

Rural Communities Water Managers Leadership Institute



Stakeholder Perspectives and Recommendations

SEPTEMBER 2018

Self-Help Enterprises



**Self-Help
Enterprises**

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About: Self-Help Enterprises is a nationally recognized community development organization whose mission is to work together with low-income families to build and sustain healthy homes and communities. Since 1965, Self-Help Enterprises' efforts have touched the lives of over 55,000 families.

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Introduction

Background

Residents of disadvantaged rural communities in California's San Joaquin Valley often find it challenging to participate and effectively lead their communities in regards to water and other infrastructure issues that they face. These challenges are due to a lack of training, resources, and capacity - not a lack of heart. Serving as a bridge between communities and the technical and governing process, Self-Help Enterprises (SHE) has been working with community water boards in their eight-county San Joaquin Valley service area for more than 40 years. In addition to helping rural, low-income communities obtain safe drinking water and sanitary sewer services, SHE empowers residents to become advocates of their communities in the development and management of their infrastructure and services.

To help build leadership capacity, previously SHE co-organized two intensive Leadership Institutes. The first, conducted in 2014 with Community Water Center (CWC) and the Rural Community Assistance Corporation (RCAC) focused on developing and enhancing the leadership skills of a broad range of existing and emerging rural community leaders. The second, held during 2016 in partnership with RCAC and the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF), emphasized building Technical, Managerial and Financial (TMF) capacity among rural drinking-water board members specifically. Through classroom instruction and group activities and projects, the curricula enhanced individual leadership skills, prepared participants to take an active, cooperative approach to decision-making and helped develop skills to bridge the communication gap with policymakers. To date, these Institutes have trained more than 50 water leaders in rural communities from Merced County to Kern County.

While TMF capacity is critical to ensuring a sustainable water system, alone it is not enough to guarantee the future of safe and affordable drinking water in rural communities. Because water is a shared resource that spans well beyond our community and even county lines, the management of water at the regional scale has a significant impact on the water we consume at home, work and school. Because of this, it is important that rural communities engage in collaborative water management and planning to protect and enhance their water supplies. Unfortunately, due to many of the same barriers noted above, achieving this has been an ongoing challenge. Through targeted efforts including six Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) pilot studies, the Tulare Lake Basin Disadvantaged Community Water Study¹ and ongoing outreach and training, some progress has been made and more small communities are participating than ever before. However, the majority of rural communities are still not participating in these important efforts.

¹ Links to the six pilot studies, the Tulare Lake Basin study and other relevant documents can be found on the Department of Water Resources DAC involvement web page at <https://water.ca.gov/Work-With-Us/Grants-And-Loans/IRWM-Grant-Programs/Proposition-1/DAC-Involvement-Program>

In 2018, SHE received funding from the Central Valley Community Foundation, the Department of Water Resources (DWR), and the United State Department of Agriculture (USDA) to design and implement another Leadership Institute, this time focused on regional water management, and building and maintaining long-term water management expertise in rural communities. In addition to designing and executing the Institute, the Central Valley Community Foundation grant included funding for an intentional stakeholder scoping process that would allow SHE to craft a program best suited to the needs and desires of the communities they serve. Receiving stakeholder input on the content, design, and implementation of the Institute is critical to the program's success and fundamental to SHE's vision for this work.

Documenting stakeholder feedback and recommendations is just the beginning of this work. The next step will be for SHE staff to review these findings and recommendations and use them to develop a draft curriculum outline. SHE staff will then conduct up to two meetings with stakeholders to present the outline and receive feedback. Draft materials will also be distributed electronically to all of the stakeholders that participated in this scoping process. Outreach to potential Institute participants will parallel this work with the hope of launching the Institute in early 2019. While, due to funding and capacity constraints, it may not be possible to implement all of the recommendations as part of this Institute, it is important to document these findings in their entirety as a roadmap for future programming not just at SHE but throughout the San Joaquin Valley and the state.

