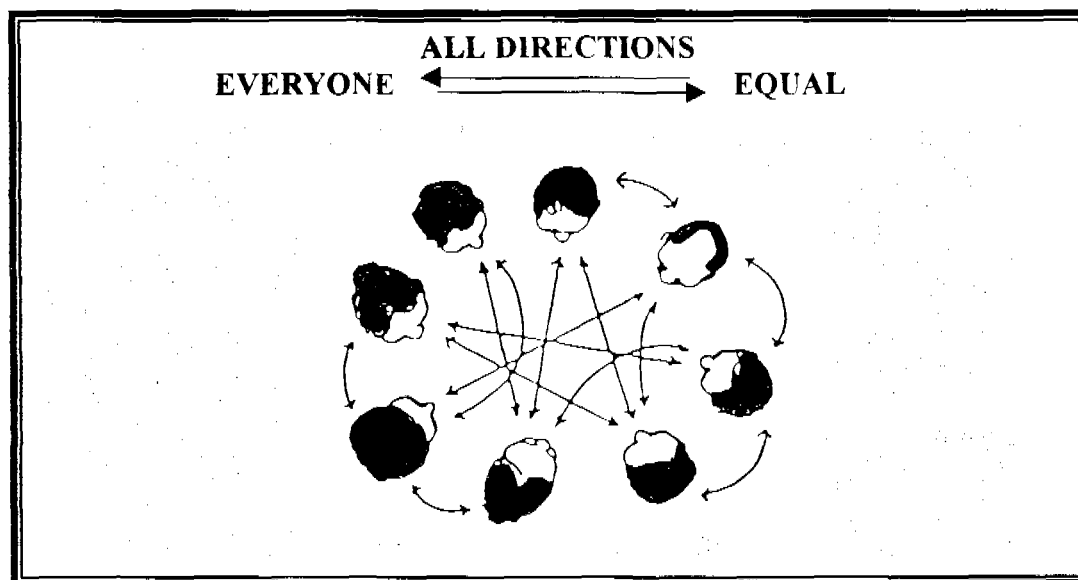


## DPHE-Danida Urban Water and Sanitation Project

### COMMUNICATING TO TRANSFER KNOWLEDGE AND CHANGE BEHAVIOUR AND ATTITUDES

#### A Background



May 1998

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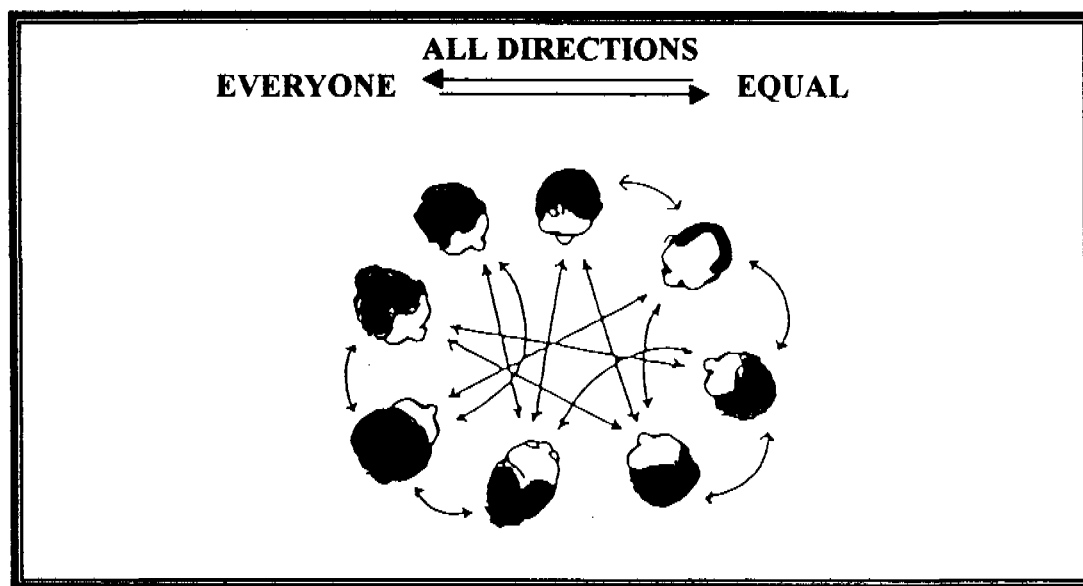
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## COMMUNICATING TO TRANSFER KNOWLEDGE AND CHANGE BEHAVIOUR AND ATTITUDES

### 1. GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF COMMUNICATION

Communication is the sharing of information (including ideas, emotions, knowledge and skills) among two or more persons. It is a social process and not merely the concern with materials or utilisation of media. A dialogue will never replace software or hardware expertise; instead it is allowing specific skills to be applied more effectively.

