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## **Municipal Management & Local Governance: A Service Delivery Perspective**

*Giving Voice to End-User Perspectives on Public Service Provision*

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## Introduction and Summary Findings

The Norwegian Social Science Research Institute (FAFO) in conjunction with field based teams in five Middle East and North Africa (MNA) region countries worked under the guidance of the World Bank to organize, design and implement a Service Delivery Survey (SDS) spanning the period 2005-6<sup>1</sup>. The SDS diagnostic examines the linkages between government policies and service delivery performance. The aim of the exercise was to provide an end-user perspective on potential ways of improving service quality, cost and outreach outcomes. It builds upon the institutional and policy review carried out in the MNA-8 countries by the World Bank in 2004 and uses the body of knowledge generated as a basis for refining the service delivery analysis in several ways. First, by surveying end-users it assesses their perception of the quality and coverage of services, improvements that they have noted, and the deficiencies that still exist. Second, it gauges their understanding of the service delivery mechanism, i.e. whether the users feel private sector providers, local governments, central government agencies or other providers are the preferred provider; if so, why; and whether there are general principles that can be derived from the user feedback. Third, it also considers the costs of provision under alternative arrangements, efficiency gains and inherent subsidies or losses that could be potentially averted under alternative institutional arrangements.

Two methodologies were employed -- focus group discussions complemented by Transect surveys – which, together, provide a window to the overall nature of service delivery in the selected Middle East countries. Certain central themes and concerns cutting across different services and countries emerge from these discussions. These are highlighted below. However, it should be noted that the purpose of implementing the SDS was not to generate definitive policy recommendations for each country. Samples sizes of cities (two per country) and within city (100 transect questionnaires and approximately 45 focus group discussion participants) hardly constitute a representative sample. Rather, the purpose of the SDS was to expose central government officials and city-level representatives and staff to cost-effective tools and techniques in consulting their constituents on key service delivery issues.

## Emerging Issues and Themes

The SDS gave voice to a range of informative and rich comments and feedback from end-users that both confirm some assumptions while raising some new and interesting perspectives on end-user attitudes about service quality, coverage and provider preferences. While it is not possible to draw comprehensive conclusions from the findings of the SDS that are applicable for all countries, several issues and themes emerged that resonate across the region. An attempt is made to briefly summarize these findings below. However, the rich and very relevant feedback that was gained through the SDS cannot be fully appreciated without reviewing in further detail the main body of the report.

- ***Incremental Reforms Preferred over Wholesale Changes to the System.*** Despite the general perception among end users that service delivery is systemically flawed, the general tendency reflected in survey responses indicates a desire to reform the current system of service delivery rather than adopt a wholesale change to service delivery arrangements. This is a significant finding of this research and, even if not statistically significant, sends a signal that end-users prefer to be selective about the changes they would like to see introduced. This may also reflect that the people don't believe that radical

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<sup>1</sup> *This initiative and the Service Delivery Survey (SDS) itself benefited significantly from the generous support of the Norwegian Trust Fund for Private Sector and Infrastructure, administered by the World Bank. The Project was managed by Stephen Karam, Sr. Urban Economist, under the overall guidance of Hedi Larbi, Sector Manager. The project relied on substantial analytical work carried out by the Norwegian Social Science Research Institute (FAFO), principally by Jon Petersen. Field-based research teams were led by the following: Najib Maktari (Yemen), Khaled Amin (Egypt), Mohammed Sbihi (Morocco), Lina Abdallah (West Bank and Gaza), and Kian Tajbaksh (Iran).*

change can occur in their country. It also seems to signal an endorsement of the approach adopted by many of the governments in the region, which is to proceed gradually with reforms.

- ***Price-conscious consumers.*** As to be expected in a developing country context, price figured prominently as a key concern for a large number of service users. Interestingly, however, most consumers indicated a stronger willingness to pay for services than might have been expected— so long as increase in price corresponds with service delivery improvement. For instance, several users complained about being issued inflated water bills due to periodic water cutoffs where only air pressure was emitted, though the water meter continued to run. Network losses due to theft or poor maintenance and other “free rider” problems also figured prominently in responses, signaling questions about fairness and uneven enforcement or none at all, which ultimately undermines the entire system.
- ***Good coverage but poor quality.*** High numbers in service access mask lower standards of availability and reliability of many key services (See Figure below). While infrastructure coverage is often considered a good measure of access to services, particularly for purposes of data aggregation and formulating strategies for poverty reduction, there appears to be a significant gap between having an actual network connection and receiving services (in addition to the quality of the service). This is particularly the case for water services in an arid region where water is effectively rationed and distributed during discrete periods of time. But concerns were also expressed about seepage of foreign elements into the water supply, poor road maintenance, erratic solid waste collection, etc. The clear need for setting *service standards* emerged in these discussions.
- ***Service providers complain about insufficient revenues to sustain and expand service provision.*** Service providers surveyed generally complain that they are constantly strapped of revenues to expand services or undertake timely maintenance. This reality traces back to problems of misalignment in revenue and expenditure assignments within the intergovernmental system. But it also relates to inherent subsidies in system design, inadequate revenue base and limited or not policy response in the form of “equalization” measures, weak revenue collection effort, and, at times, a sense of entitlement as reflected in both end-user feedback and an analysis of agency collection performance.
- ***Inter-agency policy and planning coordination poses a particular challenge.*** Institutional issues are at the heart of service delivery problems. Lack of effective coordination between various levels of government and different agencies is a serious impediment to efficient service delivery. In addition, service provision is greatly constrained by lack of technical and managerial capacities. Some agencies appear to work at cross purposes, undermining cost-effective outcomes. This often translates into multiple interventions in the same location for electricity, water and other under-surface service provision that disrupts and damages roads and other surface infrastructure without recourse to repaid damages.
- ***Response to privatization is mixed and guarded.*** Appreciation for the efficiency and customer responsiveness that comes with private provision is balanced with concerns of job redundancies and tariff hikes. Generally, those end-users with greater exposure to private providers had the most favorable response to increasing privatization, as outcomes were generally perceived to be better than the alternative of publicly provided services. This feedback provides an entry point for exploring where privatization can be expanded when there is a sound rationale to do so. Greater efforts at raising public awareness on private provision options and pilot activities that would have a potentially positive demonstration effect would be needed where there is greater reluctance about privatization.
- ***Local governments matter, at least to citizens.*** Despite limited decentralization, local governments are still seen, directly or indirectly, by citizens as the principal interlocutors when it comes to service delivery. In most cases, respondents felt that proximity to their service provider was important, but they felt as well that any provider (whether central/local government, regional utility or private provider) would need to be sufficiently resourced and technically equipped to provide services.
- ***Inadequate planning cited as a major area in need of reform.*** Long-term planning and investment prioritization is lacking in most service delivery entities, and this is hindering capacity expansions as

well as routine maintenance works. Many cities and towns lack updated masterplans, and in many cases, those that exist are prepared at the central level, leaving local stakeholders out of the consultation process. Application and enforcement of rules, building codes and planning guidelines was also cited as a major deficiency.

- ***The Free-Rider problem.*** Irresponsible consumer behaviour, including payment defaults, illegal connections, vandalism and lack of awareness, contribute to service problems. Too often, end-users viewed services as an entitlement rather than an accountability relationship between the provider and end-user. Weak enforcement measures were viewed as a practice that encourages payment defaults on services or persistence in illegally gained access to services.
- ***Accountability issues.*** Mechanisms to hold providers accountable and systems for public information dissemination are still embryonic. In some cities (Amman and Aden, for instance) new efforts to reach out to citizens through 24-hour service hotlines and timely remedies are generally exceptions the absence of accountability mechanisms.

## **Structure of this Report**

This report is divided into three parts: Part I. SDS Background & Methodology; Part II. Results of the Focus Group Sessions; and Part III. Results of the Transect Survey. The first part lays out the background to and objectives of the report, while also going into some detail on the methodology. This was deemed to be important based on reviewer feedback in which significant interest was expressed in understanding the methodology since many practitioners are interested in applying similar approaches in their professional work. Since focus groups were first introduced for market research in the United States in the 1970s, their adaptation as a cost effective means of gaining insight and feedback from end-users has led to its adoption in policy-oriented research and by service provider agencies as well.

Part II is broken down into five sections, along the main lines of the survey research, which are devoted to different service areas, as follows: (i) Electricity, Solid Waste and Water/Sewerage Services; (ii) Roads and Public Transport; (iii) Slaughterhouses, Markets, Parks and Recreation; (iv) Business Services; and (v) Education. Different topical areas of interest that emerged during the Focus Group Discussions are organized around themes, allowing the discussions and feedback to drive the issues as they are taken up in the report.

Part III presents the findings of the Transect Survey and aims at drawing parallels and indicating areas of convergence with the Focus Group Discussions. Major themes are drawn out of this survey work and presented with graphic illustrations of the responses to the survey questionnaire on key questions relating to satisfaction with services and service provider.

## I. SDS Background & Methodology

1. *Making Services Work for Poor People* (WDR, World Bank 2004) makes clear that economic growth and stability alone are not enough and that services matter. From this conclusion, two central challenges emerge: How to create services for poor people based on institutional relationships in which the actors are accountable to each other; and how to create conditions which support the emergence of capable, motivated frontline providers with clear objectives and adequate resources.

2. Describing a policy mix that meets these challenges in an appropriate way in each country requires basic information about the national institutional and fiscal environment of service provision in key sectors, as well as a good understanding of the views and perceptions of end-users and front line service providers. Under the Middle East and North Africa (MNA) Regional Initiative on Municipal Management and Service Delivery, the Bank has conducted research on the intergovernmental fiscal and administrative policies and institutions in eight countries in the region. Building on this work, the Norwegian Social Science Research Institute (Fafo AIS) was contracted by the Bank to design and support implementation of a Service Delivery Survey (SDS) with the objective of answering the general research question, i.e. *how do end users and front line professionals perceive service delivery?*

3. The WDR 2004 identifies four types of relationships of accountability (management, compacts, client power, voice and politics) of which this study is primarily concerned with the latter two. The WDR defines a relationship of accountability as having five components:

- **Delegating** – explicit or implicit understanding that a service (or goods embodying the service) will be supplied
- **Financing** – providing the resources to enable the service to be provided or paying for it
- **Performing** – supplying the actual service
- **Having information about performance** – obtaining relevant information and evaluating performance against expectations and formal and informal norms
- **Enforcing** – being able to impose sanctions for inappropriate performance or provide rewards when performance is inappropriate

4. Descriptions of these relationships and activities, combined with the intergovernmental policy and institutional studies conducted by the World Bank in selected regional countries were used to address four broad policy questions in the comparative analysis:

- To what extent has the “subsidiarity principle” been applied in determining the functional assignment to the various types of MNA local governments?
- To what extent is there a match between the functional assignments (tasking) of local governments and the allocation of financial, human and institutional resources?
- How have decentralization policies influenced service delivery systems, with special attention to the local public/private sector interplay?
- What is the coverage and quality of public services and their price/cost effectiveness?

5. **Categories of Analysis: Actors and Accountability.** The SDS adopted two principal data collection modes. The principal instrument was focus groups involving three types of participants: household users of services, business users of services, and service providers (see *Focus Groups* below). The second involved transect interviewing in selected localities in order to provide additional quantitative data on perceptions for service provision by end-users. The aim was to use the results to support the

analysis of the qualitative data with a view to strengthen the foundations for possible generalization (see *Transect Survey* below). Together, the focus groups and transect surveys generated qualitative and quantitative data, concerning the relationships of accountability involved in service provision at the local level, i.e. clients and providers.

6. The Focus Group discussions provide a unique, highly fascinating and detailed, even if at times fragmented, account of user perspectives on service delivery. These user discussions cover a whole range of concerns, from price and quality of services to appropriateness of different kinds of providers, and form the foundation of service delivery analysis. The Transect surveys, on the other hand, formed only a supporting source of data primarily to corroborate the findings of the user group discussions. Yet, they provide an excellent snapshot view of user perceptions on quality and satisfaction aspects of service delivery in various cities. Accordingly, the detailed findings of the Focus Group discussions are presented first, followed by the Transect survey results. The general conclusions emerging from the SDS are informed by both surveys.

7. The discussion of service delivery under various focus groups was organized around three major topics:

- Urban services for citizens;
- Services for business users; and
- Primary education and health.

