

Capitalization of Experiences «Water, Land and People»

Lessons Learned

Tiquipaya

Bolivia, 2007



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LESSONS LEARNED

INTRODUCTION

In the case of the lessons learned by Work Group Tiquipaya, inputs were taken from the different products created in the process (stories, summaries of stories on theme axes, fragments on sub-themes, hypothesis and others) to develop them maintaining the process authenticity. Subsequently, on the basis of the individual reflections and analyses and the collection of the main messages, trends, and perspectives found, the Group formulated the lessons and linked them to their contexts to allow a better explanation of their proposal and origin. Thus, the lessons learned are a result of the discussions posed at the Work Group when trying to interpret the stories of the different actors that express their different experiences.



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LESSON 1

Water rights based on uses and customs can hamper integrated water resource management that also satisfies new and legitimate multiple use needs as a result of the population's growth.

The community of Tiquipaya shows two factors that develop their peculiar relation with water resource management. Traditionally, it is a rural area with an agricultural identity, where the demand for and predominant use of water is for irrigation purposes, but the same water sources also provide drinking water. Its closeness to Cochabamba's capital has resulted in the community's accelerated population growth during the past 25 years and consequently to an increased demand for drinking water.



The historic condition of agricultural area is also part of the legitimization of the water access rights, as well as the main and hierarchic definition of its use for irrigation purposes. Due to this rural and agricultural potential feature, sector management in terms of people-water-land also determines the local vision regarding integrated water resource management, that is to say the vision of "integrated" management (as per their own concepts) from an "irrigation" stand point and with other uses as a result of it.

Therefore, power and interest relations from the irrigation stand point are what determine the organization in terms of water and the appropriation and empowerment trends of the social and institutional actors from a number of scenarios, mainly sector and political.



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LESSON 2

In communities where the growing population generates changes on the use of land, conflicts occur due to water access when the systems are not planned with a multiple use vision.

The population growth and the dynamics related to other uses of water and land, which in the beginning were not considered important but that are, nonetheless, legitimate, created the need for a rearrangement in the people-water-soil relation, with a more integral vision and for a complex use of water that is not ancillary to a sector. The increasing demands for drinking water stand out in a population with urban characteristics that is expanding into municipal areas close to the urban areas.



These dynamics have to be translated in a gradual rearrangement of interests, forms of organization and the rising of representatives (several), where the irrigation sector's traditions and their demands as well as their response mechanisms determine the review of integrated water resource management towards a multiple use approach on the basis of their own interests.

The weaknesses and shortcomings in the integrated municipal planning process, pose scenarios that increase the diversity of interests and power imbalances (diverse), thus creating further conflicts. The similarities in corporate and sector empowerment may deepen these trends by increasing a power imbalance.



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LESSON 3

It is necessary to have a shared vision and not a sector vision to make progress towards multiple uses between the different sectors on the basis of integrated water resource planning.

The changes on the use of land and the new legitimate demands for access to water need as a reply new sector concepts as well as local governance practices in order to confront territorial planning processes that bear in mind population growth.



It is necessary to develop progressive agreements between sector interests with traditional hierarchy and a decision over the resource and the new sectors, so that these planning processes reach a shared vision in terms of integrated water resource management for multiple purposes.

These agreements and the realignment on water access and use shall, in the end, lead to a new hierarchy of practices that are based on the opportunities provided by social and cultural valuation of water, so as to develop and reach consensus for a multiple and shared approach.

Thus, from a sector stand point, legitimate and inclusive mechanisms are developed for integrated water resource management. This is how the different sectors together and in agreement influence decision-making political processes as well as the development of regulations that respond to global interests on multiple use as well as sector interests.



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LESSON 4

To achieve shared planning processes for an integrated water resource management between the different actors it is necessary to attain a balanced empowerment of the different sectors involved.

Water resource management in the community of Tiquipaya is traditionally ruled by the irrigation sector, establishing models that are not always balanced and fair. The level of organization attained by the sector and the support received from the institutions has led to empowerment levels that are also observed at different levels within the Municipal Government.



This originates imbalances in power relations with other sectors that have legitimate interests, which develop mechanisms to give preference to collective sector interests over that of an integrated water resource management, as well as before conflicts and demands on water use and management. Sector corporate representations prevail as platforms that hamper the detachment and visibility of political and personal interests.

To make progress towards an integrated water resource management it is necessary to overcome the stillness of traditional rights, sector access and use with their corresponding interests and power relations and representation built on water empowerment. This is a challenge to overcome on the basis of the dynamic of changes on the use of land and the changing needs of the population. The relative power balance necessary to develop a shared vision on an integrated water resource management can only be achieved if other groups with legitimate interests achieve organization levels similar to that of the traditional dominant sector.



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LESSON 5

The regulations in force and the instruments for its application must support the construction of an integral and fair vision for water use, at social, political and productive levels.

The regulations in force at different territorial levels in terms of water resource management, access and use are still fragmented and lack an integral concept, unconnected sector regulations still prevail.

