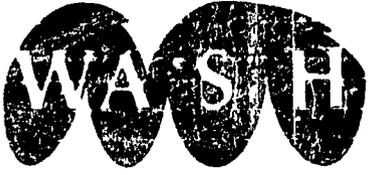


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**TRAINING OF RURAL COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT WORKERS IN
HEALTH EDUCATION**

**With Special Reference To Water Supply Protection
And Use/Maintenance Of Sanitation Facilities**

**WASH TECHNICAL REPORT NO. 3
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**Prepared For WASH By:
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**TRAINING OF RURAL COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT WORKERS IN
HEALTH EDUCATION**

by Guy Steuart & Carla Rull

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TRAINING OF RURAL COMMUNITY
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Use/Maintenance of Sanitation Facilities

Introduction

This analysis is drawn from a considerable body of literature which, more often than not, reports experiences or recommends training methods and strategies that are notably lacking in vigorous evaluation. Moreover, frequently the more specific issues that need to be delineated and addressed clearly are dealt with in a rather perfunctory fashion.

Thus, the material that follows is drawn from certain selected references that deal more systematically with the subject and represent only a small portion of the total available literature.

This analysis does not deal exclusively with formal training in the more restricted sense of a "course", but rather with the broader context of the presumed intention to produce optimal performance of the worker in the field and, therefore, with all the methods and processes that contribute to the worker's learning and performance.

There is a deficiency characteristic of most training programs of this kind. The target category of trainers in the program are expected to learn all of the skills they will need within the formal "course", which can be seriously limited. The worker is then placed in the field and expected to do the job with no special provisions made for peer support, supervisor guidance, or preparation of necessary resources to respond as needed. Usually, evaluation of the outcome is then done by an "external" agent, and the result rarely approaches expectations.

For training of technicians in circumscribed mechanical skills, this is often enough. In a broad, complex and imprecise area such as community development, it is quite inadequate.

The contrasting recommendations that follow approach the task from the point of view of worker development in which the "course" itself is only a part of the learning experience for producing and maintaining optimal performance and effectiveness.

Role Definition and Competencies

The necessary foundation for training of personnel is a clear and specific delineation between the practical role and competencies expected of the worker as a result of the training and, to an appreciable extent, the result of subsequent experience in the field.

The full earning of the competencies required will not be accomplished within the "course" period itself, but rather an attempt should be made to provide the most basic and generic learning experiences to ensure as firm a foundation as possible for later learning on the job.

While the training course should be comprehensive and all the main competency areas covered, the experience for the trainee should be one of orientation, basic principles, and of the development of his/her problem-solving ability and confidence. Thus, it should be characterized by constant encouragement toward active problem-solving by the trainees, and discouragement of expectations and pressures by instructors for precise answers to issues and problems.

The competencies that follow are based on both research and experience that indicate the likelihood of success in influencing health-related behavior and in the long-term continuation of such behavior. The likelihood of success is improved when: (1) the objectives of the program are related to, or can be grafted onto, the priority needs and concerns experienced by the people themselves; (2) the people actively participate and assume decision-making responsibilities for the whole program and its component activities.

For simplification, the recommended competencies have been grouped into five main areas. Neither these areas, nor their content, are set out in an expected sequence for trainee learning. Indeed there is considerable overlap between them and most learning and problem-solving experiences of the trainees which will presumably involve various combinations of these areas.

1. Social Diagnostic

. The delineation of communities within populations that are not geographically distinct, but provide the main social units characterized by a common allegiance, language, sense of identity, extended kinship and discernible interpersonal networks of communication and influence.

. The identification of formal and informal leadership, decision-makers and influential people among both men and women and any factions or subgroups in conflict with one another in competing for power, influence or control over resources.

. Identification of, and trusting relationships with, traditional diagnosticians, diviners and healers.

. Continuous identification of new individuals and groups with the potential for active participation, commitment and contribution to program development.

. Establishment and maintenance of the trust of villagers and in the process, eliciting, understanding, and showing empathy for the villagers' view of the world, their own priority concerns and needs and generally gaining their confidence as a person and not simply as a representative of an outside (government) agency.

. Understanding the relations between the peoples' needs and concerns and those of the water and sanitation program.

2. Social and Behavioral Change Facilitation

Guidance and facilitation of group discussion so that group responsibility, cohesion and problem-solving abilities are developed rather than the community development worker being the focus of group attention and dependence. Creation of favorable group settings for community leadership to emerge and develop. So far as possible not disrupting the sub-culturally appropriate styles of group discussion.

