Reconciling the brown and the green agenda for water and sanitation

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What this talk will cover:

- Reconciling the **brown** (environmental health) **agenda** & the **green** (ecologically sustainable) **agenda** in urban areas
- **ACCOUNTABILITY**: To whom are those making decisions on development investments accountable?
  - Governments?
  - Environmental pressure groups?
  - Those lacking provision for water and sanitation?

*Implementing the brown agenda in most urban areas – including improving provision for water & sanitation - is impossible without changing the relationship between local government and poorer groups*
The origins of sustainable development

- From the late 1960s, clash between environmentalists & development specialists
  - seen in preparations for the 1972 UN Conference on the Human Environment

- Only One Earth – Ward and Dubos 1972
  - the “charge of the U.N. to the [Stockholm] Conference was clearly to define what should be done to maintain the earth as a place suitable for human life not only now, but also for future generations”
Can different characteristics of the two agendas be reconciled

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First order impact</th>
<th>The ‘Brown’ Environmental Health Agenda</th>
<th>The ‘Green’ Sustainability Agenda</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Timing</td>
<td>Immediate</td>
<td>Delayed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scale</td>
<td>Local</td>
<td>Regional and global</td>
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<tr>
<td>Worst affected</td>
<td>Lower-income groups</td>
<td>Future generations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Priority for water</td>
<td>Increase quantity, quality and accessibility</td>
<td>Prevent over-use and degradation</td>
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Water & sanitation’s obvious advantages for brown and green agendas

- Directly addressing human needs
- Performs well in relation to future generations:
  - Does not make heavy use of non-renewable resources
  - Does not generate large volumes of hazardous non-biodegradable wastes
  - Does not contribute much to greenhouse gas emissions
  - Based on a renewable resource (although with limits)
  - Does not need much fresh water in relation to total flows in most nations and locations
Water and sanitation

- **In theory**
  - Meeting human needs
  - Without transferring costs to other people
  - Without transferring costs to the future

- **In practice, conflicts over**
  - Support given to water & sanitation relative to other development investments
  - What gets prioritised in water and sanitation
    - how pro-poor the investments are?
    - How do donor structures, donor-government relationships and external pressures influence what is done/not done)?
  - How the costs are paid for and by whom
Two specific problems faced by the World Bank

- **A bank owned by governments lending to governments**
  - Obvious conflicts between what governments want and what is best for improving provision for poorer groups
  - How to serve groups that governments ignore or repress
  - Sewers or sewer outfalls in Mumbai?

- **Banks need to lend to cover their own costs**
  - A transfer of costs to future taxpayers?
  - Alternative criteria for success for CODI in its loans to low-income households in regard to:
    - Size of loans
    - Number of loans
    - Households’ need for loans
Problems facing all official development agencies:

- Difficulties supporting processes by which most urban housing gets built
  - through which most lower-income groups get accommodation
  - 750-850 million urban squatters lacking adequate provision for water & sanitation
  - How to be accountable to poor groups working through governments in which poor groups have no representation
    (Illegal addresses; exclusion from voters’ registers)

- How to respond to different external groups
  - Northern environmental pressures more influential than demands of squatters lacking water & sanitation?
A DONOR AGENCY with its policy decisions

Internal structure:
- has to spend or lend lots of money with relatively few staff
- reliance on other agencies to implement

COMMERCIAL/POLITICAL INFLUENCES

THE INTENDED BENEFICIARIES; THE POOR

POLITICAL PROCESSES THAT OVERSEE DONOR AGENCY

RECIPIENT GOVERNMENT AND ITS PRIORITIES

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (usually weak)

LOCAL CONTRACTORS OR SERVICE PROVIDERS

Commercial interests

Non-commercial development lobbies

Non-commercial environment lobby

PUBLIC OPINION AND MEDIA
**What is prioritized by most Green Agenda proponents?**

- ‘Ecological solutions’ prioritized with no knowledge of local contexts
  - Yet local contexts almost always influence the most appropriate solutions
- Scant regard for engagement with those who lack good provision
  - Solutions promoted often don’t work
  - Criticizing solutions that work well
- Spurious statistics and associations in connections between inadequate provision for water/sanitation and water shortages
- Northern concepts applied out of context
  - Can encourage donor agencies to spend too much on what is not a priority (green agenda easier to implement, easier to spend large sums on, often appreciated by middle and upper income groups)
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SUPPORT FOR Water and Sanitation

THE INTENDED BENEFICIARIES; THE POOR
Notes to the world’s biggest development agency from one of the smallest:

- The International Urban Poor Fund; Doing the brown and green agenda differently
- $1 million a year on which slum/shack dwellers’ organizations can draw
- Funding of $10,000-$80,000 available to support initiatives by savings groups formed by slum dwellers, squatters and homeless groups – who belong to larger federations
- In 20 nations, such federations are active
Examples of national federations of slum/shack dwellers/homeless people

- **INDIA**: the National Slum Dwellers Federation and *Mahila Milan*, supported by SPARC
- **THAILAND**: Community organizations and federations supported by CODI
- **SOUTH AFRICA**: The Federation of the Urban Poor supported by CORC
- **ZIMBABWE AND KENYA**: Urban poor federations supported by Pamoja Trust and Dialogue on Shelter
- Organizations and federations of the urban poor in **Brazil, Cambodia, Malawi, Namibia, Nepal, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Swaziland and Uganda**, and developing in many other nations (most also supported by a local NGO)
2002-2006, the International Urban Poor Fund supported:

- Federation groups in Cambodia, Kenya, India, Malawi, Colombia, South Africa and Zimbabwe to get land for housing
- ‘Slum'/squatter upgrading + land tenure in Cambodia and Brazil
- Bridge finance for initiatives in India, Namibia and Philippines (where government support is promised but slow to come)
- Improved water & sanitation in Uganda, Cambodia, Sri Lanka (with improved land tenure)
- Slum/shack enumerations: Brazil, Namibia, Ghana, South Africa (the information base for upgrading/new house initiatives)
- Exchange visits by established federations to urban poor groups in East Timor, Mongolia, Angola, Tanzania, Zambia ….
- Community-managed house reconstruction after the tsunami in Sri Lanka and India
- Federation partnerships with local governments in housing initiatives in India, Malawi, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe
International Urban Poor Fund

- 28,000 low-income people reached
- Not a water & sanitation programme but most initiatives included major improvements in provision
  - changed relationships between poor & water/sanitation agencies
- Dozens of precedents used to change relationship with local governments
  - Show what urban poor are capable of, what resources they can mobilize, how far they can make funding go
- External funding of $4.5 million over 5 years leveraged far more than this locally
- Loans used where possible so funding still being re-used
- World Bank allocating 0.5% of total commitments to funds such as these, directly accountable to urban poor groups?
  - This really would drive the brown agenda forward