8. Within the above topics, the following clusters of services were analyzed:

- Electricity, Water and Sewerage and Solid Waste
- Roads and Public Transport
- Slaughterhouses, Market, Parks and Recreation
- Business Services
- Primary Education

### Schematic Breakout of Focus Groups held in each city

Service Area	Users (general)	Women users	Providers	Staff	Total
Health care	focus groups1	focus groups2	focus groups3	focus groups5	5
Primary Ed			focus groups4		
Electricity, Water, sewerage, Solid waste	focus groups6		focus groups7		2
Roads, Public Transport	focus groups8		focus groups9		2
Slaughterhouse, markets, parks & recreation	focus groups10		focus groups11		2
Business services	focus groups12				1
All Urban Services (combined areas)		focus groups13		focus groups14	2
Total					14

9. As outlined in the table above, for most clusters of services there were several focus groups. Each focus group had a mix of participants designed to achieve the most fruitful results. Frontline staff were separated from the managers and executives of the Providers groups, and two special Women User groups

have been created. In the case of businesses users and providers users and service providers are mixed. Two cities each from each of the five countries were selected for the study.

Egypt:	Cairo, Zagazig
Morocco:	Rabat, Oued Zem
West Bank:	Ramallah, Bethlehem
Yemen:	Sana'a, Dhamar
Iran:	Saveh, Tehran

10. Participants in focus groups in each service area were recruited according to the following criteria:

- **Providers:** Provider groups were composed of executive or managerial-level staff from organizations that supply the services in question – basic health clinics, primary schools, the municipal Department of Water Supply, and so on. Where relevant, representatives from public, private for-profit and non-profit providers were included. As applicable, provider organizations came from both richer and poorer, inner and outer areas of the city
- **Front-Line Staff:** These were ordinary staff or first-level supervisors from provider organizations, who have regular first-hand contact with the public. Examples: primary school teachers, nurses and hospital intake workers, over-the-counter workers in municipal utilities, bus conductors, recreation staff in local parks.
- **Users:** For the most part, users were ordinary consumers of the services in question from a mixture of richer and poorer neighborhoods and backgrounds. Grassroots community workers and representatives of citizen advocacy groups may have been included, and care was taken to ensure that they do not dominate the group. In general, user groups included both men and women, though 50/50 proportions were not required.
- **Women:** Two groups were designed exclusively for women, to allow women's distinctive voices to be heard. In other respects the selection criteria are similar to user's groups.

11. The focus groups were structured around two main themes: (1) Perception of quality and relevance of the services, and (2) relations of accountability. The main questions included:

- **Perception of quality and coverage:** The perceptions of the citizens and the providers of the quality and coverage of services.
- **Appropriateness of delivery and preferences for providers:** To which extent are different clusters of services most appropriately delivered by different providers and what is the basis for assigning preferences?
- **Expansion needs:** To which extent do participants seek expansion of existing services and, eventually, which type of providers would be preferably assigned to deliver such extensions?
- **Determinants of preferences for providers:** How do perceptions of different types of providers determine preferences for assignment to those providers?

12. **Analysis of the focus group data.** The data provided during the focus groups fieldwork consisted of qualitative statements from an estimated 230 persons in each selected country, both users and providers directly involved in the service delivery process. These statements provide insight to *how service delivery is actually perceived* in the different countries, and also *why the services are perceived in a certain way*.

13. The focus group discussions were recorded by contractors in the participating countries, translated into English, and entered on to Excel sheets in a standard format. Each line of the spreadsheet represented a statement made by a participant. Statements were coded by contractors according to the service being discussed, broad analysis theme (quality/ coverage, value/ price, expansion, appropriateness of provider,

accessibility/ accountability), and significant key words. Each statement also contained a participant identifier and information about the focus group as a whole.

14. Completed focus group reports were sent in electronic file form to the Fafo regional office in Amman, where they were logged and forwarded to the Fafo analysts. In the analysis, the relevant group reports from all available countries were first combined into cross-national archives focusing on a particular service or related group of services. Statements from the multi-service focus groups (e.g. provider front-line staff, women) were sorted according to service and added to the appropriate archive. In most cases two archives were created, one for Users and the other for Providers.

15. After an initial read-through of all statements, analysts sorted each archive according to the major themes developed during the study design phase. Beyond that, the analysis was largely determined by the contents of the groups themselves. As is normal in focus group research of this kind, each group's discussions followed a unique trajectory and dealt with distinctly local concerns. Even within the same country, using the same moderator, groups focusing on a given service often took very different courses. Yet there were also many common themes that emerged across the independent groups and often across countries.

16. Perhaps the most challenging part of the analyst's job was to capture these cross-cutting concerns and portray them in a narrative that is both coherent and faithful to the source material. In part this was done mechanically, by sorting statements into smaller thematic groups and carrying out content analysis, but it also called for a sensitivity to the ideas behind the words. For example, corruption and mistrust of public agencies was discussed using different vocabularies and was tied to different service issues across the various groups and countries; it was certainly not expressed by all participants in all groups, but was nonetheless a clearly identifiable strand of perception and opinion.

17. Although the Fafo analysts were careful to point out over-arching themes when obvious from the source material, they were also careful to avoid over-interpretation (as needed, analysts made minor changes to the grammar and spelling of translated focus group statements quoted in the Report). This Report is not intended to be a full contextual analysis, but is rather a boiling-down and summary of a vast amount of raw data. The authors of the report are well aware that analysts in other institutions may see themes that relate to issues and findings from other sources, even if they are presented here as strictly local concerns. For that reason a great deal of material is included that is, on the face of it, just a re-telling of people's stories about the neighborhood.

18. ***Some things to keep in mind about focus group data.*** The Focus group has great strengths as a research technique, but it produces data with some distinct and important characteristics. In reviewing focus group findings, readers should always bear in mind that:

- The purpose of a Focus group is to provide qualitative data about the attitudes, perceptions, and opinions of participants regarding the topic at hand.
- The groups were not designed to reach a consensus, to arrive at a plan, or to make decisions about courses of action to take.
- Focus groups do not generate quantitative information that can be generalized statistically to larger populations.
- The moderator must elicit information only within the boundaries of the focus group discussion. Participants cannot be contacted later to clarify a response.
- Group dynamics and peer pressure may lead to biases and factual inaccuracies. A good moderator can reduce these effects considerably, but can never eliminate them.
- Apart from internal evidence in the focus group report itself (informal votes, sequences of statements, participants' choice of words, recorder notes), the analyst knows nothing about the emotions

of participants or the degree of group consensus on an issue. The fact that a group spends a long time discussing a topic does not in itself mean that the topic is important to participants.

- "Absence of evidence is not evidence of absence." Focus group analysis is an empirical, bottom-up process: the analyst works from the pattern of issues that actually emerges from the groups, and can make no assumptions about issues that were never discussed. The fact that an issue was not discussed does not mean that it has low priority in people's minds.

19. ***The Transect Survey.*** The aim of the transect survey was to provide additional data to provide some context for the analysis of the focus groups. Focus groups have a built-in potential for bias, as they tend to be recruited from similar segments of society. The transect survey permits the research to obtain a diverse view of opinions of service delivery.

20. The scope of the survey was limited and explorative in nature. Due to budget limitations, the survey was able to target only one hundred households in each city for interviews. The surveys were carried out in the same cities as the focus groups. The one hundred households were selected at fixed intervals along two lines drawn arbitrarily through the cities (hence the name *transect* survey). Relatively relaxed procedures were used for selection of households at each fixed point, with similarly relaxed procedures for household substitution in cases of non-response. In each household, a responsible adult was used as respondent. The questionnaire contained questions addressing access to services, satisfaction with local services, and satisfaction with service providers, as well as a series of background variables. The questionnaire was designed for expediency in interviewing.

21. The intention of this approach is to ensure that interviews are spread out and not clustered, as is often the result with other sampling designs. In surveys with cluster design, or arbitrary selection of respondents for interviewing, there is a large tendency that respondents will have similar views because they are sampled together. This is both because services will be similar in a neighborhood, and because people of a neighborhood may know each other and have similar views. The objective was to add a greater variation of views to the information that was to be obtained from focus groups.

## II: Focus Group Findings and Recommendations

### A. Electricity, Solid Waste, Water and Sewerage & Solid Waste

- The coverage of all services, except sewerage, is relatively extensive in the study countries.
- However, their quality and reliability are below acceptable standards in many cases.
- Price considerations, continuous supply and timely response during problems are seen as the key criteria for good service.
- Rising population, illegal connections, transmission and relay losses, poor condition of network and equipment, lack of adequate technical and managerial capacity, poor revenues, and absence of long-term planning are the key factors affecting the coverage, quality and reliability of services.
- Users are confronted by a “crazy machine of bureaucracy” and constantly exposed to corruption, favouritism, poor customer service and deficient information. Women users are particularly affected by irresponsible service provision.
- Most users are unhappy with the public provision of various services. Yet, they are amenable to public sector reform rather than opt for wholesale changes in the choice of providers.
- User views on privatization are strongly conditioned by personal experiences—those who have experience of reliable private sector provision are most likely to support greater private sector involvement. Key advantages of private sector provision are increased coverage and improved quality. This is balanced with concerns of price hikes, job redundancies and monopoly power.
- More responsible citizen behaviour, greater reliance on self-help and increased input of users in planning and operations are critical aspects of user interface in improving service delivery.

22. ***Perceptions of Quality and Coverage: Electricity.*** Apart from price considerations, continuous supply and consistent voltage were the most commonly cited criteria for good electrical service. This was followed by timely response to supply problems. In general, electricity services were viewed more favorably than sewerage, solid waste and water services in most cities. Electricity had the highest average customer satisfaction ratings—71% across all cities, compared to 66% for water, 55% for sewerage and 39% for solid waste services.

23. Main criticism of the service centered on problems of power cuts, voltage surges and drops, and the damage this caused to household or business equipment. However, electrical repair crews were appreciated for providing reasonably fast response in outages and emergency situations. At least in some cities, access to new technologies for monitoring and locating faults has made possible this difference in emergency response. However, the non-emergency services of electrical providers are not nearly so well-regarded, with complaints about irregularities in meter reading, incomprehensible billing, and slow service in opening new accounts.

24. Providers identified several factors affecting the quality of electrical supply in the region. Among the major factors were the transmission losses during relay from generating station to end users that caused low and unstable voltage and led to water pumps and other appliances to burn out much more quickly. Equally, expansion of electric supply to new areas and rising number of

**Box 8: Feedback on Electricity Utilities**

“I think the electricity service is very good and the employees of the authority usually respond quickly to any complaints...”  
(Egypt, Zagazig, User)

“...The power company workers are always ready, at winter time, snow, emergencies ....”

“When they want to do maintenance to the network usually they plan those hours and announce them in the newspapers, so people can take their precautions.”

(West Bank, Users)

illegal connections lead to lower voltage throughout the grid. In fact, power losses due to stealing and illegal connections are estimated to be around 33-40%. The expansions also highlight the need for more generating capacity. Maintenance of the grid and equipment is a constant headache for most providers in the sample cities. These problems are partly due to old infrastructure and over-used equipment, and in some places, due to deliberate vandalism. Power authorities have maintenance budgets, but the amounts allocated often don't suffice to meet even emergency situations, let alone undertake upgrading and preventative maintenance. Finally, the lack of technical manpower is also cited as a major reason for poor quality service on all fronts. Contributing to this is the lack of proper staff training in technical, administrative, and financial skills.

25. **Perceptions of Quality and Coverage: Water.** With the exception of Egypt, assessments of water quality were more mixed and less negative than the assessments of local sewerage and solid waste arrangements in all countries. Apart from price considerations, *purity, availability, and timely response to problems* were the criteria applied most often by users to evaluate their water services. A clean water supply was the foremost requirement of water users. Colour, taste and smell were considered very important attributes of water quality. Often consumers are not reassured by official statements that their tap water meet scientific health standards. Second only to purity, water availability was highlighted by many users. For the most part, participants had water from a municipal network piped into their homes. However, almost none had continuous supply. The availability ranged from 'occasional' interruptions to being available only twice per week with intermittent low pressure at other times. In some cities, outlying areas have no municipal water service, while in others—for example, Rabat, Dhamar and the West Bank cities—the local authorities have been praised for extending water service to new areas.

