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**WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE:
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND MULTISECTORAL APPROACHES**

Urban partnership approaches: A WSUP update

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The challenge of providing basic services to the urban poor is enormous, and past sectoral approaches have had limited impact on the coverage statistics. WSUP – water & sanitation for the urban poor – is a unique partnership organisation that aims to support and strengthen local service providers to meet this challenge at scale, and in a sustainable way. This paper provides an overview of the WSUP model, and presents some achievements to date. Local Service providers are being supported in a number of innovative ways to build organisational capacity and improve planning and pro-poor implementation policies. An interesting aspect of the partnership approach is the distinctive governance arrangements that have evolved, with a Steering Committee set up in each city where WSUP is working. These committees have formed differently in each location, reflecting the prevailing operational practicalities. A few specific challenges and lessons are presented.

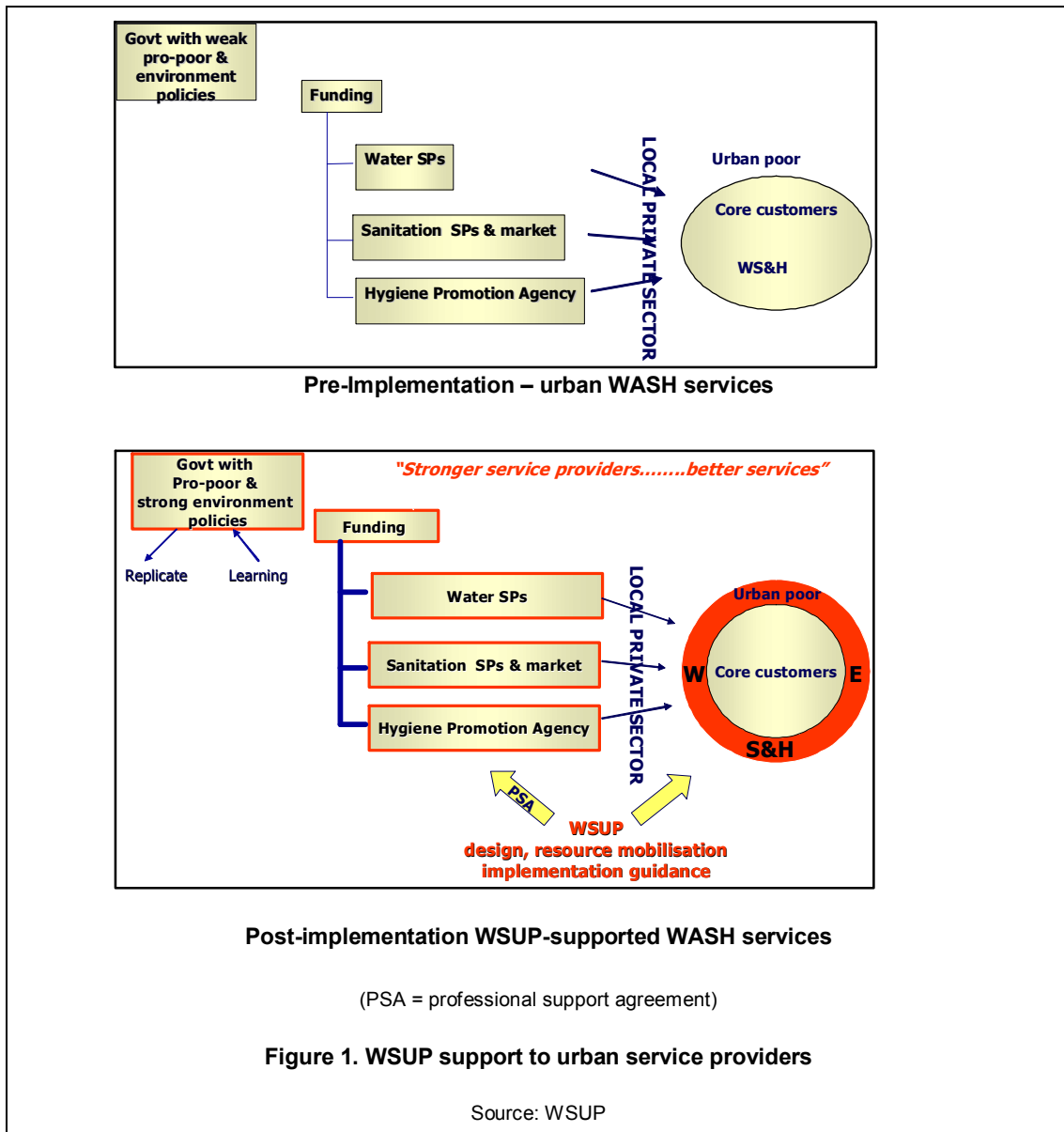
Introduction

The world's urban slum population is increasing, with trends from the Joint Monitoring Programme (UN JMP, 2006) suggesting that by 2015 there will be 2.9 billion people living in urban areas of developing countries of which 296 million (10%) will not use an improved source of drinking water and 898 million (31%) will not use an improved latrine. These estimates do not capture the additional stress that arises from intermittent and inadequate supplies, over-crowding, inconvenient hours of service, poor quality and so on, suggesting that the numbers without access to adequate services are significantly higher.

The health burden of urban slums is well known. Overcrowding, a continuing absence of sanitary facilities, poor waste disposal and lack of sufficient quantities of water for basic personal and domestic hygiene all contribute to an ever present risk of outbreaks of communicable diseases. High child mortality rates, high risk of respiratory diseases and accidents and low life expectancy are the norm. The lack of basic services contributes to the cycle of poverty, lack of education, poor housing and ill health.

The public sector, which represents 90% of formal service provision worldwide, has the potential to make the most impact for the urban poor, but is often constrained by lack of funding, weak management processes, political intervention and an absence of effective incentives. Privatisation, concessions and management contracts have - with a few notable exceptions - not been able to deliver significant improvements to global service provision (see Jacobs & Franceys, 2008, Allen et al., 2008). NGOs play an important role, but are constrained in scale, as their natural emphasis on working at the grass roots has meant limited engagement at the technical level (engineering, operations, business planning and marketing) with utilities and other service providers. Large-scale urban infrastructure projects are often funded by international finance institutions (IFIs), focussing on upgrading central urban networks, but generally do not prioritise peri-urban areas, precisely because of the special challenges these areas present.