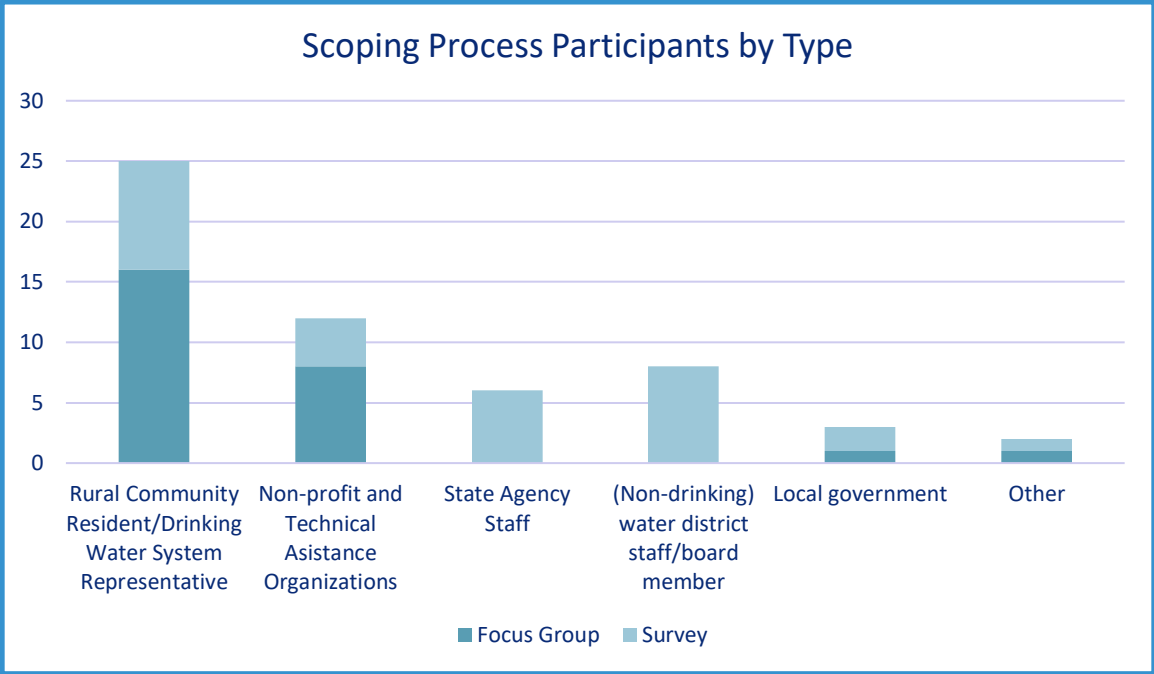
Stakeholder Scoping Process Overview

While input on all aspects of the program was desired and received, SHE identified three core considerations for feedback: The content of the Institute, the design of the Institute and challenges/opportunities for institute participants to implement their new knowledge and skills in regional water management forums. To gather the desired feedback, SHE contracted Kristin Dobbin, a UC Davis graduate student (and author of this report), to assist SHE in gathering stakeholder perspectives through focus groups and online/mail surveys. Overall, up to 54 people participated in the scoping process, 30 through surveys and 26 through three in-person focus groups.

Three two-hour focus groups were held in Visalia, Madera, and Arvin in July and August 2018. After a short presentation about the history and objectives of the Leadership Institute, participants were guided through a variety of activities including small and large group discussions, ranking exercises and written reflection. Formatted around the three core considerations, participants at each focus group shared their experiences with regional water management and planning and provided input and suggestions on a variety of topics from their favorite learning styles to factors preventing or limiting participation in specific programs. The agenda for the focus groups is provided in Appendix B.

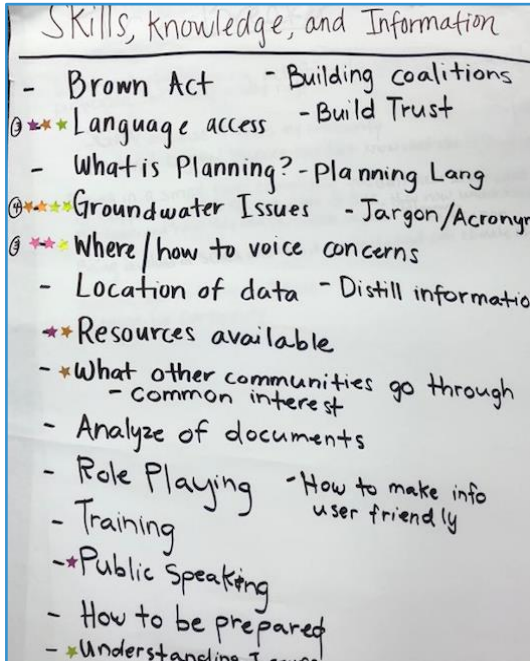
Two complementary surveys were developed to gather additional input from those unable to participate in person. The first, a 21-question survey, was targeted at rural community residents and small water system directors and staff. Structured similarly to the focus groups, the survey included various questions on the Institute content, design, and participation barriers. It also included various

questions regarding Institute logistics such as when and where to meet. Copies of the community survey were distributed at each of the focus groups and an online version was distributed via email. A second 9-question survey was distributed to non-community stakeholders via email. This survey focused on the skills and information a stakeholder needs to participate in water management and planning as well as inquired about other existing efforts for improving community participation and interest in collaborating with or supporting the upcoming Institute. The text of the two surveys can be found in Appendices C and D.