**Box 9: Contrasting Views on Water Services**

**Users and providers often hold contrasting views of water quality...!**

On regular basis the Palestinian Water Undertaking takes all the necessary tests and monitoring procedures to make sure that the water is qualified to human usage. (West Bank provider)

...those "Filterqueen" salespersons visited my house one day and they did a simple experiment and proved to me how much minerals and dirt there is trapped in our tap drinking water. So, where is the role of the municipalities and authorities if we are drinking contaminated water? (West Bank user)

26. Faced with water problems, users resort to all sorts of coping strategies such as using bottled water, home and commercial filters, and availing tanker trucks and wells. To deal with intermittent supply, residents also store tap water whenever they can get it.

27. Users and providers alike offer many reasons for water problems, such as aging and/or poor maintenance of delivery systems, contamination from sewers, headloss<sup>2</sup> due to leaks and illegal connections, and the donor practice of earmarking funds for what they perceive as priority projects. For example, old and vulnerable water lifting motors, corroded pipes and faulty consumption meters affect both availability and quality water in the MENA cities. In areas that lack modern wastewater systems, leaky pipes may absorb seepage from nearby cesspools or sewer lines and pollute drinking water for entire neighbourhoods. Where construction permits are not enforced, cesspools may even be built on top of supply pipes, making the pipes corrode much faster. Pipe leaks and illegal connections impair availability. The level of headloss in the network due to these can be as high as 40%, including water lost during connectivity and maintenance operations, as well as air trapped in meters. Refugee camps on West Bank were singled out as areas with chronic problems of maintenance and water theft. There is also a perception that donor practice of earmarking funds for equipment, although helps timely project delivery, can contribute to lower performance in the long run due to poor understanding of local needs and conditions.

28. **Perceptions of Quality and Coverage: Sewerage.** Consumer expectations for sewerage services are quite different from water supply. “The job of sewerage is to be invisible.” To the extent that users are aware of sewerage in their daily lives, the service is regarded as faulty. Sewerage problems also apparently went unnoticed for longer periods, or were left by the authorities (quite literally) to fester.

29. Many users highlighted the limited sewerage coverage, particularly in smaller towns and surrounding villages, where it may be absent entirely. In Dhamar city, for example, it was cited that two-thirds of the town is not connected to sewerage, while in Ramallah and Zagazig these figures were 40% and 50% respectively. Residents in unserved areas tend to make alternate arrangements such as septic tanks, simple cesspool arrangements or dumping, leading to noxious surface flows and "converting some parts of the city into scattered swamps." Problems are made worse by throwing wastewater and garbage directly into the streets. Old, substandard, or under-sized pipes also contribute to sewerage problems in no insignificant measure. Major sources of leaks were aging and rusty pipes (WB, E), pipes that were too small to handle outflows, or pipes that were too thin, fragile, or improperly buried.

**Box 10: End-user Views of Sewage Services**

There is a lot of misuse of the sewage network. How many times did we find dead chickens blocking the network?

Answer from the Provider group: 800 chickens were removed in early 2005.] (from the West Bank)

30. Issues of limited coverage and aging infrastructure are compounded by egregious citizen behavior. Where the infrastructure is weak, it is far more vulnerable to abuses and thoughtless behavior by users. For example, clogging was widely recognized as a problem in many of the surveyed cities. Another aspect of citizen behavior is the large number of illegal and thwarted connections that stress the sewerage systems.

31. Poor sewerage conditions can have serious environmental and health impacts. The side effects of such poor sewerage arrangements are the contamination of storm drains and ground water pollution. Surface pooling, cesspool mismanagement and subsurface leaks can have serious consequences for health, such as microbial and chemical pollution of rainwater runoff in places

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<sup>2</sup> Headloss refers to the volume of water that enters the system but is lost before it reaches the customer's meter.

that have storm drain systems, and groundwater pollution, particularly where residents rely on wells as a primary or backup source of drinking water. Gardens and nearby agricultural land can also be contaminated or made less productive.

32. ***Perceptions of Quality and Coverage: Solid Waste.*** Of the four services covered here, across all countries solid waste disposal came in for the most negative feedback. Apart from being messy and careless, solid waste services were criticized for incomplete coverage, absence of a collection schedule, garbage strikes and issues related to dump sites.

33. There may be no garbage service at all in parts of the town and nearby villages, or street dumpsters may be too few and widely scattered to be of practical use and garbage is left on the streets. To cope with this in some other areas individual households contract with private providers. Providers admit that service is inconsistent. They suggest that one of the many reasons for uneven coverage is substandard street design in squatter settlements and poor neighborhoods. Coverage can also be incomplete if the collectors are too picky about the types of trash they take. Along with poor coverage, the unreliability of collection certainly irks users. This is manifested in two ways: absence of a proper collection schedule and frequent garbage strikes. While users commonly complain that garbage is not picked up often enough, or it is done on a schedule, providers reply that residents do not put out trash at the proper time, do not use the containers provided, and put out items that can not be handled by the trucks. Garbage strikes also disrupt services and leave neighborhoods in unsanitary conditions.

34. While all of the above concern providers in one way or other, a different problem highlighted by users relates to dump sites. Dump sites attract frequent complaints of being sometimes located too close to residential areas and being poorly supervised. Suitable dump sites are always difficult to acquire and develop, especially if land parcels are small and have different owners. Distance to town has to be balanced against ecological concerns and the needs of residents in the area. In certain cases like the West Bank, there are political complexities too that dictate dump site locations. Disposal of medical and hazardous wastes pose a special challenge. There are too few facilities for disposing of medical and other specialized hazardous waste. This poses great dangers. For example, often children play at dumping sites. The long-term health impacts of this can only be grave.

35. ***Challenges to Expansion and Improvements.*** There are parallels in the problems faced by electric, water, sewer and solid waste services in effecting improvements and expanding territory. Accordingly, many issues discussed here are addressed to all or several services. However, consensus is less forthcoming between consumer and provider groups with regard to key issues; in some areas the views converge, in others they diverge. Several issues challenge the expansion of services to new populations and new areas, as well as improving existing service quality. The most critical of these are discussed below.

36. Continuous population growth and urban expansion as well as servicing the marginalized and needy are affecting the extension of all four services. Along with increasing usage per household, there is often pressure to enlarge the scope of the service area. In this, reaching peri-urban areas and small business is a real challenge. Poorly enforced planning and building regulations leading to unplanned developments exacerbate problems of extending connectivity. Users and providers both recognize the links between service expansion and business development, and for that reason they emphasize the need to expand electricity networks to suburban and rural areas, and to connect enterprise users to water and sewer networks. As demand goes up, maintenance problems rise and service becomes unstable. While revenues grow with new subscribers, they are not adequate to cover large capital improvement costs. In many

cities, equity issues are particularly important, especially for certain target groups like the women. Efficient customer service is a key element in raising revenues and holding down costs. Some providers have suggested ideas such as creating common customer service centers with representatives from several utilities in one place.

37. Service providing agencies also face internal (institutional) challenges to expansions and quality improvements. Chief among them are rising operating and maintenance costs; recruiting and keeping qualified staff, and investing in better bill collection.

38. Providers find themselves paying more for fuel and equipment. Under such circumstances maintenance budgets are stretched and available funds get spent out just in making emergency repairs, without paying any attention to periodical and preventive maintenance. Faced with rising costs and status quo in revenues, some providers are seeking innovative approaches such as obtaining donations from commercial houses, seeking development aid from donors, or combining funds from various sources, and so forth. The improvements effected by such measures are modest though. Providers also need to improve professional and technical training for utilities staff, as well as their pay and benefits to retain trained people and reduce corruption. In particular, better monitoring and supervision of field staff are needed to promote honesty and good performance. Finally, bill collection is an area where consumer and provider views diverge. Understandably, for providers, better ways to measure usage and collect payment are a high priority. New measures are being tried out in many countries to improve collection rates and to cut down collection costs, among them in Morocco and the West Bank by using pre-paid electricity cards, in Sana'a, Yemen by installing new electricity meters in places where they are easier to monitor, and in Zagazig, Egypt by training an expanded force of meter readers. Some providers are also responding to dismal collection rates by making payment more convenient for customers. The West Bank utilities allow payment at local commercial banks and make personal visits if needed.

**Box11: Revenue Collection Enhancement**

We have implemented a system that allows us to read the meter from a distance... if the bill is not paid within 14 days of issuance, we start decreasing the voltage. This way the consumer experiences the weakness in the current and pays the bill... and it has been very successful (West Bank provider)

Only 3% of users pay regularly. This prompted us to carry out public relations campaigns, setting up numerous offices near customer and mobile offices, authorising standing-order payments or deposit by cheque in boxes designed for that purpose in each office. We went as far as to authorise payment in the local greengrocer at the corner of the street! [Even so,] 60% of users pay just before the sending of the electricity cut-off notice or even after reception of such a notice. (Morocco, Rabat, Provider)

39. **Which Service Should Come First?** Although both consumers and providers spoke very little regarding priorities for expanding different types of infrastructure into unserved areas, there was a general agreement that water supply and electricity should be among the first services to add. A sewerage network, being the most expensive of the services, should come last. More common is the concern about coordination between services in carrying out construction and maintenance activities. With regard to specific services, priority areas differed for users, although certain common thematic priorities cut across all services.

40. Priorities in electricity include: (i) increasing power generation capacity to keep pace with rising needs; (ii) shifting from expensive petrol-based fuel generators to gas turbines; (iii) moving underground aerial electrical wires and replacing "old falling-down posts;" and (iv) maintaining and replacing old and unreliable equipment and cables.

41. Priorities in water and sewerage are: (i) replacing old pumps and pipes and expanding water supply lines to keep pace with population growth; (ii) expanding the number of wastewater treatment plants and using reclaimed water for irrigation and parts of the solid residue for fertilizer; (iii) cleaning up areas around the intake pipes of drinking water sources; (iv) as densities increase in outlying residential areas, replacing cesspools and septic tanks with connections to the municipal system; (v) creating "an efficient and neutral entity" to monitor the quality of drinking water and dispense trustworthy information; (vi) bringing sensitivity to social practices, especially with regard to gender preferences, when expanding into rural and village areas.

42. Priorities in solid waste are: (i) creating dumping sites or special areas for large materials, and for special or hazardous materials and eliminating political barriers to finding new sites; (ii) setting up recycling centres; processing organic trash into fertilizer, or creating jobs by manufacturing products from recycled materials; (iii) regularizing garbage collection schedules; (iv) making better equipment available for garbage collection: more trucks, smaller trucks able to work in Old City or squatter areas, protective clothing and other tools; (v) expanding the number of garbage workers or improve their salaries; (vi) having closed containers with adequate capacity for street dumpsters and locating these reasonably close to people's houses; (vii) shifting from street dumpster collection to house collection where feasible; and (viii) enforcing harsher punishments for people who dump waste along streets or watercourses and promote better citizen awareness about disposal of garbage.

43. **Perceptions of Value and Price.** Across countries and cities, a large majority of users believes that they are not getting good value for the money they pay at present for urban services. When asked if they would pay more for better service, most responses fell into three main groups:

- Yes, we would pay more *if* services were improved – and perhaps they can be.
- Yes, we would pay more *if* services were improved – but we truly doubt that you will improve them, and until you do we will resist paying more.
- No, we simply cannot afford it.

44. However it is difficult to trace differences in the willingness to pay for specific services since the responses are often couched as general principles that apply to all utilities. Further, as basic services become universal in city areas they are taken for granted by users. More important, they become essential to most people's idea of a modern, civilized, fully human life. The combination of those two ideas introduces a distinctly moral strand into thinking about price and access: "there is a belief common among Dhamar residents that water is a free gift of God."

#### **Box 12: Service Users Respond**

*"Yes, but show me"*

Always a minority among MENA service users, these users recognized that low levels of investment yield poor-quality service and were prepared to accept the idea that high quality costs more. A secondary and related theme was conservation: if you want to pay less, don't waste.

*"Not until you show me - and maybe not then either"*

These users emphasize that services are expensive relative to incomes, and that consumers have yet to see full value for their money. A secondary theme among these doubters is that poor-quality service – even if it is cheap – forces poor users into coping strategies that cost much more. Typically, buying water from private water vendors or renting sewage collection trucks is much more expensive than getting comparable services from the local government.

*"Not able to pay more"*

The third category of user claimed that they could not afford to pay more under any foreseeable circumstances. At least some of them perceive basic services as a fundamental right.

45. For their part, service providers in these countries are typically plagued with revenue collection and theft problems. Many services are already subsidized by local government, and subsidies are unlikely to increase. Few utilities make a profit, and many are in debt or are incurring losses. Service providers in the region are aware of user perceptions and this has created a dilemma, particularly for cash-strapped providers. While stealing services was always condemned, many consumers and providers support a more compassionate treatment of those who cannot afford essential services, at least temporarily.

