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# PEACE CORPS WORKSHOP ON COMMUNITY SANITATION IMPROVEMENT AND LATRINE CONSTRUCTION

WASH Field Report No. 386  
December 1992

WASH FIELD REFERENCE CENTRE  
MINI WATER SUPPLY AND  
SANITATION UNIT



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WASH Field Report No. 386

**PEACE CORPS WORKSHOP  
ON COMMUNITY SANITATION IMPROVEMENT  
AND LATRINE CONSTRUCTION**

**Niger**

**September 28-October 9, 1992**

Prepared for the Office of Health  
Bureau for Research and Development,  
U.S. Agency for International Development  
under WASH Task No. 391

by  
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and  
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December 1992

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## RELATED WASH REPORTS

*Community Sanitation Improvement and Latrine Construction Program: A Training Guide.* Technical Report No. 83. Forthcoming. Prepared by John Gavin, Steve Joyce, and Trevor Hockley.

*A Workshop Design for Latrine Construction: A Training Guide.* Technical Report No. 25. June 1984. Prepared by Maria LeClere and Keith Sherer.

*Latrine Construction Workshop for Health Workers in El Rahad, N. Kordofan, Republic of Sudan.* Field Report No. 180. April 1986. Prepared by Frank Carroll.

*Training-of-Trainers Workshop for Latrine Construction in El Rahad, N. Kordofan, Sudan.* Field Report No. 173. March 1986. Prepared by Margaret McLaughlin.

*Operation and Maintenance of Rural Drinking Water and Latrine Program in Honduras.* Field Report No. 129. September 1984. Prepared by David Donaldson.

*Latrine Construction Workshop, Gerihun, Sierra Leone, 28 November-9 December 1983.* Field Report No. 114. January 1984. Prepared by Vernon Razak and Max Kroschel.

*Latrine Construction Workshops, Las Mata de Forfan, Dominican Republic, April 4-5, 1983, April 25-May 6, 1983.* Field Report No. 93. June 1983. Prepared by Winanne Kreger and Henry Van.

*A Workshop on Sanitation in Bakel, Senegal, April 20-May 4, 1983, and an Assessment of Environmental Health Conditions.* Field Report No. 91. June 1983. Prepared by Fred Rosensweig and Thomas Talbot.

*A Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Training Course for Peace Corps Volunteers in Togo.* Field Report No. 51, July 1982. Prepared by Yolande Mosseau-Gershman.

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

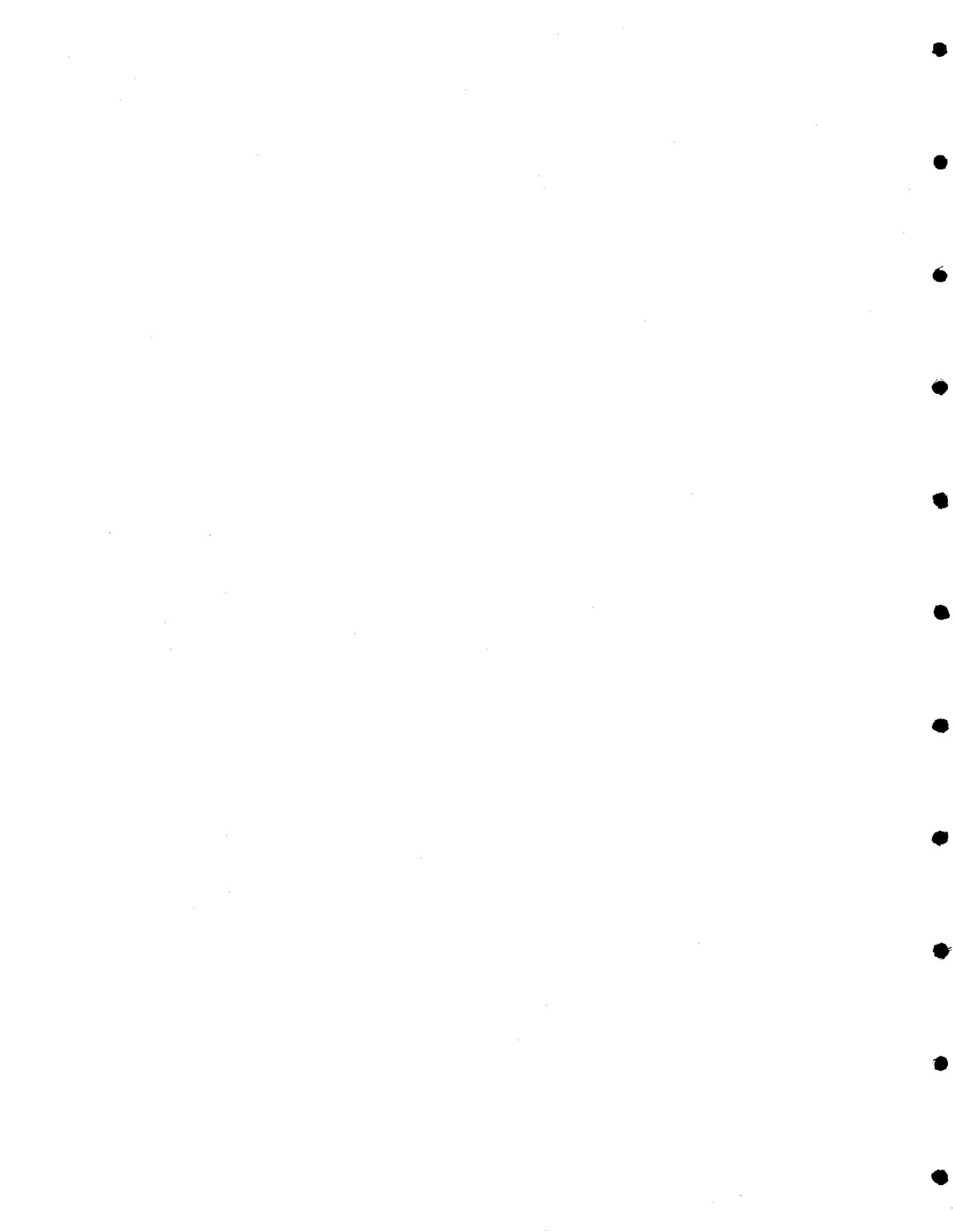
Dorothy Leroux is a specialist in facilitation/training for international development with experience in project management, training design and implementation, cross cultural communication, and non-formal education. She has completed numerous training activities for USAID and other international agencies in the U.S., Latin America, and Africa. Fluent in French and Spanish, she holds Master's degrees in literature from the University of Paris and psychology/organizational development from California State University.

