Reframing 'hard to reach' urban poor as 'primary target' of circular sanitation solutions

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CWAS CRDF CENTER FOR WATER AND SANITATION CEPT UNIVERSITY
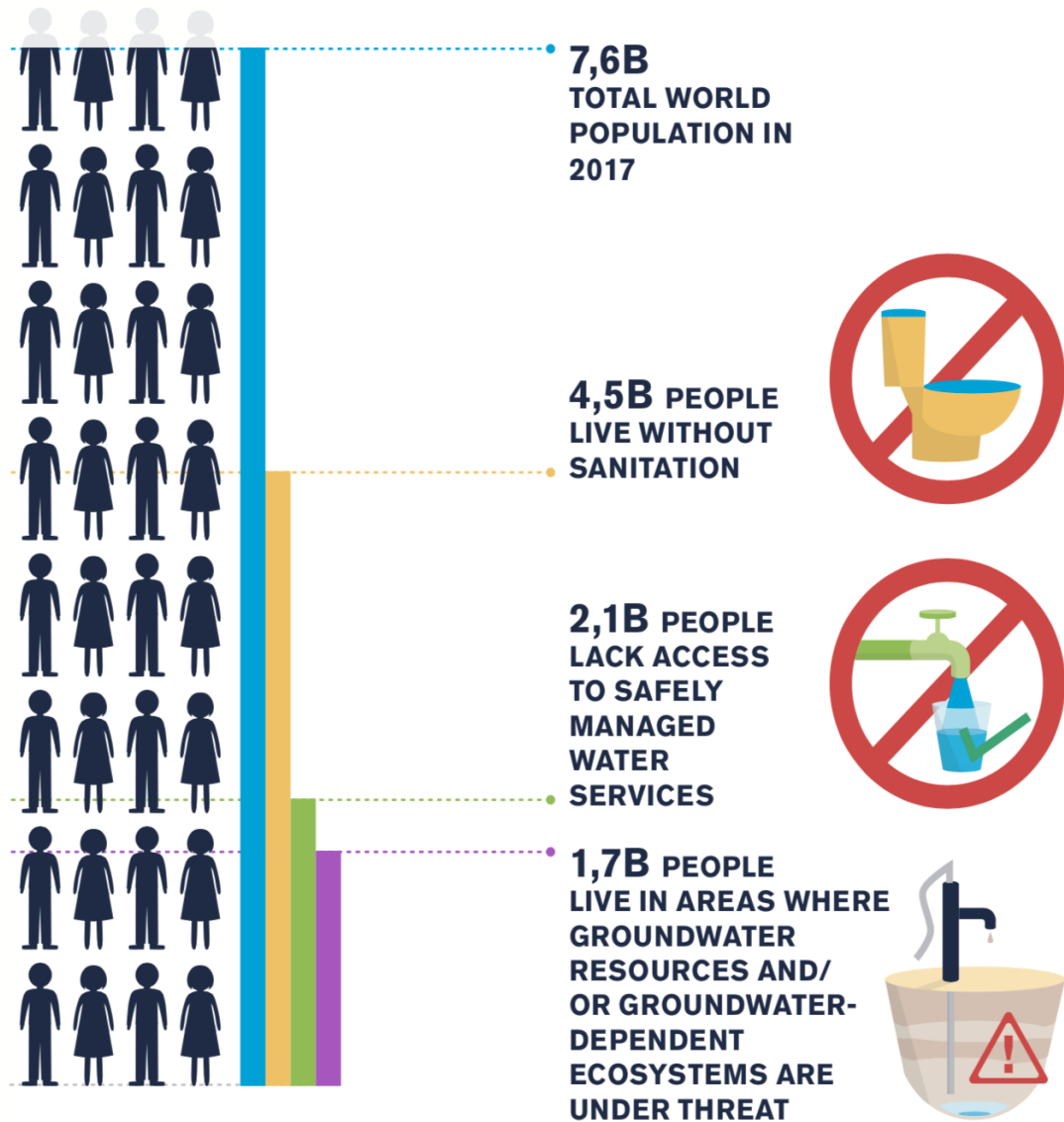
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What is "hard to reach" framing?

- **Targeting people unreached by development actions and considered deserving and needy.**

  - **Hard to reach areas** having poor water and sanitation coverage due to physical and technical constraints, adverse hydro-geological conditions, having inadequate communication network and complicated site layouts, and frequent occurrence of natural calamities.
  - **Hard to reach people** are dwellers in these areas as well as people who do not have any fixed place for living. Their living conditions entrap them into the vicious cycle of ill-health and hardship.

