Similar approaches, dissimilar outcomes: strengthening local capacity in Nepal and Tanzania

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Abstract

This paper compares approaches, activities and practical experiences with strengthening local capacity and improving local water governance in two long running, now completed rural water and sanitation programmes. Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Support Programme (RWSSSP) in Nepal (1990-2004) and the Health through Sanitation and Water Programme (HESAWA) in Tanzania (1985-2002) had a number of similarities, yet, both were also unique and pioneering. The purpose of RWSSSP was to contribute to water supply coverage through (1) improvement of the institutional capacity of the districts to enable decentralization from the national level to the districts and from district to users for implementation and sustainable management of rural water supply and sanitation, (2) provision of financial support for implementation and (3) improvement of methods in implementing, operating and maintaining water supply and sanitation facilities. RWSSSP was executed through district-based projects with local governments and the Water and Sanitation Users Committees playing the leading roles. Similarly to RWSSSP, also HESAWA grew from engineering and supply-oriented water programme towards integrated rural development programme which had capacity building and strengthening at all levels as one of its core operative goals. HESAWA aimed to improve the welfare of the rural population through improved health education, environmental sanitation, drinking water supply, community participation, and capacity building at village and district levels. The study shows how dynamic approaches, and encouraging piloting, local innovation and learning-by-doing at many levels can have extraordinary results, some of them more sustainable than others. Similar approach in different context yields dissimilar outcomes.

Keywords

Nepal, Tanzania, rural water supply and sanitation

List of Abbreviations

CBO	Community Based Organisation
DDC	District Development Committees
DPMT	District Project Management Teams
DWSSDF	District Water Supply and Sanitation Development Funds
HESAWA	Health through Sanitation and Water Programme
HMGN	His Majesty's Government of Nepal
HRD	Human Resource Development
NGO	Non-governmental Organisations
O&M	Operation and Maintenance
RWSSP	Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project

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RWSSSP	Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Support Programme
SO	Support Organisations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VDC	Village Development Committees
WUC	Water (and/or Sanitation) Users Committees (Nepal)
WUG	Water Users Group (Tanzania)

Introduction

Conceptual Point of Departure

This paper compares two long-running rural water supply and sanitation programmes in two distinct countries: Tanzania and Nepal. Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Support Programme (RWSSSP) in Nepal (1990-2004) and the Health through Sanitation and Water Programme (HESAWA) in Tanzania (1985-2002) had a number of similarities, yet, both were also unique and pioneering new approaches, effectively seeking substance for a number of principles which emerged at the time. Both programmes mainstreamed good practices related to participation, gender, decentralisation, cost-sharing, sanitation and appropriate technology. They also aimed to ensure that successful working modalities and technologies could have been sustainable and replicable after closing of the programme, both with varying success.

In this study "*capacity*" is defined as *"the combination of people, institutions, and practices that permits countries to achieve their development goals."* (World Bank 1996). In this case the focus is in certain regions within the countries, although in both cases it was hoped that the working modalities could have been scaled up nationally. It is also acknowledged that *"capacity is not only about skills and procedures. It is also about incentives and governance."* (OECD 2006). Three basic interlinked capacity building elements are recognized and used as an external frame of reference: 1) creation of an enabling environment with appropriate policy and legal frameworks; 2) institutional development, including community participation; and 3) human resources development (HRD) and the strengthening of managerial systems. (Alaerts, Hartvelt & Patorni *eds.* 1999). An additional dimension of this framework is good water governance which *"refers to the range of political, social, economic and administrative systems that are in place to develop and manage water resources, and the delivery of water services, at different levels of society."* (Rogers & Hall 2003). Key general good governance issues which can be applied to good water governance relate to protection of public health and safety, environmental protection, accountability, transparency, user participation, gender and equal opportunities, balancing equity, efficiency and effectiveness in performance, financial sustainability & transparency.

Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Support Programme in Nepal

The Kingdom of Nepal is predominantly a rural society with 80 percent living in the rural areas. Extreme slopes, high snow blocked passes, seasonally flooding rivers and land slides, as well as tropical lowlands with tropical dangers, such as malaria, have historically led to strongly localized cultural and religious patterns. Until the 1950s Nepal was practically isolated from outside world, with majority of the people living in medieval conditions. The situation has improved since although the regional disparities remain. This mountainous country of some 27 million people has more than hundred caste/ethnic groups and some sixty distinct languages or dialects. Against this background local governance is nothing new: local development has truly been a matter of local initiative. Nepal ranks 136 out of 177 countries measured by the Human Development Index and 74 measured by the Human Poverty Index. About 82 percent of the population live below 2 US$ per day and 42 percent

below the national poverty line. (UNDP 2005). Development cooperation between Nepal and Finland started in 1983.

The Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project (RWSSP) Phase I (1990-1996) operated through District Water Supply Offices in six districts of the Lumbini Zone. It took the first steps in community involvement and related HRD, but remained rather centrally-led and engineering-oriented. In the RWSSP Phase II (1996-1999) the roles of Village Development Committees (VDCs) and District Development Committees (DDCs) were more pronounced, and such themes as decentralisation, participation, gender, environmental issues, appropriate technology and sustainability in general were introduced and received more substance. The Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Support Programme (RWSSSP) Phase III (1999-2004/05) was fully executed under the Department of Local Infrastructure Development and Agricultural Roads of the Ministry of Local Development, with separate agreements with each of the District Projects. These were managed by the District Project Management Teams (DPMTs) which were chaired by the elected DDC Chairman, and later in their absence, the Local Development Officers as top district-level government officers. The scheme selection was guided by the hardship score and the District Water Supply and Sanitation Profiles.

The purpose of the RWSSSP Phase III was *"strengthened institutional capacity of districts to enable decentralization from districts to users for sustainable management and implementation of rural water supply and sanitation"* and the overall objective to contribute to *"adequate coverage and appropriate level of sustainable water supply and sanitation*." RWSSSP aimed at consistent integration of activities with government institutions for sustainability, bringing in also the local private sector as support organisations (SOs) contracted by the local authorities. The Phase III programme approach was based on four platforms 1) district project implementation; 2) participatory approach; 3) gender sensitive approach and 4) self-reliance. Four key results were expected (Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Support Programme 1999):

I. institutional capacity to support decentralization of water supply and sanitation;
II. human resources capable of implementing decentralization water supply and sanitation strategies;
III. mobilization of local resources to facilitate implementation and management of water supply and sanitation on decentralized basis; and
IV. development of new approaches, methods and technologies especially to meet the needs of the poor.

The Phase III eventually had eight District Projects which together with the Water (and/or Sanitation) Users Committees (WUCs) and their support organisations completed some 900 water or/and sanitation schemes in the Phase III alone. About 240,000 people benefited from improved water supply and about 315,000 from sanitation facilities. RWSSSP was one of the first programmes to introduce sanitation and environmental sanitation schemes as schemes of their own right, not as an attachment to water supply schemes. Their popularity increased exponentially towards the end, and the target set for sanitation coverage (52,000 people) was several times exceeded. Dissolving the local government bodies in 2002 had a considerable impact for Phase III, and escalating conflict situation in Nepal undermined work done for decentralization, democracy and good governance towards the end of the programme. Yet, Phase III operated through the District Projects until the end. (Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Support Programme 2004).

Health through Sanitation and Water Programme in Tanzania

The United Republic of Tanzania is the largest country in East Africa in terms of land area. Its post-independence economic history can be divided into three distinct phases. The first phase (1961-1986) is characterised by state socialism, known as *Ujamaa*. The ruling party, the state and government institutions operated as a single intertwined vertical entity and controlled both prices and the distribution of all-essential goods and services. Many basic services such as health, education, and

water were delivered free of charge or at subsided prices. This is the time when HESAWA entered the scene. The second phase (1986-1995) was marked by structural adjustments where economic and public sector reforms were implemented to dismantle the state-controlled economy and replace it with a market economy. The third phase (1995 to the present) is characterised by renewed macroeconomic reforms, and such as Local Government Reform is now being implemented. (King & Kirjavainen 2000). The population has grown from about 26 million in 1990 to 36 million in 2002. Tanzania ranks low at 164 out of 177 measured by the Human Development Index and 65 by the Human Poverty Index, with about 60 percent living below 2 US$ per day and 36 percent below the national poverty line (UNDP 2005). The cooperation between Tanzania and Sweden dates back more than 40 years and Tanzania is now one of the main recipients of Swedish support.

