



Environment

Water Community



Solution Exchange for the Water Community Consolidated Reply

Query: Capacity Building Initiatives in WatSan - Experiences

Compiled by Nitya Jacob, Resource Person and Ramya Gopalan, Research Associate

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From [Arumugam Kalimuthu](#), WES-Net India & Plan India, New Delhi

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I am associated with the Water and Environmental Sanitation sector for many years, and I have noticed that capacity building initiatives at all levels play a very important role in the provision and management of water and sanitation facilities. Though most of these aspects are not gained through formal education, it has been noticed that the professionals acquire these skills & knowledge over the year through their work experience and association in the sector.

Though, issues such as fast depletion of ground water, water quality issues, poor sanitation coverage, poor focus on hygiene, problems in dealing in solid and liquid waste, fast urbanisation, emerging issues due to climate change etc., demand adequate human resources with necessary capacity, some how this aspect is not being given priority. I am of the opinion that apart from capacity building initiatives for the people already associated in the sector, grooming younger generation/students is of prime importance towards achieving sustainable water and sanitation solution in the region.

In order to address the above issues, along with like minded national and international organizations, Plan India is taking a lead role under the framework of "WASH Institute". It is aimed to organize both non-formal and formal courses on "Water and Environmental Sanitation" through partnership with state and central training /academic institutions. WASH aims to cater to the capacity building needs in India and the neighbouring countries in the region.

In this regard, I would like to seek the inputs of the members of water community on the following aspects:

- Past experiences of capacity building initiatives undertaken, and insights and lessons learned from such initiatives
- Focus to be adopted for these capacity building initiatives on prioritization of key areas/topics, types of events to be conducted and categories of stakeholders to be targeted
- Key constraints faced by stakeholders when:
 - Imparting skills to target groups
 - Undertaking such initiatives on a large scale

- Types of institutional collaborative mechanisms (or) support essential to take up capacity building initiatives across the country and in the region

Your experiences and suggestions would help in the development of appropriate strategies as envisioned under the framework of the “WASH Institute” to establish effective capacity building initiatives to meet the needs of the sector professionals and also train younger generation of students.

Responses were received, with thanks, from

1. [S. Damodaran](#), WaterPartners International India Liaison Office, Tiruchirappalli ([Response 1](#); [Response 2](#))
2. [Pranab R. Choudhury](#), Bhubaneswar
3. [R. Srikanth](#), WaterAid, New Delhi
4. [Yusuf Kabir](#), UNICEF, Kolkata
5. [Vinod Kumar](#), Maithri, Palakkad, Kerala
6. [Raj Ganguly](#), Consultant, New Delhi
7. [V. Kurian Baby](#), Tsunami Rehabilitation Programme, Trivandrum, Kerala
8. [Arun Jindal](#), Society for Sustainable Development, Karauli, Rajasthan
9. [Sujatha Kothari](#), Development Consultant, West Bengal
10. [Ramney Koul](#), Consultant, New Delhi
11. [Raj Kumar Daw](#)
12. [S. C. Jain](#), AFPRO, New Delhi
13. [Shashidharan Enarth](#), Development Support Centre, Ahmedabad
14. [Prakash Nayak](#), Tata-Dhan Academy, Madurai, Tamil Nadu
15. [Terry Thomas](#), SMEC India Pvt. Ltd., Bhopal
16. [Kulwant Singh](#), Water for Asian Cities Programme, UN-HABITAT, New Delhi
17. [Arunabha Majumder](#), Jadavpur University, Kolkata
18. [Srinivasan Iyer](#), UNDP, New Delhi*
19. [Hirenkumar Rajendrabhai Patel](#), Tribal Development Department, Government of Gujarat, Ahmedabad*
20. [Susan Sharma](#), Wildbytes.tv, Gurgaon*
21. [Arvind Singh](#), National Rural Drinking Water Quality Monitoring & Surveillance Programme, New Delhi*

**Offline Contributions*

Further contributions are welcome!

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Summary of Responses

The Water and Sanitation (Watsan) sector requires capacity building initiatives at all levels. Responding to a query seeking experiences and insights on capacity building initiatives in the sector, members emphasised these initiatives are urgently needed particularly since NGOs working in the field lack expertise in imparting hygiene education. They also shared strategies for Watsan project implementation,

and noted every community has a unique knowledge system, requiring harmonization with available modern information and exchanges of experiences from the grassroots to build capacities.

Members highlighted that a key requirement of 'capacity building exercises' is to focus on processes, not tools and techniques. Moreover, the framework for a capacity building exercise should include components to bring about an attitudinal change among stakeholders to appreciate the need for capacity building, and help them prioritise and develop suitable action plans.

Setting the context for the discussion, respondents observed many times there is a lack of trained personnel dealing with Watsan issues and especially in rural projects. NGOs seldom get trained personnel to promote hygiene, education, sanitation, water quality management, which compromise the quality of the projects. Thus, in the absence of trained labour a large part of resources are spent on NGO capacity-building exercises with little time for practical implementation of lessons learnt. Further, members stressed it is important to share experiences and build the documentation skills of NGOs so they can share their expertise. They also noted some critical issues, such as the need to simultaneously work on hardware and software components to capture better impact; conduct joint programming to address issues of health and social welfare within the realm of Watsan; and collaborate with relevant agencies to scale up and develop a comprehensive strategy with a situational analysis to identify and prioritise key action areas.

Respondents outlined three pre-requisites when planning capacity building exercise involving divergent stakeholders. One, identify key stakeholders at policy, execution and user levels including identification of key change agents women and children in particular through inclusions in workshops and dissemination via school curricula, and increase the awareness of youth through campaigns. Two, conduct a needs assessment to facilitate the identification of gaps and priorities. Three, recognise the inter-relationship between different stakeholders, to identify mutual expectations, roles, responsibilities, possible conflicts and confrontations. Members also highlighted using participatory methods for capacity building noting a one-size fits all approach cannot be used while imparting training for NGOs/CBOs and especially PRIs.

Additionally, discussants listed constraints faced by stakeholders while undertaking capacity-building initiatives as well as imparting necessary skills to target groups. Members noted one time capacity building exercises undertaken by donor agencies seldom fulfil the gap a structured course, especially when they focus primarily on addressing the financial components of project management. Many NGO staff members learn through trial and error, costing the organisation time and money. Moreover, the fragmentary nature of project focused interventions together with an overemphasis on tools and techniques and negligence in process, adds to the constraints of building capacity in the Watsan sector.

Respondents illustrated how when there is asymmetric information, stakeholder participation will be skewed and for sustainable development all participating stakeholders must be brought to the same awareness level. Awareness of this constraint although difficult to overcome, would enable sector professionals to work out strategies for better outcomes. Other major constraints mentioned included lack of a suitable timeframe to allow for opportunities to practice; proper documentation and case studies relevant to the sector; training without long-term support; and low participation levels from grassroots workers from each Gram Panchayat. Identifying an adequate number of animators to transfer the information to the community was seen as a big constraint by members.

Participants cited **experiences** highlighting factors involved in the success of a capacity building exercise. For example, the National Institute of Water and Sanitation (NIWAS) in [Tamil Nadu](#), provides material and access to information on water and sanitation and a toilet technology centre for training. Another experience promoting innovative IEC activities and continuous upgradation was the Rural Sanitary Marts set up under the Total Sanitation Campaign. Members also listed Maithri in [Kerala](#), which through its training centre changed the mindsets of officials, collated knowledge systems of various communities, and developed community champions to continue capacity building interventions. In [West](#)

[Bengal](#), ATI was noted since decision makers and technical persons appreciated each other's concerns and its impact on the planning process. Respondents also highlighted APFAMGS's method of training communities to use ground water measuring equipment to understand the criticality of water and formulate community level action plans in [Andhra Pradesh](#).

