



Supportive Environments for Healthy Communities

Issue 33 November 18, 2011 | Focus on World Toilet Day and Communal Sanitation

November 19th is World Toilet Day and this issue of the *WASHplus Weekly* contains links to World Toilet Day websites and recent studies and articles on communal sanitation issues. Communal or public sanitation is an important WASH issue, especially in high-density slums with a high proportion of tenants and/or frequent flooding and water-logging. The financing and sustainable management of communal/ public toilets is challenging. Please contact WASHplus if you have information to add to this or other topics for future issues of the *Weekly*. WASHplus also welcomes suggestions for topics to cover in future issues of the *Weekly*.

REPORTS/ARTICLES

- **Assessing People's Views of Infrastructure: Methodologies to Study Urban Shared Sanitation, 2010.** A Mazeau, WEDC. ([Full-text](#))

Providing sanitation services in low-income areas in fast-growing cities is a significant challenge for urban planners, donors and governments. Making these services sustainable by answering the needs of heterogeneous urban populations is a major step to meet this challenge. This paper shows the necessity of exploring users' views when planning sanitation facilities on low-income and high-density settlements. An initial desk based study highlights the multi-disciplinary components of urban sanitation projects and the central role played by the facilities' users. Focusing on shared sanitation facilities, the users' needs and perceptions are at the crossroad of the different dimensions of sustainability. Bringing together assessment practices from social science, engineering and economics leads to new methodologies that are able to take a multi-dimensional picture of people's practices and needs.

- **Assessing Users' Experience of Shared Sanitation Facilities: A Case Study of Community Ablution Blocks in Durban, South Africa, Water SA, October 2010.** E Roma, Cranfield University. ([Full-text](#))

The purpose of this study was to investigate users' experience of sanitation technologies in the early post-implementation phase, when opportunities for remedial

intervention were still available. Fieldwork comprising semi-structured interviews was undertaken with users and potential recipients of three community ablution blocks (CAB) in informal settlements around Durban. Results suggest that non-technical aspects such as affordability or cleanliness of the facilities can affect acceptance among the investigated communities. User training is positively associated with higher levels of facility maintenance as well as satisfaction with its functionality. A comparison between users and potential recipients of CABs shows that perceived health benefits, attitudes in case of problems, and trust are affected by use of the facilities.

- **Communal Toilets in Urban Poverty Pockets**, 2010. WaterAid. ([Full-text](#))
 Although the findings presented in this report are based on a small number of facilities in a single city, the general patterns could be considered with respect to sanitation policy for urban poverty pockets. These include: 1. Communal facilities can make a potentially important contribution to reducing open defecation so long as their operating conditions are good enough to encourage use. 2. Communal facilities were rarely used as places for young children to defecate, even when child-friendly facilities were available, allowing a public health problem to continue.
- **Community-Led Urban Environmental Sanitation Planning: CLUES**, 2011. C Luethi, Eawag-Sandec. ([Full-text](#))
 This updated set of planning guides highlights the importance of broad community involvement (beyond the household level) in the planning and decision-making processes. Although the name of the guidelines changed, the main characteristics stay the same: a multi-sector and multi-actor approach accounting for water supply, sanitation, solid waste management and storm drainage in urban areas and emphasizing the participation of all stakeholders from an early stage in the planning process.
- **Design for Sustainable Sanitation: Floating Toilet Case Study**, 2011. J Hagan, Engineers Without Borders Australia. ([Presentation](#))
 An ecological sanitation toilet has been developed for floating communities on the Tonle Sap Lake in Cambodia. Strong partnerships between the community, Live & Learn Environmental Education, and Engineers Without Borders Australia, have resulted in a significant rethink of approaches to sanitation. The project promises a way forward for challenging environments where current sanitation options are not feasible, and provides lessons and an alternative approach to improve on existing solutions.
- **Financing Communal Toilets: The Tchemulane Project in Maputo**, 2011. Water and Sanitation for the Poor (WSUP). ([Full-text](#))
 For sustainable scale-up, it is important to aim for local financing or part-financing of the capital investment, and realistic user tariffs to cover at least operation and maintenance. A sustainable donor-independent model for Maputo might be as follows:

50% of the capital cost is covered by subsidy from national and/or municipal government, and the remaining 50% by a concessionary loan to the municipality. WSUP believes that communal sanitation models of this type are widely applicable in high-density low-income communities.

