



## **Water and Sanitation Program**

An international partnership to help the poor gain sustained access to improved water supply and sanitation services

# **Working Across Boundaries to Serve the Poor Sustainably**



**Water and Sanitation Program  
East Asia and the Pacific  
(WSP-EAP)**

## **WSP-EAP Regional Conference**

**Phuket, Thailand  
February 4-6, 2002**

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## Preface

### **Why work across boundaries?**

The development challenges thrown up by the Millennium Development Goal targets are causing water supply and sanitation interventions to be increasingly seen as an important part of the large poverty reduction agenda, increasingly incorporated into broader multi-dimension interventions for poverty reduction and growth, in rural, urban and small town settings.

WSS Sector professionals are faced with the need to move out of sectoral boundaries and be proactive in engaging with other communities of development practice, to effectively influence the way water and sanitation interventions are designed and implemented through projects for rural development, urban development, agriculture, public health, Social Investment Funds, and multi-sectoral infrastructure development. Over the past decades there is much that the WSS sector has learned about how to make water supply and sanitation services sustainable and efficient and better serve the poor. It is imperative that these lessons be transferred effectively when WSS interventions are delivered through non-sectoral channels and institutions. However, the learning required is not a one-way process. WSS sector professionals need to continuously learn how to work effectively across sectors as they share what they know about water and sanitation.

A growing perception among partners of the issue led to WSP-EAP's choice of "*working across boundaries to serve the poor sustainably*" as the theme for its annual learning event in February 2002. The event, which has now become a valued yearly tradition in WSP-EAP, brought together key personnel in the East Asia region from government ministries, External Support Agencies, NGO partners, World Bank colleagues and all WSP-EAP professionals.

For three days in Phuket, Thailand, the 63 participants took stock of their tasks and tested the limits of collective knowledge about how to transfer sector learning across boundaries of institutional structures and hierarchies, geographic and administrative boundaries, sector and project structure boundaries, public and private sector boundaries, and even cultural and social boundaries.

As in the past, the event was characterized by the absence of formal papers and presentations but the presence of collective learning processes which challenged people to think, analyze and be creative. Our favorite facilitator, the inimitable Allen Hard was at the helm, which meant that there was much laughter combined with intense and enjoyable learning, as borne out by the final evaluation. Dress code was strictly T-shirts.

This report documents the process and the conclusions we reached together about how to move forward in our common quest.



# 1. Overview

## Mapping out the playing field

More than 60 participants mainly from East Asia gathered in Phuket in February 2002 to learn from each others' experience as to how to work across boundaries in an effort to assess the current situation and draw up future plans. Although the focus was on East Asia, learning from across the world was used to further the collective thinking and understanding on "working across boundaries".

Sector professionals are increasingly required to work beyond the WSS sector in other areas such as health, agriculture and irrigation, integrated area development/rural development/urban development programs, and multi-sectoral interventions including social fund type programs. Decentralization and privatization processes have brought new partners and clients on the scene. Governments and ESA partners are increasingly expecting to see evidence that their investments are producing a positive impact on the lives of the poor. Hence, the number of boundaries has increased significantly over the past years. There is thus a shared agenda and search for the most effective ways of working together, in order to move toward the dual aims of sustained WSS services and improving the quality of lives of the poor through improved services.



The objectives of the 2002 thematic retreat were to:

- push the current limits of thinking about how lessons learned in the water and sanitation sector about reaching the poor could be applied across boundaries – e.g. institutional boundaries managing Water Supply and Sanitation (WSS) programs, such as seen in divisions between sectoral and multi-sectoral projects, the use of rural, urban and small town boundaries, public and private sector boundaries, and central and local government boundaries.
- to define how to move forward in ideas and actions.



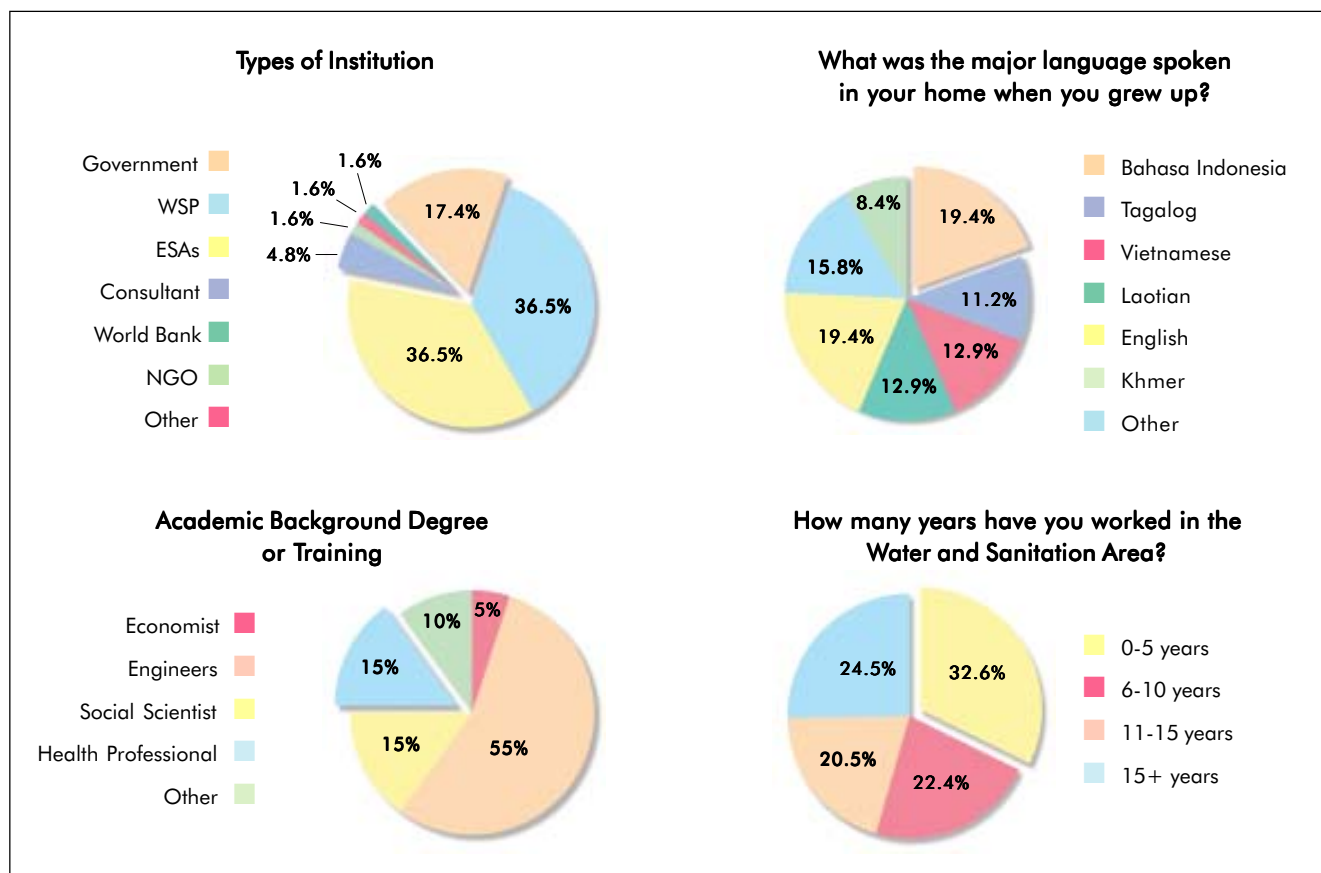
The event was designed to:

- maximize learning from each other's experiences
- investigate what leads to the effective transfer of experience and learning
- facilitate networking for future collaboration

The conference focused on ways of transferring learning across the abovementioned kinds of boundaries, about what makes water supply and sanitation interventions work, be sustainable and be beneficial to the poor.

Besides WSP-EAP professionals, participants consisted of partners from external support agencies (ESAs), governments and NGOs, as well as colleagues from within the World Bank. Nearly 20 percent were women, reflecting the overall gender imbalance in the sector, particularly within government structures. No less than 12 nationalities were represented among the participants.

All participants joined forces to explore and define essential concepts, resulting in this report, which represents a summary of the process and outcomes of the conference deliberations together with basic agreements on how to move forward in both ideas and actions.



## Breaking down language barriers

In an attempt to expose participants to language barriers in working across boundaries, they were asked to divide themselves into country groups and brainstorm to translate “working across boundaries” into their respective major languages. Following heated discussions, the groups came up with:

**Indonesian:** “Kerja Sama Lintas Sektor dan Wilayah”  
 “Cross-sectoral and Cross-Region Cooperation”

**Khmer:** “Open view”  
 “Eliminate obstacle”

**Laotian:** “Cycle network”  
 “Trans-border work”  
 “Sans-frontier work”  
 “Network”  
 “Integrated work”  
 “Comprehensive integration work”  
 “Sectoral cooperation”  
 “Cooperation with all related sectors”  
 “Co-transition network”  
 “Implementation of the work comprehensively”



**Tagalog:** “Pagtutulungan Upang Tugunan Ang Mga Balakid”  
 “Helping each other in order to overcome the obstacles”

**French:** “Renverser Les Barrières”  
 “Overcome barriers”

**Swedish:** “Arbete över Gränser”  
 “Work over Frontiers”





## Where Does Our Sector Stand?

This was an attempt to assess the identity of the Water and Sanitation Sector in each focus country as perceived by the participants. People were asked whether:

“The identity of the Water and Sanitation as a sector in its own right in the country I am associated with is:”

- a. becoming weaker;
- b. stayed about the same;
- c. becoming stronger;
- d. hard to tell or don't know.

Most participants thought that identity of the WSS in their countries had become stronger (77%), while 16% thought the identity of the WS sector had either stayed the same or declined. The remaining participants did not know. An interesting factor in some cases was the divergence of opinion among participants from the same countries.

Reasons participants mentioned for believing that the identity of the sector had become stronger were:

- change in focus, from government- or provider-driven to community-driven (Indonesia)
- improved focus on sustainability
- more gender-balanced as women are now involved in the whole process of WS program
- very strong inter-sector collaboration (the Philippines)
- improved access of the population to potable water and sanitary toilets
- more international donors have made water supply a priority (Vietnam)
- stronger, better management from central to district levels (Lao PDR)
- improved policy and collaboration among ESAs, NGOs and government

Reasons participants mentioned for feeling that the identity of the sector had either stayed the same or had become weaker were:

- “muddling along” as investment keeps declining (Indonesia)
- no significant changes
- water supply access situation is not equitable
- water supply sector has been forgotten (the Philippines)
- lagging behind other development projects
- at strategic level, water is not considered a priority (Vietnam)

It is interesting to note that although the majority of the participants noted a stronger emerging identity of the water supply and sanitation sector in their respective countries, an increasing part of total investments in the water supply and sanitation sector is currently being made through agencies/organizations other than traditional water supply and/or sanitation sector, as multi-sectoral approaches have become more common.





## 2. What boundaries are we talking about?

Based on all participants' experience, boundaries encountered in working with water and sanitation were generally classified as follows:

1. Power/institutional structure
  - How to work across central and local governments; ESAs, Bank, sectors, NGOs.
  - They all have different priorities, and we have to work with them.
2. Project structure:
  - Multisector vs. sectoral water supply and sanitation programs
  - Water supply and sanitation as part of projects dealing with agriculture, rural development, health, urban development
  - How do we work? How do we put everything together?
3. Economic structure: i.e. public vs. private, or mix
  - How do we work with the private sector, civil society?
4. Demographic structure: i.e. rural; small town; urban

Small groups were formed to discuss three questions relating to each type of boundary:



- 1) Why is this issue of interest?
- 2) Why is this issue challenging?
- 3) Why is this issue urgent?



Following are results of the group discussions:

| Why is it of interest?   | Why is it challenging?   | Why is it urgent?  |
|--|--|--|
| <b>Power and Institutional Structure boundaries:</b>   |  |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Importance of sharing of information</li> <li>■ Policy environment</li> <li>■ Learning and exchanging ideas across boundaries</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Personal conflicts can be a barrier</li> <li>■ Decentralization</li> <li>■ Additional boundaries: project approach (project environment)</li> </ul>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Community empowerment;</li> <li>■ Need to redefine boundaries</li> <li>■ Sustainability (donor fatigue)</li> <li>■ Impact on the poor</li> <li>■ Action needed to convert supply-based chain of command to a demand- responsive chain command</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Project structure boundaries:</b>   |  |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Legacy of earlier projects: cultural dependency as barrier</li> <li>■ Introduction of multi-sector approach, needs way to ensure WSS interventions made with focus on sustainability and equity</li> <li>■ Involvement of more women in WS programs</li> <li>■ Learning and exchanging ideas</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Urban vs. rural culture clash</li> <li>■ Difficult to change institutional behavior/culture</li> <li>■ Changing behavior</li> <li>■ Creating ownership</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Divergent donor foci and distraction</li> <li>■ Growing access gaps between rich and poor, urban and rural</li> <li>■ Improve human resources in WSS</li> <li>■ Create regulatory framework</li> <li>■ Encourage profit, incentives in service and delivery</li> <li>■ People are still dying due to lack of clean water</li> </ul> |
| <b>Economic Structure boundaries</b>   |  |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Lack of public-private ownership</li> <li>■ Low priority given by government and some donors to WSS sector</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ How to deal with failure to meet demand</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Develop strategies for working across boundaries</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Demographic Structure boundaries</b>  |  |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Gaps in the access of WSS services</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Prioritizing WSS issues for action</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Population pressure on resources</li> <li>■ Effort to develop flexible service delivery frameworks, focusing on user's demands</li> </ul>   |

