

# LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE TRAINING COURSE ON INTEGRATED WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

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Generally, my attendance to the Training Course on Integrated Water Resources Management has reinforced / enhanced and deepened my appreciation of the concepts and principles involving IWRM. The presentations by the resource persons, the discussions with the other participants and the field visits has enriched my understanding of IWRM as a strategy for sustainable water management and development. The concepts discussed in the course are actually not completely new to me. But through the course, I have come to understand these concepts on a wider perspective. My first hand information on how IWRM has been adopted and is working so well in balancing developmental programs and projects with and the conservation of nature has made me appreciate even more the importance of integrated water resources management.

My learnings from the course are summarized as follows:

1. *IWRM is an approach to water resources management which puts emphasis on collaborative efforts.* IWRM is a process and not a plan. As such, IWRM has three basic elements: enabling environment, institutional roles and management tools. IWRM further emphasizes on coordination among all stakeholders including the communities in ensuring the conservation, utilization, appropriation and management of water and other related resources.
2. *The adoption of IWRM as a strategy for water resource management varies from one country to another.* The organizational/country reports presented during the course indicate that IWRM is now widely recognized as a strategy / approach to sustainable water resource development and management by most governments although not very much on a very wide scale. Its complete institutionalization is underway but still, it is worthwhile to note that much has already been accomplished in this regard and that opportunities for its further implementation continue to open up with the growing concern and understanding of the need to manage water.
3. *The prospects for further improving water management is bright and high.* This is the message driven by the experience of the Jasa Tirta I in the Brantas River Basin in Indonesia with their accreditation for ISO9001 for water management. Water management can be improved to reach high standards, rewards of which goes beyond mere recognition of agency efforts to its long term impact on water as a vulnerable and increasingly becoming a limited resource. This poses as a challenge for us to continually seek ways by which water management can further be enhanced to address the present issues and concerns confronting the sector.
4. *River Basin organizations (committees and sub-committees) play a key role in implementing / adopting IWRM.* The experiences of Thailand and Japan underscore the importance of RBOs and RBCs in the institutionalization of IWRM as an approach to sustainable water resource management. A major concern in IWRM is coordination / collaboration. This is addressed by the creation of a body which is responsible in consolidating the efforts of various stakeholder groups towards sustainable water resources management.

5. *Public participation and participatory processes is paramount in IWRM.* The need to establish forum for public participation is a key factor to adopting IWRM. Generating consensus on sustainable management and development of water and other related resources can only be achieved through participatory approaches. Involving communities with due respect to their culture is a major concern along this line.
6. *Environmental flows is a major concern in water resource management.* Environmental flow should be recognized as a critical issue in IWRM which needs to be given particular regard considering its negative impact downstream.
7. *Wetlands are part of the watershed or river basin that should be conserved.* Wetlands are equally important part of the watershed, hence the need for its proper management and development. Wetlands are rich eco-system that are very useful in reducing flood downstream and as a source of water and most importantly, it preserves marine biodiversity. Like all other land uses which are best left to their natural state, the conversion of wetlands to other land uses should be discouraged whenever possible.
8. *An integrated comprehensive water supply management is necessary to maintain water quality and quantity to meet rising demands.* Water shortage all over the world is becoming a phenomenon. The increasing population particularly in urban areas makes it necessary for a water supply system to ensure that demands are satisfied while maintaining water quality. The experience of Korea provides a very good case in this regard.
9. *Comprehensive planning is an important management tool for IWRM.* The experience of the Mekong River Commission provides a very good example of how comprehensive planning is undertaken for the further development of riparian countries. Planning for the management of water and other related resources must involve all concerned sectors to ensure that all issues are addressed in the plan.
10. *Community participatory approach in planning is an equally important tool in IWRM.* The local stakeholders know best about the river basin and what for them should be the direction of development, hence their involvement in planning should not be overlooked.
11. *Basin planning following scientific and engineering viewpoints provides a sound basis for integrated water resources management.* The physical and institutional settings of river basins are important concerns which should be carefully considered in river basin planning.
12. *From the field visits, I highlight the following insights/learnings:*
  - The community have the capability to decide, plan and take action for their development. This should be recognized hence, development should not always be dictated upon the people, rather any initiative by them should be well supported.
  - In working with the communities, their indigenous culture should be recognized, respected and considered. Any intervention for them should take off from their religious beliefs, practices and indigenous knowledge.
  - Leadership is a very important component in ensuring community action for IWRM

- Public awareness is very basic to IWRM. As people come to realize that water is life, the more they exert effort towards its judicious use and management.
- Networking is very important in implementing IWRM. The more organizations are able to support each other, the better for the environment.
- Financial considerations are critical in IWRM implementation.

