



# ENDPOVERTYNOW NEWSLETTER

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**End Poverty Now (EPN) is a non-partisan, non-political, non-religious, non-profit Canadian charitable organization based in Montreal and dedicated to the long-term alleviation of abject poverty. EPN represents a group of dedicated individuals, mainly students, and is operated on a tri-pillar base that emphasizes Grassroots Projects, InReach and Education.**

*If you have questions or comments about the Newsletter, or if you are interested in joining the Newsletter Team, please email [newsletter@endpovertynow.ca](mailto:newsletter@endpovertynow.ca)*

## Introduction: Urbanization, Health and Poverty

by Hilary Ferguson

This month's newsletter aims to present the theme of health and urbanization as it relates to issues of poverty. As documented in the United Nation's most recent Revision of the World Population Prospects, in 2009, the global population was approximately 6.8 billion and 50% of the world's citizens resided in an urban centre. According to the United Nations Population Fund (UNPF), by the year 2030, when the world's population is projected to be 8 billion, approximately 5 billion people will be living in urban centers, with global population growth largely concentrated in Africa and Asia.

This process of urbanization is inevitably linked to the health of city dwellers, and those living in poverty are often the most vulnerable to the challenges presented within these evolving urban environments. As the UNPF aptly states: "...it cannot be denied that a vast number of people in urban areas cannot adequately provide for their basic

## Introduction CONTINUED

needs in shelter, employment, water, sanitation, health (including reproductive health) education. Such poverty may affect a third of all urban dwellers directly, but its indirect effects are felt by the whole society".

Please visit the WHO's World Health Day website for information:

<http://www.who.int/world-health-day/en/>

## Book and Film Suggestions: Health, Urbanization and Poverty

### Books

The Wisdom of Whores

By Elizabeth Pisani

An Imperfect Offering: Humanitarian Action in the Twenty-first Century

By James Orbinski

Planet of Slums

By Mike Davis

Infections and Inequalities

By Paul Farmer

Flammable: Environmental Suffering in an Argentine Shantytown

By Javier Auyero and Debora Swistun

### Documentary Films

The Last Train Home (2009)

Director: Lixin Fan

Home

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jqxENMKaeCU>

Triage: Dr. James Orbinski's Humanitarian Dilemma (2007)

Director: Patrick Reed

## Health and Sanitation in Kampala's Urban Slums: An Analysis of Watercan's Water Project

by Hilary Ferguson

Uganda's slums - many of which are located in the capital city of Kampala - lack the technology and service levels required to provide citizens with adequate access to clean water. These densely populated informal settlements have little infrastructure and access to existing water connections are often controlled by expensive private vendors (1). Between 2005 and 2006, Watercan, a Canadian charity, completed a project within the Lugaba slum district in cooperation with a local NGO, the Community Integrated Development Initiative (CIDI). The project aimed to provide slum dwellers with greater access to a safe, reliable water source (1).

Watercan's project is the work of municipal engineers who are concerned with developing slum infrastructure in order to improve public health (2). This project also employed technologies appropriate to the urban slum's low-resource environment, applying a strategic approach in order to address public health issues related to water access and quality (3). By focusing on active community participation, Watercan has seen relative success in its aims "to build institutions on an appropriate scale" and to "manage the common assets of a group of users and provide them with a channel for expression and representation in urban areas where individual solutions have, temporarily or permanently, proved unsuitable" (4).

This project adopted a community model (4); indeed, it would have been (and remains) unlikely for each individual household located within the Lugaba slum district to acquire its own water connection. Communal solutions were therefore seen as the most viable option. This community-based approach improved local services in association with community members by redistributing management and authority to the slum's citizens (4). The community was consulted and community members were trained to maintain and operate new facilities. Water kiosks, now connected to the municipal supply, have taps, which are overseen by water attendants who collect user fees, maintain the facility and ensure that the water bills sent by the city are equal to the volume used by the community (1). Although the project has had positive outcomes, based on Watercan's project reviews, it is unclear exactly how this participatory action was organized. For example, determining the payment of the water attendants and the protocol when the volume of water used does not match the bill is somewhat ambiguous.