The overall aim of the HESAWA Programme was to improve the welfare of the rural population through improved health education, environmental sanitation, drinking water supply, community participation, and capability and capacity building at village and district levels. HESAWA operated through annual reviews and plans, and was not exactly divided into phases. Yet, the following phase-wise thinking shows how the programme evolved over time. HESAWA Phase I (1985-1990) was characterised by heavy external consultant input with little local participation or local financing. It focused on rehabilitation and construction of large schemes. However, decentralisation, capacity building, affordability, credibility, replicability, sustenance and cost-efficiency were in the agenda from the very beginning. HESAWA Phase II (1990/1991–1993/94) shifted the implementation towards using more Tanzanian rather than expatriate consultants. The district authorities were now more involved although little was demanded from the communities except labour for construction. HESAWA Phase III (1994/1995–1997/98) witnessed full decentralisation of the administration and implementation of the programme activities. The participatory rural appraisal method was more effectively applied and Water Users Groups (WUGs) were established. Appropriate, affordable technology choices were advocated. HESAWA Phase IV (1998/1998–2001/2002) focused on consolidation and sustainability of the previous achievements. Rehabilitation and rectification of the problem schemes were on the agenda, and only a few new interventions received financial support from the donor. WUGs received increasing attention towards the end of the programme.

The “HESAWA concept” was composed of five key elements:

1) linking health with water, by highlighting the importance of sanitation as well as safe drinking water;
2) local ownership, demonstrated through cost-sharing;
3) villagers’ taking the lead role in deciding development priorities and responsibility for maintenance of water facilities;
4) emphasis on human-resource development through training; and
5) sustainability and replicability of water supply installations.

HESAWA was described as *“the most ambitious among donor funded projects, based on participation and integration of health, sanitation and water activities”* in a review of the water sector in the mid 1980s. (Therkildsen, 1988, *in*: Catterson & Lindahl 1999). The Mid-Term Review of Phase II (1992) concluded that HESAWA had achieved *“a great deal under very difficult macro-economic circumstances and contributed to new directions in the Tanzanian water and sanitation sector as a whole.”* (Smet *et al*, 1997). HESAWA covered 1062 villages or 63 per cent of the villages in the Lake Victoria regions. Programme statistics verification and WUG analysis was done at the end of HESAWA, and it was estimated that 1.6 million people benefited directly from the new or improved water supply services, the total number of constructed or improved water facilities being 6412 and the number of 926 institutional latrines and 35,026 household latrines were constructed. (Flodman Becker et.al. 2003).

Methodology

This comparative study integrates both quantitative and qualitative tools, drawing the material from the researcher's direct involvement with both programmes: as a Field Specialist in RWSSSP (2002-2004) and as an evaluation team member for Ex-post retrospective evaluation of HESAWA (in 2005/2006). Quantitative sample surveys were complemented with participatory and other qualitative approaches, such as focus group discussions and field observations. For both programmes there was an amble choice of data sources for both primary and secondary data.

Analysis and discussion

Enabling Environment

The enabling environment influences both institutional development and HRD by creating incentives for organizations and individuals within. Where certain kind of enabling environment creates incentives which foster productivity, innovativeness, growth and capacity development, some others may rather foster passivity, decline or even closure. (OECD 2006). An organization needs to be resourced and the rules of the game for using these must be clear. This is where policy and legal frameworks mediate. Both HESAWA and RWSSSP contributed to the development of national rural water (and in Nepal, also sanitation) policies. Both programmes demonstrated in a real life context and in a fairly large scale what such as gender policy or decentralisation can mean in practice. This did not go unnoticed as both programmes were also very large scale and visible operations, and as such, well known nationally and even internationally. What was at the time even daringly piloted by these programmes, can now be found neatly articulated in the water policies, including community participation, role of the water users groups/committees and local governments, gender issues, cost-sharing and cost recovery, and appropriate technology.