**A brief summary of all group conclusions was provided by three participants. These were:**

- Boundaries surround WSS projects related to demographic; administration; rural and urban; project structures, all of which influence sector effectiveness.
- To ensure poverty reduction impact from WSS interventions, there is a need for policy reformulation; public awareness creation; decentralization; strengthening of human resources.
- There is agreement that new multi-sectoral approaches are necessary, but WSS interventions within those approaches need to be made with greater understanding of what it takes to achieve sustainability and equity.
- Focus on institutional reform and demographic boundaries to address access gaps
- Need for incentive-driven WSS structures as part of effort to make our investment efficient to avoid donor fatigue.
- Networking and sharing of knowledge among stakeholders is important.
- Urgency: There is no common understanding of boundaries — as evident in a previous attempt to translate boundary into local languages to break down language barriers.



### 3. What priority knowledge issues do we want to address?

Taking stock of knowledge on boundaries, participants delved deeply into the big questions and issues that need to be understood in order to move ahead in this area. They worked in 8 small groups to identify the “what we already know” and “what we need to learn”, to work across different types of boundaries. Group conclusions were as follows.



#### Working Across Power Structures

| What we already know   | What we need to know  |
|--|---|
| <p><b>Management issues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Bottom-up approach is preferable</li> <li>■ Top-down planning prevents bottom-up approach</li> <li>■ High levels of community contribution improve project sustainability</li> </ul> <p><b>Power and Decision Making</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Public institutions do not want to give up power</li> <li>■ “Power” structures exist at all levels</li> <li>■ Interest of politicians often overrides interests of project effectiveness</li> </ul> <p><b>Institutional set-up</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Successful “pilot” institutional arrangements often fail when “scaled up”</li> </ul> <p><b>Organizational structure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Unclear roles and responsibilities among stakeholders involved in RWSS</li> <li>■ ESAs have their own agendas</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ How to encourage the general public to participate in WS projects?</li> <li>■ How do we motivate institutions to make difficult changes?</li> <li>■ How do we make everybody happy and do his/her jobs?</li> <li>■ How to help the government recognize and accept sound investment principles for managing water and sanitation?</li> <li>■ How to get a clear mandate and endorsement to organization from high level?</li> <li>■ How do we share positive experiences within the region?</li> </ul> |



## Working Across Institutions

(Central Government, Local Government, ESAs, Bank etc.)

| What we already know  | What we need to know  |
|---|---|
| <p><b>What has worked well</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ National advisory group: government, ESA</li> <li>■ Ministerial working group</li> <li>■ Planning and controlling</li> <li>■ Decentralization approach</li> <li>■ Communication</li> <li>■ Almost everybody is in favor of coordination</li> <li>■ Institutional mapping</li> <li>■ User/demand approach (local)</li> <li>■ Voices and informed choices</li> <li>■ Community involvement increases sustainability</li> </ul> <p><b>Why things have not worked</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Some institutions don't want to coordinate</li> <li>■ Overlapping responsibility</li> <li>■ Central, supply-driven, technical focus, low user ownership</li> <li>■ Lack of skills</li> <li>■ Lack of specific technical assistance</li> <li>■ Wrong incentives</li> <li>■ Different cultures</li> <li>■ Less involvement from women</li> </ul> | <p><b>What are the policy parameters and linkages?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ How to help women improve their strength in community's activities</li> <li>■ Proper coordination and good cooperation</li> <li>■ How can all stakeholders be involved in decision making process?</li> <li>■ Collaborating among neighboring states</li> <li>■ The links central to local government agencies</li> <li>■ What are the policies in addressing the competing users of water?</li> </ul> <p><b>What are the tools availability to decision-making?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Successful institutions: Lessons? How to replicate?</li> <li>■ Management systems/administration</li> <li>■ Delegation of authority?</li> </ul> <p><b>How do we support and sustain local/community involvement?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Coordination and collaboration, community empowerment</li> <li>■ Access to information by poor?</li> <li>■ Community participation and ownership</li> </ul> |

## Working Across Cultural/Behavior Boundaries

| What we already know  | What we need to know   |
|---|--|
| <p><b>Institutions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Existence of political interference</li> </ul> <p><b>Individuals</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Demand and ownership are related</li> <li>■ Participation of women and poor are generally low</li> <li>■ Need special targeting to involve adequately</li> </ul> <p><b>What works?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Cultural knowledge of the community before implementation helps adjust project approaches</li> <li>■ Bottom-up approach, community demand-driven approaches are more sustainable</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ How to build capacity at local level?</li> <li>■ How to empower local institutions?</li> <li>■ How to divide between local values and global/international values e.g. women's participation in decision making?</li> <li>■ How can we take advantage of existing cultural behavior?</li> </ul> |

## Working Across Project Structures

| What we already know  | What we need to know  |
|---|---|
| <p><b>Advantages (of multi-sector projects)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Viability (technical, financial, social, economic, environmental, institutional) matters in all projects</li> <li>■ Multi-sector projects support decentralization and use demand-responsive approaches</li> <li>■ Crossing boundaries is easier at local government levels</li> <li>■ If successful, outcomes are likely to be sustainable</li> <li>■ Budget structures can create or break boundaries</li> </ul> <p><b>Disadvantages (of multi-sector projects)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Lack of collaboration between sectoral agencies involved</li> <li>■ Difficult to manage</li> <li>■ Hard to focus improvements of sector policies</li> </ul> | <p><b>Project Management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ How to design innovative projects?</li> <li>■ Does PSP work?</li> <li>■ How to make planning agencies effective?</li> <li>■ How to translate community needs into government planning?</li> <li>■ How to identify boundary between urban and rural?</li> <li>■ How to overcome the disadvantages?</li> <li>■ What can make multisector project successful?</li> <li>■ How best to carry out integrated planning?</li> <li>■ How to reform policy through multisector projects?</li> </ul> |

