

## ENGAGING YOUTH IN URBAN WATER & SANITATION

### BRIEFING

Access to safe water and sanitation is a major challenge facing many communities in the developing world. Although some progress has been made towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) targets for Water and Sanitation (watsan), because of the rapid urbanization and increase in the number of urban poor, the number of urban residents using unimproved water sources or without improved sanitation facilities has actually increased between 1990 and 2010 (UNICEF, WHO, 2012). This session will analyze global situation and trends in urban watsan services and the role of youth in improving access to watsan, particularly for the urban poor. A panel consisting of policy makers and youth leaders in the sector will present case studies that highlight examples where youth have made a difference in ensuring access to sustainable water and sanitation services, and suggest ways to scale up such practices.

The session will aim to provide policy makers and youth with the opportunity to discuss and deliberate on issues of urban water and sanitation within the context of the theme for the Sixth Session of the World Urban Forum, *'The Urban Future'*.

**Session Focal Point:** Mr. Andre Dzikus, UN-HABITAT

#### Speakers:

1. Ms Joyeta Goswami, International Research and Development Fellow/Government Relations and Advocacy, and Ms Lauren Regional Advocacy & Housing Forum Officer, Europe and Central Asia, Habitat for Humanity International
2. Mr. Lovy Rasolofomanana, Country Representative of WaterAid, Madagascar
3. Mr. Sushil Gyewali, Executive Director, Town Development Fund, Nepal
4. Ms Anna Crispo, Researcher in Public Health of ANGIR-Napolitan Association Young Researchers
5. Dr. P. Jayapal, Executive Director, Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO)
6. **Mr. Jean Hugues Hermant, Director of Projection network, Young Professionals network in Developing countries.**
7. Neelima Khetan, General Manager, CSR and Sustainability for Coca Cola India and South West Asia.

#### Other Contributors:

- Dr. Bounchanh Sinthavong, Member of the National Assembly and Vice Minister, Ministry of Public Works and Transport, Lao PDR

**Session Moderator:** Mr. Avi Sarkar, UN-HABITAT

## PROJECTION NETWORK : BECOME A YUPPIE AND BEYOND!

Projection network is about a specific type of youth. Those who are already working in the field: the young professionals.

During this session, we presented the action of young professionals who are already involved in access to urban services and how they could work together to strengthen their capacities, develop new ideas, launch field projects, hold an original and relevant advocacy or create tools for awareness-raising.



### PROJECTION NETWORK

Projection network is a network of young professionals from the North and the South, working for access to basic services in urban areas in developing countries.

We have defined a young professional as someone with between 2 and 10 years experience in the field. We reckon that 2 years is the basis to be relevant and have enough field experience to be shared with the other members.

We develop a cross disciplinary approach with our members who have different skills like engineering, communication, project management, research, etc. and work for all types of organizations: private and public sectors, the civil society, NGOs, international institutions, universities, research, etc.

Projection is neither a social network like facebook or tweeter, neither an institutional network where people present your project in an marketing or communication effort. Projection network is a place where people meet and exchange between professionals regarding their professional background and experiences as well as their personal point of view. It is a place where the young professionals call current practices into question and provide critics on their own practices in order to improve them.

It is a place of ideas and energy! Young professionals do have some knowledge but can also hold a new vision of what can be done in the field.

Today we have more than 300 members from all over the world, from Southern and Northern countries. Projection's headquarters are in Paris (France) and we have a regional office for West Africa based in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso).

## SO NOW : WHAT DOES PROJECTION CONCRETELY DO?

### PROJECTION'S TOOLS

Projection offers several network activities to their members:

- A collaborative online platform where we product intellectual contents: articles, electronic conferences, etc.
- A quarterly newsletter on water and sanitation written by young professionals
- Monthly meetings in Paris, Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso) and Niamey (Niger) that look like after works
- International and annual workshops in West Africa

Although we are quite young (the network was created in 2008) we soon realized that we could create synergies between those tools.