- DFID was one of first to use the term "Hard to Reach" in its Programme Partnership Arrangement with WaterAid between 2011 and 2014.

- **This approach to "targeting" people who are defined as "deserving and needy" continues to be popular amongst donor programmes and government schemes alike.**

Why is 'hard to reach' reframing required ?

7,6B
TOTAL WORLD
POPULATION IN
2017

4,5B PEOPLE
LIVE WITHOUT
SANITATION

2,1B PEOPLE
LACK ACCESS
TO SAFELY
MANAGED
WATER
SERVICES

1,7B PEOPLE
LIVE IN AREAS WHERE
GROUNDWATER
RESOURCES AND/
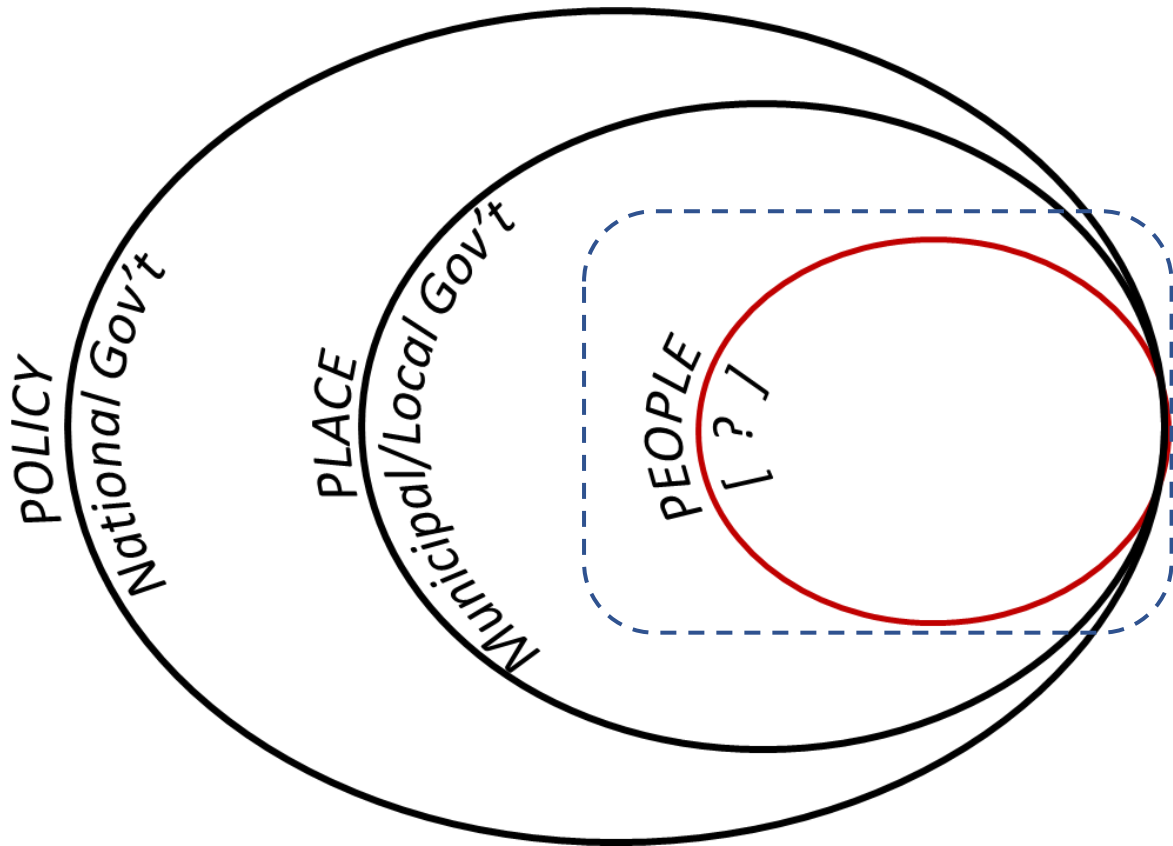OR GROUNDWATER-
DEPENDENT
ECOSYSTEMS ARE
UNDER THREAT