## Working Across Project vs Non Project: A Concept Boundary

| What we know   | What we need to know   |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Projects pose burden on government at all levels: procedures, finance, M&amp;E, reporting</li> <li>■ Projects often agency/organization-driven</li> <li>■ Projects are sexy, routine expenditure is not</li> <li>■ Incentives framework favors projects</li> <li>■ Projects less flexible</li> <li>■ Projects more readily planned, monitored, evaluated</li> <li>■ Projects discourages private sector participation.</li> <li>■ Donor incentives for project approach               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ flag waving</li> <li>○ Balkanization</li> <li>○ politics</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Employment of home country experts &amp; supplies</li> <li>■ Government incentives for project approach               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ divide and control</li> <li>○ personal gain</li> <li>○ increased dependency of community on government</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ What kind of incentives do donors need to come up with a common strategy?</li> <li>■ How to reduce transaction costs?</li> <li>■ What are the incentives for government to change?</li> <li>■ How to encourage government ownership of strategies for sustainability and equity?</li> <li>■ How to harmonize procedures between agencies?</li> <li>■ How to get commitment of political support?</li> <li>■ How to establish required legal regulation framework under condition of political and social instability?</li> <li>■ How to increase government capital contribution?</li> <li>■ To what extent can/will donors change policy?</li> </ul> |



## Working Across Economic Structure: Private and Public Sector Boundary Crossing for WSS

| What we already know  | Critical things we need to work on  |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Regulations should be set on a financially sustainable basis</li> <li>■ Private &amp; public sectors need to agree on regulations</li> <li>■ Regulations should encourage innovation by private sector in WSS services</li> <li>■ Public sector should encourage private sector investments (e.g. tax breaks)</li> <li>■ Private sector must have the opportunity to make profit conditionally</li> <li>■ Serving poor customers can be profitable</li> <li>■ The poor pay more for WSS services than the rich</li> <li>■ Example of success: Public toilets/washing facilities in some Indian cities run by SULABH International</li> </ul> <p><b>Water Supply</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Lack of transparency</li> <li>■ Lack of rules of the game on water vendors</li> <li>■ Independent economic regulator needed</li> </ul> <p><b>Sanitation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Lack of loan scheme for sanitation facilities</li> <li>■ Lack of attention by government people</li> <li>■ Inequitable distribution of funding</li> <li>■ Difficulties in collecting money</li> </ul> <p><b>Private Companies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Suppliers compete for water resources</li> <li>■ Needs legal regulatory framework, also to include provision to poor</li> <li>■ Commercially-driven</li> <li>■ Expensive</li> </ul> <p><b>Public Companies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Lack of knowledge on economics of WSS</li> <li>■ Socially/politically-driven</li> <li>■ Lack of management</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ What will help the arrangements between public and private sectors in setting regulations?</li> <li>■ How do we achieve public private cooperation on regulation ?</li> <li>■ How to balance profit vs. social services?</li> <li>■ Can't it be equity with profit ?</li> <li>■ How to get the voices of poor potential customers into decision-making for WSS services by public and private sector?</li> <li>■ What is the value of WSS investment vs. other sectors ?</li> <li>■ What common interests can be found for public private sector in providing WSS services reaching the poor?</li> <li>■ What is the true cost of poor health due to WS sector?</li> <li>■ Are monitoring mechanisms in place to ensure proper implementation of policies?</li> </ul><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ How can we equitably distribute funds to improve WSS for the poor?</li> <li>■ How to develop appropriate mechanisms for partnership building?</li> <li>■ How to encourage private sector investments?</li> <li>■ How to identify different types of private/public partnerships?</li> <li>■ What is the relationship between goodwill and profit?</li> <li>■ What are boundaries private/public stakeholders are willing to operate within?</li> <li>■ How to get private sector schemes to serve the poor?</li> <li>■ What are the choices of Public Private Partnership for different situations?</li> </ul> |

## Working Across Demographic Structures: Rural, Urban, Small Town

| What we already know   | What the big questions  |
|--|---|
| <p><b>Success:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Clear level of institutional responsibility</li> <li>■ Demand-responsive approach helps achieve success</li> <li>■ Villagers are willing to contribute in kind for WS schemes</li> <li>■ Development of multi-village schemes that cover rural &amp; small towns</li> </ul> <p><b>Failure:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Assumption that rural people have lots of time to discuss development issues</li> <li>■ Lessons learned are not properly shared in urban areas</li> <li>■ Urban customers do not pay for water system, rural users do</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ How to provide equitable and sustainable services to urban-rural communities?</li> <li>■ How to deliver sustainable services in small towns?</li> <li>■ How to define rural, urban areas?</li> <li>■ Do we talk about peri-urban or middle class?</li> <li>■ How to reach common perceptions between central and local governments in WSS service development?</li> <li>■ Why is connected middle class subsidized while poor pay highest market rates?</li> </ul> |

### Areas for investigation

The small group discussion activities led each group to select one most interesting question.

1. What will help get agreements between public and private sectors in setting regulations?
2. How can local involvement be facilitated and supported? Between community and institution?
3. How to deliver sustainable services in the “gray area” of small towns?
4. What are the necessary conditions to move to non-project approaches?
5. Where is the meeting point between external support and local culture?
6. What makes multisector projects successful?
7. How to facilitate the government to recognize and accept for investment principles?
8. How to draw up a constructive, not constrictive, legal framework for private, public firms?







## 4. Country Experiences – how do we work across boundaries?

In an effort to provide examples of working across boundaries in multisector projects, including water and sanitation aspects, four cases were presented to participants. Below are summaries of presentations and discussions on the four projects.



### In Indonesia

#### KDP: Kecamatan Development Project

KDP 2 is a US\$421 million multi-sector project in Indonesia that aims to cover the poorest rural areas in 20 provinces and 27,000 villages over a period of 4.5 years. Under the project, villagers can choose a range of public infrastructure facility improvements to underpin economic and social development. The menu of public infrastructure investments includes but is not limited to, roads, bridges, water supply and public sanitation. Each village in eligible poorest sub-districts of the country can submit proposals and compete with other villages for a maximum assistance of Rp150 million annually. Besides poverty reduction, the project aims to enhance community empowerment, grassroots democratization and good governance at local levels.

Sustainability is an issue explicit in project objectives and community ownership generated through the process of choice of interventions is expected to contribute toward sustainability. There is no guarantee yet for the voice and choice for the poor. However, community meetings are integral to the process and recent attempts to ensure separate women's meetings for proposal formulation by women's groups are expected to yield better results.

KDP designers do not believe that fixed rates of minimum community contributions are essential. There is thus no requirement for investments in capital costs by the community, although communities have been known to contribute labor. Sectoral projects running concurrently in Indonesia require up to 20 percent community contribution in construction, in cash and kind. This situation has led to two contradictory sets of project rules at community level. In the past villagers were even paid wages in multi-sectoral projects (at lower than market rates, in order to attract only poorer workers) for working on infrastructure sub-projects for their village. One critical question arising from the totally grant-funded infrastructure development perspective is: how long can Indonesia afford this ?