Achievement of group action on behalf of the whole community by having an existing group (e.g., a general community development committee, local council, etc.), or stimulating the formation of a special group, to take responsibility for the program's development and maintenance. (While this group may not be constituted precisely as a "village water committee" it will hereafter be referred to as such.)

Reconciliation and mediation of conflict or potential conflict within villages or communities, as well as between them, where this may affect the control or use of water sources.

With other village level workers (e.g., agricultural extension, school teachers, etc.) organize and develop a broader village health education program through the village water committee or other appropriate village group to stimulate more general changes in life-style of which behavior relating to water and sanitation is an intrinsic part.

In presenting information, do so in ways that: (a) are compatible with the sub-culture and the people's own theories of water-related and environmental diseases; (b) suggest, but do not always specify, appropriate actions but so far as possible elicit from the action group and from the people generally, the possible solutions; (c) are supported by simple "home-made" visual media and methods used so far as possible as a means for eliciting discussion rather than of support tools for didactic presentations.

3. Technical Water-Related Health and Sanitation Content

Knowledge of the basis of the natural history of water and sanitation-related diseases, of vector-borne diseases, including those that are

water-based depending on aquatic intermediate hosts, and that breed in or bite near water as well as those whose incidence may be reduced by more use of water in personal hygiene; of faecal and urinary pollution (human and livestock) of water sources; of the hygiene of water collection, homestead storage and use.

Knowledge and personal practice of the basics of personal hygiene, especially regarding the faecal-oral transmission route, of sanitation and safe sewage disposal and of infant hygiene.

Recognition of at least the most obvious environmental and behavioral hazards in the field.

4. Support System and Resource-Linking

Maintenance of continuous support and relationships with the village water committee until it is independently viable and the periodicity of contact can be reduced. Especially maintaining contact between the committee and its progress on the one hand, and external government or agency action on the other, thus preventing disruption or lapsing of the group's work due to agency initiatives that may occur without the group's awareness and acceptance or agency non-response at times appropriate for response.

Acting as a resource-link for all village and external resources necessary at appropriate times during progress of the program.

Knowledge and appropriate use of technical back-up resources in health-related and water sanitation matters.

Assurance of the continuity of surveillance and monitoring of water sources and their use and that the local technician or "water-minder" (see later) provides the group with regular reports of progress and status.

Understanding and appropriate use of the larger program support system (see later) to complement and reinforce the more immediate local activities associated with the program.

5. Evaluation

Understanding of the nature and contribution of a program evaluation component intrinsic to program operations and activities and as a means for continuous program improvement and effectiveness.

Development of village water committee participation in designing and applying evaluative procedures and using evaluation as a means for developing greater program commitment by the people.

Ability to do simple process evaluation of events, activities and committee and village participation and simple outcome evaluation of knowledge and behavior change including the elements of data collection (including non-quantitative observation), analysis or appraisal and interpretation.

Ability to react flexibly and appropriately to signs of slow-down, set-backs, etc., in progress of the program.

Training Models/Strategies

The recommended competencies suggest the preferred general training model or strategy as well as the eventual practical program strategy itself.

Quite simply, the extreme contrast (though most programs are likely to involve a mix of elements from each) is between:

(1) A service delivery, agency-dominated, teaching and didactic model in which the agency exclusively plans, develops and, through its personnel, implements the program, instructing, teaching and attempting to persuade community compliance, support and the necessary life-style changes, and

(2) A community problem-solving, active citizen participation model in which the agency plays a consultative, stimulating, facilitation and technical support role to the community, and in which the program is seen by villagers as their own.

The first model is technically much simpler to design and apply but has a long history of failures. The second model, which includes all the technological components of the first, is considerably more difficult to apply, but so far as the present evidence goes, if not sufficient for successful programs, is at least necessary.

These models are reflected in the training strategies. Thus, while the first model suggests more didactic teaching, especially of technical biological and physical content, with the trainees essentially as passive recipients of the training, the second model suggests more active participation, group discussion, monitors field experience by the trainees and indeed, more input by them into the content and methods of training. It places special emphasis on the social skills, problem-solving abilities, self-confidence and innovativeness of the trainee.

It does present a frequently formidable problem of trainee expectations for "professional" prestige through mastery of selected technical areas which has implications for trainee selection (see later) and the support system (see later).

It is important, however, that trainees actually experience so far as possible during the training, the kind of strategy and the methods they will themselves subsequently use in the field.

Training Methods

Perhaps the most important principles governing the selection and use of training methods in the course itself are that: (1) the more active the trainees are, and the less they are passive recipients of information, regardless of how all it is prepared and presented, the more effective the training will be; (2) the more the trainees have group problem-solving experiences rather than being given "expert" answers to problems, the more effective the training will be.