Members further enumerated the collaborative mechanisms and support essential to undertake capacity-building initiatives at the national and regional level. It is necessary to link agencies involved in Watsan to NGOs, donors, research organisations, training and capacity building organisations to meet sources of funding, training and research components. Recognising the government as the key stakeholder for receiving skill development and capacity building, respondents prescribed adequate exposures with a focus on strengthening institutional capabilities. They emphasized the need for a long gestation period for capacity building initiatives with provisions for impact monitoring and continuous feedback and follow up. Further noting a hierarchical networked set-up franchise mode would help promote entrepreneurship and self-sustainability through the development of revenue models, along with encouraging corporate sector involvement and partnership models to expand the capacity-building network without undermining the interest of the poorest and disadvantaged. For institutional collaborations, members also recommended developing linkages with national institutions and regional level [institutions](#).

Specific to the WASH Institute, respondents suggested steps to meeting of its objectives. Emphasising the land-to-lab approach, they advised locating training institutes in accessible places with models of different toilet technology to allow for theoretical and practical learning. Members also recommended the Institute serve as a national nodal agency; provide high quality structured two-year courses stressing rural sanitation, solid waste management, Ecosan, water quality, environmental Watsan and data management. Additionally, it needs to act as a capacity building institute for NGOs/CBOs and government, especially on technical issues, and a link between NGOs, educational and government institutions and other stakeholders in implementing the Watsan projects

Members re-emphasised the importance of properly packaged information appropriately transferred to communities through carefully identified and oriented animators. Focusing on the content of training programmes, discussants suggested using simple techniques with demonstrations, particularly on usage of field test kits for water quality and sanitary surveys of drinking water sources. They also noted that any effort to develop capacities must be inclusive of all key stakeholders and outlined that given the current low levels of capacity building institutions in India, members stressed the feasibility of networking such institutions and improving sector performance through institutional building of the PRIs. Members also highlighted [community contracting](#) as a rich capacity building tool for CBOs and PRIs especially significant in a decentralised set up. Additionally, discussants mentioned the need to consider capacity building as an investment in education and human capital, which would result in high returns and multiplication, ensuring sustainability. Thus, they felt capacity building efforts must focus on offering hands-on opportunities to plan, implement and manage, and make informed choices being the fundamental basis of capacity building, opined members.

Finally, respondents reiterated the WASH Institute is a good initiative for promoting training and capacity development needs to address the gap in Watsan promotion in rural areas. Moreover, they felt it is a necessary step, especially for NGOs hesitate to enter the sector, to help them feel capacitated to take forward issues in the sector. The Institute must also aim to bridge critical gaps to provide training facilities for NGOs in real need of information and support.

Comparative Experiences

Tamil Nadu

Training Centre Combined with Toilet Technology Centre *(from S. Damodaran, WaterPartners International India Liaison Office, Tiruchirappalli; [response 1](#))*

[NIWAS](#) conducts training with dormitory facilities, library, IEC materials on water and sanitation, internet facilities to browse information on water sector are provided. Local women SHGs and PRI Members, local cement fabricators etc get trained in water quality monitoring, toilet technology, hygiene education. The toilet technology centre established at the centre gives participants/trainees first hand information on different toilet options for local community needs.

Kerala

Community Based Watsan Programme for Capacity Building *(from [Vinod Kumar](#), Maithri, Palakkad, Kerala)*

[Maithri](#) in the course of many capacity building interventions conducted ecological restoration of few acres of degraded land, built buildings in an eco friendly manner there, constructed sustainable mechanisms for waste disposal and energy, and developed champions from the community. This collection now acts as the main tool and training centre. It is still an on going process and the facilities are available for likeminded individuals and organizations.

Andhra Pradesh

Farmer Managed Ground Water System Project *(from [Raj Ganguly](#), Consultant, New Delhi)*

Aims at effective use of ground water measuring equipment to empower the local community understand criticality of water and formulate responsible action plan at community levels. It provides capacity enhancement and training for all components including need based training using formal and informal techniques as per subject and target group. The techniques include cultural shows, practical training, exposure and exchange visits, and workshops. Read [more](#)

West Bengal

Integrated Training Course on Urban Planning and Management *(from [Sujatha Kothari](#), Development Consultant, West Bengal)*

The Urban Management Centre at [ATI](#) used to conduct this course beginning from area appraisal, area planning to planning for urban services including water supply and sanitation. Urban local bodies, as well as the Overseers/Sub-assistant engineers including the local councillor were called for orientation and integrated planning. A good experience enabling both the decision makers and technical persons to appreciate concerns and its impact on the planning process.

Cascading Training Program *(from [Arunabha Majumder](#), Jadavpur University, Kolkata)*

Proposed by [AIHHPH](#) in water quality monitoring and surveillance program wherein first District Level Key Trainers (DLKT) will be trained. DLKTs will next train Block Level Key Trainers (BLKT). BLKTs will then train Grass Root Workers. Development of simple and appropriate training modules are therefore important using drama, magic shows, games, wall writing etc to attract villagers.

International

Nairobi

Capacity Building Inbuilt in WATSAN Project, Kiberia *(from [Ramya Gopalan](#), Research Associate)*

The project was started to provide clean, safe water within reasonable distance and to improve the community's living standards by providing proper sanitation, thereby reducing waterborne diseases. It is now in its 2nd year and so far installed 3 water tanks of 10,000 liters and helped the community construct and manage 2 VIP latrines of 4 doors. Also project provides capacity building to manage O&M and leadership and mobilization training to be hygiene promoters. Read [more](#)

Related Resources

Recommended Documentation

“Backwashing” -Injection of Harvested Rainwater into Open Wells for Enabling Water Quality Improvement (from [Terry Thomas](#), SMEC India Pvt. Ltd., Bhopal)

Project Brief; Participatory Learning and Action Network (PLANET Kerala); Thiruvananthapuram
Available at http://www.planetkerala.org/downloads/Backwashing_English.pdf (PDF Size: 451 KB)

A community practice towards rejuvenating fresh water resources in coastal areas of Kerala State

Guidelines for National Rural Drinking Water Quality Monitoring and Surveillance Programme (from [Arvind Singh](#), National Rural Drinking Water Quality Monitoring & Surveillance Programme, New Delhi*)

Guidelines; Rajiv Gandhi National Drinking Water Mission, Department of Drinking Water Supply, Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India; New Delhi; January 2006

Available at <http://megphed.gov.in/knowledge/standards/WOMSGuide.pdf> (PDF Size: 336 KB)

Aims at training five people from each GP and with their support the community can test water quality of all drinking water sources and conduct sanitary survey of the same

Perspective on Capacity Building in Implementing Rural Sanitary Scheme (from [Ramney Koul](#), Consultant, New Delhi)

Perspectives Paper; Ramney Koul; 2007

<http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/environment/cr/res18100701.doc> (Size: 37 KB)

Shares experiences within US, Zambia, and India on capacity building which requires a realistic plan, implementation strategy and evaluation technique to meet quantifiable objective

From [Ramya Gopalan](#), Research Associate

Building Capacity to Strengthen Reforms: A Single-Window Donor Secretariat is Set Up

Article; Jalvaani, Vol. 4, No. 1; New Delhi; March-June 2001

Available at http://www.sulabhenvi.in/admin/upload/pdf_upload/sa_jal_june_01.pdf (PDF Size: 1 MB)

