SUMMARY REVIEW

SEI 2014- *Multi-level sanitation governance: Understanding and overcoming the challenges in the sanitation sector in Sub-Saharan Africa*

Background:

70% of the population of sub-Saharan Africa still relies on unimproved or shared sanitation facilities or resorts to open defecation. (pg. 2)

Inadequate sanitation costs 18 African countries $5.5 billion per year (pg. 3).

The greatest proportion of these costs is premature deaths related to diarrheal diseases.

Main Points:

There is a major disconnect between policy and practice in the sanitation sector.

“Path dependency” and “Institutional inertia” prevent the adoption of new and improved sanitation technology.

A solution must come in the form of effective multi-level sanitation governance.

The Disconnect between Sanitation Policy and Practice:

- Toilets and sanitation systems are often constructed improperly due to economic and socio-cultural factors. (pg. 5)
- There are generally weak institutional frameworks and enforcement capabilities for improved sanitation. (pg. 6)
    - Policy is prescribed by the government (between different overlapping bureaus and agencies that can be contradictory and inefficient) and is supposed to be implemented at the household level with little support.
    - There are unclear legal frameworks for regulation and standards of health and safety. (pg. 10)
- At the household level, there is lack of prioritization of toilets, lack of awareness of guidelines and standards (especially among the rural population) and irregular and insufficient inspection of toilet facilities. (pg. 5)
- Other barriers to effective sanitation implementation include:
    - *Local norms:* Resistance to productive waste toilets due to cultural norms about where and how one is to defecate. Using feces to essentially grow food can be an extremely unappealing prospect (Rwanda, pg. 7)
    - *Over-commercialization:* High prices have prevented large portions of the population from purchasing sanitation systems. (Tanzania, pg. 5, 6)
    - *Disproportionate focus on water supply over sanitation*: Water access initiatives are the overwhelmingly dominant recipients of funding and investment (Burundi, pg.6)
    - *Inadequate scale of sanitation infrastructure:* Limited scope of impact due to underdeveloped sanitation technology, support, and education systems. (Uganda, pg. 6)

Path Dependency and Institutional Inertia:

- *Path dependency* is defined as, “A process whereby contingent events or decisions result in the establishment of institutions that persist over long periods of time and constrain the range of future actions for actors, including those that may be more efficient or effective in the long run.” (pg. 7)

- *Institutional inertia* (pg. 8) (or *institutional persistence)* is the driving force behind path dependency and is the tendency for institutions and regimes to prevent change. It is a product of:
    - Uncertainty and risk of change
    - Sunk costs: the need to learn and adopt new rules, conventions, skills, tools, etc.
    - Political conflict

Connection of *Path Dependency* and *Institutional Inertia* to Sanitation:

- Pit toilet ("drop-and-store") and flush ("flush-and-discharge") systems remain the two dominant sanitation regimes in Sub-Saharan Africa. (pg. 8)
    - About half of the population in SSA relies on traditional pit toilets and this is increasing by 2.8% of the population each year in urban areas, 1.8% per year in rural areas (*more than twice the rate of expansion of flush and improved toilets put together*).
- "Sanitize-and-use" systems (productive latrines that convert human waste to agriculturally productive fertilizer) have been slow to catch on at all levels. (pg. 8)
    - Barriers to adoption include:
        - Psycho-social, technical, and capacity constraints
        - Social pressures, reluctance to engage in "toilet-to-farm practice" (pg. 8)
        - High number of users that need to be involved in maintenance of toilet, cultural and religious issues associated with dealing with human excreta. (pg. 8)

Essentially, path dependency and institutional inertia are the forces that organizations and companies struggle with while attempting to introduce new and different technologies to unfamiliar regions. The challenge is to understand the reasons for different cultures' paths, and to leverage preferences to create an acceptable product that appeals to local tastes and customs. The HCD process is iDE's way to overcome these barriers.

Solution:
Multi-level Sanitation Governance:

- There are four key dimensions of multi-level governance (pg. 8, 9)
    1. Increased participation of non-state actors
    2. Conceptualizing decision-making as "complex overlapping networks" opposed to "discrete territorial levels"
    3. New role of state towards coordination, steering, and networking
    4. Transformation of the notion of democratic accountability of the government (i.e. actually being accountable to the people)
- Micro level has the highest level of responsibility to implement sanitation facilities.
- Macro level needs to support hygiene behaviors and household solutions with promotion, information, and regulation.
- Private sector needs to support sanitation through financing and collection services, creating a value chain, and stimulating demand to promote ownership of sanitation facilities.
- Sanitation needs to be made a higher priority in rural areas, where the majority of the population resides. (pg. 10)
- Funding needs to be directed more at promoting and marketing sanitation rather than providing subsidies for sanitation infrastructure. (pg. 11)