SanCoP 10 Synopsis

The tenth meeting of the Sanitation Community of Practice was held on the 26th April 2012 and kindly hosted by WaterAid office in their London office. The meeting was the third and final of our three part series on ‘Urban Sanitation at Scale’ and focused on ‘Achieving and Sustaining Scale in Urban Sanitation’. There was some great discussion among the group and it was great to see so many new faces out of the 24 participants.

Tracey Keatman from Building Partnerships for Development kindly chaired all of the sessions during the day. The day was split into three parts and the first presentation aimed to answer the question of ‘how can we analyse and influence the politics of decision-making for urban sanitation?’ for which Ken Caplan from BPD presented on political economy analysis of sanitation.

The second sessions of the day looked to answer the question ‘How can we advocate for and achieve large-scale financing from national budgets and development partners?’ In this session Meera Mehta and Dinesh Mehta from the Centre for Environmental Planning and Technology University were able to connect to us remotely through the power of technology all the way from India! They shared with us their new Performance Assessment System to improve sustainable financing in India. Secondly, Sophie Trémolet of Trémolet Consulting talked about key results from the GLAAS report 2012 as well as from the World Water Forum and the High Level Meeting in Washington with regard to financing.

The third presentations of the day looked to answer the question of ‘What role do household and community contributions play in scalable financing?’ in which Mansoor Ali from Practical Action shared with us his experience of working on a project aimed at pro poor policies and tariff setting. Finally, Rémi Kaupp from Homeless International gave an overview of 3 case studies from Homeless International’s portfolio to show their experience of community-managed revolving funds for toilets.

The day ended with a post it note session to try and establish attendee’s thoughts on a number of key issues.

The following is a very short synopsis of each presentation, the ensuing questions and discussions and an overview of thoughts from the attendees on posed questions about the future of the community.

All presentations are available on: [http://iwawaterwiki.org/xwiki/bin/view/SanCop/](http://iwawaterwiki.org/xwiki/bin/view/SanCop/)

Synopsis of Presentations

**Session 1: How can we analyse and influence the politics of decision-making for urban sanitation?**


In this presentation Ken posed the following three key fundamental questions of political economy; ‘How does the system work?’, ‘What are the pull/push mechanisms and drivers of change?’ and ‘Who are the defenders of the status quo?’ Ken drew upon two main examples in which these fundamental questions were addressed. In Brazil, the main reason identified for the successful sanitation program was that stakeholder interests in this case had been successfully aligned. Political leaders had presented sanitation as a rights-based issue within their mandates and at that time the poor wanted sanitation and the rich had had enough of
pollution and additional to this utilities were interested in providing sanitation so overall political parties could no longer ignore the issue. Governments also wanted to avoid international embarrassment linked to not having adequate sanitation within their country and sanitation had been identified as the next thing to tackle after access to water and electricity. In the Ghanaian example Ken highlighted how the story had been quite different as the ‘stars didn’t align in the same way’ as in the Brazilian example.

The presentation developed the following themes relating to three main questions:

1. **Who / what is shaping the political economy discourse of sanitation at a global level?**
   - Power doesn’t necessarily sit with the wealthy but who is shaping the current agenda? What is their right to do so?
   - International reporting systems - are they a hindrance, who is shaping the post 2015 indicators?
   - Institutional siting of sanitation
   - Public health goals and approaches (curative vs preventative) – who shouts the loudest?
   - Is the global discourse on sanitation being shaped by anyone? Often a disjointed conversation.
   - Is it open for discussion? Is it a protected discourse?

2. **Who is protecting the status quo? There are unsaid benefits of being in power, maintaining the status quo.**
   - Land tenure is a huge issue (interests protecting the status quo of informal settlements).
   - Sanitation is not about sanitation per se, it is inherently underpinned by political economy perspectives.
   - Is the global discourse biased towards a few powerful organizations? (E.g. focus on equity.)
   - Donors are faced with the tension that they want to understand the complexities but are faced with being results / outputs orientated towards their constituents.