Kevin Novotny is a specialist in community water and sanitation with experience in training, project design, and evaluation. Prior to this WASH activity, he worked for four years as a Rural Infrastructure Development Agent with the U.S. Peace Corps in Togo, and completed two assignments as a community sanitation trainer for Peace Corps/Morocco. Fluent in French, Novotny is currently finishing a Master's degree in Environmental Systems with an emphasis in international development technology at Humboldt State University.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Community Sanitation Improvement and Latrine Construction Workshop held in Hamdallaye, Niger, required substantial planning and preparation for both its implementation and the accompanying field work. The success of this workshop was reflected in the abilities of those involved. We'd like to thank former volunteer JoDe Walp, who was in charge of logistics to get the workshop started, and site coordinators Aboubacar Mahaman Tondi and Boubacar Keita, who kept the workshop running smoothly and effectively, arranged for our forays into the community, and helped supervise the latrine project. Also, thanks to the community that accepted our presence and received the participants with friendship and frankness.

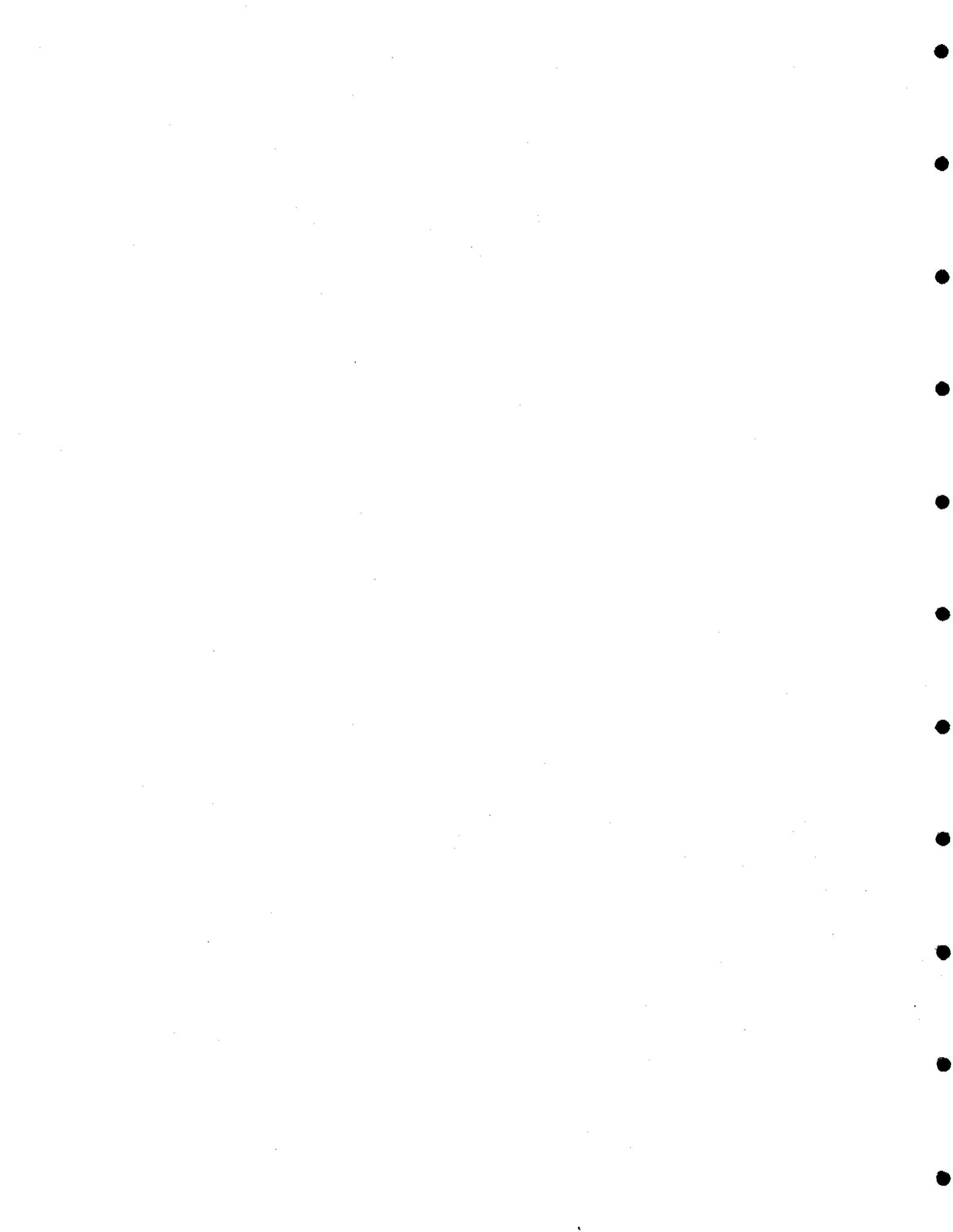
Finally, a special thanks to the participants. Their varied backgrounds, ethnicities, and cultures not only added a multinational flair to the workshop, but also increased their eagerness to participate, share experiences, and learn from each other. We wish them success in their future endeavors.



