



Swedish Water House Seminar Report

Sanitation governance – making the system work

SIWI, 19 February, 2015

This seminar was organised by the Swedish Water House in cooperation with the UNDP Water Governance Facility at SIWI. It aimed to further the dialogue among development-oriented actors in Sweden on how to improve the situation for the approximately 2.5 billion people worldwide who struggle for proper sanitation every day. Rather than making the case for how important sanitation is for society and human health or how neglected it has been, the seminar focused on what needs to be done, and how.

Conclusions

- Sanitation governance refers to the rules, roles and relations that make sanitation systems work (or not) – at what cost and for whom. Rural and urban sanitation systems differ, as well as those in high- and low-income areas. The appropriate governance structure ensures that the selected technology and all parts of the system work sustainably in the given setting.
- Most cities in low-income areas are based on on-site sanitation. For these systems to function properly they need to be managed, but they tend to be grossly neglected. An integrated approach to faecal sludge management is needed, which involve all relevant stakeholders.
- New approaches to adequate sanitation require acceptance from implementers and users. Ownership of the fact-finding process is critical; all parties involved in the process of finding solutions and having them streamlined into decision-making / policy development must become allies.
- It is crucial to keep supporting local governments to find their role in the promotion of sanitation. Having a government programme with some direct implementation can bring about important differences in the national ownership of, and interest in sanitation.
- Long-term responsibility for service delivery has multiple benefits as it facilitates the introduction of new concepts and technologies and enhances disaster preparedness.
- New communication technologies are revolutionizing the way we are planning sanitation and will simplify the work.
- Capacity development is needed at all levels.
- Sanitation needs to be integrated into society, it is not something that can be fixed quickly. Aid is not going to solve the problem, but it has the potential of demonstrating ways forward and build local capacity.



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Introduction

Lotta Samuelson, Programme Manager at the Swedish Water House welcomed the participants to the seminar, which was followed by an introduction to the topic made by Marianne Kjellén, Director at the UNDP Water Governance Facility at SIWI. Marianne brought up a range of challenges in sanitation governance, taking place at multiple levels and including a range of stakeholders. Responsibilities in sanitation are often fragmented between different sectors and line ministries. This increases the complexity in governance and the risk of administrative struggles. Another challenge, related to decentralization, is that capacities at the local government level are commonly insufficient, and the resources allocated are rarely sufficient to match the devolved responsibilities.

Better governance can enhance the effectiveness of investments in the area of sanitation - bringing the full service delivery chain to cling together and function in the way that is intended.

Summary of presentations

Integrated faecal sludge management at City Wide Level

Philippe Reymond, EAWAG/Sandec, Swiss Federal Institute of Aquatic Science and Technology

Most cities in low-income areas are based on on-site sanitation. The financial effort to cover these cities with sewer systems is not realistic. The majority of the world's urban and peri-urban population still have on-site sanitation, i.e. latrines, septic tanks or solutions that are not connected to networks. These systems need to be managed, but tend to be grossly neglected.

Faecal sludge management (FSM) projects often fail because of top-down approaches. Other reasons are that wastewater management approaches are used without consideration of the particularities of FSM stakeholders' needs and priorities. Philippe stressed that it is necessary to use an integrated approach to FSM and involve all FSM stakeholders; service providers, authorities, households and end-users.

EAWAG has recently published a book, *Faecal Sludge Management: Systems Approach for Implementation and Operation*, which provides a simplified approach for rapid assessment and key stakeholder involvement. Even though immediate results of participatory planning might not be visible, results can come at a later stage. For example, in the second largest town of Togo, Sokodé, a participatory planning approach opened the way to funding through the African Water Facility at a much later stage.



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Toilets need allies: breaking down silo-thinking for decentralized sanitation

Jean O. Lacoursière, Kristianstad University

Jean shared his experiences from working with a project on tropical wetlands in the Mekong region. In that project it became obvious that they had to address sanitation as it was a common bottleneck to much of the problematic the project dealt with. As an example all practitioners dealing with environmental issues were waiting for sanitation engineers to fix the problem first. However, sanitation engineers were unable to act because policymakers were aiming for large centralized treatment plants to be constructed.

Decentralized sanitation and natural resources/environment management have similar problems when it comes to development prioritization; all need allies to strengthen their respective positions. When challenging approaches are put forward, science is rarely the issue. Rather, ownership of the fact-finding process is the issue. Jean pointed out that cross-sectorial “brain storming” can reduce silo-thinking. Ownership of the fact-finding process is critical to the acceptance of new approaches; those who have to find solutions and have them streamlined into decision-making and policy development must become allies. Donors must also recognize that some level of “silo thinking” still exist within their own approach to funding.

Jean stressed that practitioners want to “see, smell, taste and feel the effect of each interventions” before they are streamlined into decision-making and policy development. This is central to their acceptability, as these solutions are often outside institutionally accepted ones.

What is the role of local government in community based sanitation?

Alejandro Jiménez, Programme Manager, UNDP Water Governance Facility at SIWI

Progress in rural access to sanitation is far behind agreed targets, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa. As a result, new policies are being defined which shift the role of public investment from infrastructure to sanitation promotion, and give the responsibility of service delivery to local government. The presentation analysed the role that local governments can have in sanitation promotion in this new framework with the implementation of the National Sanitation Campaign in Tanzania as a case study.