Leadership Institute Content

What: Developing Water Management Knowledge and Expertise



With the implementation of the 2014 Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), the number of programs for, and the importance of, regional water management and planning is increasing, as is their impact on rural communities. Accordingly, SHE plans to focus the upcoming 2019 Leadership Institute, and hopefully future ones as well, on regional water management and planning. Overall, many stakeholders echoed the importance of this type of training and were keen to have increased support for communities in this area. Many community stakeholders, however, also raised additional needs and priorities for training that fall outside of this scope but could be address through SHE's other programs. Skills, knowledge, and information related to regional water management and planning are discussed here; the latter is

addressed in the "Achieving participation in regional water management" section of this report.

When asked what types of planning are most important for rural communities, the three top choices of community resident participants were community plans (e.g. drought contingency plans, capital improvement projects), SGMA and state water policy. Integrated Regional Water Management, County plans (e.g. general plans) and storm water resource plans were all mentioned, but less frequently. Interestingly, when asked what programs/planning processes communities most need training in, IRWM was mentioned more frequently, along with community plans, SGMA, and state water policy.

A significant theme consistent across the three focus groups and survey results was the challenge posed by language. While the average Californian knows little to nothing about water, the majority of people participating in these types of regional water management and planning are very knowledgeable on the subject. Although many of the issues and questions discussed in the venues are social rather than technical ones, the abundance of engineers, hydrologists, and water lawyers can make anything sound foreign and indecipherable. It is essential, therefore, for residents to become familiar with the jargon (technical language) and acronyms used in these spaces and learn to translate the technical speak into questions and comments that matter to them.

In addition to the technical language, those wanting to participate in water planning effectively need a baseline understanding of water basics at the state, regional and community/local level and an understanding of how the three connect. Understanding the sources of water, how water is moved and who has legal rights to what could help participants stay grounded in the bigger picture. Understanding

local and regional water conditions, uses and challenges are necessary for helping to develop solutions. Specifically, for rural community stakeholders, having enough information to talk with decision-makers about specific challenges and solutions that do, or could, affect their community was thought to be key because other actors may not have the necessary information or interest to do so. Finally, many stakeholders felt it was important for Leadership Institute participants to know what resources are available to them and how they can access them as specific topics and questions arise.

Priority training topics:

- Where/how to have a voice in the process and make an impact
- Public speaking/communication
- The importance of, and understanding the process of, planning and regional water management
- Local and regional water conditions, groundwater issues and contaminants
- Working with engineers and consultants
- Analyzing agendas and documents/materials
- Water sources, uses and users
- Planning program objectives, timelines and requirements
- Finding resources
- California water law and regulation
- Funding and finances
- Who does what; understanding roles of various water agencies
- Understanding stakeholder interests and political dimensions of water management
- Water management options/alternatives
- Consensus building

How: Understanding and Navigating Planning Venues/Processes

In addition to needing to understand the substance, many participants spoke to the need to understand and navigate planning processes themselves. Who is in charge of what? How are decisions made? How can I make an impact?

Part of the challenge of water management is the large number of venues and actors involved. There is a need to help stakeholders understand this complicated landscape so that they prioritize their involvement. Specific agencies or groups often work on only a subset of specific water management topics and each planning program has its unique objectives, timelines, and requirements. Residents reported struggling to know when meetings were taking place, what they would be about, and understanding who all the different actors were. Furthermore, they were unsure of whom to contact with questions or concerns. Understanding the process and knowing the other actors is just as important as having a strong foundation in water management.

Whether one is on the board of directors or watching from the audience, there are always ways that one can participate-- but they are not always obvious or easy. For example, one focus group participant commented that meetings often go too fast and boards sometimes lump important items together. It

is necessary to know how and when the public can comment on an agenda item so an opportunity to provide input is not lost. Participants requested training in how to engage in these meetings and specific skills for doing so effectively including public speaking, expressing and supporting their positions, consensus building and relationship/coalition building. For community representatives participating as board/committee members, training in preparing for and running meetings would also be helpful.

Why: The Importance of Regional Water Management and Planning

“If my participation will impact something in my community, I’ll get involved”

- Rural Community Resident

Stakeholders were united in asserting that before participating in regional water management and planning, one needs a reason to do so, and that requires an understanding of why it is important in the first place. To do this, the “why” of SGMA and IRWM is perhaps even more important than the “who, what and when”. Additionally, many participants commented that to recruit participants for a Rural Communities Water Managers Leadership Institute, it may be necessary to do some of this education before the Institute even begins as part of (or before) recruitment. One way to do that is by making the impact of these programs more relevant to everyday residents’ lives, or as one stakeholder said, “make it personal.” For many of the participants who currently do engage in such processes, they participate because they see a clear connection between the activity and their own life or their community’s future.

