Diploma in water, hygiene and sanitation

Diploma in WASH assignment 1

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In this presentation I will look at water hygiene and sanitation, I will look at how to address the relevant WASH messages and relatable to an audience. I will also present my understanding of what is public health and public health key elements. I will look at how international non profit organizations or NGO contribute to public health including staffing, trainings, funding and monitoring mainly in projects in developing countries.

Question1. 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 1) audience, and 2) WASH messages?

The main body of this presentation with show how the radio station will bring to the audience attention the following basic concepts related to water sanitation and hygiene:

* Education
* communication
* Community participation
* Community development
* Awareness raising and influencing public opinion
* Policy change
* Create demand for services
* Changing habits
* Marketing water, hygiene and sanitation projects

Case studies show that the media can have an immense educating impact on the public opinion and behaviour (Burke 1999). Media like radio plays a significant role in information sharing, community development and raising awareness in water, hygiene and sanitation. It is a one of the main media and source of information in developing countries as even laymen can easily understand the message. It has been used by many to importantly to raise awareness and pass information. The community radio station would communicate water, sanitation and hygiene messages, It would be for information sharing with in the community. It would address health and hygiene promotion, giving relevant information of using clean water, storage of clean water, latrine use and construction, food preparation and storage, signs of disease and how to help the affect person for example how to prepare oral rehydration solution for people affected by diarrhoeal diseases. It would promote community development and participation in projects within the community. The audience should receive messages that influence and change public opinion and behaviours to water, hygiene and sanitation in turn putting public pressure on local policy whether it be government policy or local traditions*,* indirectly influencing decision making (SSWM). Threw the content of the shows audiences should be motivated to build oral traditions that will be used to pass strong applicable water, hygiene and sanitation norms and values. For example in location where latrine use is not popular or not considered a necessity oral traditional stories should cause behavioural change. Content of messages should help audiences create demand for services that are relevant, safe and in reachable distances, thus giving them also correct information to make informed decisions about issues pertinent to them giving the population self determination. The audience should be influences by the content of the programming to improve and diversify knowledge and skills. Knowledge such as what is hygiene and sanitation, how does it affect their daily lives and skills both technical and academic. For example in Mozambique in 2019 MSF used radio messages to inform and create water hygiene committees as well in Zimbabwe in 2018 threw radio and community health clubs MSF passed information on what is cholera, what are the signs of cholera, what to do when you suspect that a person has cholera, the use of chlorinated water and to inform the population of location of contaminated boreholes. Threw such messages the community came together to identify the source of contamination and put pressure on the City of Harare to deal with water shortages and out dated sewage systems.

Summarised the media are useful for the following reasons (WATERAID 2007):

* Change public attitudes and behaviour
* Inform the public about your issue and proposed solutions
* Recruit allies among the public and decision-makers
* Raise money for your cause
* Get your issue onto the political public agenda
* Make your issue visible and credible in policy debate
* Influence decision-makers and opinion leaders

(Media campaigns as a tool to influence both the public opinion and policy makers. Para 2)

 The WASH messages should pass the what? So what? Now what? Test.(WATER AID 2007) What refers to the information, messages and campaigns been passed to the communities. So what deals with the reasons, actions and outcomes of the message and now what deals with mainly the way forward giving solutions, basically prescribing the remedy to issues raised in the conveyed message? I will break down the WASH messages given in the radio campaign as follows:

Message content:

Portable water

Water is a fundamental human need and right, everyone should have access to sufficient safe water. Every person requires 20 to 50 litres of safe water per day depending on context culture and religion. The main messages that will be passed would be related to use of portable water, water source, treated water, water storage, water conservation and source of water contamination. The message would clearly show what is portable water, that is water with NTU of less than 5, collected from an uncontaminated source mainly sub terrain like boreholes with a good sanitary seal, treated water for storage reservoirs or council or municipality taps. The message should clearly define the difference between clean, grey and black water. Portable water is a necessity for prevention of diseases, all water borne disease are result of consuming unsafe contaminated water. One of the messages that would be provided is educating and encouraging the community to treat water through for example bucket chlorination. Bucket chlorination can be done through many different chlorine products. Skills and knowledge of what these products are, how to treat the water and why treat the water are all essential content of the radio programming. Together with the message of treated water should be the accompanying sermon of how to store the clean water in clean containers. One of the most important information that should be availed to the communities is the different sources of water. Why surface source are not considers safe as they are easily contaminated by human facial matter, waste and other contaminates. A clear picture should be painted of how surface water is contaminated and source of contamination. The audience must be well educated on the dangers posed by this contaminated water and encouraged to treat it if it’s the only available source. The community must be educated on the advantages of using sub terrain water, mainly boreholes and sealed wells. They must also be encouraged and empowered by the message to demand safe portable water.