## ACRONYMS

APCD	Associate Peace Corps Director
CAR	Central African Republic
GON	Government of Niger
MOPH	Ministry of Public Health
PCV	Peace Corps Volunteer
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VIP	Ventilated Improved Pit (Latrine)
WASH	Water and Sanitation for Health Project





## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A workshop on community sanitation improvement and latrine construction was held under the joint sponsorship of the Water and Sanitation for Health Project (WASH) and Peace Corps/Niger at the Peace Corps training facility in Hamdallaye, Niger, from September 28 to October 9, 1992. The workshop had two purposes: to train Peace Corps volunteers (PCVs) and their counterparts in designing and conducting an appropriate excreta disposal program including latrine construction; and to field test the new WASH training manual, "Approaches to Improved Excreta Disposal Management in the Community." The workshop involved eight PCVs from Niger with their Nigerien counterparts, one PCV from Cote d'Ivoire, and one volunteer/counterpart team from the Central African Republic. The workshop was conducted in French by a two-person team, one with technical skills in latrine construction and training experience, and the other with extensive training and facilitation experience.

The subject matter of the workshop included steps necessary to collect information about a community's excreta disposal behaviors; analyze these behaviors with respect to health risks; choose appropriate interventions to address the problem; and identify the skills necessary to design, implement, and supervise latrine construction. The methodology was experiential and participatory, with classroom exercises as well as numerous field exercises in Hamdallaye. A latrine model was constructed; the participants were able to oversee the construction and familiarize themselves with the steps. Project and field exercises added a practical sense of reality for the classroom information.

According to the participants' assessments, all the workshop goals were achieved with a relatively high degree of approval. Participants stated that the content, methodology, and schedule were relevant and appropriate for this type of project. There was a logical sequence of events throughout the workshop.

The consultants agreed that the goals were achieved and for the most part that the program was good. As this was the first field test for the manual, the consultants had ample opportunity to work out minor problems and adjustments seemed necessary. The content and methodology were appropriate, but there were instances in which sessions could be shortened and other pertinent sessions added. Overall, however, the time allotment for the workshop was appropriate for the amount of information in this type of program.

The training manual was followed as far as local situations allowed. The trainers made content and methodological modifications during the workshop and provided a detailed summary of recommendations to WASH.

## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background

In response to an interest by representatives of the Ministry of Public Health of the Government of Niger (GON) and the Peace Corps Director, Peace Corps/Niger through United States Agency for International Development (USAID)/Niger requested WASH assistance in conducting a workshop on a community sanitation improvement and latrine program.

Currently, Peace Corps/Niger has no established water/sanitation program, and it is only recently that the GON has shown interest in this field. Because of this, there is no major emphasis on sanitation and latrine construction in the country. There are many water projects, and PCVs work to improve community health through sanitation. Recently, the GON has shown a measured interest in collaborating with the Peace Corps in this sector.