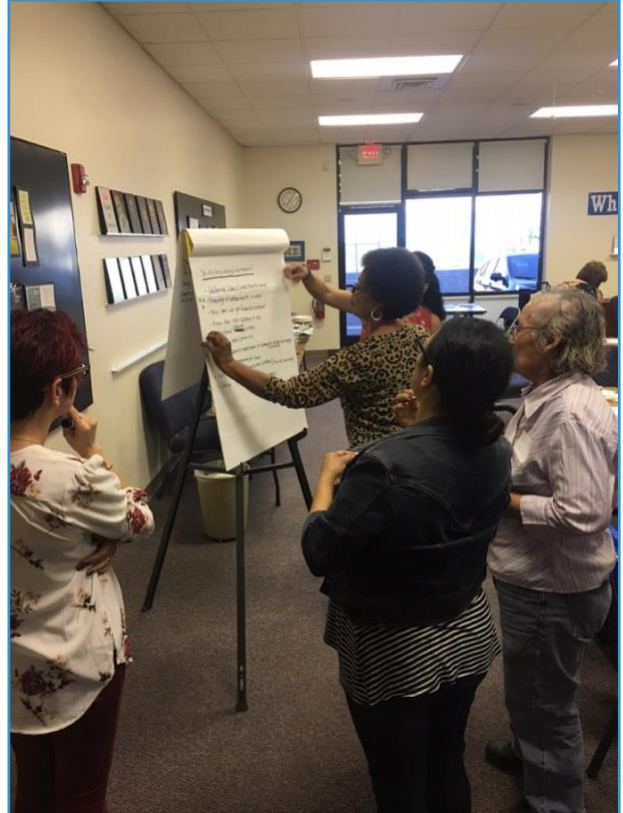
Recommendations

1. Build interest in the Institute by increasing stakeholder understanding of the importance of regional water management and planning through outreach and education before and during recruitment for the program.
2. Throughout the Institute, emphasize the ways that regional water management and planning impacts participants lives and relates to community priorities (e.g. providing safe and affordable drinking water, community development and growth). Provide case studies and examples.
3. Provide in-depth training on both the “what” (water management, including water sources, uses, users, movement and challenges at the state and regional level) and the “how” (how the planning programs work, skills for participating etc.).
4. Cover a variety of management and planning programs in the Institute curriculum including community plans, SGMA, IRWM, and state water policy.
5. Provide participants with a strong background in relevant terms, concepts and acronyms and related resources that are easy to access and use.
6. Provide case studies and examples on specific water challenges and management options as they relate to rural communities. Explore ways to help participants translate this information to their own communities.

Leadership Institute Design

Activities

Participants had many ideas about the design of the Institute as well. Almost unanimously, stakeholders were preferred the idea of a combination of different activities rather than primarily classroom style lectures. Guest lectures, meeting observation/participation, field trips and tours, group discussion, peer learning, and case studies were all favored ideas. While a few residents did not want the Institute to include classroom style lectures, others felt that this type of training would be necessary at the beginning and that more hands-on activities as follow-up could help solidify those lessons. Suggestions for making this type of training as digestible and practical as possible included providing a quick summary of the previous training at the start of each session, using summary handouts and educational materials that can be shared, keeping organized and accessible notes and incorporating questions and discussions into PowerPoint lectures.



Many community stakeholders were particularly interested in activities and educational opportunities that engaged their broader community. All-ages events, community fairs, school events, and easy to understand bilingual educational materials and handouts were all suggested as ways that the Leadership Institute could support community education and involvement, which they deemed critical to building long-term water management capacity. Such activities could also serve as opportunities for cross-learning and relationship building among communities.

Format/Logistics

Survey respondents were split on the ideal frequency of meetings and length of the Institute. A majority preferred the idea of a combination of small and large group meetings although some preferred one alternative over the other. More unity was also found on time and day, with a clear majority of respondents favoring weekday mornings. Saturday mornings were the next most preferred option.

While we did not ask stakeholders about specific locations, the majority reported being willing to travel up to 50 miles, one-way, for Institute activities.

Trainings of any sort are often resource intensive for participants. This is especially the case for programs such as the Rural Communities Water Managers Leadership Institute, which will almost certainly require an ongoing time commitment and significant travel. Time, cost, distance/transportation, language access, meeting times and child/dependent care were all noted as barriers to participation. The following recommendations were made to address these challenges: provide transportation/shuttle, provide Spanish translation, hold sessions in close by locations, provide stipends, provide childcare, utilize webinars, and create replicable “train the trainer” curriculum and activities.

Partners

The vast majority of non-rural community stakeholders who participated in the stakeholder survey are interested in being involved with the Leadership Institute, indicating many opportunities for collaboration and coordination. Various state agency and water district/agency staff offered their expertise for curriculum development or guest lectures. Among non-profits and technical assistance (TA) providers, CWC and Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability were also both interested in collaborating. CWC’s Community Water Leaders Network was mentioned as an initiative that could help complement the Institute, as were RCAC and California Rural Water’s water board trainings.