- **Haiti - Community Toilets Can Yield Nutrient-rich Fertilizer**, *National Geographic Daily News*, October 26, 2011. ([Link](#))

A new type of public toilet is helping people in Haiti make fertilizer from human waste, a project that may someday revive the country's degraded farmland, curb disease, and create jobs.

- **The MobiSan Approach: Informal Settlements of Cape Town, South Africa**, *Water Science & Technology* 61(12) 2010. A Naranjo, Lettinga Associates Foundation. ([Abstract](#))

The aim of the project is to improve the basic sanitation services provided in informal settlements through the implementation of the MobiSan approach. The approach consists of a communal Urine-Diversion and Dehydration Toilet built in a former sea shipping container. The system is independent of water, electricity or sewerage connection and it is maintained by full-time community caretakers who also act as hygiene promoters. The project seeks to link sanitation services with hygiene promotion in informal settlements while enhancing user satisfaction and reducing costs in providing basic sanitation services. This paper describes the preliminary experiences and lessons learned during the implementation and evaluation of the MobiSan prototype and discusses its potential for replication.

- **Monitoring Urban Sanitation: Old Challenges and New Approaches**, 2011. SHARE. ([Full-text](#))

This brief reports on a workshop in September organized by the SHARE consortium and WaterAid, which brought together 19 researchers and policy-makers with expertise in water, sanitation and hygiene, demography, and service provision to share knowledge and experiences to develop a research agenda for improving the monitoring of sanitation in urban areas. Many subjects were explored during this meeting to identify research questions and indicators relating to urban sanitation. The research priorities and suggested actions included the categorization of shared toilets. Should some shared toilets be considered improved facilities? If so, what criteria should be used to assess whether they are improved/unimproved?

- **Patterns and Determinants of Communal Latrine Usage in Urban Poverty Pockets in Bhopal, India**. *Trop Med Int'l Health*, July 2011. A Biran, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. ([Abstract](#))

Provision of communal facilities reduces but does not end the problem of open defecation in poverty pockets. Women appear to be relatively poorly served by communal facilities, and cost is a barrier to use by poorer households. Results suggest

improving facility convenience and access and modifying fee structures could lead to increased rates of usage. Attention to possible barriers to usage at household level associated particularly with having school-age children and with pre-school childcare needs may also be warranted.

- **When Are Communal or Public Toilets an Appropriate Option?** 2011. Water and Sanitation for the Urban Poor (WSUP). ([Full-text](#))

In general, individual household toilets are preferable to communal/public toilets. However, this WSUP brief argues that communal or public toilets may be the most appropriate medium-term solution in some specific situations: notably in high-density slums with a high proportion of tenants and/or frequent flooding and water-logging. Nonetheless, the financing and sustainable management of communal/public toilets is very challenging, and requires extensive consultation and careful analysis at all stages. This brief presents an overview of issues to be considered.

WEBSITES/VIDEOS

- **WaterAid – World Toilet Day -** ([Website](#))
- **World Toilet Day/World Toilet Organization -** ([Website](#))
- **World Toilet Day: Matt Damon Talks Sh*t For Global Sanitation Awareness-** ([Video](#))

Each *WASHplus Weekly* highlights topics such as Urban WASH, Indoor Air Pollution, Innovation, Household Water Treatment and Storage, Hand Washing, Integration, and more. If you would like to feature your organization's materials in upcoming issues, please send them to Dan Campbell, WASHplus knowledge resources specialist, at dacampbell@fhi360.org.



About WASHplus - WASHplus, a five-year project funded through USAID's Bureau for Global Health, creates supportive environments for healthy households and communities by delivering high-impact interventions in water, sanitation, hygiene (WASH) and indoor air pollution (IAP). WASHplus uses proven, at-scale interventions to reduce diarrheal diseases and acute respiratory infections, the two top killers of children under five years of age globally. For information, visit www.washplus.org or email: contact@washplus.org.

MailChimp

[unsubscribe from this list](#) | [update subscription preferences](#)

