

„Making participation count“

Participatory Rural Assessment and Participatory Wealth Ranking

Church World Service – Cambodia

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Description of the practice:

Name of the practice:

“Making participation count” - Participatory rural assessment and Participatory Wealth Ranking
(Water and Sanitation Cooperation Project)

Aim of the practice:

To expand the coverage of improved water supply and sanitation facilities to underserved populations of Svay Rieng province and to improve health and hygiene practices related to water borne and sanitation diseases.

Target group(s):

Poorest and poor households including households headed by women, people with disabilities, orphans, older people, and workers in the informal economy.

Partners involved:

1. At the community level:
 - Community Based Organizations: Water and Sanitation User Groups (WSUG), Village Development Committees (VDC), Pagodas
 - Village Authorities: Village Chiefs and Committees
2. At the sub-national level:
 - Commune Councils and authorities, Commune Facilitators, District Authorities, Provincial Departments of Rural Development

Duration of practice:

4 years (2005-2009)

Financing (short/medium/long term):

AusAID through Act for Peace

Brief outline of the practice:

CWS Cambodia's Water and Sanitation Cooperation Project is the only project in the area which is based on the practical cooperation with the Provincial Department of Rural Development (PDRD) to promote low cost technology expertise and to improve the local capacity of communities to manage their own water and sanitation needs. It links community based organizations, village and commune authorities as well as staff from the local authorities. The project uses a local capacities for peace¹ (Do no Harm) framework which makes CWS and its programming a value and peace based practice.

Establishment of Village Based Capacity for WatSan

CWS Cambodia, in cooperation with technical staff from the local authorities, provided a number of trainings for Water and Sanitation User Groups (WSUG²), Village Chief as well as Commune Councilors on low cost latrine, wells, bio-sand water filter (bio-sand water purifier) constructions, clean water use, sanitation and hygiene practices, community organizing, leading and managing rural organization, proposal writing and local capacities for peace building.

Public awareness raising on clean water use, sanitation and hygiene practices was a central component of the programme targeting all village people. To complement this, household visits and coaching were conducted by staff of CWS, PDRD and the WSUG.

Community Led Planning and Implementation

The Water and Sanitation User Groups are responsible for undertaking their village needs in term of WatSan, including selection of beneficiaries from the poor and poorest households. The groups in coordination with village and commune authorities translate the needs into a village plan. They are responsible for writing proposals addressing the prioritized needs of communities and submitting them to CWS Cambodia through the Commune Development Facilitators (CDF) who are local volunteers who receive a minimum stipend from CWS.

CWS in cooperation with the local authorities train the groups and communities to construct and upgrade low cost latrines, open wells, and bio-sand water filters. The drilling of wells is undertaken by local constructors selected in a bidding process. All are trained to monitor the constructions of the private constructor to ensure quality standards are met.

CWS encourages and capacitates the community to advocate for their own water and sanitation needs in the monthly Commune Council and Village Chief meetings.

¹ The Local Capacities for Peace approach is drawn from the 'Do no Harm' concept and stresses the need for staff and key WatSan stakeholders to consider relationships within the communities during WatSan activities that are being introduced and implemented and to avoid potentially dividing issues and processes during their engagement with communities.

² The WSUG, a village based volunteer organization with 5 members, is elected by villagers in a process facilitated by CWS and PDRD.

1. How does the practice meet the criterion of availability?

Explanatory note: Availability

Availability refers to sufficient quantities, reliability and the continuity of supply. Water must be continuously available in a sufficient quantity for meeting personal and domestic requirements of drinking and personal hygiene as well as further personal and domestic uses such as cooking and food preparation, dish and laundry washing and cleaning. Individual requirements for water consumption vary, for instance due to level of activity, personal and health conditions or climatic and geographic conditions. There must also exist sufficient number of sanitation facilities (with associated services) within, or in the immediate vicinity, of each household, health or educational institution, public institution and place, and the workplace. There must be a sufficient number of sanitation facilities to ensure that waiting times are not unreasonably long.

