
THE URAC UPDATE MONTHLY

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Nkhota Kota villagers get first taste of safe water

Bobu and Kamtekete villagers in Ngala in Nkhota Kota district are pregnant with excitement as they witness the sinking of one bore in each of their villages by URAC, courtesy of funds raised by Konrad Kess through the German charity, Malawi-Hilfe Schwindegg e.V.

Until recently, for the people of Bobu Village, particularly women and children, accessing safe water was a nightmare. They had to carry water over long distances from nearby streams and the lake because the place has never had any source of safe water. For Kamtekete villagers, accessing potable water has been an 'oversleep and miss' affair since piped water is only available after midnight when other users have retired to bed.

To ensure sustainability, the excited communities have been trained in how to manage and repair their boreholes. The boreholes are at completion stage and water is already being pumped out.

Malawi-Hilfe Schwindegg e.V is a charity that raises funds from German citizens to support community projects in Malawi. The current target area was identified by Konrad Kess who once visited Ngala as a tourist and witnessed how women and young children struggled to access water for their daily use. Konrad Kess was born in Germany in 1955. He worked as a bank apprentice from 1971 to 1973; worked as bank clerk and trained as a soldier in 1975. He studied for a first and second degree in banking (obtaining a bachelor's in 1973 and Master 's in 1978). He served as Bank Officer and Project Manager from 1979 to 1988 when he worked in

Munich, New York and London, rising to the position of senior bank manager and departmental head, and Chef Executive Officer a position he held until 2000. Konrad founded a business and financial services advisory consulting company and served there until 2017 when he retired.



Drillers working on the borehole at Bobu Village, Ngala, Nkhota-kota. Pic. Wongani Chunga, URAC



Konrad Kess

Currently Konrad enjoys travelling and seeing the world, a passion that led him to Ngala, Nkhota Kota. ***'Life has three stages: learning, working and enjoying. I have done the first two and now I started the last one,'*** he told *URAC Monthly Update* recently at Ngala.

Construction of Chilumba Village Clinic underway



Chilumba village clinic taking shape. Insert, Dr Holger Keppel. Who has been instrumental in raising funds for projects being implemented by URAC in Chilumba, Karonga. Pic. Solomon Salanga, URAC

Construction of a village clinic in Chilumba, Karonga, is well underway. The clinic is being constructed with funds from Malawi Freunde Rottenburg, e.V led by Dr Holger Keppel. The clinic is being constructed within the area of Group Village Headman Mponela.

When completed and opened, the village clinic will support pregnant mothers and children to access essential health services.

The village clinic has rooms for sleeping quarters for a health surveillance assistant. Health Surveillance Assistants lack shelter to operate from yet they deliver health services to the majority of the rural population.

URAC OFFICE MOVES

URAC office has moved from No.4 M'belwa Road to Mchengautuwa next to Mpostoli Clinic. Apart from paving the way for the Government, who are owners of the premises to open a branch of the National College of Information Technology (NACIT) in Mzuzu City, the move also assures adequate working space for the growing number of URAC staff.



‘WE ARE GROSSLY UNDERESTIMATING THE WORLD’S WATER ACCESS CRISIS’

by *Jillian Du, Diana Mitlin, Victoria A. Beard and David Satterthwaite, August 13, 2019*

In Cape Town, South Africa, and Chennai, India, "Day Zero" events where cities run out of water have drawn global media attention. But while these catastrophes seem like rare, temporary crises caused by droughts or mismanagement, life without ample water is actually a daily reality for millions of people, even in cities with abundant supply.

A new paper in the World Resources Report, *Unaffordable and Undrinkable: Rethinking Urban Water Access in the Global South*, finds that nearly half the population in 15 major cities in the global south lacks access to public piped water systems, with access lowest in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. For these households without public piped water, water from other sources is either too expensive or too unsafe.

Even access to a public tap does not guarantee safe and reliable water: About 1 billion people receive piped water fewer than 24 hours each day, some of whom have access to water only a few hours a week. The more intermittent the service, the more likely water is contaminated.

We're Underestimating the Water Crisis - Especially in Lower-Income Cities

In Lagos, Nigeria, for example, 16 neighboring households share a standpipe that has water three days a week—if their landlord makes monthly payments to the city. If not, service is cut off and households must wait in long queues for water from over-extracted boreholes or buy expensive bottled or sachet water. Neither option guarantees safe or affordable drinking water.

Lack of water service takes a major toll. When water is not accessible—because it is not available or because it is too expensive—households are forced to make tough decisions. They will sacrifice their health and time to self-provide "free" (but likely unsafe) ground and surface water, or they will buy expensive water—requiring cutbacks on food, electricity, education, health care and other household expenditures.

Widely used global indicators used to monitor the UN's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) fail to capture these everyday realities. For example, one statistic from UNICEF and the World Health Organization (WHO) states that 90% of the world's population used "improved drinking water sources" in 2015. But this measure fails to offer the full picture of challenges for urban residents in the global south. "Improved" includes a variety of sources, including water from boreholes and wells, where ground water quality is vulnerable to contamination in dense urban areas. It also does not give

any indication whether water is always reliably available or if it's affordable. These are barriers that need to be overcome, and that should be reflected in global assessments of water access.