Aims to build capacity and enhance skills at the state, district and village level to implement the sector reform program of improving water supply and sanitation services

Community Empowerment through Water and Sanitation Project Among an Indigenous People Group

Paper; 31st WEDC International Conference, "Maximizing the Benefits from Water and Environmental Sanitation"; Kampala, Uganda; 2005

Available at <http://www.seuf.org/pdf/31st%20WEDC%20paper-manu.pdf> (PDF Size: 259 KB)

Discusses Jananidhi project strategy in tribal areas focused on capacity building and empowerment in watsan of the indigenous group of Sholayoor Gram Panchayat

Development of “Capacity Building Plan” for Punjab Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project

Project Showcase; Feedback Ventures

Available at <http://www.feedbackventures.com/Rural47.html>

Assists in designing the capacity building component for sector institutions and stakeholders of proposed Punjab Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project (PRWSSP)

WaterCan - WatSan in Kibera

Project Description; Kenya Water for Health Organisation (KWAHO); Kibera, Nairobi

Available at <http://www.kwaho.org/pd-watercan-kibera.html>

Developed the capacity of CBOs to identify, develop and manage their own resources with regard to water and sanitation

Recommended Organizations and Programmes

From S. Damodaran, WaterPartners International India Liaison Office, Tiruchirappalli; [response 1](#))

National Institute of Water and Sanitation (NIWAS), Gramalaya, Tamil Nadu

12, 4th Cross, Thillainagar West, Tiruchirappalli, Tamil Nadu 620018; Mobile: +91-9443161263; Fax: +91-431-4021563/4220263; gramalaya@hotmail.com; <http://gramalaya.org/toilettechnology.html>;

Contact: J. Geetha; Director

A toilet technology cum training centre which imparts training to masons and women SHGs as well as government and NGO representatives towards building their capacity

Arghyam, Karnataka

2nd Floor, 840, 5th Main, Indiranagar 1st stage, Bangalore, Karnataka 560038; Tel: +91-80-41698941/42; Fax: +91-80-41698943; info@arghyam.org; <http://www.arghyam.org/>

Seeks to support strategic and sustainable efforts in the water sector that address basic water needs for all citizens including capacity development efforts in the sector

WaterPartners International, Tamil Nadu

D-56, 6th Cross (NEE), Thillainagar, Tiruchirappalli, Tamil Nadu 620018; Tel: +91-431-4023516; <http://www.water.org/waterpartners.aspx?pgID=867>

Works in partnership with donors and local communities, undertakes capacity building and helps people develop accessible, sustainable, community-level water supplies

Rural Sanitary Marts, Multiple States (from Yusuf Kabir, UNICEF, Kolkata)

Office of Joint Secretary, Department of Drinking Water Supply (Rajiv Gandhi National Drinking Water Mission), Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India, 9th Floor, Paryavarn Bhawan, CGO Complex, Lodhi Road, New Delhi 110003; Tel: +91-11-24361043; Fax: +91-11-24364113; jstm@water.nic.in; http://www.ddws.nic.in/rural_sani_marts.htm

Besides extension workers and facilitators, RSMs also promote innovative IEC activities, ensure quality, train local masons and provide continuous motivation for upgradation

Maithri, Kerala (from Vinod Kumar)

DPO Road, Palakkad, Kerala 678014; Tel: +91-478-2458858; info@Maithri.in; <http://maithri.in/index.php>

Established a training centre and developed champions from the community and in the course of the interventions did eco restoration, built eco friendly buildings, etc

Andhra Pradesh Farmer Managed Groundwater Systems Project (APFAMGS), Andhra Pradesh

(from Raj Ganguly, Consultant, New Delhi)

Block No. A-2(c), First Floor, Huda Commercial Complex, Tarnaka, Hyderabad 500007 Andhra Pradesh; Tel: +91-40-27014730; Fax: +91-40-27014937; info@apfamgs.org; <http://www.apfamgs.org/>

Provides capacity enhancement and training on water resource management for farmers, includes need based training using formal/informal techniques as per subject and targets

Administrative Training Institute, West Bengal (from Sujatha Kothari, Development Consultant, West Bengal)

FC Block, Sector-III, Salt Lake, Kolkata, West Bengal 700106; Tel: +91-033-23370120/4043; Fax: +91-033-23374015; dirati@wb.nic.in; http://www.atiwbnic.in/About_Us.htm

Apex training institution of the Government of West Bengal, recommended for its training and capacity building courses in urban services including water supply and sanitation

Development Support Centre, Gujarat (from [Shashidharan Enarth](#))

Marutinandan Villa, Nr Govt. Tube Well, Ahmadabad, Gujarat 380058; Tel: +91-2717-235994/235995; Fax: +91-2717-235997; dsc@dscindia.org; <http://www.dscindia.org/aboutdsc.htm>

Resource organization providing knowledge based support and capacity building/training of NGOs, CBOs and Government functionaries in natural resource management

UN-HABITAT: The Mekong Water and Sanitation Initiative, Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS) (from [Kulwant Singh](#))

<http://www.unch.org/content.asp?cid=2373&catid=465&typeid=24&subMenuId=0>

The MEK-WATSAN initiative will support participating governments, focusing on capacity building, project design and plan etc to achieve the MDGs for water supply and sanitation

Action for Food Production (AFPRO), New Delhi (from [S.C. Jain](#))

AFPRO Head Office, 25/1-A Pankha Road, D-Block, Janakpuri, New Delhi 110058; Tel: +91-11-28525452/2575/5412; Fax: +91-11-28520343; afprodel@afpro.org; <http://www.afpro.org/default.aspx>; Contact: D K Manavalan; Executive Director; ed@afpro.org

Conducts capacity building and training programs in water resource management wherein AFPRO specialists train grassroots NGOs and local communities on various skills

All India Institute of Hygiene and Public Health (AIHPH), West Bengal (from [Arunabha Majumder](#), Jadavpur University, Kolkata)

<http://mohfw.nic.in/kk/95/ib/95ib0y01.htm>

Developed training modules on different issues of water and sanitation and was involved in the RGNDWM initiated Indian Training Network

Responses in Full

[S. Damodaran](#), WaterPartners International India Liaison Office, Tiruchirappalli (response 1)

Capacity building Initiatives is the need of the hour where many NGOs working in the field of water and sanitation lack expertise on imparting hygiene education and strategies for watsan project implementation. If you estimate the number of NGOs participation over the past one year period in the solution exchange forum, you could rarely come across experience sharing, queries from NGOs who are the actual field implementation agencies for water and sanitation. There have been many contributions so far made from intellectuals, high officials, technocrats, experts working at the top level of the management, institute, donor agency or research organisations/universities.

I therefore feel the need for grassroots - level experiences to be shared by project implementing organisations. Here, we need to think over whether there are enough NGOs available for working in the field of water and sanitation or is there a scarcity of watsan NGOs? Even, the NGOs doing good work in this field either have no time to share their expertise and experiences or lack of documentation skills to disseminate their wealth of knowledge to others.

With the above backdrop, I would like to restate here there is a need for setting up a national-level WASH Initiative so that many NGOs even though they may hesitate at the beginning to enter into the water sector, will come forward to work in the field if they are provided necessary capacity building. This will encourage them to work in the field with much courage and vigor. The other important point I must share here is that there are only few NGOs coming forward to work for water and sanitation and willing to take up the challenges in this field, but these NGOs either have no funding sources to continue their work or are denied funding. We are all talking about the MDG goal and achieving the targets i.e. halving

the proportion of people without having access to water and sanitation by the end of 2015. But, the biggest question is that whether sufficient funds are available to these NGOs though they are committed and experienced NGOs. I come across many NGOs who are really experts in the field of water and sanitation but struggling to get funding support for their work.

