

# Water and sanitation



## Democratic and innovative reforms in the Global South

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Innovative strategies based on citizens' engagement and other forms of democratisation have substantially improved public services in 'developing countries'. This chapter presents examples of new approaches that have led to improved services, and the political and financial hurdles that hinder public utilities from achieving success.

### Water privatisation: continued troubles

A wave of water privatisation, accelerated by pressure from international financial institutions and other donors, swept through 'developing countries' in the nineties. Private water companies were expected to bring greater efficiency and lower prices, attract large volumes of investment, and extend water and sanitation to the unconnected poor. The actual experience with 'public-private partnerships' (PPPs) and 'private sector participation' (PSP) has been very different. Almost without exception, global water corporations have failed to deliver the promised improvements and have, instead, raised water tariffs far beyond the reach of poor households. Research by the Public Services International Research Unit (Hall and Lobina, 2005) looking at over 400 large cities in the world, shows that almost half of the cities that have tried private water management have experienced serious problems, ranging from major operational problems to the termination of the contract.

The trend of the last few years is that the global water corporations only want to invest if sufficient profits can be secured in the relatively short term. In cities with many poor people this is almost never the case. The com-

panies invest less and less in order to avoid risk, leaving investment to governments. In 2003, when water giant Suez tried to regain the trust of its impatient shareholders, it explicitly stated its intention to withdraw if a concession did not fulfil its financial expectations. The company has indeed already withdrawn from a large number of cities, although not always voluntarily. In the case of Suez's concessions in Buenos Aires and elsewhere in Argentina, flagship privatisation projects implemented in the mid-nineties, the company's departure was particularly embarrassing.

In September 2005 it became clear that the Argentinean government was not going to accept yet another request for water tariff increases. President Nestor Kirchner openly criticised Suez for failing to live up to promised investments in the water and sanitation systems, while expropriating an estimated USD 5 billion in profits, calling the company's behaviour "shameful". "This president will not allow that that company keep leaving the Argentina people without sewers and water, and on top of that increases its tariffs" said Kirchner (*La Jornada*, 2005). This high-level political conflict forced the decision of Suez subsidiary Aguas Argentinas to terminate the concession contract. A similar conflict has meant the

end of Suez's concessions in 15 cities of Santa Fe province. Suez, meanwhile, is refocusing on expansion in Europe, where financial returns are more promising than in Southern cities with a large share of poor people. The company has embarked on an expensive advertising campaign with full-page colour advertisements in major Western European newspapers, probably also in the hope of overcoming the negative media reports about the company's operations in Latin America and elsewhere.

The failure of water privatisation is hard to swallow in neo-liberal policy elite circles as it so clearly contradicts their faith in private sector solutions. The World Economic Forum (WEF), the neo-liberal think-tank behind the annual gathering of the world's economic and political elite in the Swiss ski resort Davos, has entered the water debate in defence of public-private partnerships. The WEF's Water Initiative supposedly "*aims to facilitate the private sector's participation in sustainable water resources management*" while partnering Alcan Inc., Umgeni Water, the Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation, the United Nations Development Programme and the World Conservation Union (WEF, 2005a). In a report published in September 2005 for the United Nations High-level Plenary Meeting On Financing for Development, the WEF argues that the private sector "*is an under-utilized resource for addressing the challenges in the basic education, health and water sector*" (WEF, 2005b:26). The ideological blinkers of the authors is stunning, as if PPPs have not already been receiving overwhelming support from international institutions and governments during the last decade. The report fails to acknowledge any of the multiple failures by the private water corporations that until 2002-2003 were presenting themselves as *the* solution to the water needs of the world's poorest. The WEF report recommends multi-stakeholder alliances as a way to "*strengthen the political acceptability of what otherwise might be the controversial participation of the private sector*" (2005b:34) and calls on governments to mobilise sufficient political will to overcome such concerns. For the rest, its main recommendation is for a diverse range of government subsidies to be made available to "*help raise the anticipated rate of return for private investors and development risk capital*" (2005b:42).

Such calls for subsidising privatisation and PPPs fall on fertile ground. Even after the water multinationals started withdrawing from 'developing countries' due to disappointing returns, the World Bank and other donors

remain reluctant to provide support to public water utilities and instead concentrate on developing new forms of private sector water management. Recent reincarnations of the PPP concept promoted by the World Bank include management contracts, leasing and franchising, often involving combinations of global water multinationals and smaller local water entrepreneurs, all subsidised with taxpayers' money.

