

Sanitation 21 – Let's do planning and design better

Seminar during World Water Week in Stockholm

Wednesday August 15 2007

Minutes from the seminar

The workshop discussed what is going wrong with conventional approaches to sanitation, and how as professionals we might chart a better way forward. The following points were raised:

- The trend is that solutions for sanitation problems are shifting from supply driven to demand centered approaches. Commensurately, the planning process is also shifting, from the conventional 'engineers-in-charge-of-everything' to engineers playing a more intermediate role as a mediator.
- The first step in the planning process should preferably include all stakeholders. It should focus on the approach to planning and look at the relationship between the different stakeholders. Issues to discuss include: what is the problem?; what is not functioning?; new solutions or upgrading of existing system?; identify drivers and reasons why the present situation is the way it is; how did we get to where we are?
- There is need to understand the context of planning for sanitation across all domains of the city, and how the sanitation system will work for that context. Critically, professionals must analyse if particular solutions will work!
- There are many good examples out there, but how do we move to scale? There is an evident need for education and more knowledge about available options and solutions, which cuts through all domains of the city. Some problems were noted:
 - In many places there is a lack of demand at the household level
 - Engineers and consultant can be protective of their preferred technology, which hinders the development of a multi-technology system adapted to the local context.
 - Decision-makers need to see the connection between water and sanitation and other forms of development, how improvement in water and sanitation will improve health, safety, poverty and many other aspects
- To plan for sustainable solutions is a process that takes time. This time needs to be allocated for when discussing a project.

Information about the seminar

Summary

Conventional approaches to sanitation planning and design seem to fail with depressing regularity, as decisions are frequently distorted and result in plans that lack flexibility to changing needs. The quality and effectiveness of sanitation investments is not particularly about technologies, rather about developing an understanding of system objectives and then designing a system which meets those objectives. Technical planners and designers need to be smarter at planning systems which respond to the needs of the modern city. This requires a sea-change in the way technical decisions are taken, so that they can respond better to the human and political context in which they are made. This workshop will promote: analysis of urban sanitation objectives; understanding of external factors that shape technical choices; and encourage dialogue on technical options and the respective management requirements from these options.

Workshop entry points

Conventional approaches to sanitation planning and design seem to fail with depressing regularity. In developing countries with utility situations where coverage is low, the norms and approaches that are being applied in general seem to result in too frequent failures which either see the perpetuation of low access to services, or short term failures in operation and maintenance. Current technical planning and design practices, based as they are on logical normative technical planning approaches, seem to be failing because:

- the objectives upon which decisions are based are distorted by special interests, or by a poor understanding of the real needs of the population,
- they result in plans which do not respond to the rapidly changing urban context and diverse conditions which pertain in modern urban spaces;
- they fail to make a realistic assessment of short term inertia which impedes capital investment; and
- they result in systems which place an unrealistic management burden on all levels of the city.

The role of drivers for sanitation

The quality and effectiveness of sanitation investments is not particularly about technologies (although the appropriate application of technology is important) rather it is about developing an explicit understanding of what the objectives of a system are and then designing a system which meets those objectives. We should not be surprised that significant investments in wastewater treatment plants often do not result in significant improvements in access to sanitation services. Likewise we cannot expect subsidies which help poor families to construct on-site latrines to result in better overall sludge management in the city. How can we recognize and address the role that drivers of sanitation have in determining a suite of possible technical sanitation options?

More efficient planning and planners

Technical planners and designers need to be smarter at planning systems which respond to the needs of the modern city. This requires a sea-change in the way technical decisions are taken, so that they can respond better to the human and political context in which they are made. This approach draws on well-established principles of good planning and design practice from within the technical world and also from much thinking in the development world. The question remains, how can we 'do planning and design better?'

Reconsidering thinking on sanitation options

The workshop will aim to:

- promote an analysis of the objectives of a sanitation system across all domains of the city, *including the household* (other domains include the neighbourhood, city and beyond the city)
- promote an analysis of the external drivers and contexts which impact on behaviour in each domain
- analyse technical options in terms which relate elements of the system to these domains
- encourage a realistic assessment of the management requirements in each domain;
- prompt the planner/ designer to ask, will it work? Are the management requirements matched by management capacity throughout the system? Is what we are proposing *fit for the purpose?*

		Who	Duration	Time
1	Welcome; opening remarks and comments from Chair and co-chairs	Laszlo Somlyody Gunilla Brattberg Anna Norström	10 min	13:30
2	Changing the 'business as usual' paradigm	Laszlo Somlyody	10 min	13:40
3	Presentation of draft analytical framework	Darren Saywell	15 min	13:50
4	Retrospective analysis Utility management and reform – approaches to sanitation Demand and Social Marketing	Meike van Ginneken, World Bank Beth Scott, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine	25 min	14:05
5	Case studies Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso Innovation in sustainable waste resource management – Chinese example	Chris Zurbrugg, EAWAG Christine Werner, GTZ	30 min	14:30
	Break			
6	Sanitation, planning, innovation Panel discussion including presenters and other invitees Responses from audience Includes facilitated discussion	Selected panelists including: Jamie Bartram, WHO Gerard Payen, Aqua-Fed Bilqis Hoque, EPRC	100 min	15:00
7	Summary and conclusions	Chair and Co-Chairs	15 min	16:40
	Close			17:00