URAC contribution to safe water at Kamtekete Village, Ngala. Pic: Konrad Kess

Anatomy of a Simmering Water Crisis

Our analysis of 15 cities in the global south is more holistic, considering cost, quality and other factors.

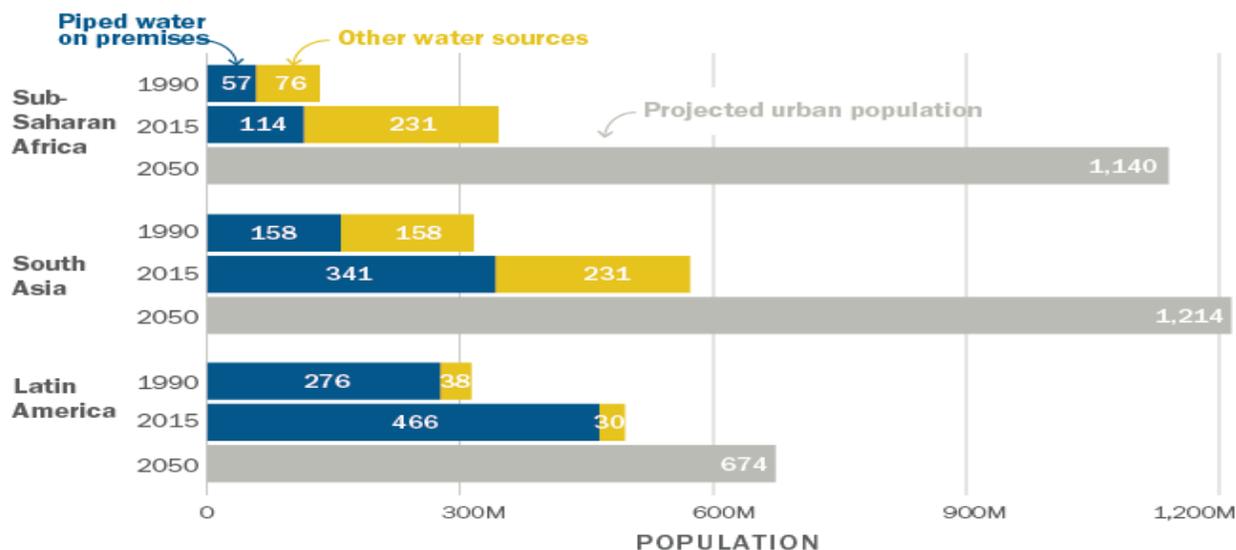
Access to public piped water in cities varies greatly; it is more common in Latin American cities but available on less than a quarter of premises in the sub-Saharan African cities analyzed. Piped utility water is the least expensive option for most households, but almost half of all households on average across the 15-cities analyzed don't receive it.

And just because residences are connected to city pipes doesn't mean water is always available. In 12 of the 15 cities analyzed, households did not receive continuous water service. In two informal neighborhoods in Karachi and Bengaluru, water service was as low as 2 to 3 hours per day for 2 days of the week. Aside from being inconvenient, this is dangerous—when water service isn't continuous, contamination is more likely.

It's an expensive loss. When public piped water is not available, residents pay several times more to get water from tanker-trucks or vendors—in Mumbai, they pay upwards of 52 times the cost of public water for this privately supplied water. The WHO recommends that households spend no more than 3-5% of their monthly income on water and sanitation. In some cities, even when public water was the most affordable source, it was still too expensive by this criterion for lower-income households.

The fact is that water access is highly unequal across cities in the global south, even for cities without a physical shortage problem.

The service gap is widening between the provision of piped water and growing urban populations



Source: WHO and UNICEF, 2015; UN DESA, 2017

 WORLD RESOURCES INSTITUTE

An Increasingly Water-Constrained Future

When households cannot obtain the minimum quantities of water to ensure health and well-being, the environment and economic productivity of the city and its residents are the first to be compromised. In some instances, this has already led to urgent city-wide crises. The lack of a sufficient public water network in Jakarta has led to the over-extraction of unregulated wells; the entire city is now sinking as it battles sea level rise and coastal flooding. Experts warn that it could be underwater by 2040.

With rapid urbanization, increased water scarcity, and a general underinvestment in water infrastructure, many more cities will find themselves in crisis mode. By 2030, 45 cities with populations over 3 million could experience high water stress, according to WRI's Aqueduct tool. The fastest-growing cities in South Asia and Africa—which will add 1.5 billion residents by 2050—have the widest gaps in water service. The demand for water will only grow in cities, increasing tensions with growing water demand from agriculture and industry.

In an increasingly water-constrained future, cities must take on a new role in managing water. They must ensure there is enough water, *and* that it is affordable for all. Growing cities must prioritize water access *before* disaster hits.

What Can Cities Do to Avert Day Zero?

The evidence suggests making public water more reliable and affordable is the best path forward.

Cities should extend the public piped water network while addressing context-specific causes of intermittent water service. For some cities this might mean fixing major leakages in old infrastructure. For others, it may involve better source protection, which will require watershed coordination beyond the city's jurisdiction.