46. All of this is leading service providers to adopt more inventive approaches and solutions on their part. Many are experimenting with 'lifeline' arrangements that are designed for the dual purpose of increasing collection rates and cushioning the impact of utility charges on household budgets. The two common practices are *instalment payments* and *graduated usage* or *tiered pricing arrangements* based on household consumption. Instalment payment systems are in place for some services in the West Bank, Morocco and Egypt, and are much appreciated by some consumers. Under some conditions, lifeline rates have the potential to encourage conservation as well as reduce costs for the poor. In contrast, across-the-board rate increases to discourage waste tend to penalize the poor, who already have low average rates of consumption.

47. However, there is very little evidence yet, across the board that such arrangements yield much better collection rates. On the other hand, there is fear that the interest charged on arrears can lead to even greater indebtedness.

**48. *Other Aspects of Price: Cost Recovery and Fairness.*** Price satisfaction, it appears, depends to a surprising extent on the way charges are levied. For example, customers want to pay only for the water, sewerage and electricity that they actually use. When coupled with billing errors, charges can run to absurd amounts. This is a source of great frustration. Then, there is the perception of fairness. A real source of consumer anger is the perception that they are being treated unfairly compared to others. Such concerns take many forms:

- different prices for the same service
- incorrect metering
- coupling sewerage and water charges: Consumers resent paying sewer bills when most of their water is purchased from water tankers. As sewerage is charged only for water subscribers, many consumers consider going off the service to avoid what they perceive as unfair bills.
- paying for theft: Many users believe that bill-paying customers pick up the tab for losses due to theft although the providers deny this.

49. Although many of these problems seem small and the complaints may not be justified, the sense of unfairness they create is not trivial. Key to long-term improvement and expansion of services lie as much as in expanding into new areas as in addressing existing user concerns.

**50. *Appropriateness of Providers.*** The largely centralized public administration system in the MNA countries is reflected in service delivery arrangements also. Thus, in many countries the central government has a significant role in service delivery in one form or another. Local governments' role in and capacity for service delivery, although varying from country to country, is relatively restricted. Privatization is nascent and limited to select cities and services. Public responses regarding the role of various entities in service delivery is thus fashioned by this history and background.

51. User views on privatization are thus strongly conditioned by personal experiences. Those who have had previous experience with competent private service providers are far more likely to support privatization even if they hold some reservations about it. Conversely, those who have had only limited experience with privatized services were wary of change, especially if local government is doing an acceptable job.

52. The classic arguments for keeping infrastructure services in the public sector are: “there are no assurances of quality, people will be laid off, and in any event it is too big a job for private companies. The solution is to reform the public sector, with honest management and incentives.” Conversely, arguments for private sector involvement in services, at least in countries with a successful track record of private sector participation, are strong. The example from Morocco is illustrative. In Rabat, Morocco, the private concessionaire REDAL has expanded electrical and water service to outlying parts of the city as well as added new connections to city areas not well-served before. A large majority of users think that service quality has also improved since the changeover to private sector. In solid waste disposal, the differences between the private provider and the old municipal service are overly evident in Rabat. Many Moroccan users believe that, in theory at least, concessionaires can provide better coverage and quality due to their access to financial resources and technology, better outreach to the consumer, and promotion of meritocracy and productivity.

53. Private sector involvement though is not without its drawbacks. Many users cite that prices are higher, and may be too high for the poor to bear. There are also concerns about job redundancies. Further, utility concessions for water, power and sewerage are monopoly providers. In places without responsible government bodies for regulating and overseeing private contractors, consumers may become worse off with private sector provision. This is amplified by three Rabat providers who identify the key to getting more consistent results from private providers, based on their experience with various solid waste contractors: (i) well thought-out contract terms, and (ii) competent municipal staff in charge of oversight.

### **Improving accessibility and accountability in service provision**

54. *Getting Timely and Relevant Information and Help.* The majority of users have negative views on service providers' ability to provide information and help. Many customers submit that “information is difficult to get, if at all available. Most of the time they feel *“confronted by a culture of expectancy and a crazy bureaucratic machine.”* Providers are blamed for lack of clearly defined customer service positions and procedures. Too often, the quality of service depends on the person behind the desk. Another issue associated with poor customer service is that the staff needed for information and action are fragmented into many departments, all in different locations, and that far too many matters had to be dealt by the costumers through in person appearance. Given the poor state of public transport in most places, it is not uncommon to find customers making epic journeys around town, sometimes lasting the entire day, to get a problem solved. Special needs of and constraints faced by women are commonly overlooked in customer relations procedures. The culture of customer service remains overwhelmingly male, whereas more women find themselves having to deal with utility problems. Although many women are less confrontational, that does not mean they accept bad service.

55. Computerized database retrieval and record-keeping are beginning to have an effect, at least for some kinds of problems. But for all-round personalized attention to the customer's needs, there's still nothing like good contacts. A number of ideas and proposals for closing the feedback loop between needs, performance and customer satisfaction have come up for discussion, among them: customer satisfaction surveys; better follow-up and monitoring by supervisors, including

better track of customer complaints and comments, especially about individual staff; 24-hour complaints' hotlines; additional service centres and one-stop shops; website for customers with information about services and prices, more informative bills and better signage within utility provider offices; awareness campaigns and training on good customer service techniques; improved database management systems that allow front-desk staff to retrieve a wider range of information related to the customer's account; delegating greater powers to local offices to act upon and resolve customer complaints; and special customer service or project implementation task forces.

56. ***Making Citizens More Responsible.*** For services to operate effectively citizens also have an important role to play. To make legitimate demands on service providers and local governments, they must put their own house in order. For example, power and water theft are well-publicized issues in many countries. General indignation about civic untidiness runs high. Providers additionally cite timely payment of utility bills as an important issue.

57. Two distinct, but not necessarily mutually exclusive, approaches have been touted for encouraging greater civic responsibility: *awareness campaigns* to heighten public consciousness about infrastructure issues, and *stricter rules and tighter enforcement* of rules and regulations.

58. ***Citizen Self-Help.*** The role of citizens extends however, beyond timely payment of bills, or cleanliness and conservation. Self-help has a vital role in the current environment where formal institutions are not rising up to the expectations of the public. Self-help can take many forms, such as, one, individual action--this is when people take the time to file a complaint if a service is not working properly, even if the problem is in the public domain; and two, neighborhood self-help and local patrons—residents in the neighborhood have little control over delivery of services like electricity and water supply, but can take local collective action about things like trash removal or water conservation. More formal neighborhood associations offer possibilities for more sustained action over time, especially in smaller towns or neighborhoods with a high degree of social cohesion. An example is the local association in Oued Zem:

**Box13: Citizen Self Help**

*User 1: In my neighborhood, there is an association which has played a considerable role in matters of hygiene and garbage collection.*

A solid waste official among the Providers apparently knew of this work and approved:

*... actually, we are impressed to see how good the involvement of this association has been in managing public service. (Oued Zem, Provider)*

59. Other forms of self-help include awareness creation campaigns and other self-help initiatives organized by private and charity agencies and cooperative societies; consumer associations that act as watchdogs or lobby groups representing consumer interests in a more organized way; and municipal incentives like contests and rewards for clean neighborhoods; and so forth.

60. ***Making Providers and Local Governments More Responsible.*** Many consumers view lack of accountability as the most fundamental barrier to good customer service. Structural reorganizing, training courses for staff, public relations campaigns and the like mean little if the person behind the counter does not act fairly and impartially. For providers, in many cases the “bottlenecks are generally to be found at the top of the bottle,” whereby “some of the decision-makers are actually themselves causing the negative reaction of the people.” Tales are abound of

irresponsible behavior by local governments, such as keeping the street lights on all day, or of 'big shots' who are accumulating enormous water or electricity bills and not being prosecuted. These stories, true or false, contribute to a general sense of unfairness and cynicism about public life.

61. For some, corruption and favoritism are not especially important in themselves. Rather, they are symptoms of an organizational culture that is not able to follow through on its goals or enforce its own procedures. Lack of resources, poor system design, low morale, overwork or low pay may or may not be underlying causes, but the net result for the customer is the same. Users in all countries agreed that "improving services... require regular supervision and periodical follow-up," regardless of whether the provider is public or private. But the key issue is, who will act as watchdog, and who will watch the watchdog? No 'magic bullet' solutions were offered to resolve this.

## **B. Roads and Public Transport**

### **Summary Findings**

- Traffic problems manifest in two ways to the users: one, road congestion and poor quality of roads, and two, poor quality of common modes of public transport--local bus and taxi services.
- The most important of direct and underlying causes of road congestion are: substandard public transport; irresponsible user behaviour; poor quality road surfaces; lack of integrated planning and agency coordination; downtown and older town areas that are not easily retrofitted to traffic and lack of enforcement.
- Two issues dominate public transport: poor availability and reliability of services and deficient comfort, safety and security on public transport modes.
- Most user-provider recommendations for improving and expanding road and public transport systems are somewhat short-term. This might be a reflection of the dire nature of the problem.
- The choice of provider is conditioned by relationships between availability, predictability, comfort, safety, economy and choice. Public sector role is emphasized in roads planning, engineering and related functions; roles for both public and private sectors are seen in public transport.
- Lack of trust in transport agencies and providers is pervasive. Transport providers are widely criticised for being unresponsive to passenger needs. Women, predictably, are most affected.
- The emerging policy issues distilled from the discussions are: expanding access to poorly connected suburbs and rural locations; ensuring fair condition of road network; improving public transport systems; and addressing transport issues of women and poor.

**62. Quality and Coverage of Roads and Public Transport.**

For the most part, traffic problems in MNA cities manifest in two ways to the users: one, road congestion and poor quality of roads, and two, poor quality of common modes of public transport—local bus and taxi services. Provider groups echoed many of the users' concerns, but spent more time discussing the underlying reasons for them. The feedback from the groups was by no means entirely negative: consumers in most places had choices, however limited.

**Box 14: A Woman's Perspective on Public Transport**

Public transportation should be organised in a way that takes gender into consideration. For example, women have their own standard schedules where they can go shopping, or where they would need transportation to go to and from work. ...[T]here are studies which give recommendations to public transportation agencies to tailor safer and more responsive transportation schedules and means for women. [Seconded by another participant]: Yes, in some areas women do not like to go out and shop for their home needs because transportation is inappropriate or unavailable when they want it.

- West Bank Women Users

**63. Road and Traffic.** Users and providers have a slightly different perspective to road congestion and poor quality of roads. Whereas users highlight a number of direct causes of road congestion, transport providers are more interested in understanding the background and addressing the underlying causes of road congestion.

64. For the users, the priority issues include: (i) heavy trucks and buses that clog the roads and make frequent and unpredictable stops; (ii) proliferation of private taxis, steep rise of unlicensed private cars and the presence of traditional vehicles like the Moroccan 'chariot' taxis; (iii) poor maintenance of trucks, buses and private cars causing breakdowns and low standards of driver training and licensing; (iv) short supply of parking, particularly in the central areas; (v) construction and other debris piled up on the roads, unregulated street vendors, massive billboards, and encroaching trees; and (vi) children playing in the streets. Two points stand out from this list. First, public transport is seen as a major contributor to traffic congestion through its aging fleets, poor vehicle maintenance and badly trained or unlicensed operators. Second, irresponsible individual behavior is one of the main factors contributing to congestion.

65. Transport providers highlight the more systemic causes of road congestion, among them population pressures, rising vehicle numbers and cities that are not expanding with demographic changes. These are compounded by weak institutional frameworks and poor enforcement.

66. Downtown and older town areas are not easily retrofitted to traffic. Population pressures, rising numbers of vehicles on the roads, lack of setbacks, presence of historical buildings, and unsympathetic residents make it difficult to impose modern traffic management methods, particularly in inner cities. While existing grid systems can sometimes be retrofitted for modern traffic management, in older quarters of many cities grid layouts are partial and localized if they exist at all. For planners to go beyond 'band-aid' solutions like parking restrictions and one-way designations, local governments must be able to acquire land in the public interest. In theory, local governments in many MNA countries have land acquisition statutes on the books. But its practical implementation requires very close and timely cooperation between the agencies responsible for road construction, general planning and finance. The process is expensive, slow and requires strong political will. For these reasons it is difficult to create bypass roads. The result is that through traffic is routed through already-congested city centers. Moreover, quasi-political decisions by local authorities often make matters worse by locating public transport terminals in inappropriate places too close to the downtown core, with inadequate access roads.