WSUP has drawn on the strengths of all these sectoral actors to develop a commercial partnership approach that supports and strengthens local service providers, from utilities and municipal departments to small independent CBOs (see Figure 1).



Background to the WSUP approach

WSUP is a unique management partnership comprised of specialist organisations in the field of water and sanitation, bringing together complementary expertise from NGOs, businesses and academia. Current partners are from the NGO sector: Care UK, WWF, WaterAid and Water for People; from businesses: Thames Water, the Halcrow Group, Unilever and Borealis & Borouge, whilst Cranfield University represents the academic sector, and the IWA and UNDP are partners with observer status. Projects are developed together with local partners, delivered through partnership, and are designed for full cost recovery, covering environmental concerns to address water scarcity issues.

WSUP is a not for profit organisation, coordinated by a Secretariat based in the UK, and supported by a members' project group. In countries where WSUP is currently working the partnership theme is replicated - project teams and advisory groups consisting of those partners which have a presence in that country, as well as other key stakeholders (see next section). All services from members are provided at cost or in kind. WSUP also seeks support for the implementation of the project work from grant-giving bodies. Major grants have been awarded to WSUP to develop the partnership approach by several donors including DFID, and, most recently, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

WSUP's vision of success for the sector is "strong local service providers (LSPs) and local community organisations providing affordable, clean water, safe sanitation and improved hygiene sustainably to the

world's urban poor". The outcome of improved water, sanitation and hygiene is improved health, education and earning potential of these communities. WSUP's ambitiously stated implementation objective is to provide affordable and sustainable water & sanitation services to 3.5 million people by 2015.

WSUP's mission is to support local service providers to design and implement water and sanitation solutions that are economically, socially and environmentally sustainable and that serve the needs of urban poor people in developing countries. More can be found about the WSUP approach on the website: <http://www.wsup.com>, and in the document 'How WSUP Works', which can be downloaded from the website. WSUP can be seen as a 'work in progress', a genuine attempt to forge sustainable service provision partnerships on a large scale. This paper updates and expands upon the preliminary paper on WSUP to the WEDC 32nd conference (Gerlach & Franceys, 2006).

