

ASSIGNMENT MODULE 8

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1. Explain 5 reasons why emergencies can put people at greater risk of waterborne disease.

Drinking-water safety is one of the most important public health issues in the most emergencies and disasters. The greatest waterborne risk to health in the most emergencies is the transmission of faecal pathogens, due to inadequate sanitation, hygiene and protection of water sources (WHO, 2004).

The main reasons that in an emergency situation can lead to a higher risk of waterborne diseases are:

1. Water supply systems may be broken or contaminated so people only have unsafe water to drink.
2. Lack of latrines or other safe method for disposing of human waste forces people to defecate in the open.
3. Disruption of normal routine and regular habits means that people may not wash their hands at critical times.
4. Flies and other disease vectors may increase in the disturbed conditions following an emergency.
5. Some emergencies will force people out of their homes to refugee camps which may be in locations with insufficient resources to meet people's needs. Overcrowding can add to the increased health risk in these camps.

Displacement of people may possibly expose them to new pathogens: the disaster situation is a typical situation where the waterborne diseases and parasites have a great chance to appear. The types of contaminations fall under these categories: bacteria, protozoa, viruses, parasites, chemical and radioactive contamination (Stein, 2008).

2. Sustainability is essential in any project. Substantiate this claim. How is sustainability achieved in donor funded projects? Explain 3 aspects

The word 'sustain', that is the root of the word "sustainability", is a word derived from Latin – sub + tenere where sub meant under or towards and tenere - to hold or keep. There are several detailed meanings defined in most dictionaries, according on context (Gosling, 2013). The great part of them indicate supporting or keeping going. 'Keeping going' does not of course mean the same as 'keeping' though some notions of sustainability appear to confuse the two. Sustaining implies something that continues but it does not imply something that is static or doesn't change. It implies something dynamic and can also imply a radical change in people's practices rather than continuing with 'business as usual'.

There are many types of sustainability – ecological, economic, financial, social, political, institutional, depending on what is being sustained.

As Clayton and Radcliffe (1996) point out, some definitions of sustainability are discordant. The process of sustainable development has a historical tradition which has tried to increase the compatibility of ecological/environmental, economic and social sustainability, making each of equal importance in decision making.

Any project that is designed have to consider the aspect of sustainability, because any change that is temporary and cannot be sustain is not a real change. The improvements should remain and continue over time.

The three key pillars of the sustainability, that cannot miss in a donor funded projects are:

Pillar 1: Economic sustainability

It requires a responsible and efficient use of labour, land, technology and capital. In addition, it needs a good value for money, in order to eliminate the waste of money.

Pillar 2: Environmental sustainability

The minimization of the damages that the project activities can cause and its impact on the environment is a key aspect in the environmental sustainability. One good option that should be considered is the use of the renewable energies to limit the ecological damages and reduce the climate change.

Another critical aspect is the production of waste that have to be minimized: since almost all running activities includes the production all waste, the reduction of the production has to be always kept in mind.

Pillar 3: Social sustainability

The social aspect of the sustainability is the one that has the higher risk to be underestimated, but it is as important as the others. It is important to improve the quality of life for the population and the reduction of poverty.

3. How would you explain what advocacy means to a colleague who is not a WASH worker? Explain the difference between policy advocacy and programme advocacy.

Advocacy means making a case in support of a particular cause. It is a process that aims to influence decisions within political, economic and social systems and institutions.

Policy advocacy involves trying to influence senior politicians who are responsible for policy setting and aims to get changes in policies and legislation. Programme advocacy is more localised and directed to make changes in the opinions and attitudes of local leaders.

In an urban WASH context, advocacy may include many activities that you and your organisation undertake including engaging opinion leaders, addressing community meetings, media campaigns and public speaking.

In many cases, it is the implementation of a particular policy that is the problem, not the policy itself. In such cases, research should focus on the blockages to implementation. For example, a government policy may dictate that there should be a certain level of sanitation per household of population throughout the country, but corrupt local councillors in some areas may have prevented the implementation of this policy. In this example, advocacy aimed at national level policy makers is misplaced. It ignores the root of the problem, whereas lobbying for a more open and accountable local council may prove more effective.

