

## Essential Diversions: Urine Diversion Toilets in Durban, South Africa

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### Aims and Objectives

Since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, western models of public health engineering have led to a global preference for water-borne sanitation, even in situations where it is neither economically or ecologically viable or culturally appropriate. This has limited attempts to improve sanitary provision for poor people in developing countries, and has had a particularly negative impact on women and children. While water and hygiene issues have been widely explored, it is only recently that serious attempts have been made to introduce new methods of waste removal and management, including dry sanitation and ecological sanitation. Experiments with urine diversion toilets in Durban, South Africa, are at the cutting edge of such efforts, and this 2-day workshop proposed to study this provision from all angles.

### Cross disciplinary

This project aims to promote collaboration between scholars in architecture, engineering, and development, as well as NGO/CSO workers, and communities; and develop a model for future global health and sanitation initiatives. By improving dialogue between the people who design sanitary technologies, those who plan and implement them, and the communities that use and benefit from them, we hope to encourage more effective feedback and provide an evaluation framework.



UD (with child adaptor), eThekweni Municipality



Traditional Long Drop Lavatory, eThekweni Municipality

### Activities

**Day 1** – project and site visits;

**Day 2** – workshop

**Held in Durban, 10-11 August 2010**

### Outputs and impacts

- 1 scholarly article - "Flush with Inequality: South Africa's Toilet Wars," *Places* (18 November, 2010)
- Numerous conference papers and media interviews
- Related Grand Challenges project, *New Loos for London?*

### Conclusions

The event established important questions that the sanitation field needs to address in future. It highlighted a tension between technical solutions to sanitation issues and their social acceptability, and asked how the development of new technology can be supported to promote greater ownership among communities. It considered the role of community engagement with making services work and asked whether centralized systems of sanitation management are the most appropriate. If the future of sanitation is 'dry', how can societal expectations be shifted so that flush systems (the 'flush and forget' model) are no longer automatically treated as preferable?

