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Serving all urban consumers - a marketing approach to water services in low- and middle-income countries: Book 3 - PREPP - utility consultation with the urban poor

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Chapter 8

Facilitating PREPP

This chapter looks at two things, how to plan the number and location of PREPP sessions and how to facilitate a session. As already indicated it is possible to adapt the approach but here the minimum framework for effective PREPP work is presented. The guidelines for facilitating a PREPP session are based on a single event comprising of one female and one male focus group facilitated by the suggested team.

Under each step there is

- A summary of the topic area and tools used
- An indication of who is involved
- An indication of timing
- A list of required resources
- A step-by-step guide to facilitation
- Examples of recording formats
- An indicative list of questions

8.1 Planning a PREPP programme

Sample population and number of sessions

As with all types of survey a first step in using PREPP is to work out how many people to include. Selecting a sample, or select people from the population based on criteria related to what the survey is trying to find out is the normal approach. Once this is agreed the research team applies a mathematical technique to working out how many people to survey and who these people will be. Realistically this approach is very difficult to predetermine when using PREPP. This is because the session is likely to be set up through an intermediary, for example a community leader or an NGO rather than a deliberate random sampling exercise. PREPP is also looking for trends and common preferences rather than precise measures. This means that it is important to explain to the intermediary the purpose of the session, the kind of people it is aimed at and the approximate numbers needed. It is equally important to state the need both for men and women to participate. As with all community development work, who participates on the day will inevitably be subject to the availability of community members. People may say yes but have other pressing things to do, they may change their minds or may want to participate at short

notice because they are curious about the subject. Sensitivity and common sense is required.

The following guidelines will help to get PREPP sampling right:

Sample population

Water consumers, preferably though not exclusively heads of households (often a man) and the main water collector (often a woman) living at least semi-permanently in an identified low-income area. This does not include community leaders or other people with wide influence.

Number of participants

8-10 men and 8-10 women (per session)

Number of sessions

At least two sessions per community or ward.

This means two women's groups and two men's groups.

Experience in using PREPP has shown that people's perceptions, priorities and preferences often vary significantly between one informal settlement and the next. This is because of the variability in socio-economic characteristics of the residents, differences in the service levels and the level of development activities either with NGOs, the utility or municipality. If the information is to be used for planning services for more than one informal settlement, then at least two PREPP sessions are needed in each settlement.

More sessions will be required in larger informal settlements to capture the diversity of the groups, experiences and perceptions within that area. Experienced local social scientists will be able to advise on the precise number and location of the PREPP sessions that will be needed in the proposed research areas, in order to capture the diversity of groups and experiences. Good quality market segmentation plans can assist in defining where the target consumer groups are located.

If a number of PREPP sessions are envisaged in different parts of a city, it is preferable to arrange for the assembled multi-disciplinary PREPP team(s) to complete all the surveys as part of the same assignment. This should ensure continuity of approach, effective data collation and analysis to inform strategic and investment planning.

Duration

As a guide if 10 PREPP sessions are proposed in different parts of a city, then these should be completed in one four week period. Typical time requirements for the key PREPP activities are as follows:

- five days to arrange for the production of drawings, liaison with the identified community and completion of PREPP team training
- one day per PREPP session (male and female). Although a session usually only takes two to three hours, the rest of the day is required for logistics, arranging the next session and writing up the results.
- three to five days (depending on sample size) at the end of the session schedule to analyse and document the findings.

Task durations will of course vary depending on the capacities of the teams and local logistical issues. Additional time should be allowed (prior to commencing the PREPP training) for research into feasible options and the costing of those options. This will involve the utility engineer and perhaps other managers.

8.2 Planning a PREPP session

Planning is an essential part of every PREPP session and its importance cannot be over emphasised. Effective planning can ensure that:

- good use is made of time - a focus group session should last no more than two hours;
- the PREPP team works well together, is familiar with the tools and drawings and that each member is fully aware of his/her roles and responsibilities;
- the relevant community leaders have been informed and the purpose of PREPP has been fully explained;
- the group is ready when the PREPP team arrives, that the venue is adequate and that the group composition is representative of the local community (men and women);
- transport is available, materials and drawings are ready and photocopied.

Most importantly planning extends to being ready for the activities that will take place after the session; writing up the data, undertaking the analysis and conducting any necessary follow up. It is suggested that a 'lead facilitator' is designated with responsibility for overall coordination, delegation of activities, logistical planning and pre-session team training.

The following checklist in Box 8.1 will assist effective planning.