Decentralization and related local government reforms both in Tanzania and Nepal continue to be strong driving forces aiming at creating enabling environment also for sustainable rural water and sanitation services. The process has not been easy in neither of these previously strongly centralised countries, and consequently attitude and power struggles are evident. Furthermore, the capacity and resources available at district and village levels have not grown as fast as the expectations have. The central governments appear eager to hand over many functions to the local governments, including such as management of the health and education facilities, but direct cash flows to districts or increase in trained and paid staff have hardly increased accordingly. In addition most of the numerous (international) development actors now expect participation and contributions from the local government bodies and villagers, adding time, fiscal and other demands to the already limited local resources.

Fiscal transfers can be seen as a part of the enabling environment as an incentive to make more comprehensive and local development plans. HESAWA and RWSSSP acknowledged that strong sense of local ownership is crucial for sustainability. Fiscal transfers to district-level local authorities were examples of how RWSSSP and HESAWA were working in this regard. Again, both were forerunner in entrusting funds to local actors, in introducing cost sharing and in emphasising the importance of local participation and contributions.

In both cases cost sharing became a pre-condition for release of donor funds. In HESAWA the aim was to reduce donor input and increase local funding, and eventually the local contributions increased from 5 to 25 per cent. Yet, during the overall programme period the Swedish assistance covered 80–90 percent of the programme costs. An interviewee reflected that "roll in-roll out" approach during the programme period did not work neither at the village nor district level: once financial support had been started, it was difficult to phase it out. Many district-level interviewees considered HESAWA approach and technologies replicable as such, "but not without HESAWA". In RWSSSP it was easier to phase out from the villages, but not from the districts: eventually no district was dropped out, but two new were nevertheless added into the Phase III.

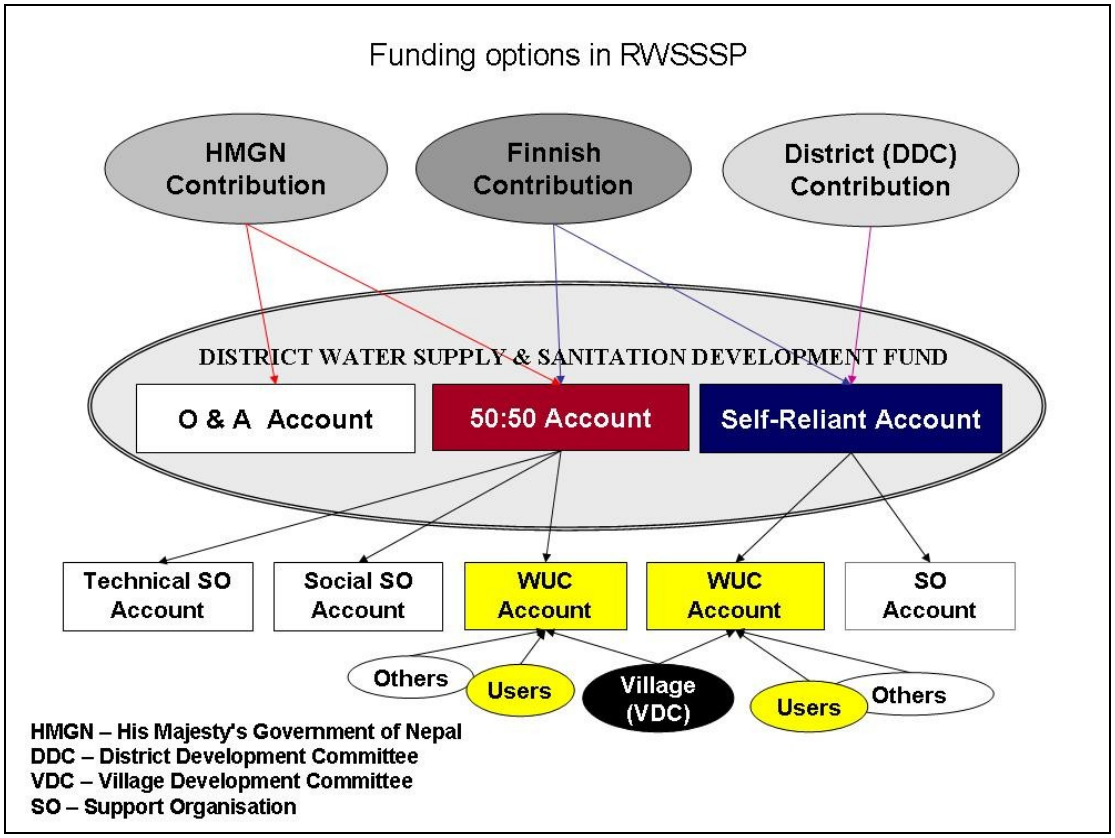
RWSSSP introduced the District Water Supply and Sanitation Development Funds (DWSSDF) which were managed in each district by DPMTs. Occasionally also other agencies active in water sector contributed to DWSSDFs. In the RWSSSP Phase III each of the districts had three separate accounts under DWSSDF: i) 50:50 Account, ii) Self-Reliant Account and iii) Office and Administration Account. These were operated by the DDC Accountants under the supervision of Local Development Officers. RWSSSP Programme Support Unit did periodic review of all accounts and only minor misappropriations were observed.