Recommendations

1. Use hands-on and experiential learning to help process and implement classroom learning topics.
2. Limit one-way travel to sessions/activities to a maximum of 50 miles for all participants. If that is not possible, provide transportation for longer distances or rotate locations.
3. Provide participation stipends.
4. Consider grouping Institute participants geographically and conducting some or all trainings/activities locally in small groups.
5. Develop/use materials that can easily be shared with others.
6. Explore using webinars or other technology-enabled learning while being acutely aware of the ongoing challenge of inequitable access to internet and technology in rural communities.
7. Provide Spanish language translation for all trainings and materials.
8. Provide food and childcare for in-person training sessions.
9. Coordinate plans for the institute with other drinking water related non-profit organizations (e.g. CWC, RCAC, and Cal Rural Water Association).
10. Reach out to interested districts/agencies/organizations to participate in and support the Institute.
11. Find ways as part of the Institute, or as a complement to it, to support more broad community education and engagement such as through bi-lingual educational materials, community events and/or school partnerships.

Achieving Community Participation in Regional Water Management

“Some people don’t participate because they aren’t interested, but some people just have enough to worry about or they may not even be aware of what is going on”

- Rural Community Resident

It is clear that building the needed knowledge and skills of residents, while important, is not, by itself, enough to achieve the goals of the Institute. There are many barriers to participation that prevent individuals from engaging in these forums. To increase rural community participation in these programs, these barriers need to be addressed as part of and in addition to the Leadership Institute. First and foremost, as mentioned previously, there is a huge need to address an ongoing lack of awareness and understanding of water planning in communities more generally. This challenge is, of course, not unique to rural communities. Urban residents are in no way regularly engaged in such efforts; yet, they typically have city councils and staff who represent them. In smaller communities, with little or no staff capacity, participation falls to volunteers who too often do not know about the programs or meetings. But, even those who are aware of and interested in water management face many barriers that prevent them from being at the table.

Competing Priorities

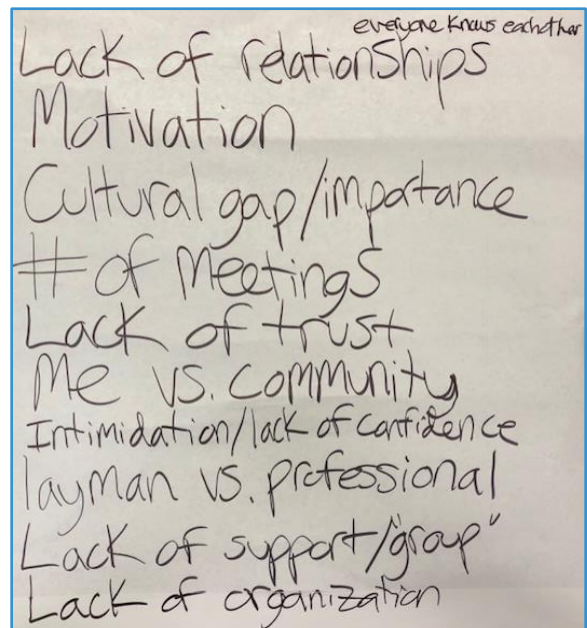
While regional water management and planning is critical to securing and sustaining safe and affordable drinking water and building vibrant rural communities, this work vies against many competing priorities. Most small drinking water systems have no or very limited staff. It takes a lot of time and resources to keep a system running even when everything is in order, let alone amid the emergencies and water quality challenges that plague rural systems. Volunteers and staff are often overworked and under-supported in addressing just these bare necessities of providing water to their communities and complying with state and federal requirements. It isn’t surprising, then, that when asked what skills/topics they would most like training on, most community survey respondents focused on the day to day necessities of operating their small drinking water system like budgeting, grant writing/funding assistance, audits, community outreach and involvement, understanding state laws, and the Brown Act. While it would be short-sighted to abandon longer-term efforts like regional water management and planning, the success of the Rural Communities Water Managers Leadership Institute will depend on the availability of ongoing coordinated efforts to continue to address these community- and system-level needs. Recognizing this need, SHE is currently in the process of revamping its TMF training program to include quarterly trainings on core topics in addition to their direct community service. These findings, therefore, will also inform that effort.

Structural Barriers to Participation

A large number of structural barriers prevent or limit rural community participation in water planning forums. Chief among these are the meeting schedules, distance to meetings, lack of transportation and childcare to attend, the costs associated with attending, and language barriers. Many residents also pointed to a lack of timely and accurate information about when meetings are held (and when they are canceled) due to limited access to the internet/computers, which can also impede access to meeting documents and resources. Many of the barriers are compounded by the sheer number of meetings that planning often entails.