Thus, even content (e.g., the technical health and water protection content) can be presented in an active format as resource information for solving a group-assigned problem.

Therefore there should be minimal didactic (some may be essential) and maximal participatory learning. A common criticism of trainees in community work has been of the dominance of lectures and the lack of opportunity to share ideas and discuss individual insights, needs, problems and experiences. This criticism is particularly common where "outside experts" are brought in, present and leave without opportunity for full discussion by the trainees.¹

Recommended methods then, include group discussion, problem-solving, case studies, role-playing, simulation, socio-drama and other methods that encourage active participation.² Such methods may, however, have to be adapted to culturally acceptable forms and trainees should therefore have an active role in shaping teaching methods.³

It should be noted that in using such methods, trainees learn both content and process simultaneously and this may be reinforced by including analysis of the group process itself in addition to the more content-directed problem-solving.

Schedules should be as flexible as possible so that when discussions in sub-groups or the whole group lead to topics that were originally planned for a later stage, such discussions be allowed to proceed. Social times in the evening may be used also for more informal discussion and reinforcement of the day's learning.⁴

Both instructors and trainees, so that the course does not become too diffuse, need at the beginning of the course, to agree on the learning objectives in respect to what progress may be reviewed every day or every few days as appropriate.

But "classroom" work, however active, cannot substitute for field experience and the inclusion of experiential components is important. Thus, some reported courses describe concurrent (classroom and field work roughly parallel), step in - step out (classroom block of several days, field work of several days, classroom again and field again) as well as single block (mid-way through the course or the last part of it) methods of classroom and field work all adhering to the principle of supervised testing of their drills by trainees in realistic field situations.⁵

Finally, at regular intervals, perhaps daily, trainee feedback on the adequacy and benefits of the training program and preparedness by instructors to modify methods in the light of this feedback seems important. This is a means of achieving more effective learning of all course objectives and of securing enhanced trainee commitment.

Trainee Selection

Programs report a range of sources and qualifications for their community worker personnel from regular long-term, full time employees to locally recruited villagers who may work only part-time and on a voluntary, unpaid basis. There is a wide variety of sources and qualifications between these two extremes.

Clearly, the worker, if not selected by village vote or approval locally, will need to be acceptable and credible to villagers. Where the opportunity presents, however, villagers may be involved in establishing the criteria for trainees.

If potential trainees are insecure, dogmatic and need to dominate others; if they have interpersonal relationship problems, are socially marginal; are likely to have only access exclusively to men or to women; if they lack the personal stability to tolerate ambiguity, conflict and uncertainty; if they are easily discouraged - these characteristics suggest that they are unsuitable for the envisioned role. Also, if drawn from village members, trainees should not be known to belong to distinctive factions not acceptable to other factions.

Conversely, then, the strength of potential workers can be concluded from the above list with the additional requirement of sufficient commitment to work consistently without continuous supervision and to be oriented toward people-helping roles rather than bureaucratic status.

Finally, women's village and family roles in respect to water, sanitation, child care, agriculture, etc., will probably be more significant than immediately appreciated and the inclusion of women community development workers is important not only in terms of their easier access to women, but in the interests of contributing to a process of raising their status.^{6,7}

Organizational, Administrative and Support Systems

The failure or only very partial success of many programs can at least in part be attributed to the unrealistic expectation that once workers are trained, the performance of the job and its success are dependent only, or even mainly, on using the competencies and skills they have learned. This is true for the most advanced training and programmes with extensive field experience of the workers; even in these cases, success retains some dependence on a number of other back-up factors.

These include:

- (1) the immediate supervision, guidance and technical back-up of the worker who once trained and in operation, provides the necessary morale and professional and technical support to help ensure effectiveness over time.
- (2) other workers in the same villages, whether from the same agency or not, need an orientation to, and some training in, the functions, roles, etc., of the rural village development worker so that they can complement and support that role.
- (3) more specialized technical support resources need to be available to both supervisors and village development workers so they can be called on when appropriate and the program is not held up for lack of information necessary for local decision-making.
- (4) the physical resources (e.g., materials, etc.) necessary for program implementation need to be available, "on call" as it were, for delivery as soon as possible following appropriate community group decisions to implement those aspects of the program requiring physical supplies.
- (5) rewards and incentives, even if this involves only formal recognition and praise from respected authority figures of government, should be conscientiously offered on each occasion to accomplishing a major step in program development and at regular intervals until maintenance of any new facilities has been kept up for perhaps two years at least.
- (6) So far as possible, once in the field, moral support of individual workers is greatly enhanced by opportunities to meet, even for only one day workshops, with other workers and to compare experiences and share advice.
- (7) Village committees may need legal authority to levy subscriptions or muster the labor required to build and maintain the water supply and have the right to exclude non-contributors from the supply.