The 50:50 Account received investment funds from the two governments on equal basis. The release of funds to DWSSDFs by the Government of Nepal was matched by the equal sum from the Government of Finland. The 50:50 Account was typically used for large and costly schemes, such as gravity flow piped water systems. (Figure 1).

The Self-Reliant Account was a new concept introduced in the Phase III to avoid the rigidity in planning, to simplify payments to WUCs and to ease auditing of DWSSDF. It consisted of the contributions from DDC and Finland. Similarly to 50:50 Account, a DDC first released its funds to Self-Reliant Account, which was then matched by the Finnish contribution. Self-Reliant approach was considered successful. During the final reporting year nearly 70 percent of all schemes were funded from the Self-Reliant Accounts. The Finnish funding in these schemes varied from about 25 percent in average to a maximum of 40 percent of the total scheme cost, with no less than 20 percent contributed from DDCs and VDCs. The rest was in kind contributions from the communities, mainly unskilled labour. Note that even a small gravity scheme may need substantial work on digging the pipe lines and thus, contributions as unskilled labour truly deserved to be valued and counted in.

A Support Fund for Poor in FY2003/2004 was operated as a separate component through the Self-Reliant Account to provide additional support to poor communities. These schemes piloted Participatory Poverty Ranking as means of identifying those households which needed more support.

Figure 1 District Water Supply and Sanitation Development Funds in RWSSSP



Institutional Development

RWSSSP and HESAWA were pioneering new approaches to decentralization and related institutional development. RWSSSP shifted its main partner to the Ministry of Local Development, and HESAWA to the Ministry of Community Development, Women Affairs and Children. Consequently both faced challenges in their efforts to break highly centralized systems which dominated the ministries related to water.

At district level institutional development was challenged both in Nepal and Tanzania by frequent post-rotations and sometimes unexpected re-locations of the civil servants, some of which also left the civil service attracted by better salaries and conditions in the private sector and development agencies. In Nepal continuity and institutional memory were lost also due to nationwide conflict which intensified towards the end of the programme. Yet, the DPMTs continued to function with the government officials, in absence of the elected members, still fulfilling their expected role as envisaged in the Programme Document. This included the collaboration with the local private sector whereby DPMTs selected the support organisations through formal tendering process. These technical and social support organisations included local non-governmental organisations (NGOs, CBOs), contractors and consultants. It was hoped that after phasing out RWSSSP this working modality could have continued. In Tanzania there was no "private sector" when HESAWA started, and still at the end of the programme the concept and role of "the private sector" remained rather vague.