Far too many people in towns and cities around the world still lack access to water and safely managed sanitation.
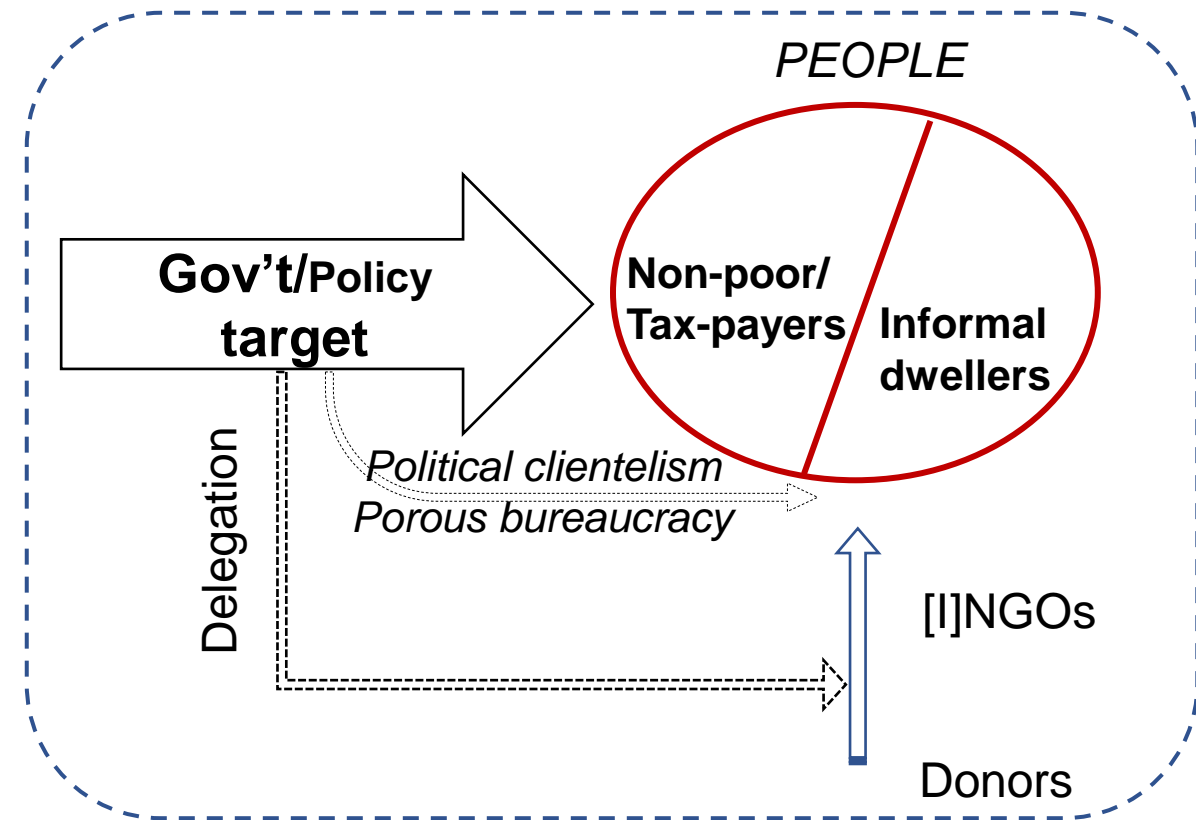
There is a need for an accelerated and inclusive approach to expanding safe service coverage (aligning to SDGs)

What's wrong in "hard to reach" framing?

Socio-ecological Dimensions of (Sanitation) Governance

POLICY
National Gov't

PLACE
Municipal/Local Gov't

PEOPLE
[?]

Neglect of Informal Citizens

PEOPLE

Gov't/Policy target

Non-poor/Tax-payers / Informal dwellers

Delegation

Political clientelism
Porous bureaucracy

[I]NGOs

Donors

What's wrong in "hard to reach" framing?

It basically shows that **informal population remain invisible in the eyes of the state.**
Against such **invisibility**, hard to reach framing only **brings partial, temporary, project-based solutions.**

There is no long-term ownership of the installations.

They race to the bottom in terms of quality…

These are below-par solutions to the grand challenge of SDG 6.2.

Major challenges are:

1. Physical, technical and social
2. Economic and financial
3. Institutional
4. Structural

Physical, technical and social challenges

- Difficult sites, terrain , complicated site layout – an over reliance on conventional sanitation service delivery system

- The bottom billion is not uniform – need to work with complexities of each site (and not just replace with 'technical only' solutions

Economic and financial challenges

- High external delivery cost, land legalisation and regularisation

- NGO led pilot projects not owned by municipalities (who owns the failure ?)
- Regularisation prohibitively costly and can displace poor !