3. **Is it more relevant to ask - How does the international discourse manifest at the national level?**

**Session 2: How can we advocate for and achieve large-scale financing from national budgets and development partners?**

| Meera Mehta and Dinesh Mehta, CEPT | Use of the Performance Assessment System (PAS) to improve sustainable financing of urban sanitation in India. |

The presentation firstly identified that the MDG target for access to sanitation in urban India will be met if shared sanitation access is included; however, Open Defecation is still at 14% in cities as per the recent JMP Report.

In terms of data collection there is a need to be able to disaggregate the general urban population from slum dwellers and there is also a need to develop indicators for networked and non-networked access to sanitation. The Performance Assessment System developed under the PAS Project uses municipality data to include data on situation in slum areas as well as some details of the whole sanitation chain across 400+ cities in two states in India. Under the PAS Project, approaches for performance improvement planning (PIP) are being developed to develop and assess various options in terms of their impact on service performance as well as financial aspects. This includes a series of PIP models that can be used by planners and engineers to assess various options. For example, in context of citywide sanitation planning, it is possible to assess whether network sewerage is the best or most affordable option and to assess the cost and impact of different options. For toilets, comparison of solutions related to
individual versus community toilets can be done using analysis of life cycle costs. Preliminary application of the PIP approaches is being done in 15 cities in the state of Maharashtra, India. The team at CEPT will be further testing the PIP approaches and the model in different cities in the states of Maharashtra and Gujarat. This will be supported through other studies related to institutional and regulatory mechanisms as well as market assessments.

In the immediate future the team are in the process of developing indicators that can be included in citywide sanitation planning and are not necessarily linked only to centralized sewerage systems (These can be shared with other SanCoP members with an interest and involvement in the process). They also want to encourage further interest of state governments in non-networked and other sanitation solutions as smaller cities rely on them. There is currently some interest because of the realisation that network sewerage in some cases is just too expensive.

Sophie Trémolet,
Trémolet Consulting

Tracking global and national financing trends for sanitation: key results from GLAAS 2012 report.

Sophie identified that there is currently a lack of comprehensive data on financial flows. The GLAAS 2010 report tried to improve this but still did not include tariff information (tariffs include money paid by household for services.) The new GLAAS 2012 report tries to improve this further but data is still missing and has poor reliability (e.g. only 4 countries supplied data on tariffs; possibly because governments were embarrassed to reveal exactly what they spend on sanitation compared to households.) Nevertheless, the report still shows that there is a perceived insufficient expenditure on sanitation although many of these countries are not spending what is allocated to them for sanitation. Sophie discussed that the World Water Forum called for increased spending on monitoring and evaluation of soft measures like capacity building and the High Level Meeting in Washington also made positive commitments along similar lines. Now the GLAAS team are trying to develop a methodology to track finances and capital stock accurately in every country so they can provide evidence on investment relative to improved access.

The presentation identified how financial tracking for sanitation can now look to be developed. Ideas included, using examples from the health sector of tracking expenditure from local to national levels and allowing the methodology to evolve instead of trying to start with something fixed. It is important to be able to highlight the importance of contributions from taxes and tariffs even if they are harder to measure. Eventually the aim is to be able to link the methodology to the JMP and post-2015 indicators.

One of the main questions posed after the presentation was ‘What is the actual use of tracking sanitation finance data, especially at a household level?’ Sophie identified that it is useful for benchmarking which can help to keep focus at country level, keep track of financing promises and also help compare between countries. It also allows for the assessment of the cost-effectiveness of different types of sanitation interventions and enables the donors to respond to the demand of the finance ministries.

Session 3: What role do household and community contributions play in scalable financing?

Mansoor Ali,
Practical Action

Pro-poor policies and tariff-setting - case study of 6 African countries by CREPA, Practical Action, WEDC, WSUP and the Gates Foundation.