## In Vietnam

### Hai Phong: Public Water Project

Hai Phong is a public utility company providing 24-hour service to a city of 500,000 population. With high water pressure (up to 5<sup>th</sup> floor), quality meets Vietnamese standard. Users take part in whole process from planning to O&M.

Under its 100% connection policy, company subsidizes house connection to increase number of users. Poor families can also pay in installments. With the existence of incentive, tariff and subsidy mechanisms, the company needs no government subsidy, instead it contributes revenue to provincial administration.

## In Lao PDR

### PIP: Provincial Infrastructure Project

IDA-funded PIP is a US\$27 million multi-sector project covering roads, airfield, town water supply and HASWAS, PIP's RWSS component that accounts for US\$2.9 million of the total fund.

Challenges faced include how to bring other ESAs/NGOs on board, and how to define rural-urban.

At the village level, the project focuses on informed choices; community resource sharing; and outsourcing. At provincial level it centers on working across boundaries and programmatic approach.

A multi-disciplinary team develops and manages the project. The project requires a cash contribution of community amounting to US\$2 per household for water service and US\$2 for latrine per household.

## In Vietnam

### MDWRDP: Mekong Delta Water Resources Development

A study in "boundary bondage", MDWRDP is a large scale irrigation project with a small drinking water and sanitation component. Irrigation makes up 95% and the rural water and sanitation component 5% (later reduced to 3.5%). Although the RWS component is small, the system is complicated, involving geographic, organizational; institutional, and incentive boundary issues and constraints.

The project features community participation in planning, cost recovery (community contribution stands at 20% up front), and was intended to include a new, facilitating role for local agencies.

Challenges include concerns of favoritism in distribution of project resources; institutional rivalries and hegemony (The executing ministry comprises five vice ministries, each of which was formerly a ministry and all still operate hierarchically. Rural water and sanitation is under a very small sub-directorate); and how to coordinate irrigation and WS sector. The RWSS sub-directorate is under a different vice minister than the irrigation sector. Also, irrigation districts and administrative boundaries used for drinking water and sanitation do not coincide.



## Dealing with “gray areas” of boundaries

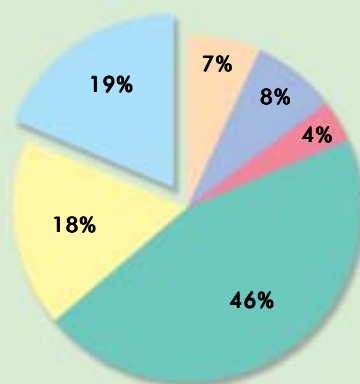
Three cases were presented by selected participants about possible consequences of boundaries and the strategies being considered by WSP and the World Bank to deal with the consequences in certain countries.

### Water supply and sanitation interventions in multi-sector projects: Act of introspection at the World Bank concerning WSS

#### Multi-sector Projects

Currently the investment in WSS in types of projects in the World Bank is in the order of:

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| Environment               | ■ |
| Agriculture               | ■ |
| Education, Transport etc. | ■ |
| Dedicated water projects  | ■ |
| Social protection         | ■ |
| Urban development         | ■ |



WSS interventions planned and delivered through these projects do not follow consistent approaches and principles, which leads to highly variable outcomes in terms of the sustainability of services created and the equity of access achieved.

#### Issues and Way Forward

- Sustainability of WSS interventions needs to be made an issue of importance and routinely assessed in multi-sector programs.
- Policy & institutional arrangements need to be in place to monitor sustainability.
- Rural WSS ‘group’ is increasingly talking to social environment, urban networks in the World Bank, but greater integration and dialogue are needed.
- Guidelines/toolkit for WSS in multi-sector projects for both WSS/Staff and partners/clients is expected to be ready by June 2002.

In order to deal with the issues, we need to get ourselves organized first, so that efforts can be aimed at changing Bank approach, community-driven development, contracting out services, and bringing sectors together. At present the Bank is focusing on public sector operations (cut across all sectors), private sector participation and decentralization. As for poverty, no less than 32 countries are going into the preparation of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), which place water and sanitation improvement high on the poverty reduction agenda in almost all countries.

## Urban, Rural, Small Town: Where do they fit in Cambodia

WS situation is changing fast in Cambodia, a country of 13 million people with 80 percent of the population living in rural areas. Service coverage currently stands at 24 percent for water and 9 percent for sanitation.

### **Question: How rural-urban policy affects project implementation.**

In addition to differences in policy and approach on water supply for rural and urban areas, the issue is made highly complex as water in all its aspects is administered by six different government departments/agencies. Community water system has become a source of conflict (four jurisdictional problems in just one community). To complicate matters further, private water vendor also comes in.

Two different ministries are involved in water supply and sanitation policy development: Rural Development Ministry and Industry and Energy Ministry.

To deal with this issue there is a need to:

- define jurisdictional boundaries
- improve political consensus and will
- develop consensus among external agencies and donors.

What is being done in Cambodia:

- coordinating committee (12 agencies) – to unify these agencies
- decentralize decision-making to local level (to avoid turf wars).

It is however too early to tell whether the measures are effective in dealing with the problems.

## Reflections on the use of the rural, small town and urban boundaries

Water supply and sanitation services are commonly classified as being either “urban” or “rural”. The alternative approach involves classification of water supplies according to who has primary responsibility for management and decision-making, rather than any physical or administrative definition. The two defining players are called “institutions” and “communities”.

To define institution or community, characteristics of the two must be taken into account:

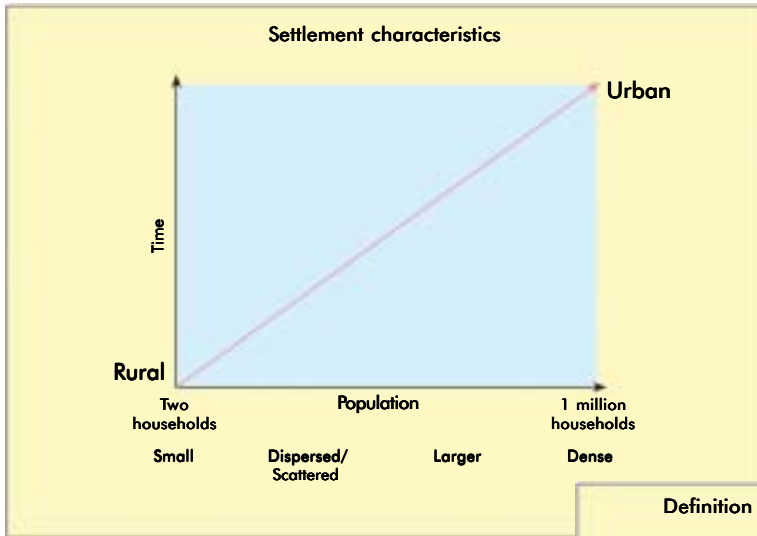
### **Community characteristics:**

“Community” means a socially cohesive group, which generally operates on mutual trust between members.