- Shortage of capital for innovation (economic benefits for whom ?)

Institutional and structural challenges

- Complicated and disconnected departments – NGOs act useful bridge for compliance

What is required ?

- Definition needs to include informal settlements

- Reframe from 'what is not allowed ?' to 'what is allowed ?'

- Acknowledge 'what is there and how to operationalise' to 'what is needed ?

- Acknowledge the rights of poor people in situ.

Emerging examples

El Salvador

- San Salvador, El Salvador's capital city: Reconstruction of houses in slums.

- From shacks to houses now with access to regular water and electricity supply.

- Each house has toilets instead of latrines.

- 90 % illegal occupants given legal rights of residence and ownership.

- Residents cleaning own streets and pavement - Living conditions have improved significantly

Source: Antje Begemann, GIZ

Orangi, Pakistan

Orangi Pilot Project (Pakistan) a cluster of 113 low-income settlement on outskirts of Karachi with 1.5 million pop.

- Orangi was a squatter community and did not qualify for government aid due to their "unofficial" status.

- Started in 1980s and today has 72 % of *abadis* / developments accepted by govt. around 50 % provided land title and remaining in process.

- Social innovation: through people's initiatives provided low-cost sanitation, housing, health, education and credit for micro enterprise.
- Demonstrate neighbourhood people can finance, maintain and manage facilities like sewerage, water supply, schools, clinics, solid waste disposal management and security.

- OPP upgraded into 3 autonomous institutions clearly show that sustainable development can be managed through local resources.
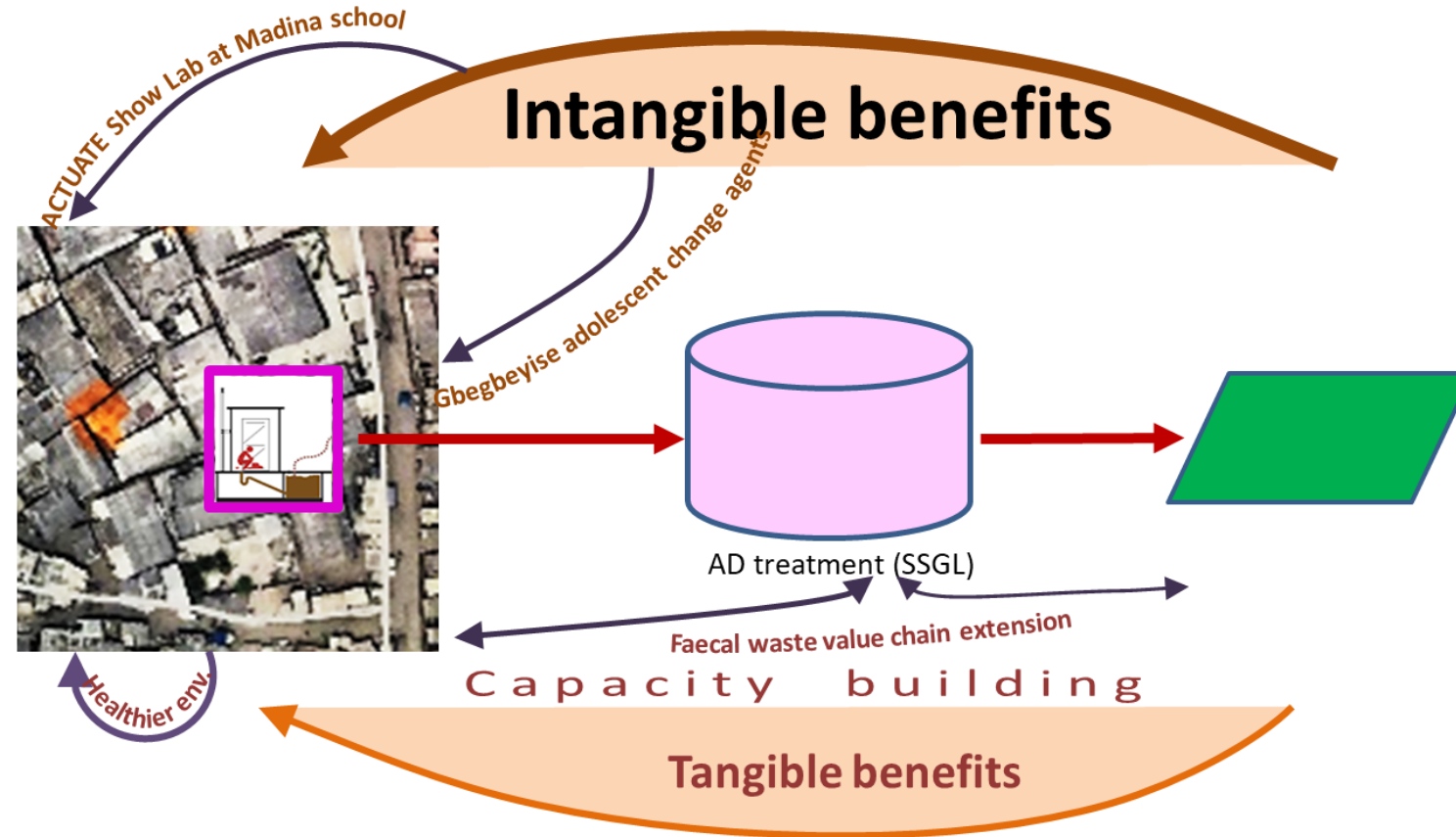
Ghana - RECIRCULATE