Note: Mansoor is happy to share reports afterwards as no numbers are included in the presentation

Mansoor identified that in the last ten years there has been no clear sign of improvement in urban sanitation in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ghana, Kenya or Mozambique. In cities in these countries, there are an estimated 32 million people without access to improved sanitation, and
over 50% of these people are living in informal or unofficial residences, and would not be counted in an “official” survey. A seven-month, six-country study (covering the countries mentioned above) and funded by the Gates Foundation, was undertaken to investigate whether tariffs could be used as a vehicle for large scale changes in urban sanitation.

Initially, a digital literature review was undertaken where it was only possible to find around 30-40 useful documents on urban sanitation pricing, however these were dominated by ideas from the World Bank. Mansoor questioned whether this way of thinking is then reflected in NGO projects, as well as other related projects, and whether sanitation practitioners are effectively “intellectually captive”. Some arguably key points of bias in the available literature included: social security tariffs were not mentioned and the impacts of corruption, politics, influence of groups and individuals, issues around pit-emptying, and citizenship were mentioned rarely. Mansoor identified that setting tariffs and measuring financial flows is difficult, as the flows are generally messy and can move very fast. A small number of people in the project cities pay through regulated tariffs (with these people often paying fairly low rates), however a far greater proportion pay non-regulated tariffs for access to sanitation facilities, and the non-regulated tariffs are generally higher than those which are regulated. The Gates Foundation focussed on how change can occur, and were particularly interested in potential business models arising from the project. In a very general summary, the project concluded that the current services in place may not be the right ones to deliver services to the poor. However, the better service models have not yet been decided.

Key findings of the project included:

- The cost of implementing tariffs is often too expensive to work well, and their impact is therefore low.
- Water utilities model: are they actually serving their target group? For example, in Kenya there are 216 water companies, but only two break even.
- Corruption is an issue that governments and other stakeholders are often unwilling to discuss – and there are often layers of institutions that look after each other.
- There is often little awareness, or available information, regarding citizens’ rights.
- A large debate is around sewers versus on-site sanitation, and this is currently a major issue.

Discussions after the presentation posed the question of if there was more information available on business models? Mansoor identified that there are a number of good relevant business models in Africa from which we can learn a lot, and there are also some strong governments. One problem is that we, as researchers, can often establish a position regarding different business models and technologies. We therefore need to make an effort to be open and actively consider different options. The Gates Foundation are also considering new indications around the amount of money that people can afford to pay for sanitation.

Rémi Kaupp, Homeless International
Community-managed revolving funds for toilets at scale - case study of 3 African countries by Homeless International.

Homeless International (HI) specialise in urban housing and basic services. They support community-led projects through long-term partnerships with civil society organisations. HI currently have 17 partners throughout their programme countries, with WASH partners including SPARC, OPP, and WSA, and many partners from the Slum Dwellers Network. HI’s local partners develop using such methods as; mobilising communities; encouraging the instigation of savings and loan groups in communities based on existing traditional community savings groups; city to city and international exchanges between communities (this helps local partners avoid using expensive consultants) and surveys and mapping of slums (often a powerful advocacy tool). Remi presented a DFID funded project where HI work with partners in Malawi, Tanzania and Zimbabwe, with a total of approximately 40,000 families.
The project aims were to:

- Reinforce links between actors.
- Demonstrate the capacity for WASH solutions and the role that the community can play in establishing them.
- Demonstrate the potential use of alternative technologies, including eco-san, pour-flush toilets, community-managed toilets and water points.
- Establish community finance mechanisms.
  - See the presentation for more details and a schematic of the mechanism – the community finance mechanisms work through using small savings from slum dwellers to create an “urban poor fund”, and then use that fund as leverage to obtain further funding and loans. The urban poor fund is also used to feed into the community savings group which can provide small loans to community members.