Results show that direct implementation enhances local governments’ commitment, but that not all functions carried out are suited to their capacities, motivations and constraints. The challenges identified emerge as a combination of technical weaknesses in the implementation of the adopted methodologies, the political economy of local governments, and the economic and social particularities of rural areas, which are similar to other countries across the region.

Alejandro presented some recommendations for a more effective service delivery model, balancing the role of local government between direct execution, coordination and supportive supervision. It was concluded that even if the results might not be satisfactory in the short term, it is crucial to keep



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supporting local governments to find their role in the promotion of rural sanitation. The fact of having a government programme with some direct implementation can bring about important differences in the national ownership of, and interest in rural sanitation, which are greatly needed.

Experiences implementing the Peepoo Sanitation System in Kibera

Camilla Wirseen, Co-Founder Peepoople

Camilla presented experiences and lessons learned from setting up the Peepoo sanitation system in the Kibera settlement in Nairobi. The Peepoo solution is a new way of solving the sanitation problem in complex situations like slums, schools, emergencies and refugee camps.

The project in the Kibera settlement, which has been running since 2010, has the objective to demonstrate the user acceptance of the Peepoo solution on larger scale and to experiment in the value chain of distribution, collection and reuse of the Peepoo fertilizer. The Peepoo toilets are sold by women entrepreneurs and in kiosks. The bags are thereafter collected at Peepoo drop-points and processed into commercial fertilizers.

Camilla stressed that dignity in sanitation should be leading words when implementing sanitation projects; i.e. the fact that you can go to the toilet when you need to go and that you can do it in a clean way and in privacy/safety.

One of the challenges for Peepoople has been to find someone that can take leadership of the team in Kibera. There has also been a need for a lot of team building to make people collect the bags. It is important that people feel that they are part of a bigger movement.

Capacity as Catalyst for Governance

Madeleine Fogde, Stockholm Environment Institute:

Madeleine Fogde talked about her experience working with the PEC¹-Zonal in Mozambique, a participatory, people-centered and district-wide implementation framework. There has been very little investment in sanitation in Mozambique and a lack of government capacity. For example, there is an average of 2,5 government staff responsible for sanitation in each district in the country, staff that also have other responsibilities such as roads, environment and energy.

The PEC-Zonal has responded to these challenges by strengthening local authorities and promoted multi-sectoral collaboration to ensure consistency in targets, approaches and messages. The programme contracted agents that ensured that communities and schools took responsibility for leadership, operation and maintenance of improved facilities. It moreover supported decentralization and capacity development of provincial, district and sub-district officials. Another

¹ Participação e Educação Comunitária (Community Participation and Education).



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important component of the framework is the learning and adaptation through monitoring and follow-up of activities, to refine strategies, activities and responsibilities.

The approach of PEC-Zonal has been adopted by the National Water and Sanitation Programme in Mozambique (PRONASAR). Madeleine finalized by presenting a few learning points from the work with the PEC-Zonal, among them that communication is key, that capacity development is needed at all levels and that long-term responsibility for service delivery has multiple benefits as it facilitates the introduction of new concept and technologies and enhances disaster preparedness.

Discussion

Each of the presentations were followed by short Q&A, and at the end there was a half-hour joint discussion with the full group of participants. Some of the points that were made are summarized as follows:

Collaboration, resources, and responsibilities: Collaboration at different levels, and working together, is a prerequisite to move ahead with sanitation governance. Moreover, people can be very effective when they have requisite resources and clear responsibilities.

Scaling up: It was asked why Peepoo has not been able to scale up. Camilla explained that Peepoo people want to scale up further – beyond the 10 000 families that are currently using the Peepoo toilets in Kibera – but that the mechanism to make people buy the Peepoo bags, as well as getting people to sell them, has been a challenge. The toilets are at present highly subsidized, and more subsidies are needed to be able to scale up.

Subsidies: The assumption that poor people should carry the full cost for their sanitation systems is a problem. It becomes a question of equity - many of the heavily subsidized (centralized) systems cater for the needs of the well-off.

Changing world: The rapid economic progress in many countries should be considered when planning and developing project approaches. New communication technologies will for example revolutionize the way that we plan for sanitation. Work may be simplified as it will be easier to report and collect data through e.g. smart phones.

Local solutions: It is important not to come with ready solutions. Community based environmental programmes have sometimes missed the community approach. There is a mentality that we teach them and then we go. NGOs and donors have go beyond supporting and implementing short-term projects.

External aid: How aid money can be used most effectively was discussed. Some countries are likely to remain very poor for a very long time and while aid is not going to solve the problem it can speed up progress by demonstrating and promoting ways forward. Sanitation needs to be built into society, it is not something that can be solved in a couple of years.



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Learning from history: Experiences from donor countries own history could be valid to share to developing countries. Donor countries with awareness of their own history could to give advice is grounded in experience. Equally, there are many lessons to be learned from the history of developing countries.

Follow-up

To follow up on the last questions – particularly on learning from history and how to make aid more effective – and to continue the discussion and explore potential partnerships, the Swedish Water House will invite the participants to a follow-up round-table to be held in May or June.

Presentations, Agenda and Participants list

Can be found on Swedish Water House webpage:

http://www.swedishwaterhouse.se/en/seminars/2015/Sanitation_Governance.html