Supporting local service providers

The role of WSUP is to support LSPs to extend their services to the urban poor whilst working with civil society who can facilitate access to these services. Expanding service provision to the poor is a complex area that is summarised by the diagram below, illustrating differentiated service provision against segments of poverty. The major challenge for the service provider is in expanding coverage in a way that is acceptable and affordable to the majority of households as well as ensuring economies of scale (Jacobs & Franceys, 2008). Whilst desirous of achieving universal service there needs to be an understanding of the most effective and efficient means of achieving that equitable service if society is to begin to achieve sustainable utility services. Figure 2 illustrates the common situation of a 'Service provider failure area' which is presently very often served by higher cost small scale providers – hence also labelled an area of potential new customer revenue. The figure also recognises that there is a 'pipe network efficiency frontier', which expands over time due to economic growth and increasing housing density but which also can be expanded through creative delivery mechanisms (see WaterChoice points as an example) to serve the 'Developing' and 'Coping Poor'. Further discussion of the boundaries of service provision can be found in Gerlach & Franceys (2008).

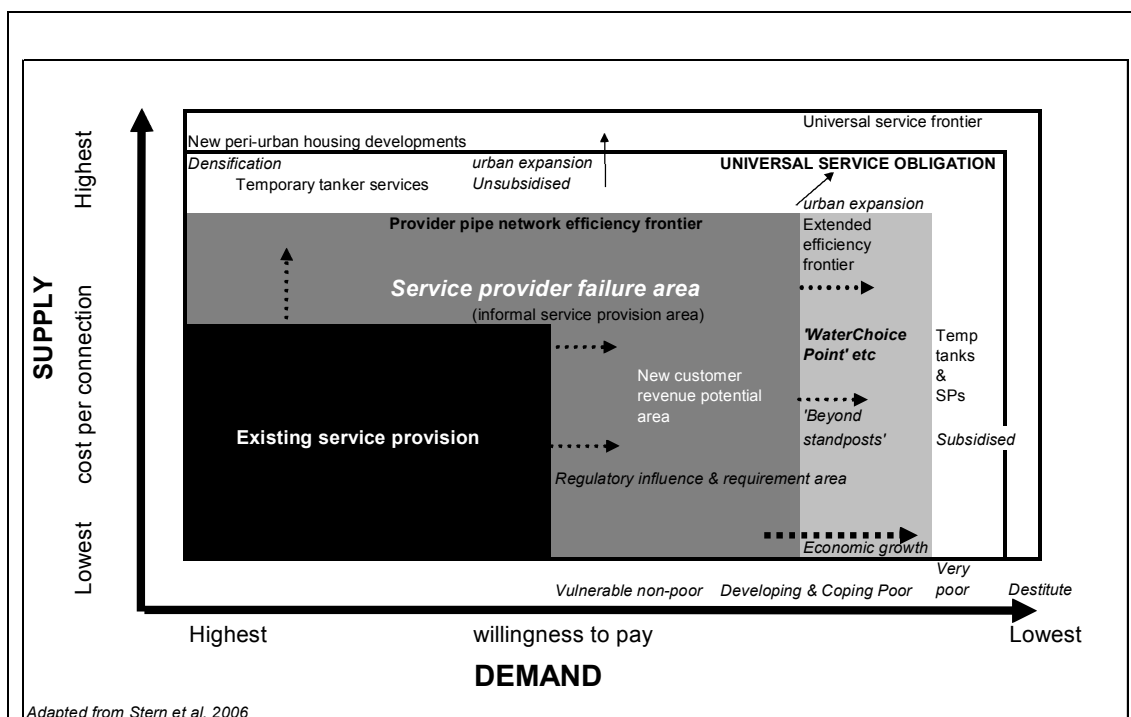


Figure 2. The boundaries of service provision

Source: Gerlach & Franceys, 2008, after Stern, 2006

Below are a few snapshot examples to give a flavour of the types of support WSUP is providing. Further information can be found in the 'Project Factfiles' on the WSUP website.

