



BPD SANITATION SERIES

Sanitation Partnerships: eThekweni Municipality case study

In Durban, South Africa, eThekweni Municipality is developing a small contractor development-cum-franchise model for manual pit emptying. Sub-contractors will employ teams of locally-resident wage labourers. Emptiers in Durban enjoy the protection of the law and work in daylight with long-handled shovels, heavy gloves and gumboots, transferring pit waste into drums and from there to specially modified waste skips, where it is screened before being disposed of safely. At the other end of the scale are Kibera's manual pit emptiers – working inside pits at night by torch-light, without protective clothing, using hired shovels, drums and trolleys, subject to abuse and social stigma, and dependent for work on agents of the landlords. They dispose of the waste by dumping it in the nearest stream, by emptying it into the sewer that traverses one part of the settlement, or by carting it to the nearest accessible road for collection by a vacuum tanker.

The low-tech approach in Durban is entirely suited to the dense settlements and extremely hilly terrain, and is relatively successful. The Durban scheme has been carefully designed to nurture the development of a cadre of small-scale service providers able to address the city's pit desludging needs, on contract to the Municipality. The Municipality is the pivot of a sophisticated project management model linking residents, ward representatives, councillors, community liaison officials, contractors, support agencies, banking services and city water and waste agencies.

Durban therefore provides an interesting contrast for BPD's Sanitation Partnership Series. The Durban model is premised on the local government deliberating encouraging the emergence of a pool of service providers able to address the city's pit-emptying needs. Emphasis is placed on close liaison with local political structures and councillors using project liaison committees which manage interaction with residents and help to recruit local labour. The prospects for replicating this exact model elsewhere on the continent may be limited, because of the capacity and resources the contracting model requires. Nonetheless it highlights the range of linkages a formal service might address in other cities on the continent.

The BPD paper '*Bringing pit emptying out of the darkness: A comparison of approaches in Durban, South Africa, and Kibera, Kenya*' looks more closely at this model and compares it with the situation faced by manual pit emptiers in Kibera, Nairobi's largest slum. The Sanitation Partnership Series spoke paper '*Beyond storage*' also looks at the need to develop more effective pit-emptying services.