What I would like to say out of my own experiences in the field of water and sanitation for more than 20 years, we need to link the agencies involved in the water and sanitation sector to different players like NGOs, donor agencies, research organisations, training and capacity building organisations. By doing this, no one should think that they are not supported for their work. It may be a funding source, training need or research aspect.

The WASH Institute should bridge all these gaps in its work so that the NGOs who really needed information, training facilities are supported. One such training institution, I would like to mention here the National Institute of Water and Sanitation (NIWAS), established by the NGO Gramalaya in Tiruchirappalli at its rural training centre. The institute is supported by Arghyam, Bangalore and WaterPartners International, USA where a building for conducting training with dormitory facilities, library, IEC materials on water and sanitation, internet facilities to browse information on water sector are provided.

This training centre currently attracts local women self-help groups to get trained in water quality monitoring, toilet technology, hygiene education. The PRI members like the elected panchayat presidents, local cement fabricators are getting training from the Institute. The toilet technology centre established at the training centre giving the participants/trainees to get first hand information on the different toilet options to suit the local community needs. Visitors to this training institution include representatives from international organisations, government officials, donor agencies, NGOs/MFIs, national and international research organisations.

The training institute should be located in a place easily accessible where models for different toilet technology can be made available so that the trainees not only get trained theoretically but also they could see the different toilet models, water conservation works, water quality monitoring by the communities etc., It cannot be the lab to land process instead it should be land to lab where the participants learnt something from their training and think over expanding or exploring for their own region implementation.

By locating the training institution, the participants/visitors should be able to see different models near the water logging area the eco-san models, dry areas the twin pit or single pit toilets, dry toilets, toilets for coastal region, water and sanitation facilities for the schools including child friendly toilets.

Pranab R Choudhury, Bhubaneswar

Although my experience in the capacity building aspects of Water and Sanitation Sector is limited, I would like to convey some suggestions towards your efforts:

1. Considering the fact that Govt and its appendages are still the largest player with the widest network in this sector, one of the key stakeholder for the skill development/upgradation/refinement as well as capacity building for bringing in attitudinal change, will be the Govt officials from different levels. They should be allowed adequate exposures to adjust and accommodate into the project/mission/process mode of operations, that being advocated for this sector now. Focus should be more on strengthening their institutional/organizational skills/capabilities. Apart from Govt functionaries, PRIs also require continued attention in these directions.
2. Capacity building initiatives should be allowed a long gestation period with provisions for impact monitoring and a continuous feedback-follow up loop.

3. Capacity Building/Skill transfer Centers should have a hierarchical networked set up and may be allowed to seeded on a franchise mode. They should be facilitated to promote entrepreneurship and to evolve to sustain themselves (through revenue models). Focus should be on easy and quick access to water and sanitation skills and services in neighbourhoods. Role of corporate sector and partnership models must be encouraged to expand the capacity-building network without undermining the interest of the poorest and disadvantaged.
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R. Srikanth, WaterAid, New Delhi

WASH institute is indeed a good initiative in promoting training and capacity development needs in this sector. Many times, it is seen that there are seldom trained personnel dealing with WATSAN issues in NGO sector. The need is felt especially in rural projects where NGOs seldom get trained personnel in promoting Hygiene education, sanitation, WQ management, resulting in compromise in the quality of projects undertaken by NGO and funded by donor agencies across the country.

One off capacity building exercises undertaken by donor agencies seldom fulfils the need that can be obtained through structured course in this field and more so when majority of capacity development needs addresses financial components of the project management. In absence of trained manpower, lots of money and time is spent of NGO capacity building exercise with little time left for practical implementation of lessons learnt from such initiatives.

Majority of NGO staff learned WATSAN issues on trial and error basis while implementing the projects. Lack of trained manpower has led to low wages in this sector especially among grassroots workers leading to high turnover. Therefore, there is strong case for pool of trained manpower in this field addressing the core WATSAN issues. The WASH should address following components:

1. Should serve as nodal agency at National level in providing high quality training in form of structured coarse for two years in WATSAN issues with stress on rural sanitation, solid waste management, Ecosan, WQ, environmental sanitation and hygiene and data management
 2. Serve as capacity building institute for NGO, CBO; government org especially in technical capacity building
 3. Should serve as vital link org serving to bridge the gap between NGOs, educational and government institution and other stakeholders in implementing the WATSAN projects.
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Yusuf Kabir, UNICEF, Kolkata

I think WASH Institute is a good initiative to meet the gap on WATSAN promotion in rural areas.

As you are aware, one of the main successes of the rural sanitation campaign is Rural Sanitary Marts (RSM). They are one of the main change agents, ensured the supply chain management and provided the community with different choices. Time to time they are also being capacitated by the Government of West Bengal and UNICEF. Beside the extension workers and facilitators, one of the main role played by these RSMs is in promoting innovative IEC activities, ensuring quality, training local masons and providing continuous motivation for further upgradation.

I think the WASH Institute can include the RSM approach of capacity building.

Vinod Kumar, Maithri, Palakkad, Kerala

What you are putting forward is a welcome thought. However, the range is quite large, from climatic change to habits in a region like south Asia. I would like to share our experiences in these aspects from a

limited context. Our primary working area is the Palakkad Gap region, where the annual average rainfall is as low as 900 mm in certain areas, literacy about 50-60 %, 20 % SC &ST and a mix of Malayalam and Tamil languages. The WB funded CRWS and Sanitation schemes, several watershed programmes and SDC CapDeck supported capacity building programme with focus on NRM and Decentralization were the major events during the last decade. Community Groups, Panchayathi Raj institutions, NGO s and District level Officials were the main players in all these programmes. Needless to say, there were innumerable training programmes which churned out hundreds of women masons, plumbers, scheme operators, community volunteers to organize PRM, Water Balance studies, PRA, Social auditing, Project formulation, Book keeping, M&E etc. Through all these some learning crystallized.

Every community has got a knowledge system in place, especially regarding NRM. Unfortunately, this is not in harmony with modern information available. So all the information required by the community should be packaged and transferred in an appropriate manner. For this transfer also the animators should be properly identified and adequately oriented. Identifying adequate number of people for this is a big constraint.

Seeing is believing for all. This is especially true for themes like climatic change. Organizing village knowledge centers with simple equipments and helping them to learn the variations in key climatic parameters and its impact, water availability and quality etc. will impart sustainability to many programmes. The changes in sanitation, hygienic aspects etc. also requires monitoring by the community in a concrete manner. Organising resources for this may be little difficult.

Project focused interventions are fragmentary in general. Much better is to develop a programme for WATSAN in a community and identify suitable projects in the course of time. This can be done with full community ownership in a relaxed manner. Empowerment strategy should be moulded to suit this. Beware of the haste of the funding agencies regarding this.

In short, the empowerment means acquiring of knowledge, which requires a process and enabling environment. Our task is to provide this. What we are witnessing is an overemphasis on tools and techniques and negligence in process. Changing the mindset of the officials is a big challenge regarding this.

Community is capable of identifying these aspects and in our experience acting accordingly. Maithri in the course of these interventions did eco restoration of few acres of degraded land, built buildings in an eco friendly manner there, constructed sustainable mechanisms for waste disposal and energy, developed champions from the community and this collection is now the main tool as well as the training centre for us. The process is still going on and the facilities are available for likeminded individuals and organizations.

[Raj Ganguly](#), Consultant, New Delhi

[Mr. Vinod Kumar](#) has rightly pointed out the criticality of the subject under discussion and the requirement of the 'capacity building exercise' to focus on process rather than overemphasizing on tools and techniques.