Answer:

The project has served at least 3,500 households in 56 villages. The water facilities provided include drilled wells with hand pumps, concrete ring wells and bio-sand water filters³. A drill well produces water at an average rate of 3.5m³ per hour in the rainy season and around 1-2m³ per hour in the dry season. It can supply enough water for the households in both seasons.

The average village consists of around 120 households. Each village has about eight wells constructed on average. The water provided is generally sufficient in terms of quantity, quality and continuity of supply for personal and domestic use by the target communities, as well as for small to medium scale vegetable cultivation.

In total, 453 hand pump wells, 493 latrines, and 2,440 bio-sand water filters have been constructed.

2. How does the practice meet the criterion of accessibility?

Explanatory note: Accessibility

Sanitation and water facilities must be physically accessible for everyone within, or in the immediate vicinity, of each household, health or educational institution, public institution and the workplace. The distance to the water source has been found to have a strong impact on the quantity of water collected. The amount of water collected will vary depending on the terrain, the capacity of the person collecting the water (children, older people, and persons with disabilities may take longer), and other factors. There must be a sufficient number of sanitation and water facilities with associated services to ensure that collection and waiting times are not unreasonably long. Physical accessibility to sanitation facilities must be reliable at day and night, ideally within the home, including for people with special needs. The location of public sanitation and water facilities must ensure minimal risks to the physical security of users.

Answer:

Bio-sand water filters and latrines are for household use. However, the location is negotiated so that others, including children (when walking or riding to and from school) and neighbors, may also easily access to it. Concrete ring wells and hand pump wells were provided for a group of households. According to the project guidelines, a well has to be used by 3-5 or more nearby households. The distance of the furthest one should not exceed 200m. The household for which the well is installed ensures other people's accessibility.

Ramps for wheelchair access are added to latrine constructions where there are people with disabilities. The standard design of the latrines is suitable for boys and girls, as well as for older people. Hand pump wells can also be used by children (starting around the age of thirteen) as it is not necessary to push and pull very hard to pump the water.

Through the local capacities for peace framework, CWS had learned that not only the targeted poor and poorest households of the village need clean water and improved sanitation, but also the medium

³ The Biosand filter, a life-long lasting water treatment, is an innovation on traditional slow sand water filters, specifically designed for intermittent or household use. The filter can be produced locally anywhere in the world because it is built using materials that are readily available. (Cambodia) One filter cost from USD8-12 for construction material and it is easily to be installed by men and women alike. (see more on www.cawst.org/en/themes/biosand-filter)

and the better off households. Before the project, most of the better off households were not informed about the advantages and necessity of improving their water and sanitation facilities nor of available affordable technologies.

CWS Cambodia has developed guidelines to promote equal and equitable access to WatSan facilities ensuring that there is no discrimination between rich and poor. Financial and in kind contributions by households are based on detailed participatory assessment, including wealth ranking (see below).

3. How does the practice meet the criterion of affordability?

Explanatory note: Affordability

Access to sanitation and water facilities and services must be accessible at a price that is affordable for all people. Paying for services, including construction, cleaning, emptying and maintenance of facilities, as well as treatment and disposal of faecal matter, must not limit people’s capacity to acquire other basic goods and services, including food, housing, health and education guaranteed by other human rights. Accordingly, affordability can be estimated by considering the financial means that have to be reserved for the fulfilment of other basic needs and purposes and the means that are available to pay for water and sanitation services.

Charges for services can vary according to type of connection and household income as long as they are affordable. Only for those who are genuinely unable to pay for sanitation and water through their own means, the State is obliged to ensure the provision of services free of charge (e.g. through social tariffs or cross-subsidies). When water disconnections due to inability to pay are carried out, it must be ensured that individuals still have at least access to minimum essential levels of water. Likewise, when water-borne sanitation is used, water disconnections must not result in denying access to sanitation.