Larger water districts can get around some of these challenges by having paid staff, but many small districts have no staff or too few staff to send anyone (for example, not being able to leave the office unattended). Beyond staffing, their limited district budgets often also prevent them from paying for the legal and technical services to facilitate or support their participation (e.g. negotiating and signing legal agreements, having a representative on a technical advisory committee etc.).

Finally, some regional water management programs and agencies are structured in a way that prevents certain residents or districts from formally participating, to begin with. For example, mutual water companies cannot be members of Joint Powers Authorities to participate in a GSA. Furthermore, many GSAs and IRWM groups require that someone must be an elected official (district director) to serve on their governing board. In some cases, renters are excluded from serving on boards or even voting in elections. Many small drinking water districts struggle to find enough eligible and interested individuals to fill their board of directors, which in turn limits the number of available people to serve in these restricted positions.



Systemic Barriers to Participation

"[Walking into SGMA meetings] makes you feel like a nobody. I even asked him when we walked in, 'Are we even allowed to be here?'"

- Small drinking water system staff member

Even when community members can or do successfully navigate these challenges, participating in regional water management can be a daunting and even a negative experience. Many residents commented on feeling outnumbered by other water interests (e.g. agriculture and dairy), that everyone else knows each other and are organized, and that the professional atmosphere made

meetings intimidating. Others mentioned that the meetings felt primarily focused on agriculture, and it was hard to see where their interests fit. Some residents shared negative experiences in meetings such as poor or even hostile reception and treatment from other actors.

Planning can also be frustrating, slow and disappointing in its outcomes. Multiple residents reported becoming discouraged after investing a lot of time in an effort that did not seem to go anywhere or yielded no obvious benefits for their community. Others noted that the objectives of the programs themselves do not always align with their own needs and priorities. For example, one person shared the IRWM focus on multi and regional benefits was not a good fit for local infrastructure improvements.

Many stakeholders felt “input fatigue” and “meeting fatigue.” Precisely because public participation has become a central component to planning, the time and resource demands of participating are constantly increasing. Especially when one’s input is not incorporated into the final plan, this can make participation feel futile. In this way, the lack of representation with meaningful decision-making authority in these spaces is another challenge for participation.

Recommendations

1. Carefully consider the scope of the Institute in relation to other expressed priorities (e.g. community education and outreach, board development) and coordinate with partners on how these interests can and will be supported through a combination of SHE and outside organization/agency programming.
2. As part of, or in addition to, the Institute, work with partners to expand and advertise resources available to support rural drinking water systems’ Technical, Managerial and Financial capacity.
3. Promote translation and language access in water management venues.
4. Educate GSAs, IRWM groups etc. on the importance of reducing scheduling and geographic barriers to participation.
5. Advocate for formal community representation in GSAs, IRWM groups etc.
6. Foster partnerships and relationships between communities that could support the sharing of services, staff, representation etc. in regional water management and planning.
7. Use the Institute to help facilitate peer mentorship, support, and unity among small rural communities.
8. Connect institute graduates to networks and resources that foster continuity in support and training (e.g. Community Water Leaders Network).
9. Clearly cover the objectives and criteria for a variety of programs so that participants can choose the most relevant venues for themselves.
10. Support relationship building between rural residents and other water interests.
11. Encourage and support residents to attend meetings together in groups.
12. Help boards recruit and train new board members.

Defining Success

“Success would include the community coming together and becoming engaged with policy makers and finding solutions.”

- Rural Community Resident

Precisely because this stakeholder scoping process was initiated to receive feedback and suggestions for the Leadership Institute, it was important that that feedback address not just the details of the program design, but also the broader vision/mission of the Institute. As such, before beginning curriculum development it was important to understand how the stakeholders themselves would define success.

If the Institute could do one thing to support rural community participation in regional water management and planning, what would it be? What would success look like for this program? When we posed these questions to community members at the focus groups and in the survey, six key metrics of success emerged:

1. Improved understanding of regional water management and planning
2. Increased community participation in regional water management/planning and developing solutions
3. Broad reach/impact
4. Improved, accessible information
5. Informed and engaged community residents
6. Strong and united community leadership

Stakeholder comments, in their own words, grouped by the above metrics, can be found in the text box on the next page.



Improved understanding of regional water management and planning

- "Make sure community members understand just how powerful IRWM's and GSA's are and the affect their decisions will play in allocations of water and funding for projects."
- "Make DAC's see the importance of being involved and that it matters."
- "Education on tech & political issues involving DACs and how to get involved with your large district."
- "Bringing in 'experts' that would present topics with interactive participation with the attendees."
- "Informed about water issues."