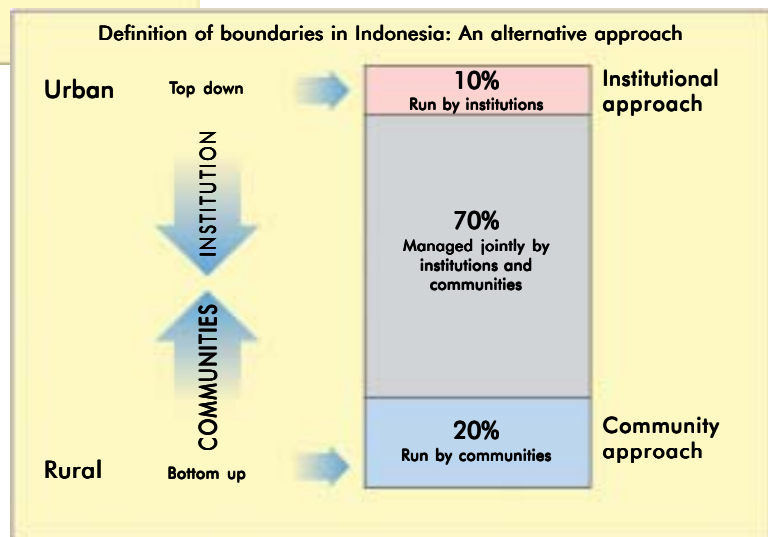
### **Institution characteristics:**

“Institution” means any formal organization or agency external to a single community whose transactions with its “customers” involves money.





Water and sanitation utilities in Indonesia are struggling to fulfill their responsibilities to smaller towns generally, and to low-income communities in particular. Communal facilities, in the meantime, have been closed down in large numbers. The institutional approach only provides services to 10 percent of Indonesia’s population. Hence, utilities play a minor role in the provision of water supply services in Indonesia.

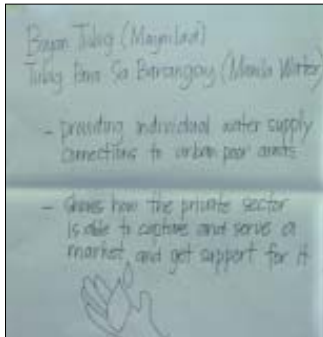


Community-managed systems are estimated to serve 20 percent of the population. This leaves 70 percent of the population in Indonesia in the so-called “gray area” — served by part-community and part-institutionally managed facilities.

This jointly managed scheme involves a formal business agreement between an institution and a community group: on the one side the institution agrees to provide a service, on the other the community group agrees to pay for that service, and internally manage its affairs. Physically this might involve the institution providing a “bulk” water supply to a point; downstream of that point the community group arranges distribution of the water and collects money among its members, and pays the agreed charges to the institution.



## 5. Ideas Fair

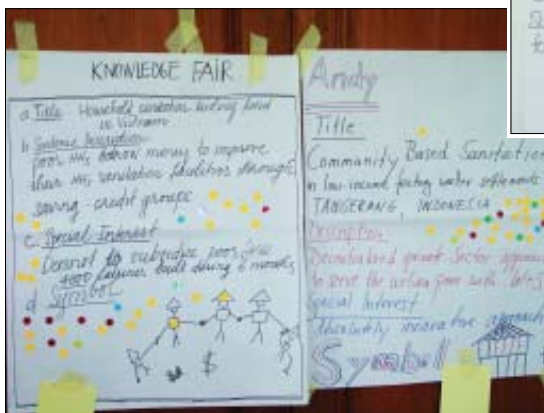


Participants took part in an ideas fair by preparing and displaying posters about experiences, projects, and designs that feature the best examples of what we know, best ideas and best learning experiences. Voting by all participants for the posters that were considered most interesting led to 16 being identified as the “winners”. The following selected topics were presented in two rounds of eight parallel presentations. Participants chose what they wanted to hear about and joined specific presentation groups.



1. Vietnam’s Small Towns Management Model Study
2. Lao PDR’s Small Towns Water and Sanitation Initiative Study
3. How to Save a Million Lives (Handwashing PPP Initiative)
4. Guidebook on doing PSP Projects for Local Government Units
5. Revolving Fund for Household Sanitation

6. Operationalizing a Large Scale Demand-Responsive Project WSSLIC 2 in Indonesia
7. Community-Based Sanitation in Low-Income Factory Workers Settlements in Tangerang, Indonesia
8. Where are the Urban Poor?
9. Stop NATO



10. Low-Cost Household Water Filtration
11. Rural Water Supply Project
12. Promoting DRA Through Informed Choices
13. Bayan Tubig (Maynilad)-Tubig Para Sa Barangay (Manila Water)
14. Working with the media
15. Aid Effectiveness







## 6. What priorities should we work on?

### Major Boundary Issues

Having engaged in a series of discussions on boundaries, participants agreed to focus on four key issues. Four facilitators were appointed to work on the major boundary issues prioritized by the participants.

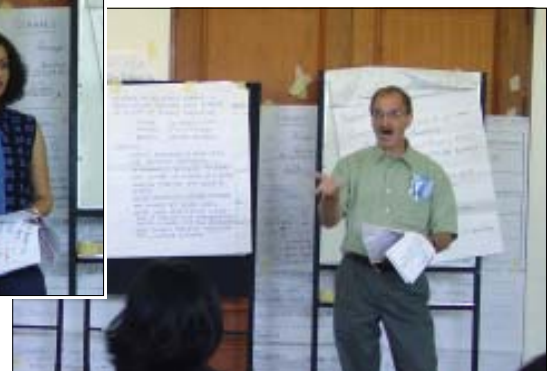
Participants self-selected themselves into four groups to work on one of the four key issues for half a day. The facilitators then presented summary of group analysis.