This workshop was a response to this interest and to the newly recognized belief that educating people, clarifying problems and needs, and then choosing appropriate interventions with respect to latrine construction are the necessary steps to improve community health.

This workshop also gave WASH the opportunity to conduct the first field test of its draft of "Approaches to Improved Excreta Disposal Management in the Community." In this effort, WASH provided the trainers. The Peace Corps was responsible for in-country logistics arrangements, the choice of participants, and the selection of training and project sites.

#### 1.2 Scope of Work

In order to successfully implement the program as stated—conduct training for 10 PCVs and their counterparts and to conduct a field test of the WASH manual—the consultants were responsible for the following activities:

- To become familiar with the draft of the WASH manual "Approaches to Improved Excreta Disposal Management in the Community."
- To participate in a two-day pre-departure, team planning meeting at WASH headquarters.
- To become familiar with the background of the project and with the current status of sanitation and community health programs in Niger, especially latrine construction.
- To use the "Approaches to Improved Excreta Disposal Management in the Community" manual to conduct a 10-day workshop in French for approximately 20 participants.

- To prepare a report that summarizes the workshop, assesses the results, and makes recommendations for future use of this manual.
- To prepare a report on the training guide based on the experience of the workshop.
- To participate in a debriefing during which the workshop results will be discussed along with recommendations about the manual to the authors.

The schedule for the project was as follows:

Team Planning Meeting:	September 22-23, 1992
In-country Planning:	September 25-26, 1992
Workshop:	September 28-October 9, 1992
Report Preparation:	October 10, 1992
Debriefing:	November 2-3, 1992

## **Chapter 2**

### **PLANNING**

#### **2.1 Initial Planning**

In early 1992, WASH Technical Report No. 25, "Workshop Design for Latrine Construction," was updated to account for recent learning about latrine technologies and the dynamics of hygiene behavior and community participation. It has been determined that a technological intervention by itself is not sufficient to bring about substantial change with respect to excreta disposal behaviors. A great deal of importance needs to be given to research, analysis, and sensitization of the community to determine risky behaviors, obstacles to changing them, appropriate intervention, and community involvement that will guarantee the success and sustainability of the project.

In the spring of 1992, Peace Corps/Niger and the USAID mission agreed that the renewed interest of sanitation projects by the Peace Corps and the GON would enable this new thinking to be applied in a realistic setting. Though there is no official sanitation program, they arranged for this workshop to be given to selected PCVs and their Nigerien counterparts.

On September 22 and 23, a team planning meeting was held at WASH headquarters for the two consultants. This meeting provided them with the background on Peace Corps/Niger and GON activities in this sector. The meeting focused on two aspects of the assignment: to provide training to 20 participants to enhance their skills in creating an improved excreta disposal management program in a community and in supervising latrine construction; and to field test the manual "Approaches to Improved Excreta Management in the Community" developed by WASH. The consultants developed a work plan for both tasks.

#### **2.2 In-Country Preparation**

Most in-country planning and preparation took place before the team's arrival in Niger. WASH and Peace Corps/Niger were in contact, and the arrangements for the training were begun. The latrine model, the ventilated improved pit (VIP), and the site were chosen and the project was started. The Peace Corps sent letters of invitation to eight volunteers and their counterparts. They also arranged for representation from similar Peace Corps projects in Cote d'Ivoire and the Central African Republic (CAR) by inviting a volunteer/counterpart team from those two countries.

Upon their arrival, the team met with Lawrence Leahy, acting Peace Corps Director, to verify what organization was completed and to clarify any questions he might have about the training program. They then met with Associate Peace Corps Director (APCD), Amy Wilson, who was in charge of the training program, and Mr. Salissou Kane, of the Ministry of Public Health, to see what was currently being done in Niger in the hygiene and sanitation sector, and how this training program might complement their efforts and long-term plans in this sector.

In the afternoon, the trainers were taken to the training site to familiarize themselves with the staff, the village, and the living and training facilities.

The following day, the team informally interviewed the participants to become acquainted with them and to find out why they were going to the workshop, what they expected to get out of it, and how they anticipated using the information from the workshop at their sites.

### **2.3 Site Preparation**

The workshop took place at the Peace Corps training facility in Hamdallaye, 30 kilometers from Niamey. It is used regularly by the Peace Corps and has become their principle training facility. The village has about 2,000 inhabitants who are accustomed to being part of Peace Corps training programs. Because of this, activities in the village were conducted with ease and a great deal of cooperation.

## Chapter 3

### WORKSHOP IMPLEMENTATION

#### 3.1 Workshop Goals

The goal of this workshop was to train the participants to be able to do the following activities:

- Identify the excreta disposal behaviors of a community and the impact of these behaviors on health;
- Collect information to assist in the development of an excreta disposal management strategy;
- Analyze critical factors in determining appropriate latrine selection;
- Describe the requirements for four types of latrines;
- Develop a latrine construction program plan, supervise construction, and assess existing latrines for possible upgrading;
- Apply interactive techniques to sanitation education;
- Monitor and evaluate sanitation interventions;
- Develop an action plan to implement a sanitation improvement program in the village setting.