Bringing the attitudinal change among the stakeholders to create appreciation for the subject, helping them understand the criticality of issue and prioritising and sensitizing them to develop the action plan should be the framework for capacity building exercise.

The following points can be considered for choosing the right tools and techniques for the capacity building exercise at different stakeholder level.

- a. Stakeholders – Identifying the stakeholders at different levels – policy, execution and user levels, Identifying the 'change agents' – Apart from the women in general, I believe for issue like water and sanitation school children can also become ideal change agents. Workshops, projects and inclusion of topics in the school curricula may also help create general awareness and dissemination of knowledge in the community.
- b. Need assessment – knowledge gap, priority over other issues (this will help projecting 'Water and Sanitation' in the broad spectrum of socio-economic development, livelihood security, health, food and environment)
- c. Inter-relationship between the different stakeholders – Identifying their mutual expectations, roles & responsibilities, possible confrontations etc.

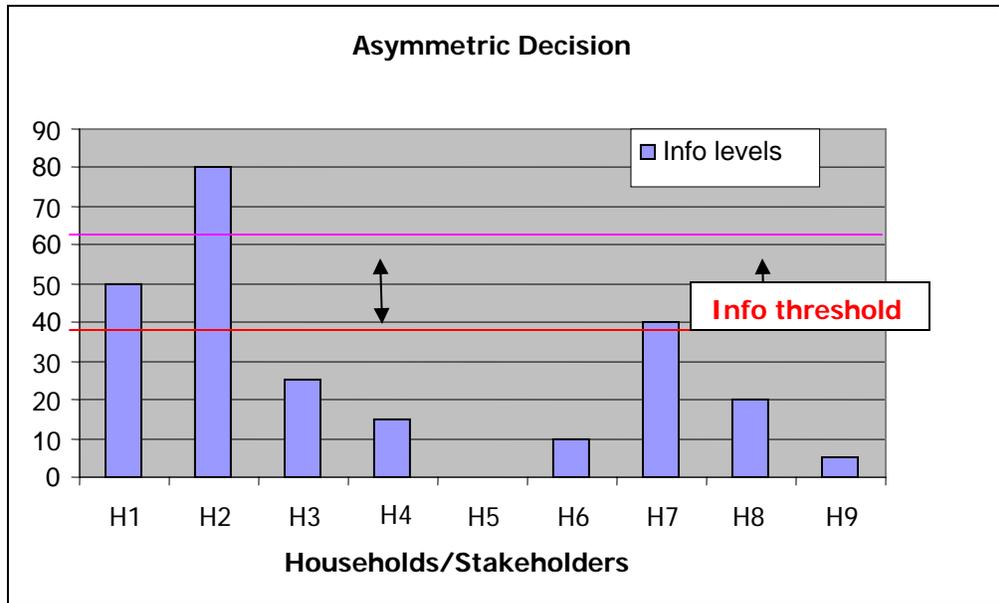
As Mr. Kumar well pointed out the need to identify the community knowledge system and strengthen it by modern scientific knowledge base. Method demonstration/result demonstration is powerful extension tool and effective utilization through simple and cost effective but innovative tools or techniques, helps in successful dissemination of knowledge. The FAO initiated Farmer Managed Ground Water System project in A.P., effectively used the ground water measuring equipment to empower the local community understand the criticality of water and helped them formulate responsible action plan at community levels (<http://www.apfamgs.org/>).

V. Kurian Baby, Tsunami Rehabilitation Programme, Trivandrum, Kerala

I have been directly associated with the wash sector for almost a decade mainly in the areas of empowering and building stakeholder capacities, networking about 65 NGOs, 1500 communities and about 100 Grama Panchayats.

Any effort to empower and build capacities **shall be inclusive** taking all key stakeholders on board, viz., political leadership and opinion makers, communities, NGOs/Civil Society, PRIs, service providers and more importantly the capacity building institutions. Any sector professional would concur with the fact that the level of **capacities of our capacity building institutions** in general are abysmally low, which needs priority focus. In a country like India, it would be always feasible to network such institutions and build professionalism for cascading results and building institutional capacities at the grass roots level. As decentralization is the key in watsan service delivery, improving sector performance sans **institutional capacity building of the PRIs** would turn out to be an enigma. One of the major reasons for the slow pace of scaling up is targetism and impatience. Even donor-supported programmes after the romance and honeymoon phase suffer from this constraint, may be on account of the compulsions of disbursement. **Capacity building is investment in education and human capital** and the money invested would reap many fold results if perused well. Creating excellence is the key to ensure sustainability, which in turn has great potential of multiplication on its strength.

Effort on capacity building should be to the extent possible to **provide hands on opportunities** to plan, implement and manage. **Community contracting**, sincerely followed is the richest capacity-building tool for community organizations and PRIs. Fundamental to capacity building is **informed choices**. Under a scenario of asymmetric information, stakeholder participation will be skewed. Ideally, all the participating households/stakeholders to be brought to the threshold awareness level (as seen in the chart) to achieve optimality and sustainability, though very difficult to achieve.



However, awareness of this constraint would enable sector professionals to work out strategies for better outcomes. Another critical constraint is the timing factor. Building capacities with out building opportunities to practice at least with in a reasonable time frame would not be much productive.

Arun Jindal, Society for Sustainable Development, Karauli, Rajasthan

I fully agree with you that the Water and Environmental Sanitation sector requires capacity building initiatives at all levels. Issues such as fast depletion of ground water, water quality issues, poor sanitation coverage, poor focus on hygiene, problems in dealing in solid and liquid waste, fast urbanisation, emerging issues due to climate change etc., demand adequate human resources with necessary capacity, but this aspect is not being given priority because users are not so aware about the importance of these issues. It is also important that the younger generation should also be competent enough to deal with these issues. The institute should have programs on awareness raising capacities of the campaigner. The programs of distance education should also start to fulfil need of the knowledge worker in WatSan Sectors.

Sujatha Kothari, Development Consultant, West Bengal

Thank you for the query. Though I am not aware of the Institute, you mention and I am not so much into these issues at the moment, I may not do justice to your query. Nevertheless, here are some issues for consideration on capacity building, though more of it relates to urban areas rather than the region.

- There is a hardware and a software component. These two need to be addressed simultaneously for better impact. However, it depends on who is addressing the issue and therefore one is given precedence over the other.
- Awareness about the issues you have mentioned need to be taken up in a campaign mode as well as discussed as part of educational curriculum for young people. Consciousness about these from an early age would definitely help. But getting them involved enmasse (is that what you mean) –I am not too certain how that is envisaged.
- We used to run a centre on Urban Management at ATI in West Bengal. As part of this, we had an integrated course on urban planning and management beginning from area appraisal, area planning to planning for urban services including water supply and sanitation. It was meant for the urban local bodies in West Bengal. The Overseers/Sub-assistant engineers including the local councilor involved

were called for orientation and integrated planning. It was a good experience as both the decision makers and the technical persons were better able to appreciate each others concerns and its impact on the planning process. But in smaller municipalities it is the PHED which is responsible for water supply provision and it makes it difficult for the ULB to takeover and manage it.

- There were regional issues where panchayats were on the border of the ULBs and a joint planning exercise was required.
- NGOs / CBOs/ private providers are important target groups besides the service providers
- Impact of water supply and sanitation goes beyond the realm of planning and implementation. From the users perspective, there is an impact on health due to poor watsan facilities wherein step the departments like social welfare and child development/health and family welfare/Panchayat and rural development etc. There needs joint programming, monitoring for better outcomes.
- Need to collaborate with other agencies involved in such work is imperative for upscaling.
- The area is too vast and would require a comprehensive strategy beginning with a situational analysis to identify issues/problems/prioritize and take action

Ramney Koul, Consultant, New Delhi

Thank you for this specific query, which is an interesting idea and has received some valuable thoughts from other members. I apologize for not having responded earlier as I had been busy and away with my work.

