

## November Focus - Water for the Urban Poor

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### The Cost of Dignity

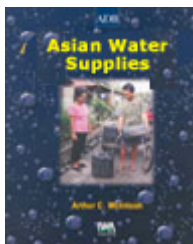
It's not just about health, cleanliness, and sanitation. It's about human dignity, which is as precious as food, and painfully absent where there is no easy access to ample water supply. Providing dignity and other socially uplifting benefits through water delivery and sanitation for the slums of Asia is a priority of the Asian Development Bank. This inaugural issue of **Water for All News** explores a number of innovations and studies that look at improving service, quality, and cost of water delivery to the urban poor.

### [Cambodian utility chief makes splash for Phnom Penh's poor](#)



Long years of war and civil strife left Phnom Penh's water supply system in ruins. An estimated 70% of the city's water was lost through the decrepit distribution system and illegal connections. Led by its dynamic director, Ek Sonn Chan, the Phnom Penh Water Supply Authority has overcome these challenges and is now one of Asia's most effective water utilities, including successful delivery to the city's poor. **The Connection**  [View video clip](#)

See Ek Sonn Chan's [ideas](#) on the Phnom Penh case.



### [New Book Advocates Raising Water Rates to Help the Poor](#)

MANILA, PHILIPPINES (October 2003) - The poor in Asia spend far more money- in real terms, not only as a percentage of income - for much less water than do

### [Water Home](#)

Home Page - ADB Water Site

### What's New

#### [The Water Fund Explained](#)

ADB's Cooperation Fund for the Water Sector

### Water Voices - Video Clips

#### [Walking for Water](#)

An effective solution by women in Gujarat, India

#### [Waibulabula](#)

Restoring paradise in the Fiji Islands

### Success Stories

#### [Country water actions](#)

Case studies and lessons learned

### Evaluation

#### [3<sup>rd</sup> World Water Forum - Evaluation](#)

Evaluation by ADB-sponsored participants

### Coming Events

#### [1<sup>st</sup> Southeast Asia Water Forum](#)

(17-21 November 2003)

#### [ADB Water Week 2004](#)

(26-30 January 2004)

the more affluent. But it doesn't have to be that way, asserts a former Asian Development Bank (ADB) water supply expert. In his just-released book, [Asian Water Supplies - Reaching the Urban Poor](#), Arthur McIntosh, former ADB senior water supply specialist, spotlights the inequities of water costs and distribution in Asian cities. This hard-hitting book tackles myths, sheds light on urban water issues, and confronts the philosophies of many civil society groups that claim to be protecting the poor from high water rates by protesting tariff increases.

[Free online version and ordering information](#)

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### [Economist calls for free connections for the poor](#)

When you enter a supermarket, notes [Keiichi Tamaki](#), you don't pay an entrance fee. You just pay for the goods you buy. It should be the same with water supply services, argues the senior urban development specialist. Tamaki maintains that water connection should be provided either free or for a nominal fee and charges should be for consumption. He says that a utility operator intending to increase tariffs in order to begin a system expansion must lower the entry barrier. "That's 'Utility Operations 101.' The entry barrier to the water supply service should be lowered rather than continuously subsidizing the water usage." He says this is especially helpful to the poor in terms of the sanitation aspect of water, as they so often live under utterly unhygienic conditions.



### [Rethinking the Role of the Water Vendor](#)

Millions of poor families in Asian cities -as many as 40%- buy their water from private local vendors. [Maria Paniagua](#), former ADB urban development and planning expert, says these private suppliers are worthy of respect as they will be around for the next decade or two at the current pace of utility reform. A study in eight cities debunks some myths and offers new perspectives on the role of the 'small scale water provider' who serve the poor living in urban slums. For details read [The Role of Small Scale Private Water Providers in Serving the Poor](#) and [Scope and Scale](#)

*"A heavy penalty was slapped on those... using illegal connections. Any staff associated with illegal connections were removed... the number of illegal connections dropped from one-a-day to less than five in a year."*

**Ek Sonn Chan,**  
Director,  
Phnom Penh Water  
Supply Authority

## [of Small Scale Independent Private Water Providers in 8 Cities.](#)

### [What is the private sector's role in serving the urban poor?](#)

Water supply, sanitation, and solid waste collection services are key to any urban poverty reduction strategy and the private sector plays a vital role in these areas. These were the key findings in a study on private, public and community participation in urban water supply services conducted through 19 cases in 10 countries where the private sector-either independently or in partnership with the government and civil society-has stepped in to provide services such as water supply, sanitation, and solid waste management. Project officer [Almud Weitz](#) offers her insights into the intricacies of private sector involvement in urban services. Her findings are presented in the publication [Beyond Boundaries: Extending Urban Services to the Poor.](#)



**Water for All News** is produced monthly by the Asian Development Bank's Water Awareness Program to provide current information to developing member governments, professionals, researchers, private sector, civil society, academe, and their counterparts in the donor community who are interested in water sector issues that affect the pace of development.

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### **Related Links - Urban Water Issues**

- [Water in Asian Cities](#) - Summary of a Workshop and a Study [ [PDF](#) ]
- [ADB-UN HABITAT Partnership](#) - Water for Asian Cities Program
- [Impact Evaluation Study on Water and Sanitation Projects](#) [ [PDF](#) ]

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