- How does drinking water consumed in Africa's poor urban communities get contaminated with faecal waste and can we find a safe circular solution to this problem, demonstrated in Accra, Ghana

- Pilot intervention in **5 informal settlements** has led to improvements in environmental quality measured by the quality of wastewater in drains

- Bringing "science to school" proved to be highly effective – connecting informal settlements to safe circular water economy.

1 Unconnected toilets in communities

2 Collecting and treating faecal waste via stakeholder collective

3 AD digestate used as soil conditioner/fertilizer

Ghana - RECIRCULATE

Safe Circular Water Economy

Ghana - RECIRCULATE

Top left and centre: Community youth "see" it for themselves.

Left: They educate their peers and elders.

Right: They inform the wider society

Odisha, India

- 5+ towns (first in India) both formal as well as illegal settlements have access to 24-7 piped water supply - **'drink from tap'** and another 15 town/cities this in under implementation.

- Ownership rights / title given to illegal settlements household to take pipe water connection and full political commitment and achieved under various govt. funded schemes only.

- SeTP for treatment of septage from non sewered areas setup. Rainwater harvesting structures for source sustainability in open public spaces.

- Self-help groups (SHGs) and transgender engagement for encouraging illegal households take connection as well as O&M.

- Informal sanitation workers / desludgers given permanent jobs and PPEs, improved salary recognising the type of work and and high-risk occupation

Providing drink from tap quality pure water to every home has been my long cherished dream for Odisha!

Happy to dedicate Sujal-Drink from Tap quality 24x7 water supply to every home in Puri city

DRINK FROM TAP MISSION

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

The responsibility of Water Supply Distribution and Consumer Management at ward level is entrusted to Jalsathis, selected from SHG members of Mission Shakti.

The Jalsathis act as key community link between the public and WATCO on performance linked incentive program and are responsible for:

Facilitating new connections
Reading Water Meters
Generating, distributing water bills and collecting user charges
Field Water Quality Testing
Support in Consumer Complaint Redressal
Sensitizing people on water conservation

Solutions

- Facilitate and even encourage working with existing settlements/provisions
- The problem of sanitation needs to be owned socially, politically and institutionally
- Sanitation is part of the meta goal, situated deep into the heart of government
- Work with re-municipalisation – to replace project-based thinking with social responsibility
- Safe and circular dimensions need to be socially subsidised
- Creative engagement with public-private-partnership model will be needed to subsidise the safe and circular aspects across the sanitation value chain (like sewage treatment plants subsidising capture and off-site treatment of human waste from low-income communities)
- Ways of seeing sanitation and the value of safe circular sanitation needs to be institutionalised – in schools, communities and beyond.
- Stopping politics is not the solution but enabling it ! - Communities should be engaged as social entities operating within low-income communities

IWA – What is happening now ?

The initiative will engage public, private, academic sector to share their experiences with barriers, practices, progress, innovations to draw up a framework with wide practical applicability to define global goals and fundamentals of a public sector approach to service outcomes

IUS Stories – 30+ case studies showing similar successfully implemented projects.

For further information:

https://iwa-network.org/projects/inclusive-sanitation/

Inclusive Urban Sanitation

Thanks to my co-authors / researchers :

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Thank You

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