Answer:

CWS Cambodia respects the right to water of the rural remote villagers. However, in order to stimulate beneficiary and community ownership, as well as to maximize the project’s output, the project requires the following contribution from beneficiaries.

| Category/Facility | Bio-sand filter | Hand Pump Well | Latrine |
|--------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|---|
| Poorest household | USD 0.00 + labor | Aprox USD 77 (20%) | Upper structure + Labor |
| Poor household | USD 1.00 + labor | Aprox USD 116 (30%) | Upper structure + Labor + material (aprox USD 24) |
| Medium poor household | USD 2.00 + labor | | |
| Medium household | USD 4.00 + labor | Aprox USD 232 (60%) | Upper structure + Labor + material (aprox USD59) |

The contribution was discussed carefully with the beneficiary in a participatory way to find out an affordable cost for different vulnerability characteristics.

School latrines, wells and bio-sand filters for public locations, such as schools, pagodas, health centers and commune offices were granted without any requirement for contribution. However, the amount has been limited except for schools, where the calculation of the user and the facility supply capacity matches each other.

4. How does the practice meet the criterion of quality/safety?

Explanatory note: Quality/Safety

Sanitation facilities must be hygienically safe to use, which means that they must effectively prevent human, animal and insect contact with human excreta. They must also be technically safe and take into account the safety needs of peoples with disabilities, as well as of children. Sanitation facilities must further ensure access to safe water and soap for hand-washing. They must allow for anal and genital cleansing as well as menstrual hygiene, and provide mechanisms for the hygienic disposal of sanitary towels, tampons and other menstrual products. Regular maintenance and cleaning (such as emptying of pits or other places that collect human excreta) are essential for ensuring the sustainability of sanitation facilities and continued access. Manual emptying of pit latrines is considered to be unsafe and should be avoided.

Water must be of such a quality that it does not pose a threat to human health. Transmission of water-borne diseases via contaminated water must be avoided.

Answer:

- Hand pump wells: All the constructed hand pump wells were tested by the local authorities using the most reliable water testing kit before clearing the well for use.
- Bio-sand water filter: The water filters were built in compliance with the recommendations and guidelines of the Center for Affordable Water and Sanitation Technologies (CAWST) based in Canada. Sample water testing was done and the results were shown and explained to the community people, beneficiaries as well as local authority.
- Latrine: The latrines were built according to a standard agreed among CWS Cambodia and PDRD, as well as through a consultative process with beneficiaries before construction. The construction ensures security especially for girls and women. Where people with disabilities need to access the facilities, wheelchair ramps are constructed.

In addition to the water testing after construction (wells) and sample testing (bio-sand water filters), CWS Cambodia has provided education for the beneficiaries on how to use water and bio-sand filter properly and on the principles of good sanitation and hygiene practices.

Moreover, the Water and Sanitation Groups has visited the beneficiary households to monitor the use of each facility and provided immediate feedback and advise to improve the usage of the facility. CWS staff and PDRD have also conducted regular spot check visits.

CWS Cambodia is considering to further improve the quality and safety assurance by either opening a suitable water testing laboratory or a mobile laboratory. This would make it possible to monitor and certify the water quality on a regular basis.

5. How does the practice meet the criterion of acceptability?

Explanatory note: Acceptability

Water and sanitation facilities and services must be culturally and socially acceptable. Depending on the culture, acceptability can often require privacy, as well as separate facilities for women and men in public places, and for girls and boys in schools. Facilities will need to accommodate common hygiene practices in specific cultures, such as for anal and genital cleansing. And women's toilets need to accommodate menstruation needs.

In regard to water, apart from safety, water should also be of an acceptable colour, odour and taste. These features indirectly link to water safety as they encourage the consumption from safe sources instead of sources that might provide water that is of a more acceptable taste or colour, but of unsafe quality.

Answer:

CWS Cambodia is a value and peace based INGO which respects the culture of the respective community by engaging in a process of consultation with the members of the community as well as the local authorities.