#### 3.2 Participants

Nineteen people attended the workshop at Hamdallaye, including 10 PCVs, (Appendix A). All but one (who spent 6 months at his site in CAR) had completed at least 8 months of service. In addition to the PCV from CAR, another came from Cote d'Ivoire. The remaining 9 participants included 8 from Niger and 1 from CAR. The Africans represented a wide range of experience and education, from ministerial level officials to peasant farmers. Only half the Nigeriens were actual counterparts of the PCVs.

During participant interviews held at the Peace Corps office in Niamey prior to the workshop, the trainers discovered that two PCVs, who were anticipating launching latrine projects, were instructed to come despite their inability to communicate in French. Their Nigerien counterparts, who were chosen at the last minute, were poorly briefed on what to expect from the training.

A more careful selection and briefing procedure would have mitigated these problems. The group demonstrated an exceptional level of cooperation and motivation throughout the workshop, approaching all tasks with enthusiasm and diligence, heat and language difficulties notwithstanding.

### **3.3 Trainers**

Consultants Ms. Dorothy LeRoux and Mr. Kevin Novotny conducted the training. Both trainers speak French and have worked extensively in Africa. The technical trainer, Mr. Novotny, specializes in water and sanitation. He was a PCV in Togo and has been conducting health/sanitation training in other African countries. With his guidance, participants received hands-on experience in latrine design, as well as supervision of actual latrine construction at two nearby sites. The training specialist, Ms. LeRoux, lead sessions focusing on preparation, design, and presentation of health education interventions related to defecation and proper latrine use. She also reinforced the importance of behavioral change and its critical role in the implementation and sustainability of development projects.

### **3.4 Workshop Content**

The workshop design, which was being field tested for the first time, covers 10 full days of training. It incorporates two main themes intended to complement one another throughout the training: latrine construction and improved community sanitation practices. One purpose for revising this manual was to highlight, as well as to reinforce, the importance of behavioral change when introducing this type of intervention into a community. Resistance to change in defecation practices often runs high in developing countries.

Throughout the workshop, emphasis was placed on project sustainability and its reliance on active community involvement in all project activities. Trainers took care to coordinate their technical and nontechnical efforts with the aim of creating a more balanced and integrated approach to latrine intervention.

### **3.5 Methodology**

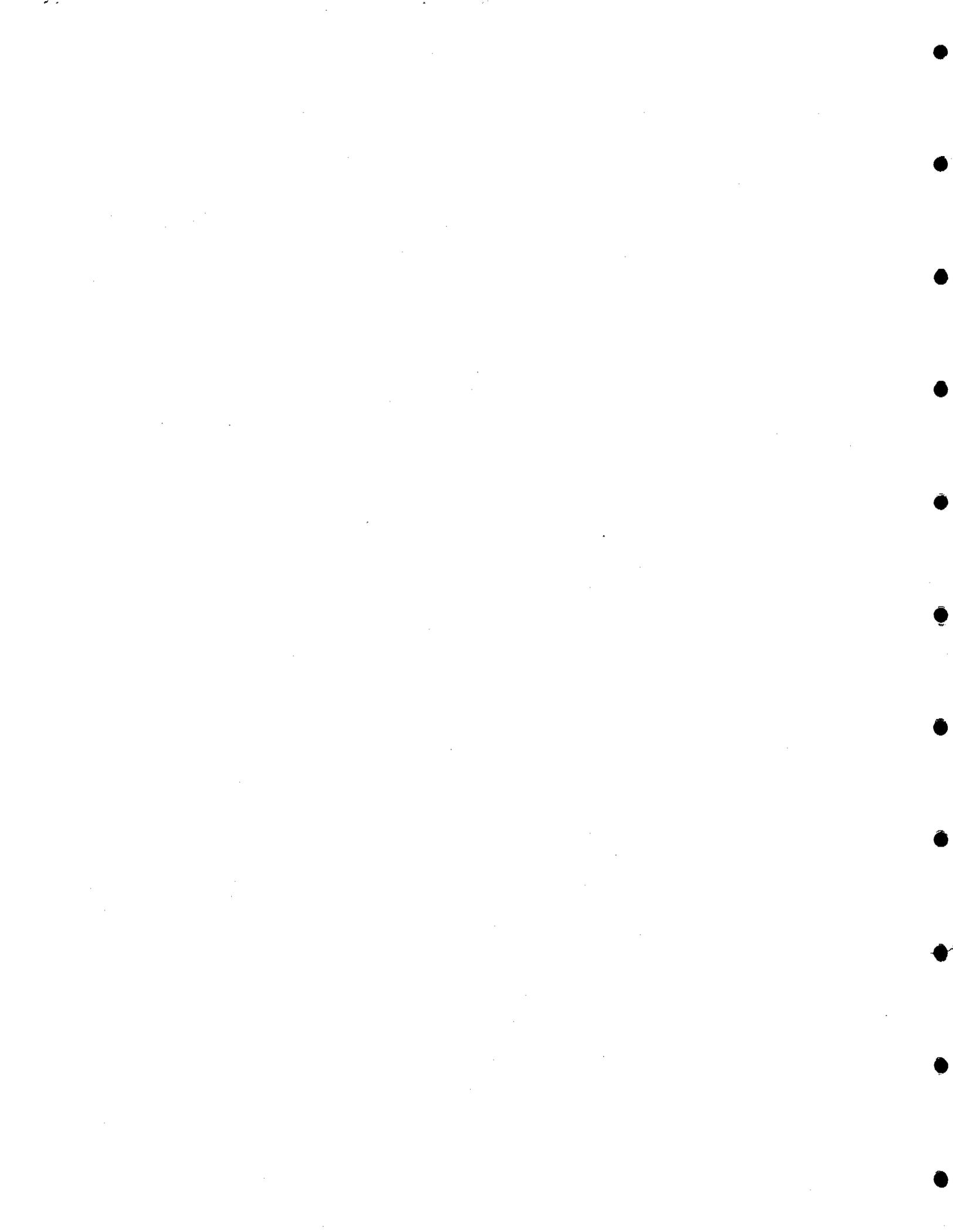
Though the core content of the workshop was delivered in French, support in both Hausa and English were available. Participants practiced a variety of experiential learning techniques, including role-playing, small group work, presentations, brainstorming, and field observations. The wide variety of participant skills, languages, ethnic origins, and educational levels presented trainers with an additional challenge—that of monitoring the level of participant interaction and training information to ensure that no one was left out. Efforts were made to keep discussions lively and interesting by encouraging everyone to speak, share experiences, or paraphrase what others had contributed. Peasant farmers and ministry officials managed to share information and work side by side to their mutual satisfaction.