While this participatory approach is often seen as the most inclusive method of project planning and development, it is likely that the organizational capacity and management processes involving public participation are problematic. Interestingly, projects that involve an impoverished community can be difficult to complete because "participation assumes that the poor have both labour and time available" (4), while in reality, neither is at the disposal of slum dwellers. The poorer the neighbourhood, the weaker the participation will be (4). In the case of this

## Health and Sanitation in Kamapala's Urban Slums CONTINUED

neighbourhood, the weaker the participation will be (4). In the case of this Watercan project, for instance, it was difficult to convince landlords to consent to building feeder pipes on their property free of charge in order to service the community as a whole (1).

Nonetheless, NGO involvement with the project helped to build social capital, confidence and organization within the community (4). CIDI acted as a mediator to help the community identify demand levels and coordinate management: "...effective strategies require involvement by non-governmental stakeholders who often have better links with communities" than government officials (3). NGOs can also serve to "legitimize new types of behaviour" (4). For example, this initiative provided education on how to utilize the new water provisions to promote health benefits and improve sanitation.

The community has accrued a variety of benefits from this venture. It has reduced the travel time, lineups and costs associated with water collection (1). Informal purchases of water were also minimized by reducing "substantial health risks, season inflationary spirals and speculative mechanisms which penalize particularly the most vulnerable households" (4). Flexible payment options, including pay-as-you-go and monthly fees, were established. Since citizens now have to pay for water based on the amount they use, water in this area is less likely to be overexploited (5).

Nevertheless, although prices are more affordable, water usage is limited since all slum dwellers cannot afford to pay for such resources and since the services still remain unreliable (4). Despite the project's positive outcomes, the fact remains that "even for those low-income groups who have access to connections, water supplies are often irregular, or of poor quality or difficult to access, for instance as dozens of households share each standpipe" (5).



Photo Credit: EyeingAfrica

## Health and Sanitation in Kampala's Urban Slums CONTINUED

Some may view Watercan's initiative as a one-off project that has no real impact, since it addresses vulnerable pockets through a piecemeal approach, further segregating the rich and the poor (3). This is because health and sanitation projects that do not attempt to provide a universal standard for a given urban population are often criticized for "lock[ing] particular districts or settlements within urban areas into sub-standard systems of service provision which will be very difficult to upgrade" (4). However, given the initial circumstances, this project applies a flexible and adaptive approach that starts small and can be gradually improved (3). Although the water supply is intermittent and not everyone can afford the connection on a monthly basis (4), Watercan and CIDI managed to connect the slum area to a municipal source, which is a huge improvement with potential for enhancement.

The bottom line: Watercan's work within Luagaba and other urban slum environments must strive to be sustainable. Future upgrades and developments on these water systems must be feasible. Furthermore, once Watercan and its team of developers exit these communities, it must be possible for these communities to maintain and build upon the technologies and systems introduced.

For more news on Watercan's more recent projects visit <http://www.watercan.com/>.

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3. Tayler, K., & Parkinson, J. (2003). Effective Strategic Planning for Urban Sanitation Services: Fundamentals of Good Practice. GHK Research Note, March, London: GHK International.
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## Cool Events in Montreal - April 2010

by Daniela Fried

### Montreal Millenium Summit returns

When: April 20-22, 2010

Where: Montreal, Quebec

Tickets: contact [info@millenniumsummit.org](mailto:info@millenniumsummit.org)

Description: This year, the issue of poverty will be examined from the perspective of climate change and its impact on women, men and children who experience this phenomenon on a day-to-day basis.

Website: <http://www.millenniumsummit.ca>

### World Partnership Walk

When: May 30, 2010 - 11:00 am

Where: Parc du Mont Royal, Montreal, Quebec

Registration: Sign up online [www.worldpartnershipwalk.com](http://www.worldpartnershipwalk.com).

Description: The World Partnership Walk is celebrating it's 25th anniversary! Join us on the last Sunday of the month of May, as always, to raise funds and awareness about global poverty.

Website: [www.worldpartnershipwalk.com](http://www.worldpartnershipwalk.com)

### 25th Annual Pan African International Festival

When: April 12-25, 2010

Where: Montreal, Quebec

Description: Pan African International is a film festival showcasing the best and brightest films from Africa and the Creole countries. The screenings are followed by discussion groups and forums with filmmakers, directors and journalists from Canada, Africa and Europe.