Cities must also make water affordable for low-income residents. Decades of attempts to increase the private sector's role and govern water as a private good have not improved access. Cities in Chile and Colombia have had success in improving access for low-income households by providing direct subsidies. In South Africa, cities provide a monthly allowance of water for free, a policy that stemmed from the national government's declaration of water as a human right. Upgrading informal settlements—which house one in three urban dwellers in the global south—with a priority on improving water and sanitation infrastructure, rather than relocating them, has improved water access for more low-income households than any other approach. Today we have better data and knowledge of urban water risk, and international organizations are repositioning themselves to better monitor water quality and affordability. But cities and water utilities need to commit themselves politically and financially to equity in water access. We need to fundamentally recognize that equitable access to safe, reliable and affordable water is a human right necessary for everyone to live, move and thrive.

<https://www.wri.org/blog/2019/08/were-grossly-underestimating-worlds-water-access-crisis>

Try Broccoli for health



The vegetable, broccoli, has several health benefits as it contains many nutrients. URAC is collaborating with a US based company in packaging naturally grown broccoli and radish to be used as food supplements targeting the youth and chronically ill patients. Trialing of samples of this Indoor Organic Gardens of Poughkeepsie (IOGP) Model spearheaded by New Yorker Brud Hodgkins, has earned praise for regenerating appetite for food in sick people. Some people who tasted it claim that the package is helping them regain strength and weight. A more detailed and scientific study will be conducted to evaluate its effectiveness followed by Malawi Bureau of Standards (MBS) certification. Broccoli is known to contain sulforaphane which has properties than can kill cancer cells, stimulates body immunity and anti-inflammation. Thus, people suffering from chronic illnesses stand to benefit. URAC plans to set up a small factory in Malawi so that the life-giving vegetable package is made available locally. IOGP powder is served at one teaspoonful per day for adults and 0.5 teaspoonful among children for 25 days by simply spreading on top of food like salt and pepper or mixing before serving.

Mdawuku wa aTonga holds annual nkholi

The annual cultural festival of the Tonga people reached the climax August 17 2019 at Mkondezi Primary School when a variety of dances such as yakhanya, malipenga, chilimika, honala and Zabweka Tembo and his school band, among others were on display

There was also an assortment of local food dishes. Local women also displayed health foods produced from moringa and other medical cum nutritional vegetables.

The planned launch of the MWATO Strategic Plan by the Guest of Honour, Mrs Mary Navicha, Minister of Gender, did not take place because publishers had not yet delivered the all-important document. The Annual General Meeting on Sunday August 18 2019 agreed many things, including the choice

of one central place where to hold the annual nkholi, outsourcing catering services to specialist outfit to ensure all delegates are fed, opening of a MWATO-run secondary school where cultural heritage will be among subjects taught and the commencement of a Saving and Credit Organisation (SACCO) for MWATO members.

Earlier, on August 16, 2019 MWATO conducted a one-day training workshop for chiefs to sensitise them on customary land laws, progress on the new HIV/AIDS treatment and legal perspectives on chiefs' succession.

Mwato plans to hold another seminar for chiefs focusing on environmental management, communication skills and preservation of the tribe's cultural heritage (Mdawuku).



Left: Malipenga dancers in action & Right: Local food supplements on display. Pics: Mtajfu Manda

UPDATES:

Precious Chawinga moves to St Anne's Hospital

Precious Chawinga, one of the Community Development Assistants, left URAC at the beginning of August 2019 and joined St Anne's Hospital as a Patient Attendant. She was the first person to work in our Chilumba office. We wish her all the best.



Precious Chawinga

URAC ED on important committees

URAC Executive Director, Mtafu Manda, was recently appointed to serve on three important committees: Firstly, he will serve as a committee member of Nkhata Bay District Planning Committee. Secondly, he was invited to join the Mzuzu City Mayor's Development Initiative Advisory Board. Thirdly, he has also been invited by the Director General of the National Planning Commission to join as a member of the National Planning Commission's Core Advisory Panel (CAP). CAP will advise on the formulation of the successor long term national development policy to the Vision 2020 for Malawi.

Mzuzu University holds Monthly Seminar



Mzuni Planning Seminar Participants August 30, 2019

The Built Environment Department of Mzuzu University held its monthly seminar where the key speaker was Dr Hope Magidimisha of the University of KwaZulu Natal. Hope is the Head of the Department of Town Planning and Housing. She was in Mzuzu to discuss a staff exchange programme. Dr Magidimisha focused her presentation on urban planning in post-apartheid South Africa. She argued that racial discrimination has been replaced by class and since class also reflects race, the problem of the apartheid planning scheme could not be dealt with by simply replacing white with black politicians.



Dr Hope Magidimisha

The Mzuzu University Monthly Planning Seminars are held the last Friday of each month and attract students, lecturers and practitioners from Mzuzu City and surrounding areas.

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<https://uracmalawi.org> Email: uracmalawi@gmail.com Twitter: @MalawiUrac Tel: +265 111312910