For the technical (construction) phase of the training, thorough classroom preparation preceded all trips to the field. The same was true for the community surveys. At the conclusion of field activities, participants were encouraged to raise questions, make comments, and generally relate their field experience to previous workshop content and draw conclusions based on the groups' shared experience.



### **3.6 Schedule**

The training program was designed as a 10-day workshop to be conducted Monday through Friday for 2 weeks. Training totaled 7 to 7.5 hours per day.



## Chapter 4

### WORKSHOP ASSESSMENT

#### 4.1 Participant Assessment

Participants evaluated the workshop using a form included in the manual and in their packets of handouts. Nineteen evaluations were completed, and the following discussion summarizes the results.

##### 4.1.1 Goal Attainment

The participants decided whether the workshop achieved the 9 goals stated for it. Table 1 shows the results. The responses ranged from 3.78 to 4.58 on a 5-point scale with 1 being the lowest and 5 the highest score. The lowest ranking was given to the third goal: Collect information necessary in the development of an excreta disposal management strategy. The highest ranking was given to the second goal: Identify the behaviors of a community related to their disposal of excreta and the impact of these behaviors on health. Overall, the scores illustrated a positive understanding of the workshop since the average score was 4.19, and the range of scores was narrow.

##### 4.1.2 Training Methodology

The second part of the evaluation contained various open-ended questions to enable participants to determine the usefulness of the training. The questions asked the participants to state the most positive aspects of the workshop and the most negative aspects.

Examples of positive aspects included the following: a busy schedule; discussing a wide range of issues so that everything will be pertinent to someone; the hands-on experiences in the community; keeping the participants abreast about where they were in the large picture of a project design; and the interaction between the various people represented there.

Some negative aspects as listed by the participants were as follows: the interaction between the various people represented there; and exercises and documents that were not appropriate to the situation in Niger.

##### 4.1.3 Content

The participants described the content of the workshop as pertinent and relevant. They expressed a desire to conduct more activities at the community level with community participants. They realized the importance of conducting the steps leading to an intervention to improve the potential success of the intervention.

**Table 1**

**Workshop Results  
(Scale of 1-5)**

<i>Goal</i>	<i>Rating</i>
Describe appropriate approaches to create a program for the disposal of excrements.	4.42
Identify behaviors of a community related to disposal of excrements and the effect of these behaviors on health.	4.58
Collect information to help create a strategy for the disposal of excrements.	3.78
Analyze the factors involved in choosing a latrine.	4.32
Describe the requirements for four types of latrines.	4.42
Develop a program of latrine construction, supervision, and evaluation, and improve existing latrines.	4.10
Apply interactive techniques in hygiene education.	4.32
Monitor and evaluate sanitation interventions.	3.95
Create a personal plan of action	3.89

**4.1.4 Trainers**

The participants stated that it was the enthusiasm, patience, and positive attitudes of the trainers that got the group through the impasses, and this was of critical importance with such a varied group.

