**Assignment 1:**

1. ***Suppose you work with a community radio station, describe what your radio station would do to address water, sanitation and hygiene issues with regard to your i) audience, and ii) WASH messages?***

Community radio stations are invaluable assets in achieving maximum outreach in the various communities they air. This is due to their inherent characteristics of broadcasting in the language of the locals as well as having presenters who are from the community. This is vital because they understand the people and their needs to a better degree. They also have connections with local leaders within the community as well as other opinion shapers. If I worked in such a radio station serving a community with water, sanitation and hygiene issues I would prioritize the following aspects of the audience and WASH messages to ensure maximum effect:

1. Ensuring that my audience understands that the success of WASH initiatives by them or external actors is completely dependent on the full cooperation and participation of the entire community. It would be my goal to make sure that they understand that the health and wellbeing of the community is a collective responsibility. I would prioritize messages that assure them that the choice to live in a healthy environment is theirs. Making them understand the personal gains of adopting healthier lifestyles by supporting WASH initiatives would be an important role of the radio station; such benefits as better health resulting in savings on health care costs, reduced risk to women and girls while searching for water, more time spent working and attending school and a better family life.
2. Community participation- Hosting interactive shows where I would invite various stakeholders within the community to discuss different ways to solve their most pressing needs as pertains to water and proper sanitation and hygiene. Those invited would vary from local leaders, elders, youth leaders to representatives of CBO’s and SHG’s involved in various WASH initiatives. The aim would be to provide them a platform through which they can reach even more of the community because they are respected in the community. WASH messages pushed by them would have a greater chance of affecting behavior and attitude change within the community concerning WASH issues. Such a show would also allow community members to call in or send messages with questions and/or suggestions further enhancing community participation in addressing WASH challenges.
3. Sustainability- Ensuring long-term success of various WASH initiatives in the community by lobbying local leaders, the public, CBO’s and all stakeholders to adopt a sense of ownership of the projects through various shows on the radio. This includes campaigning for locals to be trained and empowered to operate and maintain said initiatives even after they have been handed over to the community.
4. Social inclusion- I would also ensure that the most vulnerable in the community have a voice in matters WASH; that the initiatives are driven to be fair and equitable even to the most at risk in the society through campaigns by the radio station. Additionally, a special segment where women and girls are the focus would be part of the program. This is because in most communities, they are the most involved and affected by lack water and proper sanitation and hygiene facilities. The design and implementation of any WASH interventions would only be effective if they addressed key issues affecting women and girls making their input extremely vital.
5. Private sector involvement- The radio station would also be a great platform for collaborating with, and seeking involvement of the private sector to push for the provision of better sanitation and hygiene facilities. Sanitation marketing is a great alternative to traditional forms of funding for WASH products. Some products in their nature require investments from the potential beneficiaries. Examples include marketing of various soaps, water filters, chlorine tablets, some ready-made toilets and pest control products to limit growth of disease spreading vectors.
6. Emergency communication- The radio station would be a tool to disseminate information quickly in the event of disease breakouts as well as informing the community of how to prevent further spread of said diseases. This would involve close collaboration with public health experts within the community. Additionally, the radio station would seek to engage experts in public health as well as health and sanitation from time to time to educate the community on best practices to ensure they have safe water and to maintain acceptable levels of sanitation and hygiene to prevent spread of diseases.
7. Lobbying for sustainable water usage- To ensure sustainable use of available water resources, messages creating awareness on the scarcity of safe water for personal and domestic use would be shared through the radio. The community would also be advised on the importance of investing in water harvesting and storage equipment as well as to manage their water resources vigilantly to prevent both contamination and overuse. This should be community run and their participation in the management of their water sources would be encouraged through the radio station.
8. Fostering collective responsibility for WASH facilities/resources- Campaigns against behaviors that undermine the effectiveness of good WASH initiatives such as illegal connections to tapped water and sewers systems, refusal to pay bills, wastage of water, blockage of drains and vandalism of meters would be part of the radios programming for WASH sensitization.
9. ***In your own words, what is your understanding of public health and what are its key elements?***

Public health is the data driven approach of promoting safety, good health and wellbeing of a population by preventing diseases and bodily injury through research, education and policymaking. Activities to ensure good public health are designed to encourage an environment in which people can maintain or improve their health and wellbeing. It targets entire populations’ as opposed to individuals’ health and wellbeing, and is preventive as opposed to curative.