(8) Included in the program should probably be a locally recruited village or water supply "water-minder" who would be taught the basics of maintenance, how and when to get technical help, have, if necessary, a basic maintenance kit, etc. The water-minder should be responsible to the village committee.

(9) The chairperson, secretary and treasurer of the village committee needs to be trained in the basic skills appropriate to these functions.

Thus, except under the rarest and most exceptional circumstances, the success of community development efforts in respect to water supplies and sanitation, indeed whatever the program content, can be assured only if the workers in the field are part of a larger support system. Failure is almost certain where workers are expected to carry the whole program load in virtual isolation.

Evaluation

Although there is a considerable body of literature on water supply programs and health, very little of this includes sufficiently careful and systematic evaluation so that future programs can profit. Frequently, outcomes or results are analyzed and presented, but how these ends were achieved or not achieved is usually unclear.

While in sophisticated evaluation work, distinctions are made between summative, formative, implementation and impact evaluations respectively, these recommendations will be confirmed to a broad distinction between formative and outcome evaluation.

Formative evaluation is devoted to examination of the processes involved in community development, water supply development and use. Outcome evaluation is directed toward the results or outcomes as defined in the program's goals and objectives including both behavioral results and health indicators themselves such as urine, blood and stool measures.

So far as the community development aspect is concerned, including that of the community development worker training component, it is useful to distinguish between the following evaluative foci:

(1) The specific outcome behaviors of the people in respect to hygienic water collection, storage and use, personal hygiene; waste disposal, etc.

(2) The processes involved in moving in the direction of these outcomes:

(a) The formal processes of community organization in assuming responsibility, through organized groups, for the planning and implementation of water and sanitation programs and the viability, commitment and continuation of such groups.

(b) The more diffuse processes whereby the mass of the people adopt personal behaviors appropriate to improved health and self-protection from environmental hazards.

(c) The outcome performance/behavior of trainees in the field in comparison with the specified training expectations as indicated in the list of intended competencies.

(d) The process or activities, as expected, of the various elements in the support system.

(e) The process experience of the trainees of the training program itself in terms of:

(i) Their satisfactions and sense of confidence

(ii) Their aptness in learning in the training settings

Thus, evaluation of the training model and methods is intrinsic to evaluation of process and outcome in the whole program.

The simplest steps necessary to include a full-fledged evaluation component are in each case of outcome evaluations an initial baseline survey and subsequent regular surveys to determine the extent to which change may have occurred; in each case of formative evaluation, the maintaining of "process" notes on a continuous basis, attempting to analyze the reasons for progress, change, stability, set backs and intermediate successes at the times these may occur; attempts to relate process and outcome and in so doing to modify or change processes and methods that are not coming up to expectations in producing intended outcomes.

It seems of utmost significance that program participants play as full a role in evaluation as a means of closer identification with and psychological investment in the program, the sharing of clearly defined common goals by participants, and the readiness to respond flexibly and adaptively to evaluation findings in ways not likely where the evaluation is seen as a threat when essentially or exclusively performed by "outsiders".

As a general evaluative experience, workers brought together for "evaluation days" (say every three months) along with their supervisors and other officers of the administrative and technical support team, contribute significantly to worker morale and effectiveness.

Thus, for the program itself, under the aegis of the village "water committee", the use of community volunteers in doing surveys; for the training program, the full involvement of trainees in evaluation of the training and of their own subsequent performance in the field.

Mandara Mountains Water Resources Project

The principles and methods in this report represent a consensus of the modern evaluation and program literature concerning the training of community development workers. These principles and methods need, of course, to be adapted to the special circumstances of specific projects.

Briefly, so far as the Mandara Mountains Water Resources Project is concerned, the purpose is that of insuring "a source of year-round water supplies as a prerequisite for complementary development projects" and a possible "integrated rural development plan." Thus, for example, in addition to the more immediate action relevant to water supplies and sanitation, there will be nutrition surveillance activities and possible fish cultivation, road building, reforestation, training of farm families, improving school attendance and literacy and raising the status, influence and social roles of women.

These envisioned broader developments would seem strongly to suggest that the Water Resources Project be used as a means to establish the foundations for future programs so that they will have continuity with, and be able to be grafted onto, processes already underway rather than simply be "added" as independent programs.

Therefore:

(1) The present proposed training of community development workers, their work in the field, and the functions of the larger support system should be of a sufficiently basic and generic nature that they can be built upon with future developments.

(2) The fullest possible participation of the people themselves in the water supply project, their increased group problem-solving skills, their assumption of community development responsibilities and the formation and experience of formal local organizations take on particular importance.

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