Sanitation and hygiene

In 2010, the UN General Assembly recognized access to safe and clean drinking water and sanitation as a human right (WHO website; par 1). Sanitation is one of the most important parts of community health and well been. Sanitation has a direct impact on social and economical growth of any community. Content of the radio messages should educate people on the impotence of latrines, how to use and construct latrines. The impotence of proper disposal of waste be it excreta, industrial or house hold. They should be educated on the direct impact of improper disposal of excreta, open field deification and their health. One of the basic sanitation messages conveyed should be of hand washing, when to wash hands, why to wash hands and how to wash hands. Sanitation messages must try and change people’s attitudes to sanitation. One cannot separate hygiene and sanitation as the two are core related, the goal of hygiene promotion is to help people understand and develop good hygiene practices to prevent disease and promote positive attitudes towards good health practices (Essential hygiene messages WHO, parr2). The hygiene promotion content should have a approach to two main keys that is personal hygiene and community hygiene. The messages should build and strengthen both approaches. The message must educate people and also lower high risk behaviour for example hand washing, using soap and washing fruits or vegetables before consumption. The hygiene messages should also encourage community discussion because (Hygiene promotion is not simply a matter of providing information. It is more a dialogue with communities about hygiene and related health problems, to encourage improved hygiene practices. (Essential hygiene messages WHO. Parr 6)

Question 2: In your own words, what is your understanding of public health and what are its key elements?

Public health is protecting and improving health of people and their communities through health promotion, research, prevention and responding. Public health cover a wide array of sectors and its main concern is with protecting the health of an entire population. Public health unlike curative health looks at prevention, ways to avoid diseases and outbreaks. It also looks at how to deal with the diseases or outbreak and how to contain it and what to do after the outbreak. Whereas curative only looks at treating the individual who is already sick. Public health is the protection not only an individual’s life and health, it is also protection of community health and national health through organized, researched and proven concepts giving organizations, communities and individuals informed choices and knowledge. How public health works is through educational programmes, recommending policy, administrative services and conducting research. It monitors the health state of the community and identifies potential problem. Public health informs, educates and empowers people about health issues particularly those underserved and those at high risk. Public health core areas are protection, promotion and prevention.

The key elements of public health are monitor, inform, educate, empower and develop polices and plans.

The first key element is monitoring the health status of a population through this identification of community health problems. Public health diagnoses and investigates health problems and health hazards in the community. This is achieved threw epidemiology, statics and biomedical science. Epidemiology is the study of epidemic, it focuses on population health identifying and examining common exposures and disease trends, it looks at causes of diseases and infection. Statics is the collection of data; this data will help show trends and identify high risk area. Biomedical science “examines viral, bacterial, and parasitic disease etiology” (PH1: Chapter 1: Public Health: Science, Politics, and Prevention: Y Chinoch). The second key element is to inform, educate and empower the community about health issues. This is archived through the development and dissemination of information. The information should educate and promote activities that reduce health risks. Health promotion is an essential part and key element of public health; this is done through community outreach programmes, door to door campaigns, through various media, verbal, electronic and print. The information shared helps build knowledge and shape a population attitude also gives the population the capacity for informed decision making choices. The health promotion develops skills and behaviours for a healthily living ultimately preventing life loss. Mobilization of community partnership to solve health problem faced in the communities is an educational part of public health. Part of the empowering in public health is also helps link people to the needed personal health.

Diagnosis and investigating health problems and health hazards in a community is part of public health surveillance. Through this health surveillance problems are identified and solution researched and tested, some of these even become national and international health policy and protocols for example vaccination, hand washing and even use of seat belts. Plan, policies and protocols developed from public health surveillance are meant to protect and ensure healthy and safe population. Such policies also reduce government expenditure in the health sector reducing he burden on the tax payer. Public health does not only look at prevention but also it links people to personal health care, health care protocols in health institutes, treatment and assuring the provision of health care were not available.