Meanwhile, the public operators that are responsible for more than 90 percent of the world's water and sanitation services still receive very little positive attention from the World Bank and Northern governments. This has to do with an ideological obsession with private sector 'solutions' as well as commercial interests related to the expansion of multinational water corporations, but the negative attitudes towards public sector water are also partly explicable by the disappointing experiences of the eighties. During the International Decade for Clean Drinking Water (1981-1990), when development banks made loans available, public operators failed to deliver sufficient extensions to water services. This was used to justify the privatisation policies of the following decade, although the cause of the previous public sector failures was primarily a lack of democratic process, rather than an inherent problem with the public sector. Not only was the context of rapid population growth, urbanisation and deepening impoverishment not an easy context in which to succeed, but many 'developing countries' in this period were subject to dictatorships and corrupt regimes which held human rights and democratic processes in contempt and showed little interest in expanding water and sanitation. Without accountability, services to the poor suffered while the corrupt regimes benefited from the loans intended for water.

### Democratic water reforms in the Global South

Virtually unnoticed by an international water debate exclusively concerned with private sector promotion, a wide range of innovative approaches to urban public water delivery has been set in motion in 'developing countries' in recent years.<sup>1</sup> Diverse forms of enhanced citizen involvement have sparked major improvements in the effectiveness, responsiveness and social achievements

<sup>1</sup> Further information and analysis about the experiences of innovative and democratic management of water and sanitation services presented here, plus other cases and relevant documents, can be found at <[www.waterjustice.org](http://www.waterjustice.org)>, which is a virtual resource centre and meeting place for exchanging experiences, debate and strategies on alternatives to water privatisation.



of water utilities. The politics of urban water delivery in 'developing countries' is often an intense battleground where the interests of economic elites clash with those of the poorest. Experiences in cities across Latin America show that when democratisation means increased political control by the poor, it boosts the likelihood of their needs being met. These comprehensive forms of democratisation of water management should not be confused with the far more limited concepts of participation promoted by international donors.

In Porto Alegre and a growing number of other Brazilian cities, public water has been transformed through democratic reforms including participatory budgeting, a model often described as 'social control'. Like many other areas of public life in these cities, the population directly decides the budget priorities of their water utility through a process of public meetings. In Porto Alegre, this has played a key role in ensuring that 99.5 percent of the population, including those living in poorer neighbourhoods on the periphery, have access to clean water today. Citizens are also involved in monitoring the effective implementation of decisions and projects, which has helped to reduce the costs of new construction works. Cross-subsidisation and 'stepped tariffs' means that larger consumers pay proportionately more. The generated surplus goes into an investment fund that finances new water and sanitation infrastructure. Other examples of Porto Alegre-style democratic water management in Brazil can be found in the north-eastern city of Recife, Caxias do Sul in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, and Santo André, Jacareí and Piracicaba, all in the state of São Paulo. Porto Alegre and Recife both have far more than one million inhabitants, which shows that scale is not necessarily an obstacle to participatory water management.

The public water successes in Porto Alegre are unlikely to have materialised without the political commitment of the Workers' Party, which controlled the local government throughout the 1990s. After the Workers Party lost power in the autumn of 2004, the new mayor has kept participatory water management intact, although the city's water utility DMAE is no longer able to play an active international role in promoting public water solutions. The good news from Brazil is that the national government's proposal for a new law on water and sanitation actively encourages the creation of mechanisms for the 'social control' of public water utilities. According to Antonio Miranda, former president of the

Brazilian Association of Public Municipal Water and Sanitation Service Organisations (ASSEMAE), the new law drafted by the government of President Lula even makes access to national government funds conditional on introducing this type of public utility reform. ASSEMAE backs the new legislation, in particular the support for 'social control' mechanisms.