Through the community led total sanitation approach, adopted by the Ministry of Rural Development, various low cost designs of the latrine were introduced to all the communities' members, letting them choose the design affordable to them. The recommended designs suggested a low cost construction,

which ensures privacy and convenience but does not require much effort for maintenance. Wells were constructed by using materials (i.e. for the pump head) similar to the ones used in the village or the nearby villages.

It was difficult at first to convince people that the bio-sand water filters produce safe drinking water. However, when people saw the quality of the filtered water, they became interested and the demand for this water treatment technology rose significantly from the first year of the project implementation to the second year.

6. How does the practice ensure non-discrimination?

Explanatory note: Non-discrimination

Non-discrimination is central to human rights. Discrimination on prohibited grounds including race, colour, sex, age, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, physical or mental disability, health status or any other civil, political, social or other status must be avoided, both in law and in practice.

In order to address existing discrimination, positive targeted measures may have to be adopted. In this regard, human rights require a focus on the most marginalized and vulnerable to exclusion and discrimination. Individuals and groups that have been identified as potentially vulnerable or marginalized include: women, children, inhabitants of (remote) rural and deprived urban areas as well as other people living in poverty, refugees and IDPs, minority groups, indigenous groups, nomadic and traveller communities, elderly people, persons living with disabilities, persons living with HIV/AIDS or affected by other health conditions, people living in water scarce-regions and sanitation workers amongst others.

Answer:

By using the local capacities for peace approach (Do no Harm), consultations with the communities were conducted in which most of the community members, the WSUG and local authority were involved.

Participatory Wealth Ranking has been part of the process to identify potential beneficiaries of CWS's WatSan facility input. All the participants in the meeting voted and ranked the most vulnerable groups and their priority needs (latrine, bio-sand filter or well or in exceptional cases who would have two items in the same year of project implementation). Everyone is in need; however, the members of the community are happy with the decisions made with their participation and voice.

Participatory Wealth Ranking process:

1. WSUG calls all people to participate in a village meeting (generally the participation is between 70-80% of the village population).
2. WSGU and CWS, based on the guiding criteria, discuss the wealth ranking criteria with all participating community members by using a proportional piling tool⁴ to start the discussion. Then the meeting will agree on a standard criteria document for wealth ranking in respective village. Using the standard criteria, WSUG facilitates a voting session with all families in the village in order to categorize family by family. Every community member has an equal opportunity to vote.
3. With the result of the wealth ranking process, CWS staff conduct household visits to crosscheck if everyone fits the set criteria.
4. The finalized list is sent to the Village Chief for verification and is acknowledged as an official wealth ranking statistic.

Simultaneously, WSUG, Village Chief and Commune Councils were trained on local capacities for peace, conflict resolution and peace building, as well as community organizing. The training courses have been a significant modality to build local capacity to lead their own need analysis, planning and implementation without creating any divisive factors to the community solidarity, seeking to enhance community social cohesion.

⁴ This is a semi-quantitative method for determining community priorities. Circles can be drawn on the ground or pictures can be drawn on cards, which represent the problems mentioned. Community members are then asked to pile pebbles or beans, for example, in proportion to the importance of the problem. The facilitators then count the number of pebbles or beans placed on the symbol for each problem.

7. How does the practice ensure active, free and meaningful participation?

Explanatory note: Participation

Processes related to planning, design, construction, maintenance and monitoring of sanitation and water services should be participatory. This requires a genuine opportunity to freely express demands and concerns and influence decisions. Also, it is crucial to include representatives of all concerned individuals, groups and communities in participatory processes.

To allow for participation in that sense, transparency and access to information is essential. To reach people and actually provide accessible information, multiple channels of information have to be used. Moreover, capacity development and training may be required – because only when existing legislation and policies are understood, can they be utilised, challenged or transformed.

Answer:

The formation of a Water and Sanitation User Group (WSUG) was facilitated by CWS Cambodia and PDRD in cooperation with the Commune Councils. The WSUG is a 100% volunteer and village based organization which is elected by the villagers in a free and fair election process facilitated by CWS Cambodia and staff of Provincial Department of Rural Development (PDRD) with the participation of village and commune authorities.