Jirama, Antananarivo, Madagascar

In a city where people are unused to paying for services, and 30% of the population do not have access to safe water, the LSP Jirama (parastatal water utility) have recognised the need to communicate the costs of extending the system, and to develop a payment system. Building on support from the World Bank and European Investment Bank, and working closely with our LSP partners, WSUP (Cranfield partner) has developed a financial model that will ensure both physical and financial sustainability. The communes will manage the system, covering both salaries and allowances. Staff will be trained in small utility billing, business planning, and O&M, including solid waste collection and disposal. Additional support is being given in NRW reduction, and communications management. Together with our partner organisation WaterAid, a mapping and modelling programme is underway to cover all water & sanitation facilities in Madagascar, using GIS systems.

Naivawass, Naivasha, Kenya

The Naivasha Municipal Water and Sewerage Company, or Naivawass, is a very young LSP. WSUP is working closely with this service provider to develop its capacity to supply water and sanitation services to the growing population of the area, and has created a linked community company, the Mirera-Karagita Water Supply Company, to which it will sell the water. Naivawass staff are being seconded to the MKWSC to build capacity there. The MKWSC will be supported to develop the ability to sell the water on to the users, and trained in tariff collection and O&M. Microfinance credit schemes will be available for users to buy domestic water tanks and to build toilets. The chief source in this area is high-fluoride borehole water – WSUP is working with Naivawass to develop affordable and sustainable mechanisms for fluoride treatment.

FIPAG, Aguas de Mozambique & the municipal council, Maputo, Mozambique

In Maputo WSUP is building on the groundwork of network extension projects already underway in the city through WaterAid and an EU/Dutch/AFD consortium. WSUP is working with the LSPs to develop models that enable the urban poor to receive networked supply at lower prices, ensuring that when the network improvements materialise, mechanisms exist that ensure the poor are served. WSUP are also supporting the development of capacity within AdeM and FIPAG to replicate these models, with a preliminary target population of 160,000.

WSUP governance: The steering committees

WSUP-supported projects are currently underway in the development or pilot phase in the following cities:

- Antananarivo, Madagascar
- Maputo, Mozambique
- Nairobi and Naivasha in Kenya
- Bangalore, India
- Dhaka, Bangladesh, and
- Projects in the 'pipeline' (approved and awaiting partner support or funding) are planned in:
 - Kumasi, Ghana
 - Bamako in Mali,
 - Lusaka, Zambia, and
 - Rio de Janeiro and Curitiba, Brazil.

The size of the populations to be supported in each location ranges from 70,000 to 200,000. Detailed support and implementation plans depend on the specific requirements in each city. In these early years of the partnership, experience to date has taught WSUP to be flexible and pragmatic, with no two city programmes developing along the same lines.

In each of the first 6 projects, a Steering Committee has been developed to manage and oversee the WSUP – supported implementation. This body is seen as a fundamental component of the WSUP partnership concept, intended to guide WSUP's direction. Members include WSUP members with a presence in that country, LSP partners, as well as community representatives.

At a recent programme implementation workshop (Cranfield University, November 2008), the steering committee structures were compared, and found to be very varied – not only in composition, but also in function and effectiveness.

Some key findings from the Steering Committee review were as follows:

- The identification and involvement of key players in the sector is crucial for the legitimacy of the committee, including community representatives.
- Close involvement in the management of the committee improves ownership and effectiveness of the partnership.
- A clear terms of reference with specific roles & responsibilities assists in the functioning of the partnership.
- Community-level sub-committees are practical for implementation.

Lessons to date and challenges

LSPs are being supported in variety of ways, building political will and consensus to develop pro-poor strategies that will genuinely improve services for the urban poor. WSUP is providing assistance with, for example, extending networks, non-revenue water reduction, financial modelling, GIS mapping and environmental protection.

WSUP in-country teams have rapidly developed their own tailored strategies, with the watchwords of flexibility and adaptability. Locally managed steering committees are being set up for sustainable project management, and work on several different levels.

Several WSUP projects are at the stage of moving from pilot phase to full implementation. This involves gearing up considerably from operating out of a partner's office to developing independent organisational mechanisms as appropriate. Limitations of capacity need to be addressed in creative ways to ensure sustainable institutions are being developed. Unusual partnerships to unlock existing capacity are being forged.

The WSUP model is still evolving, and new city developments are constantly reviewed to be considered for addition to the portfolio. The organisation is young, independent, dynamic and self-sustaining. Healthy debates among the group continue as to partnerships, governance, innovatory technical options and expansion. We intend to continue to share the learning process with the wider community of practice.

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