In Venezuela, a different model of far-reaching user engagement in water management has been under development since 1999. The population in areas needing improved water delivery, typically urban slums, is very intensively involved in planning and decision-making in addition to actual construction and maintenance work. Local communities, the water utility and elected officials co-operate in communal water councils to identify needs and priorities for improvements, allocate available funds and develop joint work plans. The users exert democratic control over their utility and hold it accountable for implementing work plans. One of the first tasks of the communal water councils was to map existing water networks in the sprawling informal settlements of Caracas, with pipes often constructed by the local population without any co-ordinated planning. Five years later, almost all public water operators in the country have adopted this model of participatory planning and management. While there is still a long way to go before the goal of clean water and sanitation for all has been achieved in Venezuela, the improvements are significant. National coverage of drinking water increased from 81.2 percent in 1998 to 89.3 percent in 2003, and sewage collection rates went up from 63.8 percent to 71.7 percent. According to Santiago Arconada, a water activist who has recently become adviser to the Minister of Environment, participatory water management has resulted in a growing awareness of water issues in general, not just about what comes out of the tap, but the whole water cycle. Arconada stresses that communities need a sense of ownership to release their full potential: *"without the commitment of everyone around a water system, there is no solution"*.

The third National Encounter of Communal Water Councils took place in July 2005. It was a very successful event where local water activists and 'communitarian promoters' from around Venezuela shared experiences. The method of expanding piped water via democratic water management, building on the potential of local communities as well as workers' co-operatives, has strong support from the Chávez government. Indeed, the government is dedicating very substantial financial

resources to multiplying the achievements of the Communal Water Councils all over Venezuela, money that has become available due to the booming oil prices. In the words of Santiago Arconada, this financial commitment means the state has started “*repaying its social debt to the people*”. It is the first time that a Venezuelan government has shown such political will to provide clean water and sanitation to the country’s poorest. The country’s new constitution bans the privatisation of water, which is another reason to celebrate for water justice activists in Venezuela.

In the book *Reclaiming Public Water*, David Hall (director of PSIRU, Public Services International Research Unit) comments on the many innovative models of public water delivery developed in the South in recent years. Hall argues that these developments signal “*the Southern future*” of public water delivery, as opposed to the more traditional models that have been successful in the North in the last century. One example showing the relevance of this prediction is the recent political developments in the Abruzzo region in Southern Italy. As is the case in large parts of Italy, public water delivery in Abruzzo is far from world class in terms of efficiency and sustainability (De Sanctis and Senta, 2005). Lack of investment in maintenance results in very high leakage rates. Although owned and operated by state institutions, the real level of ‘publicness’ (defined as commitment to the public interest and responsiveness to the public) in the operation of the water utilities in Abruzzo is very low. In 2005, a civil society coalition managed to stop the proposed privatisation of the region’s water. The coalition is now promoting a more transparent, democratic and accountable model of public water delivery, clearly inspired by Porto Alegre and other Latin American examples. It remains to be seen whether the regional government fully embraces Porto Alegre-style reforms in order to improve the performance of its water utilities, but there are signs that the North is starting to learn from the South how to re-organise public water delivery.

### Public-Public Partnerships

A recent study shows that 88 percent of the world’s 408 largest cities have their water delivery operated by a public sector body (Hall and Lobina, 2005). In light of the serious failure of the privatisation wave described earlier in this chapter, it should be clear that the only realistic way to achieve the massive expansion in water connec-

tions needed is by building on these public utilities, improving their performance through political, technical and financial support as well as management reforms.

Many cities in ‘developing countries’ suffer from weak local public administration capacity. Public-public partnerships (or public utility partnerships: PUPs) are a promising means of overcoming this problem. PUPs are twinning arrangements between public water operators whereby knowledge is transferred and capacity built without taking any profits out of the local water system. These partnerships can be on the national level or international. A PUP, importantly, is a partnership in which there is no private sector partner (Hall et al, 2005).

Public-public partnerships have enormous potential for accelerating the spread of best practice in public water management, but this cannot be left to the initiative and philanthropy of individual water operators. PUPs need ambitious government support, including financial support not there at the moment. A good sign is that the concept of public-public partnerships was endorsed as an important part of the solution by the conference of the UN’s Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) in April 2005. What is still lacking is concrete political and financial support by donor governments and international financial institutions.

Importantly, PUPs should not be seen primarily as efficient Northern water operators assisting ailing Southern utilities. As important – if not more – will be partnerships between utilities in the South, for instance from countries sharing similar socio-economic circumstances. It is often forgotten that Southern water operators have the most relevant experience with expanding access to piped water in fast-growing cities with predominantly low-income people. Northern public operators may be efficient at home, but their water networks were typically built 50-100 years ago. Their recent experience is with maintaining and renewing these networks in a context of relatively wealthy water users. The experience of successful Southern public utilities must be considered, therefore, immensely valuable in terms of finding ways to expand and improve public water delivery in ‘developing countries’. And, as the example of Abruzzo indicates, there may be a time when South-North partnerships emerge as tools to help spread democratic water management practices in European countries, where public water operators have lost their sense of publicness.