Increased community participation in water management/planning and developing solutions

- "Board members, current and future, whom were inspired by this Institute feel prepared and participate in regional water planning meetings."
- "DAC equal representation on all GSA Boards."
- "Success for the Institute looks like a diverse set of graduates that is comprised of community members without previous experience on water issues feeling confident and interested in engaging in local decision-making. NOT JUST WATER NEEDS."
- "More elected officials and board members, reflect DAC water issues + solutions."
- "More DAC reps in regional planning efforts and plans that actually reflect community needs."
- "Several participants in Institute are trained and prepared to serve on IRWM & GSA groundwater boards, maybe advisory committees."
- "Success would include the community coming together and becoming engaged with policy makers and finding solutions."

Broad reach/impact

- "Contact us and ask what our needs are."
- "Better outreach"
- "Make the cost minimal."
- "Once someone has attended the program, they refer other individuals to the program."
- "That Self Help would buy a bus & shuttle all interested people to these workshops or meetings."

Improved, accessible information

- "Participants know who to call/where to look the next time they have a question or face a barrier to engaging with water."
- "Communication – it is very good now, but it can always get better."

Informed and engaged community residents

- "Educating directors to better communicate with the community."
- "Getting new members from community to become engaged (i.e., serve on board)."
- "Reaching and gaining resident participation."
- "Help in getting the general public interested in their communities' water."

Strong and united community leadership

- "Success to me would be if community leaders would be created."
- "Support the project, stand united as one. Support the issue not one's interest."
- "Teach what's right and fair."
- "Mentorship"
- "Strengthen grassroots leadership."
- "If Self Help could spin a movement of interest in involvement towards water issues at a more local level, this thing can build momentum."

Appendices

A: Acronyms and Abbreviations

Acronym/Abbreviation	Meaning
CWC	Community Water Center
DWR	Department of Water Resources
GSA	Groundwater Sustainability Agency
IRWM	Integration Regional Water Management
RCAC	Rural Community Assistance Corporation
SGMA	Sustainable Groundwater Management Act
SHE	Self-Help Enterprises
TMF	Technical, Managerial, Financial

B: Focus Group Agenda

5:00PM – 5:30PM Dinner and Registration

5:30PM – 5:35PM Welcome and Introductions

5:35PM – 5:45PM DAC Participation in Regional Water Management and Planning

5:45PM – 5:50PM Leadership Institute – History and Objective

5:50PM – 7:20PM Group Discussion

- Which program/planning activities do you participate in and why?
- What skills, knowledge and information do you believe rural communities need to effectively participate in regional water management (e.g. hydrology, understanding SGMA, identifying community groundwater use and concerns, public speaking, etc.)?
- What types of activities should the Institute include?
- What additional challenges beyond the skills and expertise we have already discussed prevent rural unincorporated communities from participating in regional water management activities and how might these barriers be addressed?
- If one thing could happen as a result of this Institute that would make you feel like it was a success, what would it be?

7:20PM – 7:30PM Next Steps & Conclusion

C: Community Survey

Thank you so much for taking the time to share your input by filing out this short survey! Please return the completed questionnaire using the provided envelope or to a SHE employee by August 15, 2018. Your contributions will help us design the Leadership Institute to be as effective as possible. If you have any questions about this survey or the Institute, please contact Eva Dominquez by phone at 559-802-1634 or by email at evad@selfhelpenterprises.org.

1. Name (leave blank if you wish to remain anonymous)

2. Which of the following best describes you? (Select one)
 - a. Rural drinking water district/company director
 - b. Rural drinking water district/company staff
 - c. Private well owner
 - d. Rural community resident

3. Which of the following programs/planning activities are the most important for rural communities to participate in? (Select as many as apply)
 - a. The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA)
 - b. Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM)
 - c. County plans (e.g. general plans)
 - d. Community plans (e.g. drought contingency plans, capital improvement projects)
 - e. Storm water resource plans
 - f. State water policy
 - g. Other (please specify) _____

4. What regional water management programs/planning activities do you participate in (e.g. SGMA, IRWM, community projects etc.) and why?

5. What regional water management programs/planning activities do you not participate in (e.g. SGMA, IRWM, community projects etc.) and why?