Policy and plan development is a key element of public health and is mainly encompasses empowering, research and development of policy. After diagnosing, investigating and researching health problems and hazards in the communities’, policy and plans are developed as prevention and a prescription to health problems and hazards. Some of these policies become laws and regulations to protect and ensure public safety overall leading to a health community. A good example is the treatment of sewage before it is reintroduced back into the water system.

1. Question 3; Public health is about partnership between the different players. Explain how the role of international non-profit/NGO in terms of
2. 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

The main tasks of international non-profit organization or NGO in public health system are to provide services and advocacy, their provision of services include medical and social as well as integrated activities, material, financial support, educational, information services, training and advocacy. An important role of NGO is participation in the formation of public health policy.

International non-profit organizations or NGO recruit a lot of qualified and specialized staff both locally and internationally. Local staffs are recruited locally in the area where the project is based or nationally from other parts of the country. Usually the trend is that less skilled staff is recruited locally and more skilled from other regions or internationally but this main based on the context. NGO’s attract usually a lot of skilled qualified people because their remuneration is usually higher than offered by the government. As a result these projects have highly skilled specialized individuals and who are usually motivated due to high remuneration which contributes a lot to the success of the projects. This recruitment also has disadvantages that contribute to failures in public health project, when NGO’s recruit staff they remove staff from smaller NGO’s that pay less or from government project and departments creating a lack and shortage of such skill causing a failure in public health projects. The bringing in of international staff also has an advantage and disadvantage; they bring skilled, experienced staff who contributes to the success of the project. On the other hand the policy does not encourage local growth or experience. When such projects are inherited by government or local communities they usually fail because the same skill force cannot be maintained and this is mainly because the party inheriting cannot maintain the salaries and skilled people leave for greener pastures.

NGO’s contribute a lot to the skills and experience and protocol of developing countries. They invest a significant amount into training, research and development. Training, mentoring and development develop local skills and knowledge, empowering and creating community ownership of public health projects. Workshops and training carried out in the communities has a inclusive affect of the population in the project. They help identify hidden talents and skills. Training is also used by NGO’s to market the projects; all this contributes to the longevity and success of public heath projects in developing countries. Projects that are handed over to local populations usually fail if no training were done and the necessary skills are not available

International non-profit organizations or NGO’s usually have a lot of funding from western government or individual donation and funds. They usually fund public health projects threw the national government or directly i.e. implementing the project. Depending on funding these project will have a wide or small impact, funding also determines the sizes of the population in the developing countries that is encompassed by the project. The norm is that bigger and highly funded projects have more impact and also contribute to government policies and protocols for example vaccination campaigns. Well funded projects also tend to have a long term life span and these have a bigger impact on the population. As public health project mainly look at prevention, this kind of intervention usually a lot of funding to implement especially related to infrastructure. International non-profit organizations or NGO’s fund governments to implement public health projects, this has advantages and disadvantages which contribute to both the success and failure of such projects. This kind of funding has the advantage that the government can develop infrastructure that has longer term impact on the population as well as formulate policy and protocols that have an impact on a national level. There are also disadvantages that contribute to the failure of projects, in developing countries we have had the experience that such funding does not always go to the intend projects or the projects are done sub standard. This also creates corruption in the government and has a detrimental effect on the project. I also have a personal view that because of the funding contributed by the NGO’s governments in developing countries do not take up their mandatory role becoming too dependent on international funding this has a big impact on public health. International funding creates a dependency syndrome in the population of developing countries which in my view has a great impact on the public heath most of the time a negative effect.

Monitoring is a key component of any public health project. Many developing if not all have public health project or developmental projects in order to improve the standard of living of their citizens. This means a huge amount of funds are poured into such project and it’s important to get value for money for the donors, government and the beneficiaries and the aspect that ensure and visualizes these results is project monitoring. “Monitoring is viewed as a process that provides information and ensures the use of such information by management to assess project effects- both intentional and unintentional- and their impact.”(The role of monitoring and evaluation in projects: F.AO Otieno). NGO’s have a lot of monitoring of public health projects, they monitor finances, process and impact of these projects and this is done in order that the intended output is achieved. To ensure continuous funding from donors and increase longevity of such projects they play a key role insuring success of such project.

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