Advocacy may be targeted at various political contexts, but in the development sector it will most often need to be targeted at a number of different contexts at the same time – particularly at local, national and international levels. Effective advocacy work, therefore, demands good communication between actors operating at these different levels. After all, the causes of the development problems that advocacy seeks to tackle are themselves complex and interconnected at every level (WaterAid, 2007).

Advocacy should be strategic and use well-designed and organised activities to influence policy or decision makers about the important issues that you think will affect the water supply, sanitation and hygiene of your community. For instance, urban WASH policy, legislation and regulations may be in place but might not be applied. The operating WASH staff of an area should identify these gaps and advocate the use of existing structures and mechanisms to try to close them.

4. Outline four particular challenges involved in urban WASH advocacy.

Supporting local and national networks to influence those who create policies, laws, regulations and budgets may present significant challenges. Belonging to a network can take up a lot of time and many of the activities involved are complex and difficult to achieve. These challenging activities could include:

1. training communities, community leaders, other network members and local water boards and associations on their rights and responsibilities regarding urban WASH laws, budgets and policies
2. educating national and local political leaders on urban WASH
3. strengthening policy dialogues between communities, civil society groups and decision makers
4. urging increased funding for government-funded urban WASH programmes
5. supporting high-quality urban WASH messaging in local news media etc. may require more time and resources.

All of these advocacy initiatives are likely to require considerable time and resources but influencing decision makers and strengthening their political will is essential for making any large-scale change.

The task of the WASH staff should be to identify an important advocacy initiative in the local context. In relation to this advocacy initiative, a key point is to determine which activities are put in place in the advocacy plan to ensure urban WASH services are better promoted and resourced in your locality or organisation. For each activity, it should be considered who should undertake it, how it should be undertaken, what resources will be required and what your role will be.

It may depend which strategy and decisions are taken, but some of these activities that are taken could be: convening meetings, public speaking, messages through local media, and consultations with the user community. The option of developing a local network may also be considered. This might involve the municipal government, youth groups, and women's groups, non-governmental agencies and local traders.

5. What do you understand by community mobilization? Describe briefly how it can be achieved.

b). Explain why knowing your community is essential for effective community mobilization.

Community mobilisation is the process of mobilising people within communities. This means encouraging and supporting them to act together to achieve desired community goals. Communities can be mobilised through helping them to identify their priorities, resources, needs and solutions.

Knowing the community is essential for effective community mobilisation because you need to understand the people in the community and the issues that are important to them. Facilitators should be familiar with the social structure of the community and the different groups. Knowing about language, culture, religion and economic status are also important.

It is important to identify the key stakeholders who have influence of others and who are likely to lead any decision-making process. For WASH projects, the current water supply situation, sanitation habits and health status of the community are also essential information.

Taking a definition used in the health sector, community mobilization was defined as “a collective response to community-defined social and health needs and give communities effective voice in programme delivery, service and policy” (Fawcett et al., 2000, quoted in Obregon & Waisebord, 2012).

In transitional economies, community-driven philosophy is the one that best can lead to achieve effective decision-making and this can happen only when the community is well known. This knowledge will help the understanding of the decision-making process and the local problem-solving capacity, that is necessary to develop a strategy for the support of that community (Narayan-Parker, 2002). Other two key aspects are the inclusion and the participation of the communities in the meeting and any other activity.

Another element that is crucial is explained by Hirabayashi (1998) the leadership in the community and the knowledge of the characteristics of the leaders, because it is very relevant at the time of implementation of an activity where the effectiveness can be more or less according to the knowledge of the internal dynamics of the community.

In the same line, studies conducted by the US Institute of Medicine (1978) about forty years ago confirmed that a weak community mobilization led to a low effectiveness of the project or sometimes to its failure.

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