A two-way communication must be built on partnership between people and in its extension it could mean:

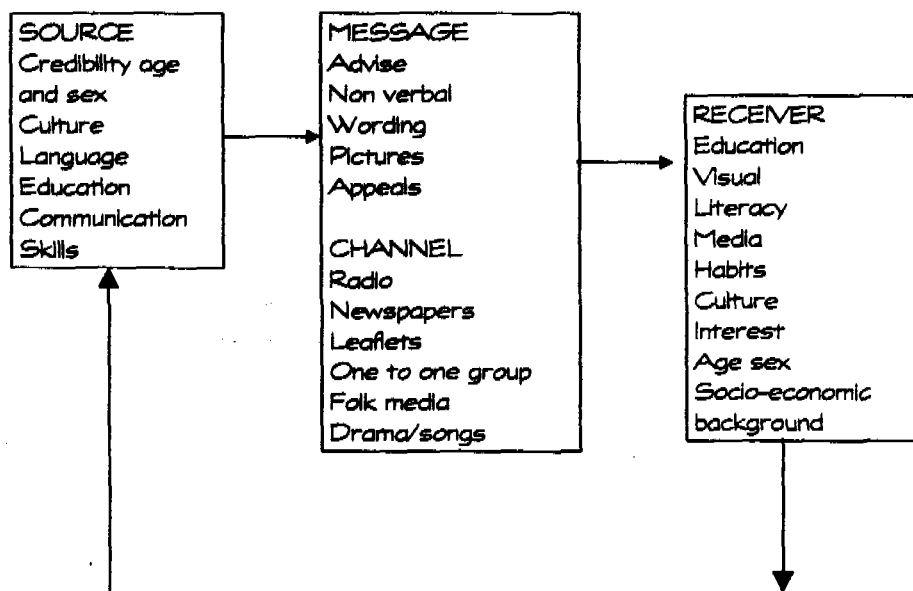
- ❖ Looking at situations from the viewpoint of others and understand their needs and concerns
- ❖ Understanding obstacles to change.
- ❖ Searching for practical and relevant solutions.
- ❖ Discover the likely effects of change.

Experience shows that even some well designed WATSAN projects have produced meagre results or even failed when the local decision-makers and the intended target groups were not involved in planning and implementation right from the beginning. Effectiveness is often defined in terms of physical output over time and the quicker an activity is completed the better it looks in Progress Reports. However, productiveness that led to high level of 'coverage' might have been achieved at the sacrifice of appropriate designs, functioning, transfer of knowledge and usage. In many cases sustainability depends to a lesser extent on physical inputs than on human factors.

Hence, it is obvious from past experience that it is not particularly useful to disseminate new information, provide technical solutions and/or health education messages that do not fit into the target group's way of thinking or living. As Project professionals we are constantly faced with the predicament of how to communicate and transfer knowledge effectively. Our ultimate goal must be to get both women and men at all levels, involved and actively participating in activities. People are much more likely to be open to change if they clearly understand the knowledge transferred, can relate it to their reality and regard it as beneficial.

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2. COMPONENTS OF COMMUNICATION



**The Receiver**

When we plan communication the first step must be to consider the intended receivers. A method that is successful with one group might not work well with another.

**The Source**

Try to find out who the receivers respect, trust and rely on and involve these people. In order to be a good communicator one has to possess *empathy* the ability to understand how others feel and think. Some staff will possess a natural talent for communication and empathy. Others might have to learn as they would learn any other skill.

**The Message**

Will only be effective if presented in relevant, appropriate, acceptable and put across in an understandable way.

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### 3. COMMUNICATION METHODS

#### Interpersonal Methods:

Interpersonal communication is characterised by direct contact between the source and the receiver.

The strength lies in the fact there is an opportunity for feedback, questions, clarifications, exchange of ideas and planning for joint actions. As such, interpersonal communication can be a strong tool in influencing knowledge, attitudes and practices. However, if the interpersonal communication is used for one-way teaching with the source telling the receivers what to do and what to think it will rarely be effective. Instead it should be used as much as possible for participatory communication that is to say - dialogue, group discussions, sharing of experience, joint learning and problem solving.