67. The demographic pressures and infrastructure backlogs are compounded by lack of integrated planning and agency coordination. A key question that is often broached is whether the root problem is the lack of good plans, or the failure to implement these plans. The lack of an effective master plan or area-wide circulation plans has effects not only on traffic, but also on housing and commercial development. The practice of donors ‘earmarking’ funds for specific purposes can help avoid political interference, but it can also prevent money from going where local planners believe it is most needed. The master planning process has been criticized for its lack of public participation. To the average citizen the most galling daily reminder of poor planning and agency coordination is the constant tearing up of roads to lay utility lines, often without any detours or warning of work in progress. The poor quality of road surfaces have a dire effect on public perceptions. Shoddy and impermanent paving is both a hazard and a symbol of government incompetence or corruption. In this regard, again, donor priorities and earmarking of funds are also blamed for taking the focus away from routine maintenance to new capital projects.

68. Finally, lack of enforcement is seen to underlie many of the practices that cause traffic congestion. Among the reasons offered for the lack of correspondence between the laws of the land and ground realities are: police are indifferent, underpaid, untrained, afraid of retribution, and absent from where they are most needed; and public transport unions are ineffective and highly corrupt, and they exert pressure on local governments.

69. **Public Transport System.** Bus and taxi services form the core of public transport system in many MNA cities. In describing the qualities of public transport people valued most *availability, price, reliability of service, comfort, and safety/security*. How do local transit systems measure up in terms of these core qualities? The bottom line is public transport services in MNA cities have substantial room for improvement. Complaints abound about poor availability and reliability of services, deficient comfort, and disregard for safety and security.

70. A recurrent complaint in many areas is that the buses do not run according to fixed schedules. When compounded with road blockages and delays, travel time becomes hard to predict. Equally frequent is frustration about missing or infrequent service to outlying parts of the city as well as shortage of service during weekends and holidays. There are many reasons for this: insufficient demand especially at non-peak hours, impassable roads, buses that are too big to maneuver and lack of commitment from local agencies. In most places taxis or private minibuses are available as an alternative, but they are far more expensive and may be overextended as well. It is not surprising that in this kind of environment women’s transport needs are overlooked. Local services are criticized for being too narrowly geared to men's schedules and concerns.

71. Extreme crowding on the bus is an unwelcome and daily fact of life, especially at peak hours in buses run by the public sector, or services heading to poorly-served destinations. Old and poorly-maintained buses complete with torn seats, inoperable windows, engine fumes and frequent breakdowns, as well as aberrant driver behaviour—characterized as rude, dangerous, unscrupulous and unqualified—both on the road and in dealing with passengers add to the discomfort. Finally, because many of the cities do not have adequate infrastructure to support bus routes, people are forced to take their chances at entry and exit.

**72. *Expanding and Improving Roads and Public Transport.*** The marketplace of public opinion offers many useful, if somewhat short-term, suggestions for expansion and improvement of the road and public transport systems. Regarding roads and traffic circulation, suggested measures include: (i) improved signage; (ii) better maintenance of traffic lights, turnouts and bus stops; (iii) increase in the number of traffic circles; (iv) better street lights; (v) more parking, especially in central city areas for private cars, and special parking facilities for buses and trucks; (vi) more arterials and bypass roads and, in some places, road widening or added lanes; (vii) pedestrian bridges and crosswalks, curb cuts and ramps; (ix) greater presence of qualified technical staff in local government agencies for road construction and maintenance and contractor supervision. To improve public transport systems user suggested solutions are: (i) fixed schedules for buses, wherever possible; (ii) more bus service to outlying parts of the city and nearby countryside; (iii) more bus stations that are properly located with fixed bus stops and pull-out areas, and with rain shelters and benches for the most heavily-used stops; (iv) expanded availability of taxis and better control of taxis through tighter licensing requirements; (v) contracting with private bus companies to provide school bus service to reduce the outpouring of children into the streets in mid-afternoon; (vi) restriction on traditional transport modes like chariots to operate only on *souk* (market) days, and be replaced by expanded bus and taxi service on other days; and (vii) flexibility and close attention to fluctuations in demand.

**73. *Value and Appropriateness of Providers: Roads and Public Transport.*** Choice of provider depends on the type of service, market conditions, the capacity of government agencies to regulate and oversee or alternately provide services, and the ability of private and alternate providers to replace the government in service provision. For road planning, engineering, urban design and related functions, most users perceive a primary role for the public sector although this did not preclude, at least in principle, private sector role in areas like road construction and maintenance. The chief concerns, perceived or real, about an enlarged private sector role in the roads sector are costs, quality and reliability. By extension, more important in public perspective was fostering honest and efficient public sector implementation by "improving working conditions of staff, selecting and assigning the right person for the right job, paying reasonable enumerations and incentives are pre-requisites for service improvement." In this connection, the stone paving work carried out by the Social Development Fund in Yemen is cited as an example of public sector work that repays its higher initial costs through better quality and longevity. It raised 10% of project costs from community contributions, a buy-in that helps to "ensure preservation and sustainability of road projects and services."

**74.** The relationships between quality, value and choice of provider are far more complex when it comes to public transport. Transit consumers value availability and predictability of service, comfort, safety, and economy. They also value choice. But in most places choice is constrained by the limited options available. For example, the degree of provider choice drops off dramatically with distance from the city centre. In Rabat private buses play an invaluable role by filling in gaps in public sector service, whereas in Sana'a, which has only private providers, buses are criticized for being crowded and for not covering "remote and new areas of the city." In Zagazig, the subsidized Internal Service buses go to villages that private providers will not touch. With regard to comfort and safety, on the whole, local private providers are judged superior in terms of comfort, vehicle maintenance, driver courtesy and punctuality; although there are some stellar public sector examples like the Egyptian railways.

75. The main advantage of public sector service is price. For affordability and value, often public sector is preferred, although there are exceptions even to this rule. If a Zagazig commuter is willing to put up with a slow ride and crowded conditions, a private microbus is often the cheapest choice. Fare structure is clearly an issue for both users and providers, proposals regarding fare structure fall into three groups: more rational relationship between fare charged and distance traveled; flat fares allowing a passenger to travel any distance on a given line for the same price; and (for taxis) regulated fare structure to end taxi-stand bargaining and make rates consistent and predictable.

76. Ultimately, it is the presence of alternatives that makes it easier for users to optimize preferences regarding availability, comfort security and value for money. Some form of private involvement in public transport system is clearly favored. Yet, at the same time, a purely privatized system finds only limited support.

77. Providers aver that many of the public transport companies in the area are caught in the classic squeeze between rising costs and the limited ability of many patrons to sustain higher prices. One solution is cross-subsidization within the company, with more profitable routes covering for money-losing destinations and times. Such arrangements are possible in a monopoly or near-monopoly situation, but are harder to sustain in competitive markets. A more complex solution is to have a set of independent operators, some public and some private, using different equipment, serving distinct but partly overlapping destinations and consumer segments, and offering services which partly compete and partly complement each other. A good example of this approach exists in Zagazig, Egypt. The public and heavily subsidized Internal Service relies on small buses and extends slow, basic, but very affordable service to remote villages. The quasi-private and moderately subsidized East Delta Bus Company covers small towns, some villages and longer trunk routes to cities, but only on paved roads. Prices range from affordable to fairly high. The Egyptian Railway service covers limited, fixed routes and offer prices that start higher but overlap with those of the EDBC. Private minibuses fill in the gaps for off-hours and individual travel. Each provider directs its service to class of people.

78. ***Accountability in Roads and Public Transport.*** Lack of trust in road and public transport agencies is pervasive. Yet, widespread is also the idea that while the private sector is capable of providing quality service, it does not always give good value for money. Nearly all consumers see room for substantial improvement. The net result is that on both road and transit issues there is often a willingness to pay more, but it was coupled with a 'show me first' attitude.

79. **Provider Accountability.**

Both public and private transport operators took their share of criticism for being unresponsive to passenger needs. Among the suggestions for making information more accessible and improving accountability, are: (i) better signage on government buildings, notice boards, and maps; (ii) programs that help citizens contribute to law enforcement efforts; and (iii) issue-based task forces to coordinate action by government agencies at different levels.

**Box 15: Performance Feedback in the Public Sector**

The methods of the public Internal Service of Zagazig, Egypt, though hardly sophisticated, does not fit the stereotype of out-of-touch bureaucrats.

[We are very satisfied if the service] is covering the needs of each village. The data is collected and evaluated through the people and local councils in the villages. When I receive complaints I investigate them. We make field surveys for each working line; we go out at rush hours to inspect the situation. I personally go with a team to see by myself. Actions always take place as a result of monitoring the transportation network and I increase the service according to this information.

As for the [quasi-private] East Delta buses, revenues are a good index to evaluate the service, also monitoring the different lines to see which is more crowded with passengers than the others so we can increase the number of vehicles running on the same line in order to increase the revenues.

- *Bus provider from Zagazig, Egypt*

80. **Consumer action to Improve Services.** There is no consensus regarding the most effective avenues for citizen action to improve transport services. This is perhaps to be expected in an environment where consumer advocacy groups are rare and citizens do not see clear institutional avenues for making their collective concerns known. Yet, several avenues for practical collective action emerged, among them calls for local focus for small scale direct action; user contributions to demonstrate local buy-in; mobilizing public awareness to educate on citizen responsibilities; use of patronage relationships and so forth.

81. Admittedly, focusing too much on neighborhood needs and political advocacy can contribute to an adhocism that undermines rational and comprehensive planning. But to many consumers, it seems that comprehensive planning and other rational solutions are things that are talked about more than they are acted upon. Without clear political mandates and consistent enforcement of regulations, they do not produce “facts on the ground.”

## C. Slaughterhouses, Markets, Parks and Recreation

### Summary Findings

- For the user, themes of coverage, sanitation, standards and monitoring, crowdedness, access and personal security are central to the quality of slaughterhouse and market operations.
- For the park user, themes of availability, crowding, lack of facilities, maintenance/cleanliness, and security matter most in terms of quality.
- Although availability is not a direct issue for end-users of slaughterhouses and wholesale markets, there is recognition that new facilities are needed to accommodate the needs of growing population. The single biggest challenge to expansion is availability of suitable land.
- There is a severe shortage of park space in most study cities. The main reason is the shortage of contiguous, publicly-owned open space. The prospects of expansion are not promising for now.
- For slaughterhouses, there is willingness to pay more for better quality in some cities, especially given the health aspects associated with their operations. For market services, the tradeoffs are between quality, price and convenience: some opt for quality and convenience, while others put up with distance and dirt to get the best price. Public parks and open spaces are seen as a civic patrimony and a setting that is essential for the physical and moral growth of children. With such views, the idea of restricting admission through user fees is seen fundamentally wrong.
- There is varying degrees of openness—from little interest to explicit support—in different countries to the idea of private sector involvement in slaughterhouses and markets. With regard to parks, the main themes are: private sector will give greater value for money; private sector will make things happen; and private sector is expensive and exclusive.
- Access and accountability issues are not important to the end-users for slaughterhouses and markets, but critical for park users. There are a lot of complaints in this area.

82. ***Perceptions of Quality and Coverage: Slaughterhouses and Markets.*** The themes of *coverage, sanitation, standards and monitoring, crowdedness, access and personal security* are central to the quality of slaughterhouse and market operations.

83. ***Coverage and Location.*** Throughout the region, the proper and hygienic slaughtering of animals is by law, either supervised by government or carried out directly in government-run slaughterhouses, both because of their environmental effects and as a way of ensuring close control and monitoring. Since few consumers have direct contact with slaughterhouses, as they buy meat from butchers and other retail vendors, slaughterhouses are judged by the final quality of meat they buy. Similarly, the average consumer has little direct involvement with wholesale produce markets, although (s)he may be affected by its smell or the congestion generated by the market. Above all, what matters to the consumers is an assurance that their food products are properly handled and free of disease.

84. From this perspective, availability of slaughterhouse is not an issue; but the extent to which meat production is covered by health laws can be. Even if a slaughterhouse or wholesale market is viewed as doing a good job, it can still be considered a nuisance. For example, in Rabat and Sana'a slaughterhouses are in urban areas and residents complain about smells, pollution and traffic congestion. A central location provides easier access to public transport, making the market more accessible to poorer customers, but the neighborhood pays a price.