6. For which of the following programs/planning activities do rural communities most need training/assistance to engage in? (Select as many as apply)
 - a. The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA)
 - b. Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM)
 - c. County plans (e.g. general plans)
 - d. Community plans (e.g. drought contingency plans, capital improvement projects)
 - e. Storm water resource plans
 - f. State water policy
 - g. Other (please specify) _____

7. Which of the following topics are most important to know about in order to participate in regional water management and planning? (Select up to three)

-
- a. Hydrology (general principles and concepts)
 - b. California water policy, law and regulations
 - c. Local water sources, conditions and management concerns
 - d. Information about water uses and users
 - e. Information about the process, requirements and timelines for different programs/planning efforts (e.g. SGMA, IRWM)
 - f. Who manages water at the state level (agencies, roles, responsibilities, how decision are made)
 - g. Who manages water at the local level (agencies, roles, responsibilities, how decisions are made)
 - h. Community-level water management information (for example amount of groundwater used, infrastructure, quality problems etc.)
 - i. Funding and finances
 - j. The importance/benefits of planning and best practices
 - k. Project development
 - l. Engineering and infrastructure
 - m. Other (please specify) _____

8. Which of the following skills are most important for effectively participating in regional water management and planning? (Select up to three)

- a. Brown Act and how to run a public meeting
- b. Public speaking, making comments and suggestions in meetings and on committees
- c. Understanding and analyzing the political dimensions and power dynamics that influence decision-making
- d. Understanding and analyzing technical documents
- e. Understanding and analyzing legal documents
- f. Understanding and analyzing budgets and financial documents
- g. Working with consultants/staff
- h. Conflict resolution
- i. Negotiating and building consensus
- j. Communicating with the public/public outreach and education
- k. Collaborating with neighboring communities and/or other water interests
- l. Engaging the public/community water planning and decision-making
- m. Building and sustaining a strong community water board/district
- n. Other (please specify) _____

9. What skills/topics do you already feel comfortable with?

10. What skills/topics would you most like to receive training for?

11. Which of the following activities would be of most interest to you as part of the next Institute? (Select up to three)

- a. Meeting observation/participation
- b. Field trips/tours
- c. Role play
- d. Guest lectures from experts

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- e. Group discussion
 - f. Group projects/activities
 - g. Peer learning/sharing
 - h. Case studies
 - i. Other (please specify) _____

12. Which of the following Institute formats would you prefer? (Select one)

- a. Large group meetings
- b. Mix of large group and small group meetings
- c. Small group meetings

13. How often should the Leadership Institute meet? (Select one)

- a. Monthly for full day meetings
- b. Twice a month for half days
- c. Combination
- d. Other (please specify) _____

14. For how long should the Leadership Institute meet? (Select one)

- a. Three months
- b. Six months
- c. Twelve months

15. What times and days are best for meeting? (Select as many as apply)

- a. Saturday Morning
- b. Saturday Afternoon
- c. Sunday Morning
- d. Sunday Afternoon
- e. Weekday Evenings
- f. Weekday Mornings

16. How far are you willing or able to travel to participate in Institute activities one way? (Select one)

- a. 10 miles
- b. 25 miles
- c. 50 miles
- d. 100 miles

17. What factors limit your ability to participate in trainings/meetings? (Select as many as apply)

- a. Distance/Access to transportation
- b. Cost
- c. Time
- d. Childcare/dependent care
- e. None
- f. Other (please specify) _____

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18. What could make the Institute more accessible for you and others from your community to participate?
 19. What factors prevent community water policy makers and managers from participating in regional water management and planning (e.g. SGMA, IRWM, County plans)?
 20. If the Institute could do one thing to support rural community participation in regional water management and planning what would it be?
 21. Besides the Institute, what other programs, funding, support etc. are needed to support community participation in regional water management?

D: Stakeholder Survey

Thank you so much for taking the time to share your input by filing out this short survey! Please return the completed questionnaire using the provided envelope or to a SHE employee by August 15, 2018. Your contributions will help us design the Leadership Institute to be as effective as possible. If you have any questions about this survey or the Institute, please contact Eva Dominquez by phone at 559-802-1634 or by email at evad@selfhelpenterprises.org.

1. Name (leave blank if you wish to remain anonymous)
2. Which of the following best describes you? (Select one)
 - a. TA provider
 - b. Non-profit/Member organization
 - c. City representative
 - d. Non-drinking water agency staff (including GSA/IRWM staff)
 - e. State agency representative
 - f. County representative
 - g. Funder
3. What information/knowledge is most important to effectively participate in regional water management and planning?
4. What skills are most important to effectively participate in regional water management and planning?
5. What factors prevent rural unincorporated communities from participating in regional water management and planning?
6. To address the barriers you identified in your answer to Question 3, what would you like to see included in the Institute curriculum or activities?
7. What, if any, role do you or your agency/organization play in addressing the barriers identified in Question 3?
8. Are you interested in participating in or supporting the Institute activities or trainings? If so, how would you like to be involved? (Note that answering this question does not constitute any sort of commitment, we are just trying to get a sense of interest and brainstorm ideas. We will follow up for further discussion.)
9. Besides the Institute, what other programs, funding, support etc. are needed to support rural community participation in regional water management and planning?