I have shared my thoughts that may sum up an overview and basically serves as the lead blueprint in planning the capacity building project. Based on my 30 year experience in implementing public health programs in infectious diseases, epidemiological studies and environmental health (water, air, agriculture and food safety), I have practically evolved a capacity building methodology with proven results.

My experience within US, Zambia, and India has given me a perspective on capacity building that more than anything needs a realistic plan, implementation strategy and evaluation technique to meet quantifiable objective. Please find in the below link a 3 page cursory perspective (my full response) on where one can begin and how to proceed.

Perspective on Capacity Building in Implementing Rural Sanitary Scheme

<http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/environment/cr/res18100701.doc> (Size: 37 KB)

I can be available for consultation with proper lead-time. Please feel free to contact me for any questions that you may have.

It is a pleasure to participate in this discussion. I hope I can be of some help to this great cause and other issues under public health program management.

Raj Kumar Daw

Kalimuthu's mail on a WASH Institute has got me back to something that I have thought about, on and off, for many years. I have worked in the sector now about 35 years and a good part of that was, in today's jargon, in capacity building. Earlier, when activities were defined a little more simply and even HR was not on the vocabulary, we called it training.

In the early 1980s, in AFARM Pune, some of us had toyed around with the idea of a "Water Institute". The idea was get the dead and dying drilling rigs together, rebuild them, as we Indians are very capable of, take large government contracts like a regular business house with all the wrinkles that we NGOs fondly despised (that would take care of our self-sustainability question, another of those favourite themes in those days) and use the profits and the contracts to train people in the water supply sector

(sanitation did not exist as a problem then on the vocabulary). A very simple-simplistic model. Fortunately, perhaps, it never took off.

When examining the needs for modern-day capacity building in the sector, perhaps one should look at the models of IRC or WEDC. My guess is that these institutions did start with fuzzy altruistic thoughts but grew to what they are because the donor community invested in a future market – the market of capacity building. And capacity building was marketed to their clients like a commercial venture. Have you seen their prices? Like five star hotels! Perhaps if a piece of the pie was available in the stock market, some Indian would have bought into it.

Again, coming back to capacity building needs, one needs to ask the questions: Do drillers need training now? Do hand pump mechanics need to know how to install or repair handpumps now? Do Sanitary Mart dealers need to understand how to cast slabs and rings now? Is it still necessary to ask 'willingness to pay' question? Do we still have some doubts that women can not repair pumps, make cement blocks, run self-help groups, or take charge of anything that they want to? Is the development sector now only for radicals and bright young crackpots, or has IRMA been on to a good thing for years? Or do implementing agencies need to be held accountable for taking short-cuts in drilling depth, falsifying yields, saving on platform or slab cement, or as Joe Madiath put it very correctly some time back on this forum, is poor quality is good enough for poor people?

I do not believe that capacity building for drilling, pump installation, community mobilization, young managers and whatever else one can think up will have a major impact unless there is institutional responsibility for services (not) delivered. If we have not learnt how to drill wells or install handpumps after claiming that India has 3.2 million handpumps, then further capacity building can only be a band-aid to a more fundamental wound. One should not lose sight of the fact that the country was claiming about 96% rural coverage with drinking water in 2003-04. By 2006, this figure had fallen to 60% in some states. Did capacity building go in reverse gear? Or does acceptance of a drop on coverage mean more wells to be drilled and the consequent-subsequent lucrative spin-offs? The answer is quite simple.

I have a photograph of a street a village in Rajasthan. It shows eight hand pumps in a row, all within a stretch of about 100 m. six pump handles are down and the platforms are dry. Two platforms are wet. I have water source inventories of a number of villages in Nalgonda, where generations of hand pumps have been installed over 25 or more years, all on high fluoride wells. The construction of tanks and laying of pipelines first in piped water supply systems, without finding a source is not unheard of.

Capacity building has its place, but I cannot to get excited about it any longer. Something much more drastic is needed to turn the world's largest RWSS programme around. And that is not easy to hide from.

[S. C. Jain](#), AFPRO, New Delhi

Considering the changing context where community centre programs are being promoted in water supply and sanitation sector, the initiative to set up WASH institute indeed a good initiative. The program promotion approach demands support services at grassroots level to meet the requirement of water supply and sanitation facilities. The need of having such services at the community level would require further impetus from the agencies those are already involve in WATSAN program and also need more such agencies/individuals to contribute in the sector.

The trained manpower is required at grassroots who could relate with the community at local level and work for creating the awareness on the issues related to water supply and sanitation and also facilitate the process for identification of options, decision making for selection of appropriate solution. Capacity at community is required to engage the services of agencies, procurement, supervision of work during implementation and understand the complexity of operation and maintenance aspects of water supply and sanitation facilities. Therefore the capacity building would be required for enhancing the knowledge

on technical as well as social aspects and also skill to adopt participatory methodology to facilitate community level initiatives.

As you are aware AFPRO is involve in extending services and organizing 'On the job course for enhancing the capacities of NGOs, CBOs and other services providers at community level for various interventions under water supply and sanitation programs. These experiences suggest that the capacity building requires combination of input on subject, space for practice and guided reflection sessions to carry forward learning. Hence balance of theory, practice and reflection session is required in designing the capacity building modules.

While working as capacity building organization under sector reform project in Maharashtra it has been experienced that, there is large gap in the desired role and functions of local bodies and their capacity to deliver such responsibilities. The capacity of service providers, like NGOs, training organisations and government agencies, to adopt demand driven, community centre approach for creating water supply and sanitation facilities in rural areas, are also limited to meet the increasing demand of capacity building input.

The experiences also suggest that, we need to develop linkages as part of capacity building efforts with the agencies like NGOs, resource support organisations, research organisations, training and capacity building organisations. This approach would strengthen the initiatives for mobilising competencies to meet the challenge of capacity building requirements in the sector.

[Shashidharan Enarth](#), Development Support Centre, Ahmadabad

I apologize for the late response. Hope the ideas in this note are of some use.

We at Development Support Centre in Ahmadabad have been struggling with the content and delivery of capacity building initiatives for quite a while now. I will share the issues that have emerged and what appears to be a trend as well as some of the workable approaches to improve the impact of capacity building initiatives.

The first challenge is in the very understanding of what capacities we are trying to build. In most cases, the focus is on enhancing knowledge levels on subjects such as technology, accounting, efficiency improvement etc., things that can be measured, compared and predictable. They are very important and, thankfully, easy to deliver in relative terms. Much is made out of the ability of water users' ability to be water managers. To me this is simply logical, if they have not shown management skills, it is not because of their inadequacy in a generic way. It is only because they have always been the passive recipients of services. By extolling the virtues of user-managers (statements like "with training, EVEN women and rural folks can be good intelligent managers") we betray the condescending attitude behind it. It is only logical for resource-users to be better resource managers. This fact must be established right in the beginning of a capacity-building program. In doing so, the participants get an opportunity to examine the reasons why resource users have been marginalized all along --- things like the top down nature of public agencies, the perils of highly subsidized services, the mystification of technologies by engineers/administrators, the vested interests that dictate access to resources etc. I think, once we get the minimum on technologies, and management aspects (what I call "product" issues) covered, we can then move on to understanding the "process" issues.