**4.1.5 Organization**

The participants were in general very pleased with the organization of the workshop. They felt that the time allotments were appropriate for the information covered and that the structure and content were presented in a logical order.

There was nothing but praise for the support and organization provided by the Peace Corps and the training site staff.

## **4.2 Trainer Assessment**

### **4.2.1 Workshop Goals**

The two main themes of the workshop—latrine construction, supervision, and repair; and behavioral change related to improving community sanitation—were equally represented in the workshop goals. Trainers felt that the goals were reasonable and relevant to the topics covered. Better time allotments would have ensured thorough achievement of certain goals. Another minor obstacle was the exceptionally large disparity among participants in their skills, education, and experiences.

### **4.2.2 Planning and Site Preparation**

The Peace Corps training center at Hamdallaye is well managed, with high standards of hygiene and good cooking. Constructed on a hill adjacent to the village of Hamdallaye, the center is practically an extension of the village. Over time, excellent relations have been established and training activities often include the villagers' participation. Everyone seemed pleased with the accommodations, and, with the exception of the heat, there were no complaints.

### **4.2.3 Support**

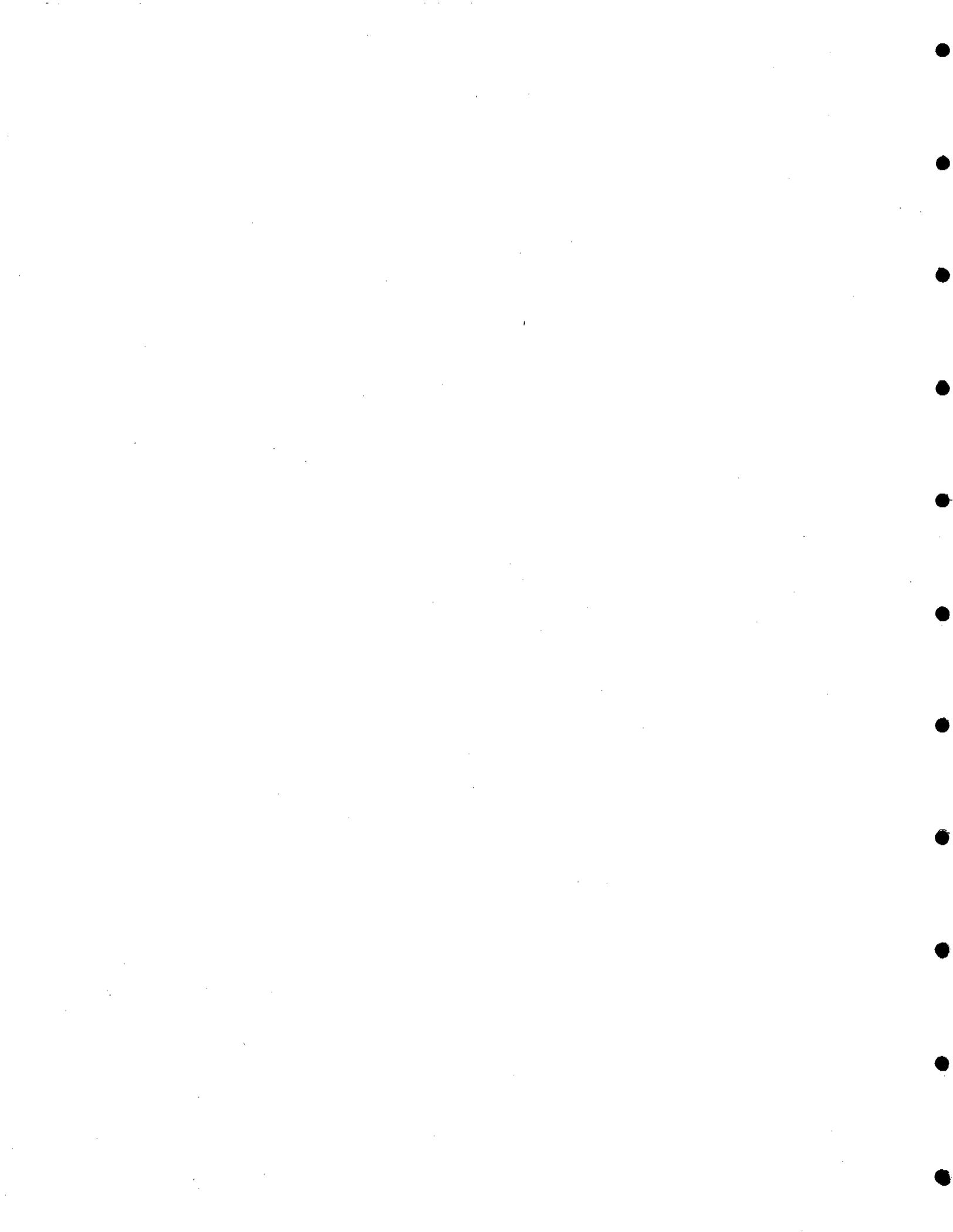
Peace Corps/Niarney lent its full support to the training program, though actual contact with Peace Corps staff was minimal. The training center staff, all competent and caring, provided 24-hour support for the trainers and participants during the workshop.