At village level HESAWA established the Village HESAWA Committees to coordinate activities and mobilize local resources. These were largely dissolved or merged to WUGs later on. The Village Councils are still weak and the decentralization process with its capacity building efforts is yet to reach them. Nepali equivalents to Village Councils were the Village Development Committees (VDCs). In RWSSSP they were involved from the very early step in the Step-by-Step process which guided the various partners through the scheme planning and implementation process (Figure 2). VDCs also contributed financially but otherwise their role was rather that of an observer. However, many VDC Chairpersons and other members were active in promoting water and sanitation development in their villages even after VDCs as elected bodies were officially dissolved. Towards the end of RWSSSP there were plans to extend the Step-by-Step to cover also post-construction phase to ensure sustainability. It was observed that WUCs need follow up after having gained actual experience in operation and maintenance (O&M) and related fund management. This could have offered great opportunities to align their practices with the principles of good governance, in close collaboration with VDCs. Unfortunately time run out for RWSSSP in this regard.

Water users groups were key actors in both programmes. In RWSSSP the WUCs, as democratically elected representatives of the users were in charge of the planning, implementation and maintenance of their water supply and sanitation facilities. The practice was introduced in the RWSSP Phase II (1996 ->). WUC concept was nothing new in Nepal and easily adapted due to an ancient tradition of working as irrigation users groups. Yet, there were also new expectations such as procurement of the construction materials and operation the scheme budgets through their own WUC Accounts. These accounts were not shared with any government agencies nor private sector (NGO or alike), as was done in some other programmes. It was hoped that O&M Fund would have been a natural follow up, but in practice the banks were often far from the villages and establishing a regular practice with the banks was just not possible. Towards the end of the RWSSSP one of the more affluent WUCs took initiative to establish a WUC Network and initial seminars were held. Reportedly the idea had been carried on to national level. In HESAWA the WUG concept was introduced from Kenya in 1998, and considered a success even though WUGs are still not today entirely institutionalised and formally recognised. A very small number of registered Water Users Associations have been established.

In both programmes institutional development was a continuous process. Such good governance principles as transparency and accountability were gaining substance at village level through such as community meetings, WUC/WUG management practices and in Nepal, also through Public Audits

which were interestingly appreciated also by the insurgents. In Nepal during the final two years the following issues emerged:

- Participatory Poverty Ranking to rethink how local contributions could be made more poverty-sensitive, yet, enough to create a sense of ownership to ensure sustainability;
- Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation tools for WUCs to make more informed and timely decisions, to improve transparency in decision making, and to encourage community participation especially in the sanitation schemes;
- VDC Approach aiming at total coverage within a VDC to ensure that all benefit, not only those who know how to express their demand and how to contribute. This was closely linked to above mentioned Participatory Poverty Ranking and eventually also to Support Fund for the Poor which aimed to fill "gaps" in otherwise well covered VDCs;
- Post-construction follow up and capacity development, and follow up also for the HRD efforts, including a series of manuals and training events.

Human Resource Development

Both HESAWA and RWSSSP advocated appropriate, decentralised technology. Where HESAWA promoted hand dug wells, improved traditional water sources and tube wells, RWSSSP introduced rainwater harvesting and gravity flow systems, the arsenic problem in the plain areas stopping the shallow tube well construction in the Phase III. Both programmes also drilled deep tube wells. Theoretically these technology choices should have been manageable at village level.

HESAWA's HRD programme resulted in the training of 1885 Village Health Workers, 1301 Traditional Birth Attendants, 865 Village Animators, 1437 Village *Fundis* and 13 748 pump attendants, being an average of 17 persons per village. HESAWA aimed to have two trained well-caretakers (at least one woman) in each village. A total number of 5517 WUGs were trained. Their three days training event included financial issues relating to collection of water fees and managing O&M funds, as well as technical and hygiene issues such as minor repairs, cleanliness and protection of the water sources. (Flodman Becker et.al. 2003).

RWSSSP's decentralised people-oriented approach necessitated a large number of HRD activities at all levels. A range of training events, workshops and seminars, awareness campaigns and experience sharing at various levels were constantly under way. The RWSSSP training events were divided roughly into three categories:

1) Scheme-related technical and process-oriented training funded through DWSSDFs and usually conducted by a support organisation (NGO) as an essential aspect of the Step-by-Step approach and empowerment of the communities. These included such specific topics as account management;
2) Programme Support Unit funded HRD activities addressing cross-cutting themes and advocacy at all levels, with a strong focus hygiene and sanitation education, gender and arsenic awareness; and
3) Programme Support Unit coordinated and funded special packages, such as arsenic mitigation related HRD to special groups such as bio-sand filter technicians, post-construction activities and special packages for district-level focus groups, such as accountants and engineers.

