

Rainwater Harvesting for Domestic Use:

a social perspective



Prof J. Goldin
21 November 2013, Pretoria
jgoldin@uwc.ac.za



Where the people are

- William Sutton robbed banks – because that is where the money is
- We need to be down on the ground - because that is where the people are



Understanding people

- Over the past decades – since the 90's (Rio Summit and the famous – or is it infamous – principles)
- Lowest level
- We need systematic understanding of people
- But how do we do it – its easier said than done



Plato's Meno

- The paradox of inquiry: – if you don't have any idea what you're looking for you won't ever find it
- Story telling is never neutral and the narrator always directs attention to features of the world rather than to others



Participation – meanings and interpretations

Participation has come to mean whatever people want it to mean

The term disguises very different approaches, founding principles and values



People-centric

“The essence of participation is exercising voice and choice and developing the human, organisational and management capacity to solve problems as they arise ... ” (Saxena 1998)



“For participatory development practitioners, a primary aim is to transform conventional development into a process of engagement with and by local people, rather than to use expert knowledge to dictate interventions” (Cornwall 2000)



We want to know ...

- What do people do?
- How much do people do?
- How often do they do this?
- When do they do it?
- Where do they do it?
- Why do they do it?
- Who do they do it with?
- What are the costs or consumption implications?
- What is required to do things differently?



Conversion factor

- We ask ourselves how have the tanks helped convert into something useful
- Not just the potential for new water
- But the potential to exercise choices that improve life
- So must be part of the decision-making
- Otherwise **choice** hijacked



Diversity

Acknowledges diversity by acknowledging the conversion factor – as this can differ between people

Some of the differences may be individuals whereas others will be structural differences in society – related to gender, class, race, case and so on



Gender lens

- Application of a lens which considers the different ways in which men and women engage with DRWH



A new approach

- Amartya Sen's capability approach has generated remarkable interest over the past decade. His Tanner Lecture 'Equality of What' (1980) set out a broad agenda for debate and further research



CA reminds us

- Robust social theory that hones in on the individual
- Conversion factor looks at social, environmental and personal factors
- Material goods are instrumental in getting a 'good life' but opportunities and choices (capabilities) are intrinsically valuable



Tanks just one aspect

- Of course, then, if there are no other options the DRWH becomes the one way to achieve valued well-beings (getting water for productive use or domestic) but that is not all that matters
- What matters is to achieve valued well-being such as dignity, self-esteem, ability to make choices, to be respected – having trust between government and society and amongst social groups



W³h

- It's the process of bringing DRWH that is being considered
 - **what** you do
 - **with whom** you do it
 - **when** you do it
 - **how** you do it



Evaluative framework

- Achievements in the human dimension
- Not a means to an end (getting water)
- But an end in itself (improving capabilities – choices/opportunities) for people



Why me factor

- Feelings of discrimination or advantage
- Opportunity and choice plays a huge role here







Prof J. Goldin
21 November 2013, Pretoria
jgoldin@uwc.ac.za

Thank you



Prof J. Goldin
21 November 2013, Pretoria
jgoldin@uwc.ac.za