**As Planning Officer, I my action plan is as follows:**

| Activity  | Objective   | Expected Output                          | Timeframe                                |
|---|---|--|--|
| 1. Re-echo learnings from the IWRM training to ARBDC Secretariat<br>Submit a post training report   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To share the concepts of IWRM as part of enhancing knowledge within the organization</li> </ul>  | 1 presentation<br>1 report               | Before end of August 2004                |
| 2. Coordinate the preparation of integrated and comprehensive plan for the identified watershed in the Central Cluster of the Agno River Basin following participatory approaches |   |  |  |
| 2.1 To identify all the agencies, local government units, NGOs to be involved in the plan preparation   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To ensure the involvement of all concerned agencies in sub-basin planning</li> </ul>   | Creation of 1 TWG                        | Before end of September 2004             |
| 2.2 To identify community representatives to be involved in sub-basin planning  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To ensure local community participation in planning</li> </ul>   | Community representatives identified     | Before end of September 2004             |
| 2.3 To conduct community consultations  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To obtain community inputs to the plan</li> </ul>  | meetings                                 | Oct – Dec 2004                           |
| 3. To coordinate the preparation of sub-basin plans for the other identified watersheds within the Agno River Basin following participatory bottom-up approaches                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To ensure the preparation of integrated and comprehensive sub-basin plans to serve as basis for addressing locally-specific issues and concerns</li> </ul> | Integrated/comprehensive sub-basin plans | 2005 and beyond<br>(continuing activity) |
| 4. As a student, I would like to do a study on community involvement in water resource management in one of the sub-basins within the Agno River Basin                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To determine the extent and level of participation of local communities in managing water</li> </ul>   | One study                                | November 2004 - May 2005                 |

## INDIVIDUAL ASSIGNMENT

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**Question No. 01 – What is your definition of IWRM and how does this work for you?**

Put in simple terms, I consider IWRM as a means or way of living peacefully with the environment. With that, I define IWRM as a way of life which upholds synergy in preserving the integrity of the environment while gaining maximum and equitable benefits for this and the next generation.

I would like to further expound on this definition by defining the terms used as follows:

A way of life. Water affects our every being. Hence, IWRM is a way of life which permeates into everything that we do. The application of IWRM cannot be bounded by time nor space.

Synergy. As we live out IWRM, we do it in support to and consistent with other people's or other group's actions. All together, our collective efforts which is driven by the same goal, result to greater/stronger impact. Synergy leaves no room for fragmentation in our actions but rather consolidates acts together resulting to a total effect which is more than everyone's effort taken individually.

Preservation. In recognizing the natural limits of water and other related resources, IWRM calls for a lifestyle that consistently promotes the judicious use of these resources to ensure that every activity undertaken does not negatively impact on the environment. The goal of IWRM is for everyone to share in the benefits of the environment with the next generation and the only way to do that is to ensure its preservation.

Integrity of the Environment. Water as a resource cannot be isolated from all other natural resources. A degradation of any resource can create ripples that will eventually result to the degradation of the whole eco-system. Respect should therefore be afforded the environment on the basis of the fact that it exists to serve not only this generation but also the generation after us

This definition works for me as a mother, as a member of the community and as a planning officer of the Agno River Basin Development Commission.

As a mother, my domestic tasks must be done with keen consideration of its impact to water as a resource and in general to the whole eco-system. This line of thinking is made a part of my being – it is a way of life for me to always utilize water in an efficient and productive way. My actions are guided by these principles.

As a member of the community, I share with everyone's responsibility to ensure proper conservation, utilization and management of water and other related resources. As we in the community continue to enjoy the benefits from these resources, we have to make sure that we do it in a manner that will not result to the degradation of these resources so that even after we are all long gone, our children and children's children will continue to experience the benefits these resources serve. For instance, the community sets rules/policies/regulations on the proper use of water. I have to do my part and abide by these laws and even be an advocate for the efficient utilization of water and the protection of the environment as everything we do has an effect to such.

As the planning officer of the Agno River Basin Development Commission, I make sure that our planning activities are consistent with the principles espoused by IWRM. As such, planning should be done to ensure the integrated economic, social, physical development of the basin – striking a balance among conflicting interests and optimizing the utilization of natural resources. This further implies that our planning activities must ensure the maximum participation of all stakeholder groups, establishing the most effective approach to effect a sustainable collaboration.