#### *Person-To-Person Discussions*

*Home Visits, or at a Public Place, but can also be part of walking around in the community or whilst visiting water and sanitation facilities. A good opportunity might also be during breaks or at the end of a group meeting.*

***ADVANTAGES:** More causal meetings can create an atmosphere of trust, equality and understanding. More organised meetings such as home visits are particularly useful when discussing sensitive subjects or subjects requiring careful consideration or individual solutions. An additional advantage is that one can get a fair impression of the living standard/conditions of the target group and immediately integrate that into the discussion*

***DISADVANTAGE:** Time consuming and costly to reach all members in the community*

#### *Small Group Discussions (up to 12 persons):*

*Allow a process in which participants directly communicate with each other. Tool for influencing knowledge, but especially in influencing, attitudes and practices. Composition requires attention but main requirement is that all are allowed to speak freely. Consider gender, age, and background.*

*The facilitator role will be to:*

- Start discussions, give suggestions,*
- Provide structure to the discussions, keep track of the purpose, keep an eye on the time, giving interim support*
- Provide information and correct wrong/misleading information*
- Provide guidance to the group process and support individuals - enable everybody to speak, stimulate the shy to participate, make sure that group members listen to each other, create an open atmosphere, help to create consensus and to make joint decisions*
- Evaluating the process*

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Large Group Discussions (between 12 and 30 persons)/Public Meetings (above 30 persons)

Useful for quick information dissemination, awareness raising and gaining initial support for new activities.

- Decide on purpose and message before the meeting.
- Limit presentations to 20-30 minutes, use aids and tools to make it more interesting.
- Target group orientated: link information to the audience knowledge, experience and new information must be relevant to the local situation. A rule is that a presentation becomes more effective when it contains about 30% of new information.
- Make sure that both women and men are invited. Make sure that date and time are suitable and convenient.
- Begin with a short, clear introduction about the purpose, organisation and the expectations of the meeting.
- Allow time for feedback and questions.
- If possible allow time for group discussions or field visits.
- Summarise at the end of the meeting. Give a clear idea of planned follow-ups.

#### 4. THE INFORMATION, EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION (IEC) PLANNING PROCESS

##### STEP-BY-STEP:

##### STEP 1: Analyse the Situation - Read, Listen, See and Understand

- ❖ Review of existing policies and programmes.
- ❖ Which behaviours should be influenced (based on baseline findings, case studies etc.)?
- ❖ What knowledge should be transferred?
- ❖ What are the possible constraints? How can they be tackled?
- ❖ Which development partners, Government Departments can assist?
- ❖ Which communication tools are available and will be suitable?

##### STEP 2: Planning and Programming

Define in clear and simple terms what behaviour you would like to promote and/or what knowledge you would like to transfer. Your aim should be to address the needs and concerns of the intended audience. These might vary according to the target group - whether users group, or staff from the local authorities. When the target group is divided in terms of specific needs this is likely to increase effectiveness. In order to do this you have to have a clear understanding of the variances of needs and abilities among the different groups or subgroups. Without this background you will have difficulties in designing appropriate messages which really call for change. The contents of the themes will remain the same, but the fine-tuning, the choice of media and the designing of the messages will vary accordingly.

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### STEP 3: Message Development, Pre-Testing and Revision

A rapid assessment of formal and informal modes of communication will be helpful when you try to identify the best communication techniques and media to use. For example each message regarding sanitary latrines may have to be communicated by different techniques.

- ❖ A message concept has to be developed (preliminary illustrations, words, phrases theme lines).
- ❖ Pre-test this with representatives of the intended target group, especially check so that pictures, diagrams are not misunderstood. Pay attention to strong and weak points and relevance to the audience.
- ❖ Based on above create messages and materials.
- ❖ Pre-test messages and materials for comprehension.
- ❖ Final production.
- ❖ Before reproducing re-test and evaluate.

Remember: Communication must be directed where people can see or hear the messages. For this you have to observe the habits of the target groups. Where might they see posters? What are their listening or reading habits? Poverty, illiteracy, ill health and overwork might further hamper women and men's active participation.

It might be particularly difficult to reach women as:

- ❖ daily chores might leave little or no time for women to participate in Project activities;
- ❖ they are also likely to have limited experience of participating in decision making;
- ❖ they might fear disapproval from male community members or elders;
- ❖ they are not able/used to take financial risks or decisions; and
- ❖ apprehension of taking on tasks that require skills unusual for the cultural context;

### STEP 4: Understanding the Message

Two people might hear the same message and interpret it quite differently from each other as well as from the meanings intended by the sender.