### I. Achieving Equity in WSS Interventions

This group began by defining the issue as follows:

**Achieving greater equity in the WSS Sector involves defining what equity means for particular stakeholders, and then building into project design the necessary structures, tools, indicators and mechanisms needed to ensure that all stakeholders have:**

- Having equal access to information and opportunities
- Having equal voice and choice in decision making; and
- Receiving fair distribution of benefits





## How to Achieve Equity in WSS?

| Developing structures & mechanisms to ensure equity in WSS   | Verifiable process indicators to ensure equity   | Verifiable outcomes & indicators impact to assess equity  | Approach for better equity needs to be defined specifically for rural/urban   | Equity built into project design for WSS   |
|--|--|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Developing mechanisms to ensure equity</li> <li>● Providing opportunities for project benefits to reach target beneficiaries (lowest level possible)</li> <li>● Community management structures that promote equity</li> <li>● Requires systems approach</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Human resource capacity building</li> <li>● Knowing if all receive information and opportunities fairly</li> <li>● How do you identify the poor/disadvantaged?</li> <li>● Knowing if all community groups are having a say in decisions</li> <li>● Are subsidies for the poor reaching the poor?</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Indicators for M&amp;E</li> <li>● Social and realistic approach</li> <li>● Better coverage</li> <li>● Knowing if both poor and non poor are benefiting from services</li> <li>● Community assessment tools</li> <li>● What are the indicators needed to assess equity</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Relative to different sector rural/urban</li> <li>● Better definition of rural/urban/small towns to remove barriers &amp; gaps in service</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● WSS in poverty alleviation programs</li> <li>● Equity responding to community's expressed demands instead of donors' perceived needs</li> </ul> |

## How to promote Equity Across Boundaries?

### Design an Enabling Environment:

- Promote policy development for sanitation that makes promotional & commercial approaches the way to go in sanitation
- Use selling approaches for sanitation, not educational ones: price/product/right placement/promotion
- Recognition of the importance of active community commitment participation in decision making
- Use of community contracts in project: group contract, household commitment

### Get Incentives Right, for Relevant Sets of Stakeholders

- Credit funds or schemes for small-scale water and sanitation improvements
- Local government executives to have income from user fees
- Dispel the myth that serving poor customers cannot be profitable
- Allow profit making by private sector, if they serve majority of poor customers

### Publicize Success Stories & Why They Succeeded

- Campaign to make water and sanitation a priority
- Disseminate information/lessons via website, email, publications
- More proactive government promotion of best practices
- Use schools/youth to introduce better water, hygiene behaviors in communities



### Use WSS as the Wedge to Establish DRA in Communities

- WSS project design should readily transfer to solve other communities development needs
- Whenever community selects WSS as entry point, use it to establish a demand-responsive process for subsequent inputs
- Establish multi-stakeholder decision making committees at all relevant levels for community level interventions

## II. INCENTIVES

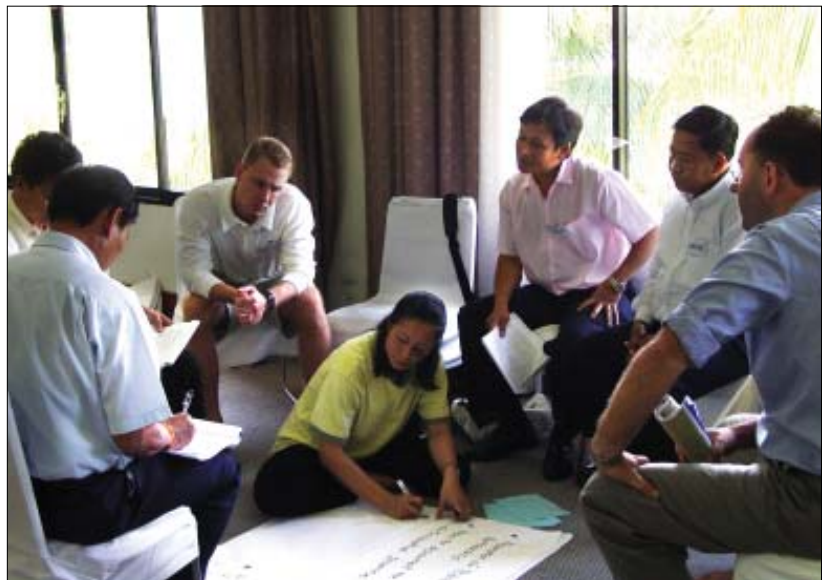
Incentives are key mechanisms to encourage stakeholders to change ways of doing business, behaviors, attitudes, ways of communicating, etc. Positive incentives (that attract rather than deter) are much more effective than negative ones. Incentives can be financial, cultural, moral, ethical, or legal in nature, and include motivators such as tax breaks, recognition, and opportunities for career advancement, training and intellectual stimulation.

### How to create innovative incentives?

- Identify stakeholders (politicians, policy makers, government officials, donors, private sector, community, NGOs)
- Identify incentives that maintain status quo, disincentives to change
- Brainstorm on new incentives that will encourage the change
- Develop strategies to increase appropriate incentives and reduce disincentives

Creating innovating incentives to encourage/promote all stakeholders to work across boundaries:

- A new aspect not exploited before
- Unique
- Watch for unintended consequences
- Appealing environment
- Stable environment
- Stimulate creation of strategies to deal with innovation
- Empowerment





### III. GRAY AREA

This group began discussion asking the question: How to deliver sustainable services in the gray area between large urban and community-level (including small town) WSS systems?<sup>1</sup>

**Acknowledging that there is a Gray Area which is not effectively serviced by institutions or the community and where there are opportunities to clarify a framework, explore options and promote cooperation**

It is fair to say that this was a challenging new concept to most participants. However, one group was brave enough to work on further exploration of what it meant to them in relation to their own experience. The first half of the discussion period allowed sub-groups from different countries and agencies to share the application of this concept to their sector experience. The situations described were very diverse. The group then proceeded to explore points of similarity and difference, and to refine the concept, as shown in the table.

#### How to Deal with Gray Area in WSS?

| How can local involvement be facilitated & supported between community & institution?  |  |   |  |
|--|--|---|--|
| Clarify framework  | Understand characteristics   | Promote cooperation   | Explore options  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Institutional mandate &amp; function</li> <li>● Regulatory framework</li> <li>● Community-based organizations: legal framework</li> <li>● Direct policy to pass responsibility to local level</li> <li>● Ownership of facilities</li> <li>● Roles and responsibility of institutions and community groups</li> <li>● If people know and care about where their drinking water comes from, it will lead to better management of that resource</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What is an institution and community organization</li> <li>● Differences between countries</li> <li>● Settlement density</li> <li>● Variation over time</li> <li>● Urban-rural derivations are not appropriate for water and sanitation</li> <li>● Comparative advantage for optimal mix</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Can institutions and communities co-exist in same area?</li> <li>● Gray areas physically within other areas</li> <li>● When does a community-based organization become an institution?</li> <li>● How to work together between urban and rural on WSS?</li> <li>● If complex cooperation is required, does that lend itself toward institutional management as opposed to community management?</li> <li>● Level and nature of village cooperative behavior</li> <li>● Complexity of cooperation required</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Technological sophistication</li> <li>● Preferences for water of a particular source (e.g. surface over ground water)</li> <li>● Is there a relationship between the way water supply is managed and the water source?</li> <li>● Management options, especially small scale</li> </ul> |

<sup>1</sup> This topic arose from the presentation titled "Reflections on the Use of Rural, Small Town and Urban Boundaries" described in chapter 4.