This is, to my mind, the real challenge. How do we handle process/political matters? Should we dig into uncomfortable historical issues mentioned above, and rattle a few powerful folks? Or do we pretend that they are history and therefore look ahead only? There are convincing arguments for both approaches. A discussion is essential. It will then lead to issues such as equity and accountability. That will in turn force us to discuss mechanisms for transparency. All three of them further irritate and threaten established power-centres in the village. It will bring out the perils of decentralization. In a way, it de-glamorizes

decentralization and alerts us to the pit-falls and limitations. They are all serious capacity building issues. Unless they are listed and dealt with in a planned manner, they always fall between the cracks. It is an uncomfortable and difficult task. To manoeuvre around potential saboteurs, we have to be innovative in the content and methods of delivery. It is difficult, but that cannot be a reason to not do it. I have analyzed hundreds of training programs and have discovered that over 95% of them prefer to deal with the first category of the subjects. The results too are there for everyone to see. The physical structures are notably better than when done by public agencies. Initially, they are also more equitable due to the catalyzing effect of the NGO or support agency. Gradually, inequities creep in, maintenance suffers, corruption increases and the project slowly degenerates. Sustainability is the casualty.

The third challenge for capacity building is to make institutions dynamic and learning. In other words, they must evolve learning-mechanisms that feed into the change-process. When and what should trigger a change in the way the institution operates. We all accept that change is inevitable, so how can water-users cope with changing environment? What are the routinized feed-back loops that will catch the dysfunctions? How can we prevent the locus of change making from moving out of the users' hands to an external agency (as is rampant right now)?

These issues are nothing but topics of capacity building programs. They can be the corner stones for the curriculum of formal "training" sessions. Much as it is out-of-fashion, I see an amazing proportion of capacity building initiatives in the form of formal classroom sessions. If that is so, we should be bold with the contents and formats for discussion in these classroom sessions.

I wish I could organize this better to make it more coherent. But, I realize that it will only delay my communication. I will be very happy to expand or clarify or revise my opinion if I get some feedback.

S. Damodaran, WaterPartners International India Liaison Office, Tiruchirappalli (response 2)

Capacity building Initiatives is the need of the hour where many NGOs working in the field of water and sanitation lack expertise on imparting hygiene education and strategies for watsan project implementation. If you estimate the number of NGOs participation over the past one year period in the solution exchange forum, you could rarely come across experience sharing, queries from NGOs who are the actual field implementation agencies for water and sanitation. There have been many contributions so far made from intellectuals, high officials, technocrats, experts working at the top level of the management, institute, donor agency or research organisations/universities.

I therefore feel the need for grassroots - level experiences to be shared by project implementing organisations. Here, we need to think over whether there are enough NGOs available for working in the field of water and sanitation or is there a scarcity of watsan NGOs? Even, the NGOs doing good work in this field either have no time to share their expertise and experiences or lack of documentation skills to disseminate their wealth of knowledge to others.

With the above backdrop, I would like to reinstate here there is a need for setting up a national-level WASH Initiative so that many NGOs even though they may hesitate at the beginning to enter into the water sector, will come forward to work in the field if they are provided necessary capacity building. This will encourage them to work in the field with much courage and vigor. The other important point I must share here is that there are only few NGOs coming forward to work for water and sanitation and willing to take up the challenges in this field, but these NGOs either have no funding sources to continue their work or are denied funding. We are all talking about the MDG goal and achieving the targets i.e. halving the proportion of people without having access to water and sanitation by the end of 2015. But, the biggest question is that whether sufficient funds are available to these NGOs though they are committed and experienced NGOs. I come across many NGOs who are really experts in the field of water and sanitation but struggling to get funding support for their work.

What I would like to say out of my own experiences in the field of water and sanitation for more than 20 years, we need to link the agencies involved in the water and sanitation sector to different players like NGOs, donor agencies, research organisations, training and capacity building organisations. By doing this, no one should think that they are not supported for their work. It may be a funding source, training need or research aspect.

The WASH Institute should bridge all these gaps in its work so that the NGOs who really needed information, training facilities are supported. One such training institution, I would like to mention here the National Institute of Water and Sanitation (NIWAS), established by the NGO Gramalaya in Tiruchirappalli at its rural training centre. The institute is supported by Arghyam, Bangalore and WaterPartners International, USA where a building for conducting training with dormitory facilities, library, IEC materials on water and sanitation, internet facilities to browse information on water sector are provided.

This training centre currently attracts local women self-help groups to get trained in water quality monitoring, toilet technology, hygiene education. The PRI members like the elected panchayat presidents, local cement fabricators are getting training from the Institute. The toilet technology centre established at the training centre giving the participants/trainees to get first hand information on the different toilet options to suit the local community needs. Visitors to this training institution include representatives from international organisations, government officials, donor agencies, NGOs/MFIs, national and international research organisations.

The training institute should be located in a place easily accessible where models for different toilet technology can be made available so that the trainees not only get trained theoretically but also they could see the different toilet models, water conservation works, water quality monitoring by the communities etc., It cannot be the lab to land process instead it should be land to lab where the participants learnt something from their training and think over expanding or exploring for their own region implementation.

By locating the training institution, the participants/visitors should be able to see different models near the water logging area the eco-san models, dry areas the twin pit or single pit toilets, dry toilets, toilets for coastal region, water and sanitation facilities for the schools including child friendly toilets.

[Prakash Nayak](#), Tata-Dhan Academy, Madurai, Tamil Nadu

I apologize for the late response. Hope the ideas in this note are of some use.

Let's discuss what happens in water management in informal sector. Plumbing profession is one such sector, which demands not only high precision it requires high dedication and creativity, but at the same time, so far it is kept out of the preview of Water & Sanitation Sector. In this sector, there is no regular flow of income and return, but the barefoot water engineers (plumbers) strives to sustain their livelihood for last so many years.

Though they work in unorganized sector, there is hardly any "capacity building activities" targeted towards the community. Even the sector reform initiative targeted to water and sanitation sector has completely forgotten strength and usefulness of plumbers partly because of the complex nature of their work, migration and execution unevenly spread across the country.

As all of you must be aware that Orissa is home to roughly 10 lakhs plumbers who usually work out side the state and even India. Mostly uneducated, unskilled and economically poor, these people leave their homes to other states in search of work .But unlike migrant labourers, the youths learn the basics from senior plumbers and start plumbing as a career. Initial days are very rosy as there is little liability. But as time passes they face uncertainty and marginalization in the society. They learn the basics of water

management under sheer poverty and of course "mentored" by the seniors. For them capacity building is synonym with income generation, because the very word capacity building

On the contrary, in the formal sector, the service providers, officials and decision makers are in no way trained like the former. How many people in the formal sector have really prioritized the Water & Sanitation problem into their personal as well as professional agenda?

Coming to the formal sector, if we examine, there is no clear-cut incentivisation/ punishment of the sector. If a technician/officer commits any mistake, he/she is not properly responded by the system. That makes the whole system immune to the market dynamics. This could be one example out of hundreds that have already crippled the system.

In last July, 2006, I had the opportunity to undergo 2-week ToT on Swajaldhara & Total Sanitation Programme at Uttaranchal Academy of Administration, Nainital. With due respect to the organiser and the faculty members, I have nothing to say on the content on the programme. Technically, it covered all aspects of Swajaldhara & Total Sanitation Programme. Like me there were many Engineers, Administrators Elected Representatives and others those who have attended the course that run round the year. I did not find empowered /motivated by the content and there were few areas where I could relate to the ground situation on Water & Sanitation.