85. **Sanitation, Standards and Monitoring.** Providers itemize a number of issues facing slaughter houses and markets: scarcity of water, lack of sewerage disposal facilities, poor lighting and transport, and machinery breakdowns. These self-criticisms usually refer to older facilities. They also blame consumers for patronizing shops that engage in illegal or unsanitary practices, just to save some money. On the other hand, consumer criticisms are more likely to target downstream arrangements for transporting, storing and displaying food, especially meat, wherein “shops are open to air, dust, insects, traffic pollution and passing by dogs and do not meet minimal healthy conditions and requirements.” General criticism of this sort is supplemented by more specific concerns about monitoring and quality control in both meat and vegetable markets, such as the need for more veterinary supervision at the slaughterhouse, more health labs to carry out rapid spot testing for spoiled meat, as well as closer attention to and rigorous enforcement against poor quality and forged products, and the practice of replacing labels on expired canned and bottled goods. Customers also want better monitoring weighing scales in wholesale markets.

86. **Crowdedness, Parking and Road Access.** Crowding can stem from bad market design, vendors who spread out beyond their designated spaces, or simply from the fact that the market area has become too small to handle the extra demand created by the city's expansion. Crowding is accompanied by threats to personal safety, a factor mentioned not only by consumers but also by market vendors. Women are especially vulnerable. Further, parking is almost always a problem. Central city markets often may not have adequate nearby parking for customers and vendors, or the market may have expanded at the expense of parking space. Often roads in the market area get blocked by delivery trucks.

87. **Street Vendors.** Unlicensed street vendors are ubiquitous in all cities (except Saveh) and provoke strong reactions. Informal markets are dirty, cause congestion, and may be unsightly for tourists. On the other hand they are often cheaper, and right down the street. They epitomize user frustrations with official retail markets as well as the trade-off between accessibility and quality. Attempts to relocate street vendors into organized market spaces have been tried in

**Box16: Public Market in MNA-8**

Regarding formal markets, the available ones are not enough relative to the population size they are serving. These markets are held once a week on regular basis... in every place in our city. This is in addition to a huge general market for the whole city named Tuesday market. On the other hand, the random markets are available daily. And hence those who were not able to go to Tuesday market can get their vegetables from these markets without any problem. Random markets are found every where in Zagazig city.

- User form Zagazig

many places over the years with mixed success. It was tried in Bethlehem, where farmers were encouraged to set themselves up in the Central Market. It did not stop street selling, to the great frustration of planners. Small vendors selling nearly identical produce can compete only on the basis of location and price. By dispersing themselves they become more convenient to the customer, while reducing price competition and overheads. The formal markets (including the

Food Security Service) are viewed as cleaner, with respectful vendors and better packaging of products.

88. **Perceptions of Quality and Coverage: Parks and Recreation.** Parks and recreation facilities are highly valued by users. They offer a respite from the noise and pollution of the city and are one of the few places in the city shared by people of all social strata. Perhaps, most importantly, parks are widely regarded as one of the few sources of recreation for families and children. Comments like, “*they are our patrimony*” highlight this sentiment. For the most part, user comments on park quality focused on five concerns: availability, crowding, lack of facilities, maintenance/cleanliness, and security.

89. **Availability.** With the exception of Saveh, Iran, users spoke of a severe shortage of park space in these cities. The main reason given for the lack of parks is the shortage of contiguous, publicly-owned open space. Land values are too high and expected revenues too low to make private parks an attractive investment, at least in core city areas. The large parks are often the old ones, built along what used to be the edge of town or during the colonial period. Given the stiff competition for land, it is not surprising that public recreational uses may be shunted aside in favor of public buildings, housing, or—allegedly—private business uses. This idea is particularly galling to some citizens. There were one or more stories about park land that had been 'stolen' for other uses:

90. **Crowding.** The same sites that reported a shortage of parks also report an uncomfortable overcrowding of the existing facilities. Crowding gets worse on holidays. The fact of ‘crowded open space’ negates what parks are supposed to be about. Different people use parks for different activities—organized sports, children's games, picnicking, sitting or strolling; but in small parks these varied legitimate uses interfere with each other, and this can be a problem, especially for families.

**Box 17: Public Gardens**

Moderator: In the city plans, there are many gardens, but where are they? User 1: Some of them were taken and houses were built in those areas or they were sold. User 2: Some [people] took over some gardens. Even though the concerned authorities knew that, they did not do anything to them. (*Users from Yemen, Sana'a*)

91. **Facilities and Maintenance.** Many park users complain about the lack of equipment and facilities at their local parks. Among the items mentioned are the need for more places to sit, including picnic tables or other family facilities; safe and well-maintained playground equipment for the children, including separate equipment for boys and girls, where needed; better lighting and fencing; working toilets and water fountains; municipal swimming pool for inland towns; first-aid facility within the park; and places within the park that are “specifically allocated to families.” Related to the need for better facilities is the issue of maintenance. People cite, for example, that public toilets and drinking fountains do not exist, do not work, or are filthy; park furniture and playground equipment lack regular maintenance; parks are infested with unwelcome birds or insects; and surface water is polluted. Providers clearly recognize the need for maintenance but stress that it costs money and requires genuine cooperation from citizens:

92. **Security.** Personal security in parks is a quality concern in countries like Yemen, Egypt and Iran. Main concerns centered on “social embarrassment” and harassment directed at children, especially girls. In response, there have been calls for a special area devoted to family recreation and for a park “politeness” police or security inspections.

### 93. Expansion and Improvements

94. **Slaughterhouse.** The need for new facilities is quite pervasive in the region. The single greatest challenge to accomplishing this is finding a suitable piece of land, preferably on the outskirts of the city and away from residential neighborhoods. It must have good road connections and be well-served with water and sewerage, or and have its own wastewater treatment equipment. For health reasons slaughtering of red meat and poultry cannot take place on the same site unless it is a very large one. Additionally, there is also need for better on-site storage facilities, more refrigerated transport, and special transport vehicles for waste products. Where funding is an issue, an alternative to building new facilities is the renovation of the existing slaughterhouse and increasing its capacity. Slaughterhouses also clearly need better monitoring and management, focusing on expanded inspections of sanitation and working conditions, pre-slaughter veterinary examinations, and laboratory spot tests of meat samples. There is also a need for better qualified and trained municipal inspectors.

95. **Markets.** Places like Dhamar, Rabat, Ramallah and Zagazig all need new or expanded markets. Five different forms of expansion have been highlighted: (i) building more retail markets and reorganizing existing markets into more specialized markets; (ii) increasing the size of existing markets *“in order to absorb the large number of dealers and to avoid crowding problems, such as thefts, accidents and other troubles;”* (iii) distributing new markets more evenly across the city to reduce travel times, so that *“women and housewives can shop for their groceries at a walking distance from home;”* (iv) increasing the frequency of periodic markets; and (v) expanding or relocating wholesale markets to supplement the central market, consolidating and rationalizing existing central markets, or removing the main wholesale market to a less congested site. Within existing market, both users and providers pointed to the need for greater refrigerated storage capabilities for meat markets; better clean-up after the market shuts down; and improved road access and parking for customers and vendors. Finally, users also address the issue of dealing with street vendors: it was suggested that consumers and vendors with both benefit if street sellers are dispersed into smaller markets areas around the city.

96. **Parks.** Despite a definite need for expansion of facilities in the West Bank, Yemen, Egypt and Morocco, there did there seem to be much hope for adding major parks in the near future. Some users have suggested adding more cultural centers, whether they are located in parks or not, to host cultural and entertainment events. The main bottleneck is a shortage of land. Funds are also in short supply, and there is stiff competition from competing public uses. Given this scenario, other possibilities such as parks in suburban areas, infill strategies to utilize vacant plots, and even ways to make better use of apartment courtyards and back gardens, may need to be explored seriously.

97. Given the intensive use of the limited number of parks available, constant maintenance is essential. Some of the more specific suggestions include using better trained and professional gardeners, at least in supervisory capacities; complement green plantings with tiled or stone walkways; more street plantings and landscaping to benefit those who have no easy access to real parks; having more maintenance and vehicles and equipment into service, installing water-conserving irrigation networks, and improving education of park visitors on the need for treating public green spaces with care. Improving basic facilities such as toilets, wash basins and fountains; eating places, small-scale shops or vending facilities, and a place of worship within the park resonated with many park users as did the need for better off-street parking arrangements. A Zagazig provider suggested "vertical" expansion of amenities as there are no vacant lands to establish new parks. Security issues are also a matter of concern—additional measures like better access control of the park perimeter, introduction of some form of “safety supervision” for

children, and allocation of specific parks areas for families are among the suggestions to boost security.

## 98. Perceptions of Value and Price

99. **Slaughterhouse.** There is willingness to pay more in cities like Ramallah, Dhamar and Rabat for better quality. Prices are up, providers aver, because costs are up; it is not easy to keep afloat financially. 'Yet there are positive externalities that far outweigh the losses in terms of "*less diseases and less environment and health hazard and less fumes.*" All the same, providers would be wise to keep in mind that price does matter in carrying out their role of protecting public health.

### Box 18: Cost Conscious Consumers

Commodities in public markets are cheaper, and we go there even though they are a bit far...(Thus) public markets are serving our purpose despite the fact that they are disorganized and not much clean. (Woman user from Dhamar,)

One of the strong features of random {street} markets is that prices are cheaper compared to formal markets. (User from Zagazig)

Personally would rather go to Bravo supermarket for vegetables, and pay slightly more. Bravo is conveniently located and there is a lot of parking space. (West Bank users)

100. **Markets.** Regarding market services, the tradeoffs are between *quality, price* and *convenience* in choosing between a public market, private store, or street vendor. The patterns of choice are not very different from other urban services: some consumers opt for quality and convenience; while others put up with distance and dirt to get the best price. Retail vendors are also customers for market services and, like other consumers, want value for money. Often they end up paying for services that are not delivered.

101. **Parks.** User perception on the value and price of parks is slightly different from other urban services. Unlike other services, where users fully expect to pay money for services partaken, public parks and open spaces are seen by many as a civic 'patrimony,' an extension of Nature into the city, or a setting that is essential for the physical and moral growth of children. For those with such views, the idea of restricting admission through user fees can seem fundamentally wrong. Accordingly, user views centered on two overlapping themes:

- the issue of price versus quality; and
- the question whether user fees (or higher fees) are appropriate.

102. The general prevailing view regarding pricing park services is that user fees are unacceptable, and this is echoed in views like, "*establishment of parks and even libraries are service activities offered to a wide range of the society, and are not for making a profit.*" Entrance fees for parks generate stiff opposition; the majority of people are against them. 'These objections take mainly three forms:

- people simply can not afford it.
- people will stop using parks, and that will hurt everyone (the conjecture is user charges would make some people stop using services that were good for them and the society in the long run).
- access to open space is our right.

103. A minority of users are content to pay fees provided that parks install playground equipment or make other improvements. But most users emphasize that they are not getting good recreational value for the money they pay in taxes or at the ticket kiosk. Providers though may disagree: *“the public gets a lot of benefits which equal or exceed the charges they pay for it.”* Providers also assert that parks and recreation services are not going to expand or improve unless someone pays for them. Current user fees, where they exist, may help to defray maintenance costs but cannot begin to cover the cost of expansion.’

### **Appropriateness of Providers**

104. ***Slaughterhouses.*** At present the red meat slaughterhouses in the West Bank, Yemen, Morocco and Egypt study cities are owned by units of local government or municipal corporations, with private management of operations in certain select cases. Most of these facilities are operating at a loss, but providers believe that the public health benefits they confer far outweigh any subsidies they receive.

105. Although no full consensus exists, there are varying degrees of openness in different countries, especially among providers, to the idea of privatization. In Egypt and Yemen there is relatively little interest to move from public to private management. One key concern is that meat price will likely increase if the private sector becomes involved. In Yemen, providers agree that slaughterhouses should get public financial support whether they are private or public. At present the government looks at the slaughterhouse corporation as an income generating entity and provides little support. Morocco providers and consumers have the most explicit support for privatizing slaughterhouse operations through concessionary arrangements. There was an emphasis on the better quality management that a private provider would bring to the job.

106. Users are more amenable to opening up the field to private competition to combat the widespread illegal butchering. But many recognize that, whether municipally-or privately-owned, it is difficult for slaughterhouses to exist without subsidies. As for the advantages of private management: *“the most important thing note here is, regardless of the ownership, quality and health control should always remain with the municipality.”* A very interesting idea was about exploring joint-stock slaughterhouses, with ownership shared by the municipality and a consortium of butchers.