## IV. Public Private Partnership (PPP)

Exploring the potential for private sector involvement in the water and sanitation sector is very much in vogue in our work. The group discussed the ways that public-private partnerships can function, and how they might be optimized to achieve equitable access to services by the poor. The group began by defining the intent of partnerships:

**PPP aims to develop ways to mobilize public and private skills and capital in water supply and sanitation for the benefit of all stakeholders, including the poor. Partnerships require flexibility; there are many models with a varying balance of public/private roles and their effectiveness will be driven by a variety of factors. The desire to minimize risk for all parties underpins the relationships.**



### Why develop Public-Private Partnerships?:

- Public sector alone is not efficient
- Limited government funds – private investment is needed
- The private sector tends to be more responsive to customer demands in order to increase business
- Value of water
- Private sector can market, identify/create demand, usually more effectively than the public sector alone
- The key is creating a competitive environment – neither public nor private monopolies are healthy

A variety of partnership models are known, ranging in duration, risk, and ownership. Within each model, equitable services for the poor can be achieved by creating an appropriate incentive framework for the service provider. A key boundary to be crossed is understanding the “poor market”. Developing a marketing strategy that addresses the demands and constraints of the poor is necessary. The big private sector tends to be only interested in the potential for high profits in major cities. How can the small, local private sector be attracted to the water (and sanitation) sector? The key is to minimize risk. One interesting approach is the “Design-Build-Lease” model, which takes away investment risk for the private builder/operator.

## How to promote PPP for the poor?

### Guidelines for ensuring equitable service through partnerships

- Checks and balances are needed of the incentives and functions of both sides of the partnership.
- An enabling legal and organizational framework is needed, and a regulatory framework between public and private sector.
- Private sector needs to be accountable to its clients.
- Assess incentives for each partner.
- Assess and minimize the risks involved for all parties.
- What are potential benefits to private investors.
- Demonstrate ways to profit from serving the poor – create a win-win situation.

### Do the poor need subsidies?

Generally speaking, in partnerships public resources should be focused on serving the poor, but the private sector can also be induced to serve the poor. Given the right enabling environment, the private sector will do market research and seek profits from serving the poor (and everyone else). Both the public and the private sector need to better understand the “poor market” in order to develop a viable strategy for providing services that the poor can and will pay for.

Some examples of PPP from the region:

| Manila – concession   | Jakarta – concession  | Vietnam – increasing entrepreneurship  |
|---|---|--|
| <p>The concessionaire had an incentive to serve the poor – realized that the poor were already paying a high unit cost for water, so there was a market in poor neighborhoods. Low-cost engineering solutions are being developed. The municipality also reduced risk by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Waiving excavation fees;</li> <li>● Permitting above-ground pipes;</li> <li>● Guaranteeing that squatter areas would not be redeveloped for a fixed period.</li> </ul> | <p>The two concessionaires cannot serve squatter areas by decree – they are not recognized settlements – so the ability to serve large numbers of the very poor is limited. Pilot projects are providing free house connections in recognized low-income communities. Subsidized “social” tariffs are applied to poor households. Neither of these approaches would encourage private investment.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The “small” private sector is playing an increasing role in the water sector as the legal and regulatory environment liberalizes.</li> <li>● The public/private interface is a “gray area”. In some cases civil servants hold private jobs, which may lead to conflicts of interest.</li> </ul> |





## 7. Conclusions

Participants agreed that boundary issues are an important subject that needs to be dealt with via a concerted effort to improve the quality of lives of the poor through sustained WSS services.



## Endnotes

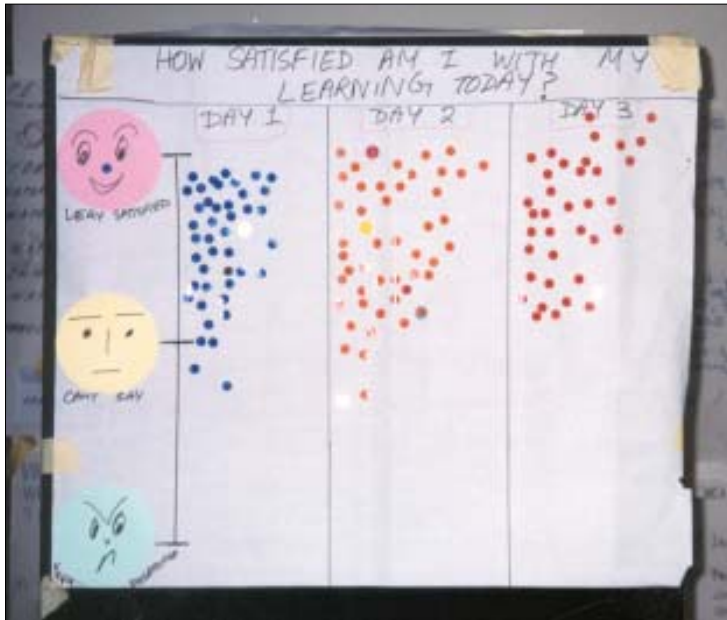
As the conference drew to an end, participants packed their bags for a dragon boat race. Having sailed across “boundaries” of another type, participants threw their hats in the air to mark the end of the learning journey.







## Conference Evaluation



The “mood meter” clearly showed that most participants were fully satisfied with their experience with learning across boundaries.



### “IMAGINE WORKING ACROSS BOUNDARIES WITH BONDAGE”

Imagine there are no boundaries, it’s easy if you try, no red tape before us, above us just one sky.

Imagine all poor people enjoying life today.

Imagine there are no countries, it isn’t hard to do, nothing to steal or lie for, and no corruption too.

Imagine all the people living without disease.



**\*\* YOU MAY SAY WE ARE DREAMERS,  
BUT WE’RE NOT THE ONLY ONES,  
WE HOPE STAKEHOLDERS WILL JOIN US,  
AND THE WORLD WILL BE AS ONE**

Imagine there is no grey zone, I wonder if you can  
no hidden agendas, a partnership of women and  
men.

Imagine all the people Working Across Boundaries...





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