

Journal Assignment 6 Due Session 13

The readings for this week deal with the advantages and challenges of community participation in W&S projects. As you complete the readings, here are some questions you might want to consider:

The term 'participation' means different things to different people--it is even treated somewhat differently across the three papers this week. What are the various forms of participation that we might want to encourage as W&S planners? Are there circumstances under which we might actually want to *discourage* community participation in planning, implementation, and/or ongoing maintenance? What are the goals of various forms of participation in your view--remember the distinction between 'strategic' and 'practical' participation (or 'means versus ends') that was introduced during earlier class sessions.

One of the critiques of highly participatory W&S planning approaches is that substantial time and resources must be devoted to a small number of communities, thus excluding many others from a given project. What strategies might we employ either to reduce the time/resources needed without sacrificing the quality of participation in W&S planning, and/or increase the likelihood that a given project will result in spontaneous spillover effects in the form of scaling up to other communities?

In our discussion of the 'demand-responsive' approach to W&S planning, we saw evidence of the dangers of 'under shooting' community preferences by providing levels of service that were lower than those that households were willing and able to pay for. (As one example, remember the public tap system in Kerala that went unused because households didn't view this as an improvement over private wells.) Yet evidence from this week's readings suggests that simple technologies and less complex projects are associated with greater sustainability, particularly in communities undertaking their first such project. How should we make sense of the apparent contradiction in these findings?

What are some of the equity issues that arise when structuring a participatory W&S planning process? How should participation requirements be established, and by whom? What is the implication of Khwaja's finding that strong leaders are associated with more sustainable projects for the kind of broad-based, inclusive planning processes that we typically associate with the term 'participation'?