The concept of public-public partnerships is gaining theoretical and political momentum, but valuable experi-



ences have also already accumulated on the ground. In South Africa, for instance, a not-for-profit, public-public partnership between the local government in Harrismith and Rand Water, a large public water utility that supplies water to Johannesburg, has achieved substantial improvements under very difficult socio-economic circumstances. The Harrismith experience shows that sharing management and technical skills can contribute to rapid improvements in public water delivery. The aim was to build long-term local capacity and that goal was partly reached. The partnership was made possible by a grant from the South African government, which covered Rand Water's costs during the preparation and running of the partnership. Despite the progress made during the three-year experiment, it has not managed to overcome the enormous backlog in access to clean water that exists in the impoverished townships. Indeed, it is hard to see how water for all can be achieved without far more ambitious policies to fight poverty and redistribute wealth nation-wide.

Public-public partnerships, in which ailing utilities learn from the operational methods and management structures of successful operators, are high on the agenda of anti-privatisation coalitions in many 'developing countries'. In Indonesia, for example, civil society groups reject the government's plans for large-scale privatisation of water utilities as being driven primarily by ideology. Instead, they point to the utility of the city of Solo as an example of best practice in public water delivery that needs to be amplified. The water utility in Solo is financially healthy, has excellent conservation policies and one of the highest coverage rates in the country, partly as a result of its constructive relations with an active and critical local consumer group. The scope is enormous for improving the financial health of other Indonesian water utilities via transfers of best practice in management. Water leakage rates can be as high as 60 percent, as is the case in the East Java city of Semarang.

The Solo water utility is one of the most efficient and best performing in Indonesia but still has been added to the top of the government's list of utilities it wants privatised. While this seems both illogical and unfair, the likely reason is that Solo is one of the utilities for which the government will most easily find a buyer among water multinational companies. Furthermore, the government would be able to use it as an example of 'successful privatisation'. Piped water coverage in Solo is currently at 56 percent, a high figure in Indonesia. Pa Abimanyu, the

director of the water utility, expects to increase coverage to 80 percent in the coming few years, by replacing 500 stand pipes in the city's slum areas with small charcoal-based water treatment systems: affordable low-cost technology produced locally. The utility has just had a tariff increase imposed by the government as part of moves towards full-cost recovery, but Abimanyu stresses that no profits flow out from the budget of the utility, a rare achievement in Indonesia. In many other Indonesian cities substantial amounts flow from the utilities to local governments. Sometimes utilities even have to borrow from commercial banks to satisfy the demands of local politicians seeking a contribution to their budgets. Civil society's demand for public-public partnerships as an alternative to privatisation is far from utopian. Examples of local PUPs already exist in Indonesia, for instance the one involving PDAM Tirtanadi in North Sumatra, which assists a smaller and weaker utility in the region.

In neighbouring Malaysia, the government has also embraced water privatisation, although the state of public water delivery in the country provides little rationale to do so. According to Charles Santiago, co-ordinator of the Coalition Against Water Privatisation, the country's public water utilities create a surplus, but instead of reinvesting this in improvements to the water systems these funds are often claimed by local politicians for pet projects. As an alternative to the government's plans, the Coalition Against Water Privatisation advocates domestic Public-Public Partnerships as way to spread best practice. The model utility highlighted is the public water utility in the city of Penang, which delivers water to 100 percent of the population. The Penang utility combines a *"commercial outlook with social obligations"*. Due to the very low levels of non-revenue water, tariffs are affordable for all citizens. Part of the secret to the success of the Penang water utility is a strong public service ethos, a commitment to serve the population among the management and the workers, who own part of the shares in the company. For the rest, the utility is publicly owned but administratively independent. This prevents problematic political interference while enabling the population to hold the company accountable.