107. ***Markets.*** At present, most of the formal markets in these sites are operated by municipalities. All sites have informal street vendors to one degree or another. Overall, consumers in several countries want to see their markets reorganized, with more specialized markets and better differentiation among the types of goods sold. This is a possible selling point for private involvement. The idea of delegating market management to a private contractor is definitely on the table (and gaining legitimacy) in countries like Morocco given its good experiences with 66.

108. Private entities operating under local or central government supervision. These arguments bolster the Moroccans’ concerns for a “reorganization of the service” and the need for a “well-structured markets.”

109. On the other hand, in the West Bank and Egypt, although users express the need for more specialized markets, sentiments about private ownership or management are quite negative. In these cases, typically the fears (as expressed in Zagazig, Egypt) are about price increases that are perceived to accompany private sector involvement. Thus it is not unusual to hear arguments such as, *in private markets price trumps quality and convenience; or that food security cannot be*

*trusted to the private sector since public markets are one of the main vehicles for government intervention with price controls and subsidies.* Users also fear that if all markets are privatized and formalized, consumer choice will become even more limited, leaving them only with the ‘random’ markets to fall back on. While there is recognition that improvements are needed, the users opine that the public sector should make these improvements. For many of them, private sector management of markets is an option, only if “*there is a strong provision for food supervision along with it*” and “*there is competition between companies*” on the behalf of consumers.

**110. *Parks and Recreation.*** Only in cities where public park facilities are widely seen as inadequate—Bethlehem, Dhamar and Zagazig—did the topic of privatizing certain aspects of parks and recreation catch attention. Discussions on the topic touched upon issues of public versus private provider value, price exclusion of the poor, management style, and appropriate roles for the private sector. For the most part, consumer views on involving the private sector are parallel to the concerns expressed about other urban services. The main themes by now are familiar:

- The private sector will give better value, commensurate with what consumers pay.
- The private sector is expensive and exclusive. Also, there is no guarantee that a private operator will keep prices low in the long run
- The private sector will make things happen, a theme strongest in Dhamar, but also present in Zagazig and the West Bank, and in essence saying that local government seems unable to make meaningful improvements.

111. Providers foresee many possible roles for the private sector in parks and recreation: (i) as concessionaire for entire parks or park systems or as minor concession-holders operating eating places or other facilities in the park; (ii) as donors of equipment or land; (iii) as management consultants; or (iv) as competitors offering similar or different services. Indirectly though, there are several strands of talk that illuminate people’s thinking about appropriate contributions by business. From a policy standpoint the more fruitful question is, what kinds of private investment can make a positive contribution and still be sustainable. The business issue is whether there is enough demand to sustain them. The policy issue is whether this is the kind of investment that is needed most.

## **112. Accessibility and Accountability: Slaughterhouses Markets and Parks**

113. ***Slaughterhouses and Markets.*** With respect to slaughterhouses and markets, matters of accessibility and accountability do not appear to critical especially for end users who are far more likely to deal with the local butcher than with the slaughterhouse and with retail vendors rather than the manager of the market. But several concern are still valid, among them the location of the slaughter-house facilities and its effects on traffic and nearby neighborhoods; unregulated butchering that can create possible health hazards; difficulties in enforcing standards and monitoring these in many countries, especially in meat production and sale; and low levels of public awareness.

114. ***Parks and Recreation.*** Many of the themes of accessibility and accountability that surface in connection with parks and recreation are parallel to concerns expressed about other urban services. Several suggestions are offered by users and providers to improve internal management and to communicate better with park users. The most relevant ones include: (i)

recognize that responsiveness begins with the park employee; (ii) use administrative data and direct customer contact to regularly monitor park performance; (iii) add a help desk at the entrance to assist people; (iv) assign natives to the area or long-term residents as staff; and (v) start awareness campaigns, such as a voluntary day for tree planting, or a school course or workshop that teaches children about sanitation and respect for the environment.

115. In addition to these typical complaints, specifically with respect to parks there is often a strong feeling that parks are being short-changed when local government sets its priorities for development. This idea is echoed in the many stories of park-designated land being turned into housing, government buildings or businesses uses. While no one denies that housing and other uses are unworthy in themselves, a better balance of priorities is urged.

116. The role of citizens in ensuring good access and improved accountability generated very little discussion. For example, the issue of irresponsible citizen behaviour gathered little response in the parks discussions, except in Dhamar. The Dhamar parks provider complained that “the absence of cooperation from the community side” is the biggest obstacle in delivering good services. In most groups very little was said about consumer action on parks and recreation issues. When asked what they could do to improve service, Zagazig women said that they should use the parks properly, teach their children to do so, and use the complaints box or notify the proper authority if something goes wrong. In Oued Zem, a participant said that “associations are handicapped by the lack of civic spirit and altruism.” Another threw responsibility back into the hands of the civil service by assigning the responsibility for improving services back to the *managers of the public service*. A realistic and straight-talking Ramallah provider summed up the feelings of many professional and technical people in the discussions:

117. “We can see injustice and inefficiency, and understand what causes them; but that in itself does not lead to action. I actually mean, whatever we are discussing right now, it will not solve our problems. We are sitting here, and none of us has the power to make decisions.”

## D. Business Services

### Summary Findings

- Local government services relevant for business include licensing and business permits, taxation, zoning and construction permits, and civil documentation.
- These services face many of the same hurdles as elsewhere in the world: onerous ‘red tape’ and erratic or ineffective enforcement of regulations.
- The criteria against which government services are measured include: policy direction; enabling environments; enforcement and security provision; efficacy; fairness; and mitigation
- Lack of policy direction is acute; creation of enabling environment is focused primarily on markets and industrial zones and in this there is some efforts and progress; corruption, poor enforcement and security provision are hurting investors and businesses; bureaucratic hurdles are affecting the efficacy of business services; pathologies of unfairness, pervasive according to many users, stem from the approval processes that plague the system.
- Feedback regarding the value of government services is fairly negative. Much of this has to do with the ways in which government agencies conduct activities or extract compensation.
- Choice of providers for business services is a non-issue.

118. **Perceptions of Quality and Coverage.** Local government services relevant for business primarily concern aspects of local level regulatory framework—licensing and business permits, taxation, zoning and construction permits, and civil documentation. The record of MNA local governments is mixed, but evokes areas of significant concern. In places like Ramallah, Bethlehem, Dhamar, users are satisfied with the way local authorities provide the civil documents, but in Rabat, Oued Zem, Cairo and Sana’a the levels of satisfaction are low in this regard.

119. The themes emerging from various discussions indicate that local government services for business in the MNA countries face many of the same hurdles as elsewhere in the world: onerous ‘red tape’ and erratic or ineffective enforcement of regulations. Together, these generate (and are generated by) informality and corruption, discourage productive local investment, and undermine local government tax revenues. While the precise dynamics involved are very much embedded in the specific institutional and social context of each community, various discussions reveal a number of criteria against which government services are measured, by providers and users alike, in the different MNA countries. These include: policy direction; enabling environments; enforcement and security provision; efficacy; fairness; and mitigation

120. **Policy Direction.** Lack of an overall policy direction is described as “*the absence of common clear vision at different levels of staff*” (high, middle and lower), leading to a loss of investment opportunities and projects. This can take several forms, such as a lack of strategy concerning business development, or (what participants described as) poor or inadequate urban planning. For example, the Yemeni cities, the participants complained of a lack of planning as a source of social conflict and corruption. Yet, this is by no means a problem unique to Yemen; in fact, the problem of corruption extended across all countries.

121. **Enabling Environment.** There is common presumption that local governments should be creating an enabling environment for private sector activity and promoting a positive investment climate. Most discussions of enabling environment at the local level focused primarily on markets and industrial zones. In some countries, local governments have taken steps forward. For example, in Rabat, there was recognition that attempts have been made by the local government to improve on both market and industrial fronts, although these efforts had not progressed adequately in terms of coverage. One user of industrial zone in Rabat complained that *“the pieces of land in the industrial zone are expensive and we pay in installments, but delivery of the land comes years later.”*

122. **Enforcement and Security Provision.** The enforcement of regulations by municipalities and the provision of basic security by police form significant factors of local government service provision in public perception. Yet, concerns are that *“when a new investor comes, he is faced with a lot of negotiations and blackmailing especially from corrupt officials in concerned service agencies.”* Why does this happen despite laws to the contrary? *“Security defects and other drawbacks and the lack of law and order that would protect investors are the main reasons for blackmailing and driving away investors from the country.”* For example, in Yemen, an attempt to privatize the maintenance of a park failed due to a combination of factors, including corruption, poor enforcement and security provision.

123. **Efficacy of Process.** Issues of efficacy could be described as the problems generated by bureaucratic hurdles or red tape involved in obtaining permits, licenses and other approvals. Several users portrayed the problem as having to apply to three or four different offices, each located in a different part of town, or in another town altogether. It was clear from the discussions that there is an urgent need to improve the processes involved in obtaining licenses, permits and the other forms of permissions to operate.

124. **Fairness in Dealings.** A number of issues relating to (un)fairness of the services provided, especially in the processing of permits and licenses were underscored in the participant discussions. In one example, a businessperson in Rabat related that *“business outlets are granted to us by the local council and we have to respect the regulatory framework, pay taxes and so on an so forth ...but parallel to that there is an underground market, which does not pay any thing to the state. And this is unfair on us.”* This kind of informality is present in all economies. Its growth can be threaten public service provision as it draws more and more potential tax revenue out of the formal, taxable economy. But attempting to shut it down can also have negative consequences, both on those who make their living in such markets and on the wider (formal) economy, to which informal markets are inevitably integrated.

125. The second issue stems from corruption and the appearance of preferential treatment or bias by officials to their friends, family or business associates. In an illustrative case, when asked about the agency responsible for business promotion in the town, the comment was: *“the agency in charge of business and investment in Dhamar is the Sheikh!”* The seemingly preferential or arbitrary treatment by some officials leads people to the conclusion that these officials are in fact a power unto themselves. Corruption is

**Box19: The Service Center Culture**

“No sooner does one start his new enterprise than he is visited by representatives of the Labor Office, Insurance, and Industrial Supervision. In order to avoid their fabricated reports, he has to pay bribes, which ultimate leads him to put an end to his enterprise.”- from Cairo, Egypt.

“Unfortunately, for most of the transactions such as legal documents authentication and endorsement, a bribe has to be given to smoothen the transaction. In many instances, personal relationships also effect business transaction but possibly at lower level as compared to bribery.” – from Dhamar, Yemen

unfair, of course, in that it involves the purchase of an unfair advantage. Ultimately, the pathologies of unfairness stem not from informality or corruption, but the various approval processes that plague the system. Most providers confirm the deep-rooted nature of the problem and note that it is hard to police it when there are not enough resources to provide a living wage or maintain an inspection system.

**126. *Mitigation.*** The effectiveness of government service delivery is measured in part against criteria that can best be described as its ability to mitigate economic and other shocks. For example, in the West Bank, business people look to the government to mitigate the impact of competition or other restrictions from Israel. Yet, there is a good deal of realism about what local governments can do in this regard given its economic, financial, political and administrative limitations. Thus in Oued Zem, when the local economy was badly hit by a chain of events beyond the control of the local government, this was not viewed as the fault of the local government.

**127. *Perceptions of Value and Price.*** The value and price of government services are directly related to perceived transactions costs, in both time and money, of doing business with government agencies. The feedback regarding the value of government services is fairly negative. Much of the dissatisfaction has to do with the ways in which the government agencies conduct their activities or extract their compensation. Then there is also the problem of predictability of fee levels. This is in part due to poor information, but is also a function, in some countries and for some services, of administrative changes to fees and corruption. For example, in Sana'a, "*the I.D. card officially costs 300 Rial, but in reality it may cost 2700 Rial.*" Similar stories emerge from the West Bank, Yemen and Egypt. Often, these kinds of problems have their source in an administrative structure. Few users are willing to contemplate for now increases in service fees or taxes in the absence of significant improvements in service.

128. **Needs for Expansion.** Providers complain of lack of financial and human resources. In some countries, the staff was older and not qualified and the public sector work force needed upgrading. The general feeling is that, “*some of the obstacles related to the business environment are (from) lack of qualified individuals,*” and addressing this would require greater resources, i.e., “*increasing the salary of staff.*” Another prerequisite for organizational change and expansion is locally-based consultation—engagement of citizens and community leaders by service providers, along with inter-agency discussion of service delivery problems.