We can work on a topic first during an afterwork, then go deeper with an international working group and finally conclude our study with a workshop and come up with a set of recommendations from young professionals on this topic.

Those recommendations are all the more legitimate that they come from a collective work of professionals with different skills and coming from all types of structures.

Then, we have two ways to put those recommendations to good use:

- We can either do advocacy ;
- Or put them into practice. This is currently the case with our field project called SANI TSPATA.

## FROM NETWORK DISCUSSIONS TO FIELDWORK

### SANI TSAPTA, STRENGTHENING LOCAL ACTORS FOR SANITATION

After more than a year of discussion in the network around the topic of sanitation (with a focus on west Africa), we came to the conclusion that there is a total lack of independent training for the local actors of sanitation like masons who build the pit latrines, managers of public toilets and showers as well as health officers in charge of the sanitation in local collectivities.

All those actors also called "barefoot engineers" mostly arrived in the area of sanitation, either for small business opportunity, or because they have been put there (for example : some civil servants in small cities that do not necessarily have any kind of expertise in sanitation).

Nevertheless they are the main local ambassadors in neighborhoods to expand access to sanitation!

A concrete example : the small scale operator like masons. Nowadays, they mostly work on short-term projects (often held by international initiatives) which leave them workless when the project ends up. One of the challenges of capacity building is thus to get them become proactive, in order to get market opportunities and become a real local force for sanitation development.

So since 2010 Projection is leading a project in partnership with SIAAP, AESN and Rail-Niger. This project is built on two axes:

1. Putting sanitation actors into network at all levels and ages:
2. Proposing appropriate training, to match the needs and realities of these actors: creating original training tools (the audience we face is often illiterate, so we have to find innovative communication methods) and on a format which fits with their professional constraints (there is no question of modules over a few days).

*This is an example of how a study made by a network specifically dedicated to young professionals, can end by concrete recommendations to improve basic urban services.*

## **FROM NETWORK DISCUSSIONS TO ADVOCACY**

### **BRING FORWARD THE SUBJECT OF ACCESS TO WATER AND SANITATION IN SLUMS**

Now, the second way to put our recommendations to good use is advocacy.

One of Projection network's goals is to improve the representation of young professionals in national and international conferences and to support their innovative and relevant ideas among decision makers.

A World Water Forum took place in the city of Marseilles in France in March 2012. Projection was part of the organization in charge of coordinating the initiatives regarding Young Professionals. It was the first time young professionals participated to a major international event as a clearly identified group.

During the preparation of this event, we noticed the lack of working group addressing the issue of access to water and sanitation in slums. So we decided to bring forward the slums by ourselves within the 6<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum.

Projection network initiated a collective work by mobilizing our members and beyond, international actors with a view to widen participation, in order to encourage a collective vision of solutions to water and sanitation in slums.

During the event, we presented an exhibition recreating on the site a sample of such settlements and presenting existing or emerging solutions to water and sanitation issues in those specific urban areas. The idea was to show how improved access to water or sanitation could be a first step towards the integration of the slum into the urban area.

*This example shows you the interest of ranking as young professionals: our proposal can be relevant as well as innovative. Because we are young, we can go "out the line" and bring forward a sensitive subject with original advocacy tools.*

## FROM A YOUNG PROFESSIONALS' NETWORK TO LEARNING AND AWARENESS TOOLS CREATING LINKS WITH STUDENTS AND THE YOUTH

Projection's doors are not closed to the other groups of youth.

We create links between the professional sector and the students who want to work on basic services in developing countries.

In France, we created a Forum called DEFIS SUD (CHALLENGES SOUTH in English). This is a business forum which aims at providing greater transparency on the sectors' key issues, jobs and actors.

And we edited a guidebook with the same objectives : PARIER SUD. It is an original and didactic book with little games and easy explanations on the issues of the sector. It is so easy to read that even your mother could read it to better understand what you do!

*Actually, those projects were mentioned not for a communication purpose but to show how our network approach facilitates the circulation of information, the transfer of experience between generations to improve the knowledge and the skills of new generations that will build the future of the cities in developing countries.*