The RWSSSP Phase III had more than 80,000 participants in the various HRD events. The results of the scheme-specific training, including technical training, were reflected in the smooth implementationof a large number of schemes. More than 940 persons received technical training as village maintenance workers, local latrine builders, rainwater harvesting jar masons and water technicians. Of these, 116 were women. During the final year an in house study was made to investigate the status of these women years after the training. In total 97 women responded to a survey

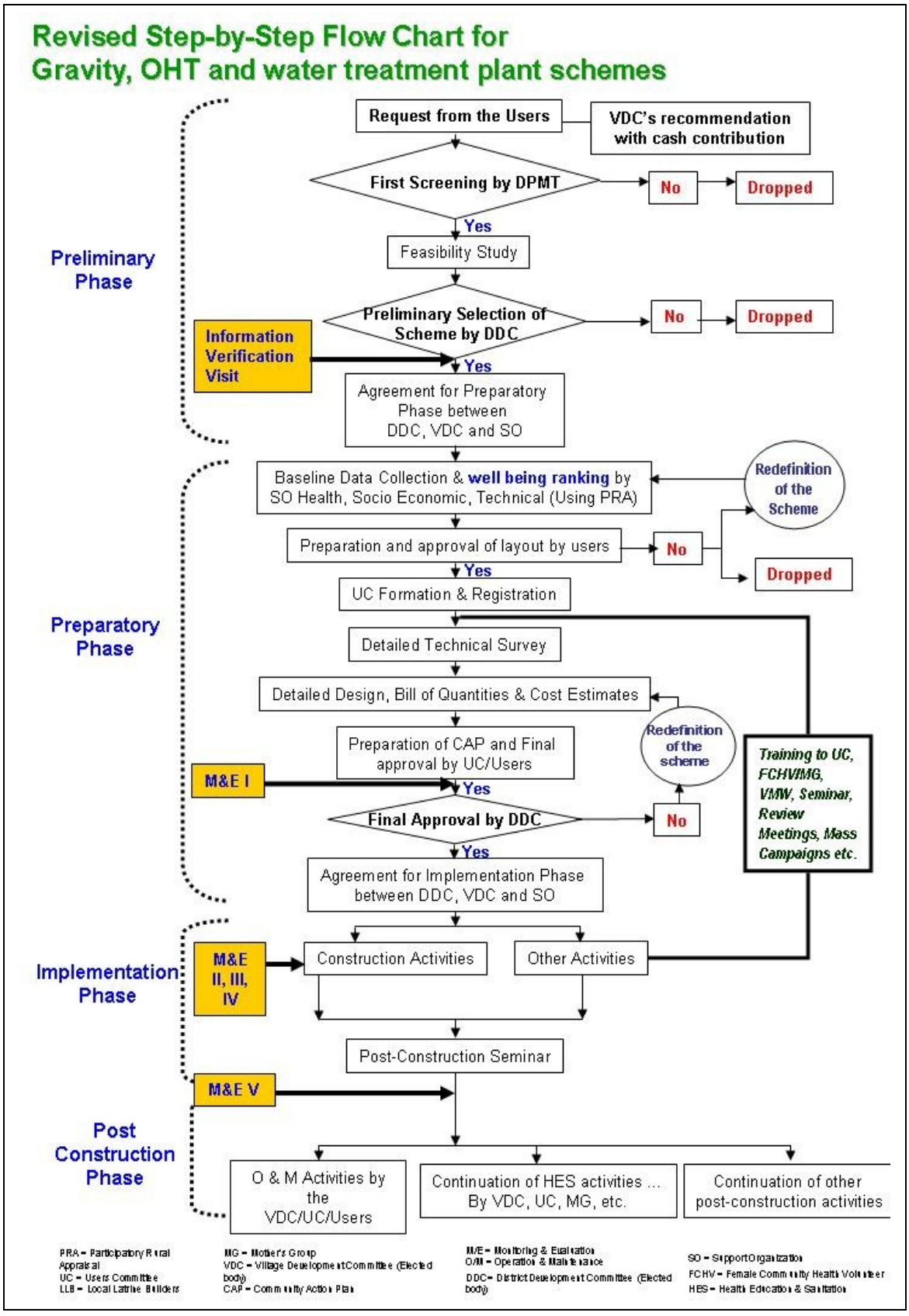


Figure 2 Step-by-Step in RWSSSP

and 95 participated in a two-day seminar. Of these, 78 percent were working and 17 percent reported this as their main source of income. It was also found that these women were very active members in their communities as only four percent stated that they were not involved in any community group whereby 39 percent were members in the Mothers' Group, 17 percent were Female Community Health Volunteers, 16 percent were members in a irrigation users group, 10 percent in the community forestry group, and 34 percent were WUC members. (Rautanen and Baaniya 2005).

Both HESAWA and RWSSSP Phase III appeared frequently in the local daily newspapers and had their own radio programmes. This approach was a considered a very cost-effective way to spread health, hygiene and sanitation messages among the larger public. In Nepal an important dimension was arsenic related public awareness.

Conclusions and recommendations

Institutions are influenced by a variety factors, both past and present. Historical precedents can leave strong legacies which cannot be tackled entirely within a water programme. Ten to fifteen years programme is still a short-term programme if it attempts to truly tackle fundamental problems, many of which are problems of governance and as such, rooted in broader political system and socio-economic development. Both HESAWA and RWSSSP lived through historical times in their respective countries, witnessing changes even in constitutional provisions and political arrangements. Both programmes were daring forerunners of what is now mainstreamed in most development programmes and articulated in national policies, also in those outside water sector. Decentralisation to users' groups and local government bodies, community participation, gender issues, cost sharing and demand-driven and responsive approaches are equally relevant themes for practically all rural development programmes. The change continues in both countries where local government reforms continue with new paradigms. Tanzania is strongly thriving for aid harmonisation and joint assistance strategies also in the water sector. Nepal is entering into an entirely new era without His Majesty's Government of Nepal but with the Government of Nepal.