8.3 Step by step guide to facilitating a PREPP session

Preliminary activity: Getting to know the local area

One way to orientate the PREPP team is to conduct an observation walk either before or soon after the focus group session. This serves a number of purposes including

- familiarizing the team with the local area;
- showing them first hand the existing water sources and coping strategies;
- building a relationship with local the community;
- presence of the utility other than in a vehicle or office; and
- providing an opportunity for fact-finding and verification or triangulation of information gained during the PREPP process.

Following orientation the team is ready to facilitate a session.

Box 8.1. PREPP planning checklist

1. Form PREPP team

Hire or secure participation of two facilitators bearing in mind the following criteria:

- able to fulfil ToR
- local language skills·good spoken and written English
- community development and or NGO background
- excellent communication skills·social development perspective
- willing and able to commit required time during research period
- flexible and open
- willing to learn quickly about the water sector/area of research
- able and willing to work in a team

Hire or secure the participation of two assistants bearing in mind the following criteria:

- able to fulfil ToR
- local language skills
- good spoken and written English skills
- willing and able to commit required time during research period
- able and willing to work in a team
- good listening skills

Secure participation of a utility based Engineer and request that he/she does the following:

- Agree the service options that the utility is proposing to introduce in low-income areas. This will involve working out the price for receiving the option and any management requirements. This information will form the COR.
- Agree the most commonly used existing sources in conjunction with the facilitators based on local knowledge.

Hire local artist to:

- Prepare water ladder: separate A4 black and white drawings of existing water sources
- Prepare costed option ranking (COR): separate A3 black and white drawings of proposed utility provided service options

2. Prepare sessions and training

Agree questions, probes and recording formats

- An overview of the utility's strategy for water supply in low-income areas
- A discussion about low-income consumers: poverty and vulnerability
- PREPP tools and techniques: theory and application
- The PREPP process and focus group facilitation
- Working in a team
- Reporting and analysis requirements

Box 8.1 continued

Make contact with a credible intermediary

- who is familiar with the community (NGO representative, Council Officer, Zonal Water Officer, school teacher) and ask her/him to arrange the meeting and let people know the time to attend and the venue

Obtain materials required for the focus groups:

- Flip chart pad x 1
- Marker pens x 4
- Masking tape x 2 rolls
- Note pads for assistants and facilitators
- Pens for assistants and facilitators
- A4 envelopes for filing materials

Organize transport

Arrange access to photocopying



Figure 8.1. Conducting an observation walk, India¹

1. Photo: Rajahmundry Municipal Corporation AP, India 2002

Session step one: existing experiences

Timing	Topic area	Tool used to facilitate	Resources	Facilitated by
20 minutes	Existing experiences (sources, supply and coping strategies)	Water ladder	4 copies A4 water ladder	The main facilitator

Facilitating the water ladder

Divide the focus group in to two smaller groups. Ensure that each has sufficient space to work easily with the drawings. Give one set of water ladder drawings to each group. These should be in random order. Ask the groups to identify each drawing, removing any that are not recognized at all. Ask the groups to sort or rank the drawings in order of preference for what is a 'poor', 'acceptable' and 'good' practice or water source, so making a ladder. Allow the group sufficient time to change the order of their ladder until a consensus is reached. Note that each group may have a different ladder.

Recording the water ladder

Each water ladder should be recorded at this stage. Below is an example of a water ladder results table.

Table 8.1. Water Ladder Results

Date:Location:	GROUP ONE		GROUP TWO	
Drawing description <i>For example</i>	Group ranking order	Individual / Household votes	Group ranking order	Individual / Householdvotes
water collected from a shallow well				
Borehole with hand pump at Mosque				
Kiosk with a structure				
Handcart vendor				
Kiosk without a structure				
Other as identified by group				

Session step two: existing preferences

Timing	Topic area	Tool used to facilitate	Resources	Facilitated by
10 minutes	Existing preferences (exploration by type)	Household voting, group probing and discussion	4 copies A4 water ladder Voting counters (eg. beans, pebbles)	The main facilitator

Facilitating exploration of existing preferences

Using the water ladders constructed above ask each individual to indicate which of the existing sources on the ladder his/her household currently uses (it may be more than one) by placing markers ('votes' - using pebbles or beans) against each relevant picture, including any additional sources that the group has identified.

Record the final votes on the water ladder results table above.

Next ask the whole group to consider and discuss their reasons for each of the indicated preferences.

Make notes of the discussion using the following guide.

Brief summary of key points	Notable quotes
Comments and observations	

Questioning and Probing

Probe the group about existing water source and practice areas that have not been covered in the discussion so far. Below are examples of probes and questions.