Website: <http://www.vuesdafrique.org>

### 12th Blue Metropolis International Literacy Festival

When: April 21-25, 2010

Where: Montreal, Quebec

Registration: deadline April 1st, 2010

Tickets: 25\$ / 6 coupons

Description: The world's first multilingual literary festival; for five days of literary events in English, French, Spanish and other languages

Website: <http://bluemetropolis.org/Festival>

Telephone: 514-790-1245 / 1-800-361-4595

## Cool Events CONTINUED

Science Documentary Film: The Refugees of the Blue Planet

When: April 11, 2010 – 4:00 pm

Where: Redpath Museum, Auditorium, 859 Sherbrooke Street West,  
Montreal, Quebec

Description: This film from the NFB sheds light on the little-known plight of environmental refugees. They are constantly growing in number and often have no legal status, even though their right to a clean and sustainable environment has been violated.

Website: [http://www.mcgill.ca/channels/events/item/?item\\_id=113076](http://www.mcgill.ca/channels/events/item/?item_id=113076)

Follow End Poverty Now's news updates on  
Facebook, Twitter and the EPN website!

## CALL FOR WRITERS!!!

The EPN Newsletter is currently looking to expand its staff of volunteer writers. We are looking for reliable, enthusiastic individuals who are able to contribute articles to our monthly newsletter.

If you are interested in joining our team or if you have any questions, please email Hilary at [newsletter@endpovertynow.ca](mailto:newsletter@endpovertynow.ca).

## What's New with End Poverty Now - April 2010

by Jennifer Sault

First, we would like to welcome Sayara Thurston, our new Director of Communications to the EPN team! There are numerous other opportunities to join our staff currently! Please visit <http://www.endpovertynow.ca/join/positions> for more information.

### EDUCATION

Tune into April's podcast on health and urbanization at <http://www.endpovertynow.ca/education/publications/podcasts>.

EPN's Annual Academic Journal, Means to an End, is available online and in hard copy! If you would like a hard copy of the journal, they are available for \$10.00. Our journal can also be found online at <http://www.endpovertynow.ca/home/education/publications/journal>.

Our End Poverty Now Curriculum continues to be piloted successfully in select schools across Canada. See <http://www.endpovertynow.ca/forschools/curriculum> for more information.

Our School Outreach team has given a presentation in McGill University education courses and has presented at the Junior Peacemaker Youth Summit on March 15th.

### GRASSROOTS PROJECTS

As for our Grassroots Projects, we are pleased to announce that the final installment has been sent to the Rwanda Village Concept Project (RVCP) for the implementation of a Bee-Keeping initiative with the Widow's Association (WA). EPN has been working alongside the WA and RVCP for 3 years now and we could not be more thankful to RVCP & WA for the successful implementation of this joint venture. EPN will continue to be in partnership with RVCP throughout the coming years to ensure the sustainability of this project. See the final reports on this project online at <http://www.endpovertynow.ca/home/grassroots/beekeepingrwanda>.

### INREACH -- EPN CHAPTERS

We are happy to announce that the success of our EPN chapters continues! Without them, our work would not be possible.

The Guelph Chapter continues their efforts. We are looking for new leadership for the 2010-2011 school year. If you are interested in joining, please contact [endpovertynowguelph@gmail.com](mailto:endpovertynowguelph@gmail.com).

## What's New with End Poverty Now - April 2010 CONTINUED

The McGill EPN Chapter has had great success with the Week to End Poverty, a week-long event from March 15th-19th with different events each day around poverty. As part of this campaign in conjunction with 5days.org, students slept outdoors to raise funds and awareness for the homeless in Montreal. This aspect of the campaign raised just over \$4900, all of which is going towards the Projet Autochtone du Quebec, a homeless shelter catering to Montreal's impoverished Aboriginals. This week also included a speaker series, film screening, party night, date auction, serving at homeless shelters in Montreal, a food and clothing drive, as well as the provision of educational materials.

For more information, visit [www.endpovertynow.ca](http://www.endpovertynow.ca)!