### **4.2.4 Methodology**

The combination of theory, experiential training techniques, and frequent field visits lent variety and dynamism to the training. Many of the Africans had no prior experience with interactive training approaches. Their enthusiasm and participation remained high throughout the two weeks. Participants demonstrated the effectiveness of the experiential approach by modeling trainers' techniques in their own presentation later in the training.

### **4.2.5 Participants**

Most participants intended to work with latrine projects in the near future, thereby putting workshop theory and skills to immediate use. It was a distinct pleasure to work with these people. Over the course of the two weeks, there were few absences, no complaints, and a concentrated effort to cooperate and support each other in a wide variety of tasks and activities.



## Chapter 5

# RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 Technical

The technical sessions as presented in the manual are appropriate to fulfill the objectives of the training. Aside from changes in time allotments or format to fit the situation, they should be kept as is.

The field exercises are appropriate in time and place, but there are discrepancies with the construction schedule and where those activities need to be placed in the program. There are also key construction considerations which participants need to know that weren't given time allotments. One such example is that there is no time specified for the participants to see a latrine slab before it is built. In reality, the iron work in the slab is the most important part.

Considering that costs of latrines are often used as excuses against them, the trainers recommend that along with the construction of an improved latrine model such as the VIP, the workshop also should address the construction of the most simple, effective, and safe latrine that is in use in the host country. This activity could reinforce the idea that effective latrines of any style are preferable to nothing and could be an inroad to behavioral change.

According to the training manual, there needs to be a master builder who can undertake the construction project without the constant supervision of the technical trainer. In theory, this is ideal, but in reality, it is rare. In view of this, the trainers recommend that the in-country agency, Peace Corps or otherwise, hire someone specifically for this task. The person should be skilled enough in construction to be able to supervise the work of the mason, determine the amounts and types of materials needed, and work with the trainers to keep the project on schedule with the appropriate training sessions.

As this is the first test of this program, there will obviously be time to work out these details.

### 5.2 Non-technical

The training manual stresses the importance of an effective hygiene education program along with other skills to carry out an effective sanitation program, but it allots this topic a marginal amount of time. The trainers recommend increasing the amount of education activities that can be done at the community level.

The trainers also recommend that the time allotments be reviewed and revised to more adequately accommodate the training tasks.

### **5.3 General Recommendations**

The trainers found that though such a varied group adds a great deal to a program, it was also one of the major obstacles to the success of the program. The lack of language proficiency slowed the pace and threatened to rob the training of its momentum. The language obstacles were managed, but the overall quality of communication was weakened. In view of this, the trainers recommend that language skills be strongly considered when choosing participants.

Along the same line are the skills, education levels, and motivation of the participants. This would probably be different in situations where there is an established sanitation program, but if not, there is risk that the motivation for coming to the conference will be so different among the participants that forming cohesiveness within the group will be difficult.

Therefore, the trainers recommend that the following categories of groups be considered in future training programs:

- Extension agents of similar backgrounds, experiences, and motivations.
- Extension agents of similar language skills.
- Extension agents working specifically with health and sanitation programs



## Appendix A

### LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

<i>Name</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Region/Town</i>
Abouzeidi Chahabou	Hygiene Technician for Sanitation	Maradi
Paula Bauer	PCV, Environmental Protection	Maradi
Heather Berg	PCV, Nonformal Education	Maradi
Sharon Conrad	PCV, AFSI	Ouallam
John Dunlop	PCV, Child Survival	Central African Republic
Halidou Abdoulaye	Engineer for Genie Rurale	Niamey
Robert Hanson	PCV, Urban and Environmental Development	Cote d'Ivoire
Hayo Moussa	Farmer	Zinder
Illia Moussa	Farmer	Maradi
Natalie Jones	PCV, Environmental Protection	Zinder
Tracy Leary	PCV, Nonformal Education	Maradi
Ari Kime Maina	Chief of the Division of Hygiene and Sanitation, MOPH	Niamey
Mamane Ibrahim	Farmer	Maradi
Daniel McCormick	PCV, AFSI	Say
Pascal Mobiri	Sanitation Assistant African Republic	Central
Niandou Bodo	Agricultural Extension Agent	Dosso

Roro Sanda

Michelle Schuhmann

Michael Switow

Chief of Civil

PCV, Nutritionist

PCV, Education

MalbazaAffairs

Maradi

Malbaza