Under the broad framework "WASH Institute", I expect you all to capture both non-formal and formal courses on "Water and Environmental Sanitation" through partnership with community based, state and central training /academic institutions. All my best wishes for the initiative.

Terry Thomas, SMEC India Pvt. Ltd., Bhopal

Intricacies linked with capacity building are numerous. Let us examine a bit-

At times capacity building is mostly (rather) equated as "formalised training". This needs to be demystified in future programs. Added to Dr. Baby Kurien's statement it should be viewed as investment in human capital, capacity building should equally thrust on two specific elements –

1. Improved systems and tools to apply
2. Process of capacity building, *which include synthesis and delivery in a given environment*

Systems and Tools to apply (RWH, Sanitation, GWR etc) are very much case specific and no two water/ sanitation issues are ever found similar. Hence, "one size fits for all" is not the answer, though many know, but "compulsions and a series of limitations" makes to repeat the same old efforts. Hence, any effort on capacity building needs to examine which systems and tools are more likely to function in the proposed area/s. This needs innovative thought/s to be applied, else major chunk of the problem zones gets excluded.

In my experience capacity building in water and sanitation is very much case specific, if sustainability is to be counted along with.

Secondly, whose capacity counts? The user, regulator or promoter. No capacity building reaches its goal unless the largest and weakest stakeholder (user themselves) is directly involved throughout. This calls for active involvement of user group/ user group representative in the capacity building process.

Combining the above, a system thinking based capacity building is the need, which any future activities may examine.

Such **Capacity Building** should involve **facilitating the problem (facing) communities to collectively undertake an area specific local initiative / action research among themselves, build an innovative outcome(including demystification) and capacitate other stakeholders involved, which form the very essence of "knowledge based participation"**.

Under the World Bank-Development Marketplace 2004, we had the opportunity to practically execute and refine this model, towards rejuvenating fresh water resources in coastal areas of Kerala state and developed a community practice called "**Backwashing**" (Injection of rainwater directly into homestead wells and ponds to arrest saline water intrusion). Three years down the line, the communities themselves are now replicating the same and the facilitators returned to back seat. Here, communities were just facilitated to get involved in assessing factors causing depletion of local water resources, supported to experiment alternate options, produce initial (neo) results, which were subjected to scientific validations and eventually refined the practice. Thus, the new knowledge acquired brought about changes in attitude and skills, and ownership by community themselves.

To summarise "**Recharging community knowledge base ignites right capacity building**"

Kulwant Singh, Water for Asian Cities Programme, UN-HABITAT, New Delhi

Capacity Building Initiatives in the Provision and Management of Water and Sanitation (watsan) facilities go beyond simple training of local authorities, water and sanitation utilities and communities. UN-HABITAT has been involved in the capacity building of various stakeholders including building the capacity of Capacity Building Institutions themselves. There has been variety of initiatives including development of Capacity Building Hubs and Policy support for enhanced local capacities. Some of the main objectives have been to share knowledge about the local actions/best practices in water and sanitation, which are successfully implemented in various countries of the region and provide support to the policy makers in promoting local actions. The mechanisms have also been focussing on political mobilisation to facilitate institutional, organisational and legal reforms as part of the process of capacity building. As regards training at community levels. It is the local NGOs, which have been involved so intimately to create awareness, develop skills and change the attitudes. Our experience in social marketing of sanitation has been that communities are most receptive and responsive if the messages are clear.

Arunabha Majumder, Jadavpur University, Kolkata

I was associated with International Training Network (ITN) in early 90s. At AIHPH we developed training modules on different issues of water and sanitation. World Bank also provided training materials. In India key institutes were set up to develop manpower in PHED, Panchayati Raj Institutions and NGOs.

Later RGNDWM initiated Indian Training Network and HRD cells were set up in PHED. Some research and educational Institutes including AIHPH were also involved in the program. Today CCDUs have set for capacity building in Watsan sector.

Training must target development of trainers. In water quality monitoring and surveillance program we have proposed Cascading Training Program. Firstly District Level Key Trainers(DLKT) will be trained. DLKTs will next train Block Level Key Trainers (BLKT). BLKTs will then train Grass Root Workers. Developments of training modules are important. It must be simple and appropriate. Drama, magic shows, games are good to attract villagers. Wall writing may be attractive.

Target oriented training modules are to be developed. Trainers must have field experience. They have to talk about the field; what to do and what not to do.

[Srinivasan Iyer](#), UNDP, New Delhi*

I agree with [Shashi](#).

Most training courses are at best technocratic. Political processes are ignored, or referred to in passing. Which is not appropriate since the 'trainees' are located within political structures and processes which significantly influence the domain (resource use, resource allocation...) addressed by the training courses.

Further, there is need to include the ecological dimension in training courses. Most interventions have significant ecological footprints. Some of this is substantially known (pollution, soil erosion, biodiversity, displacement of people), though not often dealt with. Other aspects are barely understood (GM technology, groundwater depletion, climate change). Such footprints are often ignored if they are external to the participating community. This then becomes political and as Shashi says, is a 'real challenge'. Sorry for the late response.

[Hirenkumar Rajendrabhai Patel](#), Tribal Development Department, Government of Gujarat, Ahmadabad*

As per my experience in Gujarat, I would like to suggest few points with regard to capacity building. Very first thing we should consider is the participatory method for capacity building.

Past experience and Focus area and Topic in Capacity Building:

1. For Drinking Water and Sanitation there should not a one size to fit for all for we should impart training of PRA, which is more important for the community organizer of NGOs and CBOs.
2. Another thing is to facilitate the village action plan because most of them are not available for what action should be taken to address the drinking water and sanitation problem of particular village
3. Basics of source identification (not technical) but some tips, due to this NGOs or CBOs member are able to convince community members regarding local source development, source identification.

Main Key constraint while imparting training is lack of proper document or case study on Drinking Water and Sanitation issue. We have to develop certain case studies, which will cover subject such as Decentralization, Gender Mainstreaming, Community Participation and Equal Distribution, Water Quality etc.

For the institutional collaboration, we should develop linkages with National level institutions such as Rajiv Gandhi National Drinking Water Mission, CSE, WOTR and regional level institution such as WASMO, GJTI and People learning Centre in Gujarat or any other institution in other states.

We should consider above points while drawing the capacity building program for drinking water and sanitation.

[Susan Sharma](#), Wildbytes.tv, Gurgaon*

It is refreshing to read Mr. Nayak's comments. We need to promote "doers," empowering the plumbers, the grassroots workers who manage and rectify faults in our water lifelines is an excellent idea. Hope the community can take this up on a serious note.

[Arvind Singh](#), National Rural Drinking Water Quality Monitoring and Surveillance Programme, New Delhi*

Currently I am associated with UNICEF and working as a Capacity Building Specialist for National Rural Drinking Water Quality Monitoring & Surveillance Programme. As per the programme guidelines, the objective is to train five people from each Gram Panchayat and with their support the community will be able to test the water quality (Bacteriological & Chemical) of all drinking water sources and Sanitary survey of the same.

Providing only training without any long term support, is very difficult for the community at grass roots level to do regular water testing of all the drinking water sources of GP. Another difficulty is how to ensure the participation of grass root workers of each GP those who are really responsible to test all the water sources after trained on water quality aspects. State like Uttar Pradesh where we have 52002 GPs and as per program guidelines if we have to train 6 people from each GP is very big task to achieve within a short period of one year.

Another important thing under training is the content of the training programme; it must be very simple with demonstration particularly on subjects related to usage of field test kits for water quality and Sanitary Survey of all drinking water sources.

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: Capacity Building Initiatives in WatSan - Experiences. Additional Reply."

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