missions. For water quality and surveillance, the Rajiv Gandhi National Drinking Water Mission, Department of Drinking Water Supply, Ministry Rural Development, Government of India, drafted Guidelines on National Rural Drinking Water Quality Monitoring and Surveillance Programme in January, 2006. It was published and widely circulated extensively, but there were few takers.

My submission is to advocate for the use of a communication strategy among senior managers of the government (Rural Development, Panchayati Raj, Water Supply & Sanitation, Irrigation, Education, Health, and Women & Child development, etc) and other service providers (NGOs, Resource Centres, CBOs, PRI bodies etc.). Everything else being equal, there is a need to touch heads and hearts of such managers, then only the sector will be more effective and accountable.

Prakash Nayak, Integrated Nutrition and Health Programme, CARE-India, New Delhi
(response 2)

The Guidelines on National Rural Drinking Water Quality Monitoring and Surveillance Programme are available at <http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/environment/cr/res-25110902.pdf>, PDF, 343 Kb.

Johnson Rhenius Jeyaseelan, WaterAid, Lucknow

WaterAid India has developed a good communication strategy through self-help groups (SHGs). We wanted to expand our reach with our hygiene messages. One of our partners, LSS in Raigarh, had strong SHGs. We made a water sanitation hygiene manual focusing on six lessons. This was a training of trainers and we trained 20 SHG leaders. These 20 were divided into 5 groups and each of them trained around 350 SHG women in turn. The TOT session was for five days and the latter training was for 3 days. The 350 women who were trained by each TOT were trained to handle the manual in their SHG meetings. Also the team regularly got feedback on the manual along with its pictures, message, methodology and revised the manual in the end. This strategy was very successful in reaching very large no of women with hygiene education and was also

sustainable.

Members who are interested can write to us to enable us to share a report on the above and also the SHG module for WASH developed through these SHGs.

Kashinath Vajpai, Prakriti, Dehradun

In a Knowledge Community on Children in India (KCCI) series 2007, UNICEF India had published a case study titled 'Scaling Up Wastewater Management in Marginalized Communities in Madhya Pradesh: Recommendations for Success' (Link: http://waterwiki.net/images/6/64/07_WWM.pdf, PDF, 1.8 Mb), with the Madhya Pradesh Watershed Management Development Association (*Erica Hagen, et al*). The important learning of this comprehensive study touched upon 'concept diffusion' i.e., developing full scale awareness with wider application, and the need of a thorough study before implementation of a project or technology, to know about the acceptance among people and replicability.

In this context, I recall my discussion with one of the key functionaries of the said project, sounded well on technical and academic research aspects. He argued that IEC could not be considered among the primary focus areas in such innovative projects. However, the recommendations of the assessment of the project after 2 years emphasized the important need of 'effective IEC campaign' and 'inclusion of specific group in IEC process'.

Therefore, I feel the 'perceived' issue and 'in-depth research' Dara has mentioned are quite important in my view.

Here, I would like to mention a very successful strategy adopted by 'Swajal' project in Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh during 1997-2003. The learning from the process was adopted by Government of India (in reform principles) and many other national government across the world. I worked with this project and was part of the process. The communication strategy of 'Swajal' project was developed carefully and scientifically during 1997-98, considering all the facts mentioned by Dara in his query, and further refined as the project progressed. The IEC model was based on a multi-pronged strategy to bring attitudinal and behavioral changes in project area of Uttarakhand Hills and Bundelkhand region in Uttar Pradesh.

The strategy involved; the components of demand generation among people for water and sanitation, developing ownership, ensuring community participation, responsive community for operation & maintenance, strengthen local self governance, generating awareness, among others. On a broader frame, it worked on three important IEC aspects; Interpersonal Communication, Folk Media and Mass Media.

It had a clear strategy and key messages for each; phase/stage of the project (Pre Planning, Planning, Implementation and Operation & Maintenance), aspect of the project (Health, Education, Gender, Community empowerment, Technical issues, etc.), stakeholders of project (Community based organizations, NGOs/Service Organizations, Other functionaries, etc.), group of the people (Women, Children, Youth, Village workers, etc.)

Therefore, it is worth contacting functionaries at Swajal (Government of Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh) for such resource material, and the strategy they adopted during 1997-2003, and also adopting a robust approach in devising IEC strategy for an inclusive programme.