The key elements of good public health practice are as outlined below:

1. Equitable- By ensuring that all members of the community have access to health facilities without discrimination by gender, tribe, religion, disability, political affiliation or any other factor. The vulnerable in the community must be identified and served.
2. Empowering- By informing and educating the public about health issues with particular attention to the most vulnerable in the community and at risk of neglect.
3. Effective- This is achieved through lobbying for the right legislation to be passed in to law and thereafter enforcing the laws to protect the health and safety of the population; Developing policies that support community health initiatives; ensuring the presence of adequate qualified public health workforce matching the size of the population.
4. Evidence-based- Through research in to alternative solutions to health and safety problems; diagnosing and investigating health problems and potential hazards in the community promptly; continuously surveilling the health situation of the community to be ahead of any potential dangers to their health.
5. Fair- In conducting public health initiatives, everything must be done in the most humane manner for instance where chemical control of disease carrying vectors is required or where people have to be evicted from their homes. The effectiveness and accessibility of health services must be reviewed continually.
6. ***Public health is about partnership between the different players. Explain how the role of international non-profit/NGO in terms of***
7. ***recruitment ii) training iii) funding and iv) monitoring for public health projects contribute to the success or failure of those projects in the developing countries***

International non-profit organizations are one of the most important players in public health projects and by extension WASH initiatives. Their role in recruitment, training, funding and monitoring of such projects in developing countries are key to their success or failure in the short and long term.

1. Recruitment- This is an important aspect of any project. Acquiring the correct personnel with both the right attitude and qualifications determines greatly the success or failure of a given project. As a key player in such projects, NGO’s should actively participate in this activity and in the setting of job descriptions and required qualifications. Emphasis should be on tapping as much as possible in to the community for qualified locals. This has proven benefits including having staff with great knowledge of the locality, their challenges, resources, and above all, it empowers those in the community. This ensures that the community is involved deeply in the project from the onset. Recruitment should also be equitable and this and be overseen by the NGO. The vulnerable as well as women should be given as many positions as possible. If the recruitment is fair and equitable, the project will enjoy considerable support from the community it seeks to benefit. Those recruited will be excellent ambassadors for the project, which is a first step towards fostering a sense of communal ownership for the project. This in turn is a major step towards ensuring the projects sustainability in the long term.
2. Training- This is a significant facet of any project or initiative in a community. For a project to be viable in the long term there must be people within the community adequately trained to operate and maintain the facilities established under said projects. Examples include water treatment and distribution facilities, and solid and liquid waste management facilities. Such projects bear little investment value if they cannot serve people for the entirety of their design lives; because benefits would only accrue to the community in the short term. Capacity development of government officials is also key to the success of many such projects and could be driven by NGO’s. The support, understanding and appreciation of projects by local leadership is vital for their short-term and long-term success. Training also offers an avenue to ensure a participatory approach to projects aside form empowering various members of the community. Community involvement through trainings for instance in WASH initiatives is important in ensuring inclusivity of women, girls, the disabled and other marginalized members of the community in coming up with solutions for their problems. As earlier mentioned, the better the level of community participation in a project through various means including training, the more likely that a project becomes sustainable.
3. Funding- NGO’s should play an active role in vetting potential projects to ensure that the projects that offer the best value for money in terms of benefits to the community are given priority. This is because inevitably, funds are scarce. In addition, for any project chosen, sufficient funds should be set aside for proper training and acquiring of resources for operation and maintenance of the project during their design life. This is especially important for WASH projects, which many times are not sustainable. Priority should be given to technology that require minimum attention to operate. In the initial stages NGO’s can also intercede for affected or beneficiary communities with donor agencies to secure favorable funding packages including full or partial grants for various projects. In the operational life of projects, NGO’s should steer the community and local leadership towards self-sustaining models of operation for instance for water supply projects. Favorable rates should be determined to fund the operational and maintenance costs of such facilities. Concerning sanitation, NGO’s can collaborate with the private sector to market and create both demand and supply of private latrines.
4. Monitoring- An NGO must have internal checks for continuous monitoring and evaluation of projects to ensure the proper utilization of donor money. Monitoring and evaluation if done properly ensures that interventions and projects realize rapid impact on the community while also ensuring the sustainability of the projects in the long-term. Monitoring how the achievement of various milestones of projects relate to the fiscal progress of the project is vital in establishing whether a project is on course or not. It enables the donors and other stakeholders to identify and address challenges on time to ensure the successful and economic completion of projects. Since funds are scarce as compared to the needs of a population, it is vital that NGO’s utilize the little that is available in the projects that yield the most benefits for the community. Monitoring and evaluation if done properly ensures that there is minimal wastage of resources. This also improves donor confidence and leaves way for additional funding which is all to the benefit of the community.