Utility managers from countries like Thailand and India now come to Penang to learn, but still the Malaysian government ignores the option of improving public water delivery through public-public partnerships. According to Charles Santiago, this is because politically powerful Malaysian business tycoons can

make money out of privatisation, whereas public water offers no such opportunities. The government of the state of Sarawak, however, supports public-public partnerships as an alternative to privatisation. At a conference in Jakarta in August 2005, Santiago suggested that Indonesian utilities could also benefit from the Penang model. “*We already share the smoke, so why not the public utility experiences*”, Santiago said, referring to the smog covering the region at the time due to widespread forest fires.

Not only in Indonesia and Malaysia do anti-privatisation campaign coalitions go far beyond mere resistance. These movements have often very elaborate visions and concrete proposals for public sector alternatives based on real-world experience. Indeed, citizen coalitions are often more than eager to actively engage in implementing improved public options for water and sanitation.

For example, the Bolivian city of Cochabamba attracted international attention in April 2000 when the privatised concession – jointly owned by construction multinationals from the United States (Bechtel), Italy (Montedison) and Spain (Abengoa), with minority shares held by some Bolivian private companies – was terminated due to citizens’ protests over dramatic price increases and mismanagement. Far less known are the intense efforts that have taken place since to restructure the re-municipalised utility SEMAPA so that it more effectively serves the citizens, particularly the poorest. As a concrete result of a democratisation process that aims to overcome bureaucratic tendencies, citizens elected three out of seven SEMAPA board members in April 2002. SEMAPA works in a public-collective partnership with the pre-existing water committees in peri-urban areas to expand access to piped water to unconnected poor communities. The partnership will use the unique capacities of these committees to administer services in their local communities, while SEMAPA supplies bulk water. Lack of support from the local political elite and a range of other factors still endanger successful outcomes of this new model of community involvement and democratic control (see Lohman and Calle’s chapter on Bolivia in this volume). Access to finance for investments in expansion and improvement of water delivery is a very immediate obstacle. The Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) has offered SEMAPA a loan, but with conditions that hamper the transformation of the utility and, in fact, endanger popular support by delaying visible improvements in water delivery.

That citizen’s movements should be considered central actors in the process of ensuring clean water and sanitation for all remains poorly understood. A recent example is El Alto, Bolivia, where the government recently terminated the water concession of French water giant Suez, after citizens’ protests following seven years of privatisation that failed to deliver promised improvements. While the privatisation contract guaranteed Suez a 13 percent rate of return, a large number of the 800,000 inhabitants were left without access to water, not least due to the hefty connection fees (almost eight times the monthly minimum wage in Bolivia). After the departure of Suez, the local population envisages a democratised public utility with citizens’ participation. German aid agency GTZ refuses to provide loans, however, unless Suez remains involved in the management. This is a stark example of the continued widespread bias against public water among donors and international financial institutions (IFIs). The privatisation conditionalities attached to development aid and loans are amongst the worst obstacles to improved public water and sanitation delivery.

### The meaning of publicness

A July 2005 report on ‘public-public partnerships in health and essential services’, co-published by the Municipal Services Project, Equinet and PSIRU, highlights the risk that “*public sector corporations may see PUPs as an opportunity to practice commercial operations, while exploring privatisation opportunities elsewhere*” (Hall et al, 2005:6). Rand Water and Umgeni Water, two South Africa-based public water operators, have decided to pursue international expansion on a commercial basis, primarily into other African countries. Rand Water, for instance, has submitted a bid for the five-year management contract to run water in Accra and other cities in Ghana. Rand Water’s bid is a joint venture with Vitens, a Dutch public water operator. The French water multinationals Veolia and Saur are hoping to get the Ghana contract, too. The Ghana Coalition Against Privatisation of Water (GhanaCAP) demands that all three bidders withdraw as it considers the management contract a threat to securing water as a common good and a human right for all Ghanaians. A joint letter from GhanaCAP and five Dutch civil society groups sent to the CEO of Vitens in May 2005 explains that “*although the Ghana management contract is different from previously proposed privatisation models, it is the outcome of a ten year long push for privati-*



sation of Ghana's water by the World Bank and the government, in a flawed, undemocratic process in which other options have not been seriously considered." The groups want the government of Ghana to "explore other options, centred on capacity building for Ghana Water Company Ltd as a public company, accountable to the Ghanaians" (Letter to Jos van Winkelen, Chairman of Vitens' Executive Board, signed on 26 May 2005 by Friends of the Earth International, Corporate Europe Observatory, Both ENDS, Transnational Institute and the Ghana Coalition against Privatisation of Water).