V. Suresh, Institutional Transformation and Change Management, ODEC (P) Ltd., Chennai

In 2003-04, a very far reaching governance reform initiative was undertaken in the Tamil Nadu Water Supplies and Drainage Board (henceforth TWAD) which had as its focus the task of sparking off across the state wide organization a critical review amongst all sections of the water technocracy of the functioning of the water board, the relationship between the technology-centred functioning and improvements in water sector including, importantly, addressing the issue of the extent to which technocratic mind-set and technology-centredness had contributed to alienation of local communities from owning up to and taking responsibility for maintaining local water systems and traditional water management systems/methods and in a more general way to addressing the issue of the extent to which technology and technocratic focus had contributed to the water crisis itself. The programme 'Democratisation of Water Management' also focused on an action oriented framework, encouraging the engineers to re-examine and recreate their relationship with the community and indeed with the entire water system, covering all aspects from their engineering-technological contributions and activities to their role and responsibility for protection and promotion of water sources to ensuring sustainable water delivery systems.

In a nutshell the main thrust was to transform engineers to become 'social engineers' imbued with a heightened sense of ownership, involvement and sensitivity to the catalytic role they could play in democratizing water management processes; in turn the engineers would in the second stage, actively engage with various sections of local communities in a more pro-active, action oriented, forward looking and transformative process. At all stages the emphasis was on maintaining a finely tuned balance between attitudinal changes of individuals and institutions alike along with perspective shifts and transformation of institutional responses and work culture. In actual terms this meant that at all stages of the change exercise, water engineers actively involved both in conceptual explorations in workshops while they sought to engage in action-transformation experiments in the field. Continuous reflection-review-reformulation methods ensured that the learning process was constantly monitored and course corrections were made in the field.

The concept of the 'koodam' was the cementing block bringing together all types and levels of participants together. The term means a 'gathering' in Tamil and culturally carries notions of a sacred space (NOT religious space) in which all people are treated as equals, where every person's opinions and views are sought irrespective of status or position and decisions are consensual, monitoring of implementation of decisions are voluntary and collective and individuals take responsibility for respecting collective norms and acting to enhance ethical values. The *koodam* was used as the motif to rebuild a sense of community and togetherness. (the *koodam* has resonance in north India in the notion of the choupal, and is referred to in different parts of south Asia in different terms; the idea has been to give a new thrust and meaning to the concept which emphasizes democratic relationships imbued with value of equality, equity, fairness, responsibility and responsiveness).

Note to readers: The *Koodam* idea has been fine tuned in over 12 years of application in governance reform experiments all over India and in at least 5-8 countries abroad. It has uniformly evoked intense and involved responses from people across diverse cultures. The most recent introduction was amongst officials of varied water departments in HP where a similar state-wide transformation programme is being discussed).

In a comprehensive experiment from 2004-06, over 470 villages comprising about 145+ Village Panchayats in 29 of 30 districts in Tamil Nadu were covered for intensive work with local communities and water users. As can be guessed, appropriate communication strategies were central to the transformation process. I share some perspectives which guided action and strategies to inspire creative, transformation-centred action amongst communities and the

responses. For more details on this please read <http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/environment/cr/res-25110903.doc> (DOC; Size: 54KB)

[Jyotiraj Patra](#), University of Oxford, United Kingdom *

The Development and Educational Communication Unit (DECU) of the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) published the Communication Briefs on Drinking Water and Sanitation Issues of Gujarat including a series programmes titled 'Jal-e-Jivan'. Details could be obtained from DECU-ISRO, Ahmedabad.

[Neelima Garg](#), Uttarakhand Jal Sansthan, Dehradun, Uttarakhand *

The Uttarakhand Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project (Sector Programme):

This World Bank funded Sector Programme is based on the principles of Sector Wide Approach (SWAp). The main objective of the project is to scale up the reforms in the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Sector. This is a pioneer project of India in which SWAp principle is adopted.

The main objective of the project is to ensure decentralization and increased role of the Panchayati Raj Institutions and rural community in the pre-planning, planning, implementation, operation and maintenance of the schemes as per the 73rd amendment of Constitution.

Following communication strategies are being adopted in this project:

- Coordination and management of training programmes for personnel of village water and sanitation committees, village facilitators, Support Organizations and village communities including members of Gram Panchayat and Jal Prabhandan Samitis, primary school teachers;
- To secure active involvement and participation of NGOs committed to the cause of rural water supply and environmental sanitation;
- To organise conferences, symposia, workshops, etc. on matters related to the project.

* *Offline Contribution*

Many thanks to all who contributed to this query!

If you have further information to share on this topic, please send it to Solution Exchange for the Water Community in India at se-wes@solutionexchange-un.net.in with the subject heading "Re: [se-watr] Query: Developing Communication Strategies for the Drinking Water Sector - Examples; Referrals. Additional Reply."

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