Water Efficiency Conference 5-7 August 2015, University of Exeter



PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES

Understanding people and water efficiency

Sarah Bell and Eleni Tracada

The Water Efficiency (WATEF) Network

www.watefnetwork.co.uk

Overview

- Committee scope
- Activities to date
- Case studies of people and communities in water efficiency
- Framework of scales and approaches
- Future plans



Introduction to the Committee

- First meeting February 2015
- Diverse membership
- Scope
 - Clarify different approaches
 - Disseminate case studies (successes and failures)
- Clarify the role of individual, community, social and cultural factors



Activities

- Two meetings at UCL
- Framework produced by Ali Browne and Claire Hoolohan
- Case study template
- Initial case studies
 - Social housing
 - Traveller communities
 - Schools



Current Study

- Expanding case study data base
- Developing web site for dissemination
- Analysis of case studies to draw wider conclusions and recommendations



Key Findings

These categories of WEff activities rely on the idea of Service Provision and Decision Making.

Service Provision provides a principle for WEff that demand must be managed on behalf of consumer to reestablish limits to supply (especially under uncertainty and extremes). Examples of WEff: improving efficiency, abstraction reform, seasonal tariffs, building and product standards.

Decision Making relates to the idea that given the right incentives and tools consumers are likely to make better decisions. Examples of WEff activities: education/advice on behaviours, designing incentives (billing, smart metering), offering products to ease change (water efficient devices) This category of WEff activities relies on the idea of Social Norms and Networks. These include socially defined standards of normal and acceptable use in the activities that underpin water use. It shapes a principle for water efficiency that consumers can be influenced by moral and normative reasoning to make better decisions. Examples of WEff: engaging schools, geographic communities, social groups, and interest groups; communicating positive 'normal' practices (comparative billing, normative messaging; some use of intermediary organisations.

These categories of WEff rely on the idea of Socio-Technical Practices, that is, they explore the way that the way that the social, the 'natural' and the technical are linked in promoting water efficiency for people and communities. This could involve looking at the connections between collective conventions, everyday routines, and technologies and infrastructures. Examples of WEff include: redesigning systems of provisioning; reconfiguring practices; policy that influences wide scale adoption of new provisioning and influence co-evolving practices; altering social practices (cultures of cleanliness, hygiene, the good life) that shape practices of water use: and using a range of intermediaries to achieve these aims.

Wide Scale Socio-technical Transitions

E.g., diversifying systems of provision in cities/
regions, reconfiguration of existing routines

tions.

Cultural/Social Communities

E.g., collective conventions and routines around
'practices' of water use such as cleanliness

Geographic/Social/Interest Communities

E.g., regionally based WEff programs, schools

Technology/Buildings/Retrofitting

E.g, products, technologies, building design

(and regulation), retrofitting

Individuals/Economics/ Behaviour

E.g., pricing, information provision, choice

Figure 1. Principles and Locations/Scales of Change of Different Water Efficiency (WEff) Policy in the UK

Adapted from: Hoolohan, C., & Browne, A. (2014).Reframing intervention: What does a collective approach to behaviour change look like. In Smyth, B., & Jenkins, J. (Eds)., Proceedings of the Water Efficiency Conference 2014, 9-11th September 2014, University of Brighton, UK: WATEF Network/University of Brighton. Pp. 145-158



Future Program

- Use case study database to demonstrate different approaches and factors for success an failure
- Synthesise key findings for:
 - Policy
 - Different practitioners and sectors



Summary

- There is a role for a range of approaches to involving people and communities in water efficiency
- Water efficiency requires a range of actors (not just water companies)
- Drawing together theories from research and case studies from experience
- Synthesise key findings for different audiences