As previously mentioned, management contracts are the latest reincarnation of PPPs now that it is clear that global water corporations neither want to bring in nor risk significant amounts of finance. In the case of the management contract proposed by the Ghanaian government (with the World Bank in a very active role), the purpose is to prepare the public water company for privatisation. This underlines the difference with a PUP where the clear purpose is to build long-term local public service capacity. Vitens, meanwhile, shows no sign of reconsidering its bid for running Ghana's urban water, even in the context of privatisation being a prospect after a five-year transition. The fact that Vitens, itself, is exclusively owned by regional and local governments is considered irrelevant in doing business outside The Netherlands.

Against this background it is no surprise that the CEO of Vitens expressed strong disappointment with the new Dutch water law passed in the autumn of 2004, which explicitly rules out any form of private drinking water delivery in The Netherlands. The CEO considers Vitens a business like any other. Nevertheless, the reality is that the company is a public water utility that operates under very different pressures from private water multinationals like Veolia and Suez. The latter are first and foremost accountable to their shareholders in Paris and other Northern capitals. Vitens, by contrast, faces no pressure whatsoever to make profits, let alone optimise returns. As with other Dutch water utilities, the company's performance is steered by a strong regulatory framework as well as benchmarking exercises comparing efficiency levels. These are factors that have made Dutch water utilities among the world's most sustainable, with water leakage levels as low as 4-5 percent (far less than private water corporations in the UK and France). The Vitens management identifies strongly with the private sector and see no inherent value in maintaining a public sector water delivery capacity in Ghana. This is sympto-

matic of the degree to which many public services companies have internalised corporate values. There are, fortunately, also water utilities in The Netherlands that have preserved a public service ethos, if not a pride in being public, but the pressures undermining these values are strong.

Despite the 2004 water law that outlaws private water delivery in The Netherlands, the Dutch government is one of the most eager promoters of public-private partnerships, using large shares of its development aid budget for this purpose. The Dutch government's determination to impose privatisation on 'developing countries' takes bizarre forms. When Dutch water companies get involved in projects in 'developing countries', as for instance in the former colony Indonesia, this is presented as public-private partnerships, even when both the local utility and the Dutch water company are public. It remains to be seen how long the Dutch government can get away with such blatant double standards: banning the private sector from water delivery out of concern for public health, while promoting PPPs and other forms of expanded private sector involvement in 'developing countries'. The governments of Sweden and Norway maintain similarly contradictory water policies (Hall, 2004).

### From defensive to offensive

In the run-up to the World Water Forum in Mexico City (16 – 22 March, 2006), Dutch civil society groups and trade unions will challenge the government to come out of the closet and support public water management. This is part of a very encouraging international trend. The global anti-privatisation networks have grown sufficiently strong and mature to move into offensive mode. In addition to fighting privatisation, cross-border civil society networks are actively promoting public sector solutions to the global crisis in access to clean water and sanitation. The Inter-American activist network Red Vida is taking a lead in this respect and promising plans are being developed as a follow-up to the publication of the book *Reclaiming Public Water* in English, Indonesian and Spanish, with Italian, Finnish, Japanese and other translations underway. The UK-based World Development Movement has spearheaded a groundbreaking campaign to force DFID, the traditionally staunchly pro-private government development agency, to end the pro-privatisation bias in its grants and instead embrace 'Plan-B':

supporting workable public sector solutions. The French activist coalition ACME is producing a step-by-step guide on the transition from private to public water delivery, based on the experiences of the growing number of municipalities in France that have de-privatised water in recent years. The France Liberté Foundation works to link these re-municipalised utilities with communities in Bolivia, Argentina and elsewhere that have gotten rid of Suez but need support in developing new forms of public water delivery.

For all these groups, the question is not *can public water work*, but *how can it work*? This chapter has intro-

duced just a small selection from the full range of workable options that have emerged in recent years, from reformed municipal utilities, to users' co-operatives and workers' co-operatives, to community-utility partnerships and other forms of public-public partnerships. The political, financial and other hurdles that prevent public water delivery from achieving its full potential are by no means insurmountable. Essentially what is needed is the political will to overcome outdated ideological prejudices and create more enabling environments to help public water improvements to succeed.

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