

1st International Conference of the GWOPA

CONCLUSIONS ON COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION PRACTICES 4 Messages +

Zaragoza. 3-4 December 2009

**1st International Conference of the Global
Water Operators' Partnerships Alliance**
Raising Awareness and Communicating the Urgency to Act
Zaragoza, Spain. 3-4 December 2009



UN HABITAT
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE
Global Water Operators' Partnerships Alliance

We had some messages from the Authorities +:

.....About Zaragoza as a water saving city;

.....the importance of participation of stakeholders in River Basin Organizations;

.....the importance for the Regional Government of differentiating between public services and the private providers of the service

We discussed.....

.....the Importance **of water utilities** in improving access to water supply and basic sanitation..

.....and in fulfilling **citizen's expectations and needs** in meeting the MDGs.

Message 1 There is an important gap in communication and awareness raising

- There is a **SPECIFIC** need to work on **communication models FOR THE POOR ..**

and also

- on communicating **inspiring solutions to support extension of services of WOs to poor people..**

and consider...

-Need to refocus:not enough on **sanitation**
-involving **medium size and small water operators** as the main providers for poor populations.
- Put communication strategies **to the service of the MDGs**. Include non-served populations in communication strategies.

Key Message 2

The focus in communication is strategic for the operators themselves....

- Key tool to build **confidence** and trust of the public on water operators
 - vital to the development of the company for the mission of public service
- ...very important to maintain regular relationship with the users

Key Message 3

BEYOND COMMUNICATION THINK OF THE

- Use communication to **raise social participation**
- Use communication to **improve transparency**
- Communication should provide **tools to empower** people
- Consider **users**, not only as recipients, but as **active actors**.
Listen to the communities: what are the services they expect?

In this sense..

1. **Be inclusive.** Communication goes beyond just communicating to the users; it shall consider all stakeholders
2. **Be proactive.** Need to do more than just inform. Establish a regular public consultation and information mechanism
3. **Consider users as partners,** not just as instruments/recipients. Respond to their needs through ongoing consultation

Key message 4 : Go beyond customers

- Invest in **internal and external** communication (ensure a 2-way dialog).
- Communication campaigns also need to aim government, regulators, staff, etc.
- Communicate/advocate to increase political will.

Key message 5: There is a lot there in the TOOLKIT of communication and information practices

But

- We need to MEASURE and communicate also the positive impact of communication practices (make results known) .. Difficult to measure behaviour change..
- Importance of developing a sense of ownership for awareness raising.
- Consider that working with targeted audiences like the children help in sustaining behavioral change. They change the adults..
- Prevention (of behavior through education) and correction of existing behavior (join campaigns) are complementary elements.

Also...

Guarantee continuity of actions to build trust, not just when conflict arises

Consider differences in perceptions

- Urban and rural populations
- Different socio-economic categories of users

Communication approaches depends on the environment – no one size fits all approach

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To take advantage of what there is out there...

- Join the WATER SMART Campaign
- Get involved in exchanges through WOPs
- Join our communicators network..... with the Communication Champions