Probes for water collected from a **shallow well or traditional source** may include the following questions:

- How do you collect the water? When?
- How much water do you usually collect? (quantity)
- What do you use to collect it in? (jerry can, bucket etc.)
- What is the quality like?
- Who usually collects it?
- What do you think of this source?
- How far away from your house is the source?
- How reliable is this supply? Wet season? Dry season?
- How long does it take to collect your water?
- What is your main reason for using this source?
- Do you store the water? How?

Example of probes for water collected from a **handcart vendor**

Service probes

- Who supplies your water?
- What is the quality like?
- How do you receive/collect it?
- How much water do you get?
- When do you get your water?
- What do you think of your supply?
- How often and how reliable is this supply?
- What is your main reason for using this supply
- Where does the vendor get the water

Payment probes

- How often do you pay?
- How much do you pay for your water (based on a 20 litre jerry can)?
- Who do you pay?

Examples of probes for water collected from a Kiosk **without a structure**

Service probes

- Who supplies your water?
- How often and how reliable is this supply?
- How do you receive/collect it?
- How is the pressure?
- What distance do you go to get the water?
- How is the quality?
- How long does it take to get your water?
- How much water do you get?
- When do you get your water?
- What do you think of your supply?
- What is the main reason for using this source?

Payment probes

- How much do you pay for your water (based on a 20 litre jerry can)?
- Who do you pay?

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- How often do you pay?
- Is there a metre?
- If yes, is it working?

Session step three: consumer perceptions

Timing	Topic area	Tool used to facilitate	Resources	Facilitated by
15 - 20 minutes	Consumer perceptions (of the utility)	Questions and probing	-	The main facilitator

Facilitating consumer perceptions of the utility

Ask the group to describe their perceptions of the utility. While the group members may or may not receive water from the utility they may still have views about it. Adapt the questioning as appropriate to the group's situation.

Questioning and probing

Examples of probes

- What do you think about the utility?
- Do you ever have direct contact with the utility?
- How do you make contact with the utility?
- Where is the utility based?
- How do you know about what the utility is doing?
- How can you become a customer of the utility?
- How do you rate the services that the utility provides (dealing with complaints, re-connecting etc.)?
- How should the utility improve?

Record the discussion using the following guide.

Brief summary of key points	Notable quotes
Comments and observations	

Session step four: service option preferences

Timing	Topic area	Tool used to facilitate	Resources	Facilitated by
45 - 50 minutes	Service option preferences (existing options compared to new)	Costed option ranking Pocket chart voting	1 copy A3 COR drawings 4 copies COR A4 drawings	The engineer The main facilitator

Note: the easiest way to facilitate this part of the session is to bring the men's group and the women's group together. This way the Engineer can make one presentation. When the Engineer has completed his/her presentation the group can split and work as before.

Facilitating service option preferences - the Engineer's role

Explain to the group that you wish to find out what their preferences are for possible future service options, compared with their existing water services and sources.

Show and describe by **technology type, management and price** the following drawings in *random order*. (Note: it is important to avoid the impression at this stage that the new utility promoted options are necessarily better than the existing water supplies or that the utility/engineer itself has a preference).

- a) Potential options for future supply through the utility (with estimated costs based on prices that could be charged in the following year). These are the COR drawings.

together with

- b) The most popular existing sources (select and use only the 2 or 3 pictures that have the most votes). These are taken from the Water Ladder.

Answer any questions.

Note: Group members will have an appreciation of the 'coping costs' they already incur for existing sources, for example the payments to vendors, time spent in collection, health costs. This knowledge will enable them to compare their existing situation with the new COR options.

Facilitating service option preferences - the facilitator's role

When the engineer has finished the presentation return to the two separate groups, one men and one women. Give the group the COR drawings and the most popular existing source drawings taken from the water ladder. Ask the members to discuss the relative advantages and disadvantages (including the technology, management arrangements and relevant health issues) of each option. (This enables the group to compare existing costs - financial and non-financial with the proposed costs that may at first sight seem more expensive.)

Split the group in to two smaller groups. Ask each group to rank the options in order of 'least preferred' to 'most preferred' based on the presentation and group discussion, so making a second ladder. (The group should be given a little time to digest what they have heard and discuss the options further amongst themselves).

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Compare the ranking from the two groups and ask for comments. Reach a consensus if possible.

When the ranking is complete ask each individual to vote (using the pocket chart) for their own top three options based on what they think their household would prefer. (Note that this may well include votes for their existing sources as well as votes for possible future utility promoted options).

Record the results and make notes of the discussion as suggested above. Below is an example of a COR results table.

	Option least preferred	Option	Option	Option	Option	Option most preferred
Ranking Group 1						
Ranking Group 2						
Voting Group 1						
Voting Group 2						