

### Governance Issues in Water

Developing countries are guilty of attaching insufficient priority to water and even less to sanitation in national poverty reduction plans. Budgets are typically less than 0.5% of GDP and coordination between ministries poor. There is a deeper problem than shortage of finance. The Global Corruption Report 2008 published by Transparency International warns that “corruption in the water sector is a root cause and catalyst for the global water crisis.” It traces how funds are diverted at every level of project implementation so that the proportion of aid actually invested in water and sanitation programs is alarmingly low. In urban projects, petty corruption is notorious for forcing up water charges. It has been demonstrated over and over again that success in water and sanitation programs depends on creating a sense of local ownership. Women are the primary users of water in cooking, washing and tending livestock - and will often play the key roles in organizing village-level structures to ensure the sustainability of a facility. Equipment needs to be properly maintained, user-fees collected, and hygiene behaviors changed, often involving difficult cultural adjustment. Nevertheless, community-level water and sanitation projects in both rural and urban areas have a consistent record of success. Whilst it is difficult to convert small-scale developments into national programs, the improved understanding of their rights to safe water amongst the beneficiaries could translate into wider citizenship movements to bring local and national governments to account.