Misunderstandings can easily occur if and when:

- ❖ the language you use is too complex and containing technical and words unfamiliar to the target group;
- ❖ presentation of complicated diagrams;
- ❖ too much information at one time; and
- ❖ unfamiliar subjects are presented in unknown settings.

### STEP 5: Promoting Change

It is never enough to receive and understand a message in theory - the message also has to be believed, reliable and accepted.

- ❖ It is difficult to influence a belief or a practice that has been held along time
- ❖ It is easier to promote a behaviour and/or transfer knowledge where the positive effects can be easily demonstrated
- ❖ If a belief or practice is deeply rooted in the culture or the religion it is very difficult to change

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**STEP 6: Change in Behaviour**

Change might occur in beliefs and attitudes but still not influence behaviour.

- ❖ Pressure from the family or the community may prevent change.
- ❖ Lack of enabling factors such as money, time, skills or health services.

**STEP 7: Improvements in Health**

If messages or facilities are based on outdated or incorrect ideas people might follow or use them but their health will not improve.

**5. SOME FINAL POINTS TO CONSIDER FOR AN EFFECTIVE LEARNING AND COMMUNICATION PROCESS**

Information that is linked to the target groups experiences and builds on what they already know will be easier understood and more meaningful.

- ❖ What do people already know?
- ❖ What do they think?
- ❖ What do they want to know?
- ❖ Pre-test on sample target group to learn possibilities and limitations

The receiver will pay more attention to a message that is put across in a creative manner and with a variety of teaching aids.

❖ **Active Methods:**

Practise in real situations under supervision,  
Practice in group situations e.g. role-playing or discussions

❖ **Less Active Methods:**

Observing drama or demonstrations,  
Studying pictures/photos,  
Written or pictorial examples

❖ **Active Learning**

Aiming to make the participants think and apply new knowledge through a task.

❖ **Clarity**

Use visual aids,  
Speak clearly, slowly and use simple language,  
Repeat important messages and keypoints in various ways  
Explain the content at the beginning; explain all new words, concepts and ideas  
Summarise main points.

Encourage active participation from both women and men stimulate and provoke discussions.

Ensure understanding, check understanding and competence reached



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*Give feedback. The most effective way to find out if learning has really taken place is by obtaining feedback - either by asking questions or observing performance for change. Tell the learners what you feel that their progress is. If there is no progress the fault most likely lies with the source and the message!*

*Complicated information should be introduced step-by-step in a logical organised manner.*

- ❖ *Eased by the use of well chosen visual aids or other teaching tools*
- ❖ *Information handed out in written or pictorial handouts.*

*Use the same aid several times*

*Avoid too much information in one session.*

- ❖ *Attempt to use a range of materials such as talks, demonstrations, discussions, and group exercises.*
- ❖ *Allow frequent breaks- perhaps every twenty minutes*

*Provide opportunities for practices of new skills, where mistakes can be made and then corrected*

*Evaluate with the help of the target audience*

### *Hints for Using Pictures*

- ❖ *Show accurate details and use objects that are familiar to the target group*
- ❖ *Avoid using gender stereotypes*
- ❖ *Avoid distracting with too many details*
- ❖ *If in colour they should be accurate*
- ❖ *Size should not be distorted*
- ❖ *Objects should be shown from familiar angles*
- ❖ *Show complete objects*
- ❖ *Well-known signs and symbols*
- ❖ *Sequences can easily cause confusion*
- ❖ *Pre-test with samples of the target group*

### *Hints for Using Written Messages*

- ❖ *Write simply*
- ❖ *Avoid using linguistic gender biases*
- ❖ *Short sentences; avoiding sentences with too many sections*
- ❖ *Use simple words that are understood by the target group; avoid abbreviations, technical words and jargon; if used explain the meaning;*
- ❖ *Space text and avoid crowding of pages*
- ❖ *Use lists and bullets*
- ❖ *Avoid small print*
- ❖ *Use diagrams and pictures to explain or highlight text*

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- ❖ *How To Select Methods? What are the needs?*
  - ⇒ To convey simple facts?
  - ⇒ Complex information?
  - ⇒ Problem-solving skills?
  - ⇒ Practical manual skills?
  - ⇒ Attitudes and behavioural change?
  - ⇒ Is there a need for a visual dimension e.g. a picture to explain or highlight a point?
  - ⇒ Is sound necessary?
  - ⇒ Is the target group accepting new ideas? Do they resist them?
  - ⇒ Time scale?
  