The WSUG's role is to manage the village water and sanitation development including needs assessment, planning, implementation and monitoring, as well as mobilizing development resources from the government and civil society organizations or private individuals. Various training courses are provided to the WSUG members to build their capacity. The courses include facilitation skills, project management cycle, WatSan and Hygiene education and construction, PRA, local capacities for peace and more.

After building capacity through various training courses delivered by CWS and PDRD, the WSUG leads the process of the village's WatSan planning with back up support from CWS Cambodia, PDRD staff and the CDF.

The planning process includes:

- Participatory rural appraisal to analyze the community problems, needs and response,
- Participatory beneficiary selection and orientation to the informed choices of WatSan facilities (see also "Non-discrimination on Participatory Wealth Ranking)
- Village WatSan planning and integration into Commune Development Plan.

Participation has also been defined by CWS Cambodia as the involvement of community members in the actual construction of latrines, bio-sand filters and wells. This participation is not only for helping each other to construct these facilities in the shortest possible time, but also to give the community members ideas and skills for further local initiatives.

Women's participation in decision-making is also on the agenda in every step of the process. Gender training courses were provided to raise consciousness of both men and women in the community, the community based organizations and local authority on the importance of women participation.

8. How does the practice ensure accountability?

Explanatory note: Accountability

The realization of human rights requires responsive and accountable institutions, a clear designation of responsibilities and coordination between different entities involved. As for the participation of rights-holders, capacity development and training is essential for institutions. Furthermore, while the State has the primary obligation to guarantee human rights, the numerous other actors in the water and sanitation sector also should have accountability mechanisms. In addition to participation and access to information mentioned above, communities should be able to participate in monitoring and evaluation as part of ensuring accountability.

In cases of violations – be it by States or non-State actors –, States have to provide accessible and effective judicial or other appropriate remedies at both national and international levels. Victims of violations should be entitled to adequate reparation, including restitution, compensation, satisfaction and/or guarantees of non-repetition.

Human rights also serve as a valuable advocacy tool in using more informal accountability mechanisms, be it lobbying, advocacy, public campaigns and political mobilization, also by using the press and other media.

Answer:

Rural remote villagers lack understanding of their rights or the roles of the duty bearers in facilitating their rights to water, sanitation and hygiene facilities and services. CWS Cambodia in cooperation with PDRD have trained local authorities and WSUGs on their role and responsibility to address the needs of the community on WatSan. Simultaneously, community members were also educated on clean water use, sanitation and hygiene to raise their understanding and consciousness.

Moreover, in the water, sanitation and hygiene facilities and services improvement, the beneficiary community members and WSUG, as well as local authorities have been engaged in the procurement process as well. They were trained to monitor the constructors (particularly for well construction, as it is constructed by a private company) during construction to ensure the quality.

Regular commune meetings were coordinated with the participation of staff from CWS Cambodia, PDRD as well as key community leaders including CDFs, WSUGs and Village Chiefs. The coordination is aimed at ensuring that the WatSan agenda is included in the commune development agenda. It also aims to update, give and listen to feedback and to identify and share good practices on WatSan development progress and activities among stakeholders at commune and village levels.

9. What is the impact of the practice?

Explanatory note: Impact

Good practices – e.g. laws, policies, programmes, campaigns and/or subsidies - should demonstrate a positive and tangible impact. It is therefore relevant to examine the degree to which practices result in better enjoyment of human rights, empowerment of rights-holders and accountability of duty bearers. This criterion aims at capturing the impact of practices and the progress achieved in the fulfilment of human rights obligations related to sanitation and water.

Answer:

At community and commune levels:

Clean water and sanitation facilities, as well as awareness on water, sanitation and hygiene has been improved and now covers between 30-50 percent of the needs in the communities. Between 80-90% of the direct beneficiaries belong to the vulnerable groups in the communities. However, there are still many rural poor communities in the same target province have not been served yet due to limited project resources.