Remi highlighted during his presentation that the finance mechanisms created in the various case studies are designed to integrate with existing community finance and are able to reach the poorest of the community. Interest from the savings can also be used to cover some of the inflation and allow the fund to grow. However, it is imperative to have a good system and strong policies in place to effectively monitor repayments and minimise fraud. Currently around 50% to 95% of loans are paid back – a low enough rate of return to mean that if this were a microfinance venture, it would be classed as a failure. In a few occasions the loan ends up being a subsidy – especially if the member taking the loan is very poor, however this method does enable you to reach the poorest, unlike traditional microfinance.

This talk brought out a range of questions, covering the challenges of accessing the poorest community members through to the flexible ways in which HI runs projects and works with partners. Remi identified the following points through the question and answer session;

- That forgoing part of the loan to reach the poorest can be problematic although the systems are designed by the committees themselves and HI like to encourage the community to set the rules themselves at the start of the project. However, in Malawi for example (on a housing project not part of this DFID grant), when one person stopped repaying, the entire community followed and also stopped repaying. A court case had to be filed and a presidential order be given for repayments to start again.
- In an attempt to reach the poorest of the poor a number of issues often arise especially with regard to whether we should advocate for the support they may require. Remi indicated that in the cases presented slum mapping exercises had been useful in actually finding the poor in the first place. However, to work with the poorest, it is necessary to allow some level of informality.
- HI work with partners by firstly assessing the amount and type of support required at the beginning and as they develop – partners need people who can do planning, microfinance, and a range of other skills. Some partners partner with MFIs, some do it all in-house, but there are a range of solutions, and HI work with organisations to assist them in identifying their aims.
- Sanitation and shelter should go together, and a “one-size-fits-all” cannot generally be effectively applied.
- It’s important to benchmark the amount of technical support required by an NGO to achieve sustainable change in different situations. This will enable NGOs to plan and budget for future projects.

**Final Session**

The final session requested feedback from SanCoP members on a number of issues, and responses are recorded below. Generally, the responses provide a wide range of (often differing) views, but will be used to feed into a survey to obtain some more detailed feedback and help to shape the SanCoP strategy moving forward.
1. "SanCoP should be a voice for leading international development issues"
Generally the group identified that establishing a collective voice would be tricky although it would be good to link to other forums and bring in different expertise linked to sanitation (i.e. heath, land use, educational and environment.) Other comments identified that space for sharing, learning and non-competition is vital to the CoP and the diversity and debate it brings currently is important. Finally it was suggested that more emphasis should be put on self-promotion to help us to link to other practitioners.

2. “SanCoP should have more online & offline networking opportunities”
Overall, the consensus was people preferred face to face contact but also made other suggestions such as, online networking and more focused groups of meetings (e.g. financial instruments, PhD network, M&E...). Online networking was also identified as important to bring in views from CoP members and others nationally and could consider member bios and info on the existing IWA wiki page. Also highlighted option of linking this UK based SanCoP with the global SanCoP (currently being managed by Pippa Scott.)

3. “SanCoP should provide more support for young professionals”
The overall feeling was yes! Suggestions included using online and offline networks for this, including developing an area where network members offer advice, suggest sources etc. to answer issues. Other ideas raised were for SanCoP to link more closely with IWA Young Professionals, instigating a “mentoring” system within SanCoP, and outreach to universities, including considering putting on an MSc student research conference in mid-September to directly target young professionals.

4. “SanCoP should provide quality sanitation knowledge and resources”
Overall consensus was that this group should focus on engagement and maybe look to provide space for members to promote own resources and forums for discussions. It was also suggested that the notes are more widely shared from the meeting and maybe consider some form of Waterlines journal article or a conference proceedings type document.

5. Future Themes?
There was a large range of themes suggested of which are shown below:

Feel free to send your thoughts and feedback on the pros and cons of the meeting to sancop.uk@gmail.com. SanCoP 11: Theme, venue and date to be confirmed ASAP.

Thanks
Many thanks for WaterAid for hosting our event. Thanks to our speakers and chairs Tracey Keatman, Ken Caplan, Meera Mehta, Dinesh Mehta, Sophie Trémolet, Mansoor Ali and Rémi Kaupp; and those who assisted in note taking, Alison Parker and Pippa
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