- ❖ *General Characteristics of the audience: gender, age, experience, skills, literacy level, class, and religion? Previous experience and exposure to pictures or written words, ownership of radio/TV/VCR? Listening, watching and reading habits*
- ❖ *Many projects fail because they do not pay attention to the needs of the communities*
  
- ❖ *Costs, inclusive initial purchase costs and maintenance cost? How many staff and what level of skills need to be involved? What requirements will affect the use of the equipment e.g.:*
  - ⇒ electricity/power cuts
  - ⇒ storage
  - ⇒ transport
  - ⇒ availability of funds
  - ⇒ spare parts
  
- ❖ *What media are available and popular?*
  - ⇒ Cinema?
  - ⇒ Traditional drama groups?
  - ⇒ Radio/TV?
  
- ❖ *What messages is already being conveyed? Do they agree or disagree with the Project's? Is it possible to mobilise existing channels?*

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**ANNEX**

Communicate for Transfer of Knowledge and Changing Behaviour and Attitudes

<b>TOOLS</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>AUDIENCE SIZE</b>	<b>ADVANTAGES</b>	<b>DISADVANTAGES</b>
Demonstration of Facilities		1-30 people, as it can be difficult for a trainer to follow up on more	Using materials in real situations. Good for people who are not used to look at or read instructions? Good for participation	Takes time to plan and prepare
White Boards		Up to 30 people. If more a very large board is needed. Placement of audience has to receive attention	Inexpensive. Easy to maintain. Enables participation	
Flannel Board	Flannel, terry cloth or felt attached to rigid surface/ cut figures will stick if backed with flannel, glued sand or sandpaper	Max 20. Size depends on size of board	Inexpensive. Easy to maintain and transport. Figures can be used in different presentations. Ideal for showing sequence of events, reviewing lessons as figures can be brought back	Considerable preparations needed. Artistic abilities required
Posters	Message on a large paper, with an self-explanatory illustration and simple written message	No limit	Inexpensive. Easy to transport	Can deteriorate rapidly. If the message is not carefully planned/ designed it can confuse. Need good artistic ability
Flip charts	Illustrations on pare/cloths, usually larger then 21cmx27cm; bound together with strings or rings. Flip over in sequence	Max 30. Size depends on size of flip chart illustrations	Inexpensive and easy to transport. Good as a basis for discussing events in a sequence, with a small group	Deteriorate with frequent use. Artistic ability required if produced by Project/NGO
Flash Cards	Illustrations on thick paper, usually smaller then 21cmx27cm. Illustrations not bound but can be presented in sequence	Max 15, due to size of illustrations	Inexpensive. Easy to transport. Good way of giving sequential information to small groups	Deteriorate with frequent use. Artistic ability required if produced by Project/NGO

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**ANNEX**

Communicate for Transfer of Knowledge and Changing Behaviour and Attitudes

<i>TOOLS</i>	<i>DESCRIPTION</i>	<i>AUDIENCE SIZE</i>	<i>ADVANTAGES</i>	<i>DISADVANTAGES</i>
Filmstrips	35mm film, colour/black or white, with sound projected on a screen or a wall	Max 30 in order to provoke good discussions	Dramatic, less expensive than cinema film. Can show real photos and sequence in time. Battery operated projector available. Relatively easy to transport	Can be damaged, requires projection equipment. Need for darkened projection area. Limited appropriate filmstrips available
Video	Colour or black and white	Max 30 Due to screen size and to provoke good discussions	Dramatic and can get audience attention. Shows motion and therefore explain step-by-step and time sequence	Relatively expensive, need electricity, TV screen and preferably dark projection area. Difficult to transport
Bulletin Boards	Surface at least 3/4mx1m, into which pins can be placed. Drawings, photos and lettering can be displayed	No limit	In expensive, good for small group discussions	If outdoors, damage can occur easily. Constant supply of interesting and educational material is needed
Slides	In colour or black or white to be projected onto screen or wall	Max 30 in order to provoke discussion	Dramatic. Can show sequences. Battery operated projectors available. Local Photos can easily be taken.	Easy to damage, easy falls out of sequence or upside down. Requires projection equipment, electrical outlets or batteries and darkened projection area