Four years into the project, the communities' ability to organize themselves has been enhanced as well as their capacity to advocate directly at the level of the Commune Council and local authorities. The WatSan agenda has been raised in village and commune development plans in most of the target villages and communes. The WatSan priority has been conceptualized into long term development. However, CWS Cambodia acknowledges the limitation of the impact due to difficulties of the commune councils and local authorities who do not have full capacity to mobilize resources for

development in their local community. The concept of decentralization in Cambodia is still weak and structural changes are still required.

At sub-national levels:

The Water and Sanitation Cooperation Project was the source of the development for CWS's Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Cooperation Model. The model is unique; it is recognized by the government and is built on the foundation of peace building, a comprehensive and holistic approach. The approach has been shared and replicated at a smaller scale into CWS's village based community development in Kompong Thom and Preah Vihear Provinces. The demand from target and non target villagers for bio-sand water purifiers attests to the success of the technical decisions, as well as the participatory approach of our model. The local authorities in the target province of Svay Rieng adopted the household water treatment technology, as well as the community WatSan capacity building and education modality for their joint projects with other development partners. CWS Cambodia through this success has been trying to access new funding to expand and replicate this initiative to other most rural remote locations in Cambodia.

10. Is the practice sustainable?

Explanatory note: Sustainability

The human rights obligations related to water and sanitation have to be met in a sustainable manner. This means good practices have to be economically, environmentally and socially sustainable. The achieved impact must be continuous and long-lasting. For instance, accessibility has to be ensured on a continuous basis by adequate maintenance of facilities. Likewise, financing has to be sustainable. In particular, when third parties such as NGOs or development agencies provide funding for initial investments, ongoing financing needs for operation and maintenance have to be met for instance by communities or local governments. Furthermore, it is important to take into account the impact of interventions on the enjoyment of other human rights. Moreover, water quality and availability have to be ensured in a sustainable manner by avoiding water contamination and over-abstraction of water resources. Adaptability may be key to ensure that policies, legislation and implementation withstand the impacts of climate change and changing water availability.

Answer:

At the end of the four years, CWS has observed that villagers are still using the water and sanitation facilities and they remain functioning. Local ownership and maintenance facilities and skills have been built among beneficiaries.

As a value and peace based INGO and with its 30 years of experience in Cambodia, CWS Cambodia has been complementing development of rural remote areas through three related conceptual and technical areas, including ideas, attitudes and skills. Through the four-year project implementation cycle, knowledge of their right to and need for WatSan have been raised among community members, WSUGs, Commune Councils, village and commune authorities through education and actions. The attitude of the right holders and duty bearers on water, sanitation and hygiene practices and development agenda have improved. However, the CWS Cambodia believes that, in addition to impacts mentioned in the above part, continuity of the local ownership and leadership depends on availability and accessibility of the resources, especially in terms of financing.

Good Practice Contribution to the Independent Expert on the issue of human rights obligations related to access to safe drinking water and sanitation.

Submitted by the Ecumenical Water Network (EWN) and the ACT Alliance on behalf of Church World Service - Cambodia

Final remarks, challenges, lessons learnt

CWS Cambodia focuses on developing ownership of activities by the project beneficiaries primarily through the Water and Sanitation User Groups (WSUGs). The WSUG acts as the catalyst for ensuring that key health and hygiene concepts are understood, practiced and reinforced. Continued technical management of infrastructure is ensured through the training of maintenance workers and the dissemination of WSUG training manuals which also address the sharing and coordination of roles and responsibilities between the communities and the Provincial Department of Rural Development (PDRD).

The integration of community led village action plans into Commune Investment Plans influence the Commune Councils to give higher priority to the improvement of WatSan facilities and services in the longer term, hopefully with support from the commune budget. The involvement of private sector enterprises (i.e. through local construction firms, merchants) stimulates the local economy; in the longer term the success of the model could encourage replication and a more demand driven approach to WatSan engaging the WSUG, local businesses and suppliers.