To achieve an integrated water resource management, specially in the local environment, it is necessary to have policies, laws, regulations and guidelines defined and developed within participatory, decision-making and consensus building processes, with participation of the social and institutional actors interested in the use of water, and that these processes result from an integral management vision.



The experiences in Tiquipaya related to the privatization of drinking and sewage water supply, the fights for access and exploitation of water sources and others show that the deficiency or lack of legal instruments creates uncertainty and conflicts that hamper, even further, the development and promotion of integral, fair and multiple water use approaches.

The sector regulations in force, without losing their essence and purpose, must be connected and also complement an integrated water vision through interaction with the different users, organizations and institutional actors involved in water use, management and conservation. It is then that the foundation and framework for consensus for access, distribution, multiple use and water conservation rights will be established.



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LESSON 6

Integral planning, with strengthened institutions, leads to water use practices that encourage water balance and benefit the environment.

Environmental watershed management and water balance at the sources of origin as well as at the resource harnessing areas are the result of how the different users and institutional actors carry out water resource management and that of other natural resources in their territories.



The culture of respect to their environment, when confronted to risks and institutional weakness, is not strong enough to incorporate the environmental variable in a long term and balanced planning process to satisfy the supply and demand of the sources. As a result, planning is still dominated by the satisfaction of short-term sector needs and interests that do not view the environment as a key factor for long-term sustainability.

A new legitimate institution can rise from the existing institutions, which will generate processes based on planning with an integral water resource vision and a multiple use and fair approach that is in agreement with territorial organization. It is also a space for consensus, with the capacity to carry out conservation and recovery activities for watershed sources. Thus promoting a healthy and harmonious habitat development that generates a suitable offer of natural resources, particularly water, with fair access and that provides benefit with long-term sustainability for all those involved.

On the other hand, the lack of a legitimate institution with legal support leaves the local actors on their own to measure their power, thus hampering integral planning.



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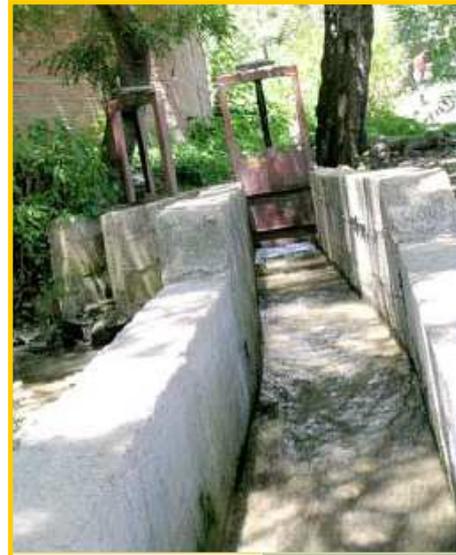
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LESSON 7

Drinking water systems meet the population's needs, but due to the fragmentation level, the committees managing them do not have any influence over the planning, regulatory and local power processes so that access to water occurs in an orderly manner.

Population growth processes in rural areas close to larger urban areas are very dynamic, but not always orderly in terms of territorial management, planning and settlement.

A result of this activity is also the demand for water access to satisfy the new needs associated to the changes on the use of soil, and mainly for drinking water. The demands correspond to sector visions and mechanisms, and for water resource management within the same sector, which have not been coordinated between them or with other traditional sectors connected to local water resource management, such as irrigation.



New forms of sector water resource management result from these population sectors, which are focussed on adjustments to access rights and water use in areas that traditionally had a different use. Their organization seeks effective solutions for access to drinking water. Although they establish organizations to satisfy this need, they are weak in the local political context due to the level of fragmentation, and also because they oppose the traditional sectors interests. Therefore, it is necessary for them to harmonize the legitimacy of their rights by holding inter-sector dialogues.

Development processes for new social and inter-sector arrangements require mechanisms to encourage the integration of several visions and interests and for decision-making regarding access rights and water resource management, by consensus and in a participatory manner. Under the integrated management principle this also influences all actors in greater decision-making processes at political and legal levels.



LESSON 8

Everybody feels that water is a social, common and life good, which is a starting point for planning processes that reach an agreement in terms of water use and integrated local management.

Water as a life element, water culture as a day to day way of living, creates a sense of belonging in all actors and sectors, based on conditions and on traditional and new organizations. As of this basic consensus the population and the local institutions can develop new management forms and models revolving around water, and as a mechanism for local integration, with greater inclusion processes, decentralization, shared development and participatory democracy.



Local conditions revolving around water as “an element of life and cultural expression” are the basis for planning water resource management for human and productive use, and to make it “territorial”. In the midst of diverging scenarios, proposals and visions for integrated water resource management arise, which are encouraged by local institutions and authorities, as well as local development support groups.

In the extent that the sectors and the different actors acknowledge the rights and legitimate demands of the others, these planning processes give way to a different form of management, with a multiple and integral vision, which occur as a response to population growth and fairness in terms of water rights and access. In order for this consensus processes to become true they must go hand in hand with mid and long term municipal territorial planning linked to an integrated water resource management.

