

Presenting the Community-Led Urban Environmental Sanitation Guidelines

After worldwide piloting and evaluation of the Household-Centred Environmental Sanitation approach, Eawag/Sandec, the Collaborative Council (WSSCC) and UN-HABITAT have published new guidelines for Community-Led Urban Environmental Sanitation (CLUES). Christoph Lüthi¹, Lukas Ulrich¹

Intensive field-testing and validation of the Household-Centred Environmental Sanitation (HCES) planning approach [1] was conducted between 2006 and 2010 in seven different urban and peri-urban settings in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The experience and lessons learned from these pilot projects were used to develop a revised set of planning guidelines called Community-Led Urban Environmental Sanitation (CLUES) (Photo. 1).

From HCES to CLUES – What's new?

The name change from HCES to CLUES highlights the importance of broad community involvement (beyond the household level) in the planning and decision-making processes. Although the name changed, the main characteristics stay the same: a multi-sector and multi-actor approach emphasising participation of all stakeholders in the planning process from an early stage.

The revised guidelines differ in four ways from the former provisional version:

1. Simpler to use, featuring only seven planning steps (previously ten-step process).
2. Written in an easier and more accessible language for non-experts to understand.
3. They feature a complete toolbox with multiple "how-to-do-it" tools for each step of the process.
4. Special attention is paid to environmental sanitation at the community level, especially to low-income communities where service improvements are a complex task.

Characteristics of the CLUES approach

The new publication presents a step-by-step procedure for planning and implementing environmental sanitation infrastructure and services in urban and peri-urban communities. Based on the Bellagio principles for sustainable sanitation [2], the planning approach builds on a framework, which balances the needs of

people with those of the environment to restore human dignity and a healthy life. By involving all relevant stakeholders, particularly the targeted community, it aims to consider the entirety of perspectives and expectations, thereby helping to find and implement the best possible environmental sanitation solution in a common agreement.

Some of the strengths of the planning approach:

- CLUES adopts a flexible and neutral approach with regard to technology choice, taking into account economic factors (ability and willingness to pay) and social benefits such as privacy, dignity and convenience. Its objective is to link expression of needs at the community level with those resources available locally and those requiring additional inputs from external agencies.
- The approach combines expert knowledge at national and municipal level with local knowledge at community level.
- CLUES is primarily focused on solving sanitation problems in unserved (often informal) settlements. Its objective is to derive solutions requiring minimum external support and, at the same time, complementing citywide and strategic approaches such as "Sanitation 21".

Structure and target audience of the new publication

The CLUES guidelines are organised in three parts: Part 1 elucidates the seven steps of the actual planning approach. Part 2 describes why an enabling environment (political, legal, institutional, financial, socio-cultural and knowledge framework) is needed as a precondition for the success of every planning process and how it can be nurtured. Part 3 provides 30 practical tools in digital form to support and streamline process implementation. An enclosed memory key containing the toolbox is also provided and will be accessible (in its latest version) on the Internet.

This document has been developed to provide guidance to experts and profes-

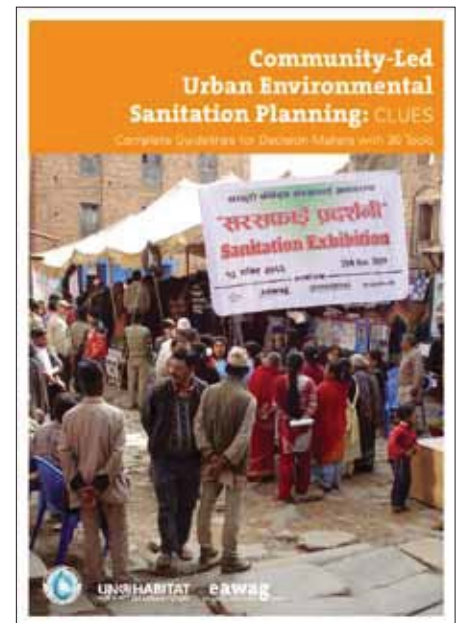


Photo 1: Cover page of the new planning guidelines for decision-makers.

sionals working with peri-urban and urban neighbourhoods partially served or unserved in terms of environmental sanitation services. The structured seven-step process and accompanying toolbox should prove useful to local authorities, donor agencies, planners, and NGOs dealing with infrastructure programming and service delivery, as well as to non-experts, local NGOs and community-based organisations taking part in such a planning process.

- [1] Eawag (2005): Household-Centred Environmental Sanitation: Implementing the Bellagio Principles in Urban Environmental Sanitation. Provisional Guideline for Decision-Makers.
- [2] Eawag (2000): Bellagio Statement: Clean, Healthy and Productive Living: A New Approach to Environmental Sanitation.

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This open source document will be launched at the World Water Week 2011 in Stockholm and can be downloaded from the Sandec and WSSCC websites after the World Water Week. The development of CLUES was supported by the Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) North-South and SDC's Water Initiatives Division.

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