How well did RWSSSP and HESAWA manage to build *"the combination of people, institutions, and practices that permits countries to achieve their development goals"*? Certainly during the programme period in both cases there were a number of capacitated individuals and organisations in place, working as effectively as could be expected under very difficult socio-economic and political circumstances. In both countries many of the key actors as individual persons remain active (if not retired), whether in the government offices or private sector. Indeed, sustainability of the *institutions* is the key challenge.

A water sector programme is certainly in a good position to pilot practical approaches into how to translate such principles as good governance into practice. HESAWA and RWSSSP provided a number of lessons learned relating to such as protection of public health and safety, environmental protection, accountability, transparency, user participation, gender and equal opportunities, and financial sustainability & transparency. Furthermore, both HESAWA and RWSSSP gave the local government bodies, users groups and the local private sector, including CBOs and NGOs, much needed opportunities to build their own capacity through first hand experiences and training events. This capacity enhancement applied to both individual and organisational levels. Both programmes also gave visibility to women and introduced gender into agenda in the context of an integrated rural development, thus giving the gender issues real life substance and credibility.

Capacity is not static and it cannot be described by a linear change: it is about incremental changes and even side-steps. Local government's capacity to manage more efficiently the present and assume new responsibilities in the future is built on the previous experiences and capacities. The underlying question is whether local governments were truly utilising all their opportunities and resources that they could have been, as efficiently as they could have done? What were and now are the *incentives* for doing so now? Similarly it is worth paying attention to the future: when or under what kind of conditions it can be said that "a local government body has capacity to perform a given responsibility"

and that this is on a sustainable basis? How can we know when this capacity is institutionalised into the local government structure, and when it is merely dependent on individuals? The future vision of "a capacitated local government institution" should be equally clear as the shared understanding concerning its capacity now. The same applies to good water governance: the vision must be a shared one with real and measurable road map.

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