**Box 20: User’s Views of Service Providers**

At present our situation is similar to a car with its engine running, but not in gear: we don’t move and all we hear is the noise...What we need could be summarized as follows: clear organizational setups, job descriptions, services user’s manual, follow up and evaluation, rewards and punishment and proper plans.

- Dhamar

129. **Appropriateness of Providers.** The choice of provider for business services is a non-issue, and there is no notable example of private sector involvement in the provision of government-to-business services. Who or what could replace local government in providing the regulatory or enabling frameworks for business? The immediate answer is, other (higher) levels of government, even if the record is mixed as to the quality and value of services provided.

130. **Accessibility and Accountability in Business Service Provision.** Access to and accountability of services providers is distorted by relationships of influence and corruption. However, there are indications that civic action can help generate accountability and access. An example from Dhamar, Yemen, where a citizen pressure group was able to hold off rate hikes exemplifies this civic power. Crucial in citizen mobilization is information. Not knowing what questions to ask, of whom, and when is one of the important complaints amongst businesses.

## E. Education

### Summary Findings

The most critical issues associated with schools include accessibility, especially for girls, and quality of education—issues of crowding, infrastructure, teacher motivation and curriculum.

- Overall perception is that public schools have lower quality than private schools; they suffer from overcrowding, lack of adequate facilities and non-motivated teachers.
- Several choices are available in most countries in school selection—public, private and sometimes, other providers such as religious groups. The choice of school depends on the family's financial situation, school's reputation and the distance from home. Poorer families often supplement public school education with tuitions.
- There are widespread complaints about accountability in the school system, especially with regard to public schools. Corruption is pervasive across countries and endemic in some countries; school management is widely criticised for not communicating with parents; and there is no effective system for supervision of teachers.
- The key policy issues are: expanding access and increasing quality of public schools; addressing gender issues in school access; and improving accountability in school system.

131. ***Perceptions about Quality of Schools.*** Discussions on education mainly centered on: (i) the differences between public and private schools; (ii) the quality of education; (iii) shortages of schools; and (iv) poor school management. The overall perception in MNA countries is that public schools have lower quality than private schools, and they suffer from overcrowding, lack of adequate facilities, and non-motivated teachers. Based on the overall perceptions of quality in public schools, the following issues require attention: establishment of more schools; maintenance of existing schools; fewer pupils per class; better management; training courses for teachers; increased teacher salaries; laboratories and teaching equipment; adequate school yards with enough space; evaluation of teachers on a regular basis.

132. ***Crowding.*** It is widely acknowledged that the major challenge facing public schools is overcrowding (50-70 per class is not unusual). This is attributed to the population boom, lack of sufficient number of schools and the fact that, because public schools are more or less free of charge, these are the only schools most parents can afford. Large classes, it is claimed, deteriorate the learning environment and leave no room for interaction and problem solving. In fact, there is sympathy for the teachers who have to work under such difficult conditions. Both users and providers demand better long-term planning, improved communication and coordination between relevant central and local public authorities (in education, urban planning and health), and greater private investments in the school sector to address issues of overcrowding of existing schools and expansion of schools to new areas.

133. ***Non-Motivated and Low Quality Teachers.*** Low teacher motivation is cited as a major issue in many schools. For the most part, accusation about poor motivation is directed at teachers in public schools, but a few users also directed it to teachers and management in private schools. Poor teacher salaries and lack of incentives are factors contributing to low teacher motivation. Another reason cited by many parents regarding why teachers in public schools do not do their utmost to develop each and every student, is that there is a lack of competition for entry into public schools. Most providers are of the opinion that teachers in the private sector perform better, not only because they earn higher salaries than in the public sector, but also because they

are under more pressure from both the school management and the parents, compared to public school teachers. The suggested solutions to the problem of unmotivated, unqualified and misbehaving teachers would be to give teachers more respect through higher salaries, more training courses, and closer supervision by authorities.

134. ***Inadequate School buildings and Lack of Equipment.*** The poor condition of schools, especially public schools, troubles both users and providers. In some places, school infrastructure (or rather, the lack of it) is cited as a reason parents keep their children at home, or provide lessons for them elsewhere. Bad management and inadequate budgets are noted as the main reason for poor quality buildings.

135. With rapid population increases, many schools are too small for the number of pupils they inhabit. Rooms designated for library, computers and science labs have been turned into normal classrooms. In other places, shortage of schools has made it necessary to run a two shift system. These measures have unfortunate consequences, such as splitting up families' routines, schools having shorter days and children therefore getting less hours of education, and excluding extracurricular activities at school. Double shifts are especially inconvenient for girls, many of whom are restricted from walking outside after dark. Higher drop out rates are therefore an unfortunate consequence of this state of affairs. In addition to worn down school buildings, there are also complaints about the poor state of equipments and teaching tools in public schools. Many parents also want to see more variation in the school yards with some greenery and trees, in contrast to a purely asphalted yard, just to make the environment nicer. The poor state of infrastructure plaguing public schools extends to many schools' hygienic facilities too. This creates more problems for girls than for boys since they are more dependent on proper toilet facilities than boys, lack thereof can lead to health problems and even drop out of school as well.

136. Private schools provide much better physical facilities in general. Schools are in well kept buildings with adequate teaching equipment and less crowded classrooms. However, many private schools also face maintenance problems as they are entirely dependent on their incomes to improve the standards.

137. ***Curriculum.*** Examples of dissatisfaction with curriculum are many. In the West Bank and Yemen, both providers and users agree that the curriculum in general is too advanced and technical for the children. Curriculum changes and the heavy workload also put increasing stress on parents and teachers. In many places, teachers lack proper training to include the changes in their lessons. In general, there is a demand for reform in all countries to change teaching from simple instruction, to one that helps children think for themselves.

138. ***Value and Appropriateness of Different Education Providers.*** In all the countries studied there is a choice between private and public schools, at least in principle. The choice of school depends on the families' financial situation. However, in some countries there are additional choices, like experimental schools run by public authorities and schools run by religious groups. Both are considered by many users, but not all, to be better than ordinary public schools. A typical example is the chain of schools called al Azhar schools in Zagazig. These schools put a lot of emphasis on teaching the Holy Koran, require no tuition fee, and even serve a daily meal. Many poor in rural areas take advantage of these schools, which are sponsored by rich religious people. Similarly, in Morocco, but for the OCP schools that are semi-private and free of charge, for the majority, depending on their ability to pay, the choice is between private and public schools. In Yemen, Iran and the Palestinian cities there was no mention of other types of schools apart from private and public ones, and whether parents chose one or the other did to a great extent follow the same pattern as in Morocco and Egypt. Many of those who enroll their children in the public educational system rely nevertheless on extra after-school classes (especially common in Egypt). This is deemed necessary to supplement the normal classroom education. These classes, despite their financial burden, are still cheaper than enrolling in a private school. Even providers in Egypt admit that private lessons are necessary to succeed in school.

139. Apart from economy, peoples' choice of school depends on the school's reputation and the distance to it from their home. Normally the public authorities enroll the child in the school nearest to his or her home. Many people complain about this, as they would prefer to choose according to the school's reputation. In other cases, especially in Egypt, transfer from one school to another has been possible, but is often connected with a cost or a bribe.

140. ***Gender Differences.*** Some participants in Ramallah said that parents give more priority to boys' education by sending them to private schools while girls more often went to public schools. In Yemen and Egypt it was emphasized that girls should have the same opportunities as boys, and even claimed that girls perform much better than boys. In Morocco's rural areas the impression from the discussion is that fewer girls than boys attend school. It was said that girls preferred to stay home and work. This may be related to lack of girl schools in many rural areas together with social restrictions to let girls travel long distance to go to school.

141. It appears that the segregation of genders in school is quite common. Parents of girls prefer girl schools, ideally within the community in which they live, for reasons of safety and accessibility. There is a lack of such schools in many MNA countries. The long distance to school from home, it is suggested, leads to higher drop-out rates for girls, especially in villages.

142. ***Quality and Price.*** Private schools by and large have better facilities than most public schools, but in some areas there is a perception that private schools are more interested in profits than actual education. Users in general are inclined to choose a private school if they have the means, for reasons of better quality teaching, and better treatment and follow-up of students. They tend to accept low quality public schools since these are free of charge and have easy access.

143. Parents' willingness to pay more for better education services is dependent on their financial situation. Most of those who can afford send their children to private schools. Many parents with children in private schools are in fact ready to pay even more for better services, while many of those with children in public school said that was impossible. Some were willing to pay more in public schools as well, but not as long as classes were as crowded. A majority of parents who have their children enrolled in private education are of the opinion that the education

received is in line with the price they pay. A provider in Egypt even said that some parents take up loan to get their children into private schools.

#### **144. Expansion Needs in Education**

145. *Expanding the Number of Schools.* Lack of enough primary schools is a universal complaint. Congestion at schools is mostly a problem in densely populated areas, while shortage of schools seems to be a problem for all areas, and especially so in rural areas of countries like Yemen and Morocco. The key problems in expanding education access are lack of planning and resource constraints.

146. Given the resource constraints faced by public authorities, it may be worthwhile to seek innovative and out of the box solutions. One such example comes to light from Dhamar, Yemen where the Social Development Fund recently has expanded the school sector with new school buildings and additional classes attached to old schools. Interestingly, this was the only city where user groups did not complain about lack of schools, although this does not necessarily mean that the city is well covered with sufficient number of schools.

147. *Addressing Needs of Children with Special Needs.* Children with learning problems or physical disabilities have great difficulties in public schools in the countries in question. Along with infrastructural deficiencies, there is also a lack of qualified teachers to take care of children with special needs.

148. *Extending School Support.* There seems to be a great demand for extended coverage of social workers to assist children who struggle at school. The service exists in several places, but often one social worker covers several schools. The problem is also that they do not have much leverage to deal with problems that arise and are therefore somewhat ineffective.

149. *Communication and Accountability in Education.* Considerable potential exists for improving the channels of communication between school and parents. On the one hand, parents complain that they do not get any information from public schools. On the other hand, the providers complain equally that parents do not take any interest in their child's education. Providers from all countries are keen about more active parent councils, as they see this as an important tool for improving the communication between school and parents. In the private sector the situation is better. When parents pay a considerable sum to educate their children, it appears that they are more active in following up to check upon their child's progress.

150. *Supervision.* The need for effective monitoring and supervision of schools and teachers is easily agreed by all, but questions about who supervises and how it is undertaken remain largely unresolved. In the West Bank there is a law stipulating that each teacher in public education should be supervised by a person from the ministry three times per year. Not everyone believes this law is effective. Add to this, objective criteria to monitor teachers are also lacking. Further, it is also not clear if this law is binding for private schools.

151. *Corruption.* The hydra-headed monster of corruption rears its ugly head in education too, especially in public schools. This is most profound in countries like Egypt and Yemen. Payment for guaranteed

#### **Box 22: User's View on Corruption in School**

*If you want to transfer your child from a school in one place to another place you have to pay a lot of expenses around 500-600 pounds without any reason, even if it is your right to transfer and it is in your residence district, if you refuse to pay, they would say the location is not suitable, and you are have to pay donations to the school and gifts to the managers, and to pay for constructions. my daughter was not transferred until I bought photocopying papers for 100 pounds, a carpet, and an electric fan, although it was her right to be transferred, I do not mind paying but with my own free will.*

*- User from Cairo, Egypt*

success at exams or for letting a child transfer from one school to another is not uncommon. The providers presented this problem from another angle, namely where they were under pressure from parents in passing their particular child.

152. Corruption also takes place with regard to appointments in school, and this in turn has a negative influence on the quality of teaching. While no immediate solutions were on the table, there is agreement that favoritism and corruption had to stop.

## TRANSECT SURVEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

153. The scope of the transect survey was limited and explorative in nature. It targeted only one hundred households for interviews in each of the cities where focus group discussions were held. The households were selected at fixed intervals along two lines drawn arbitrarily through the cities (hence the name *transect* survey). In each household, a responsible adult was used as respondent. The questions addressed access to services, satisfaction with local services, and satisfaction with service providers, as well as a series of background variables.

154. **Relatively Good Access to Services.** It is almost universal in these eight cities to be connected to an *electricity grid*, except for Zagazig where only 75% of the households are connected. Approximately half of the respondents report that they experience cut-offs in the supply, at least a few times a month. Daily cut-offs are common only in Oued Zem (25% of the households, another 30% weekly). In Zagazig and Dhamar 23% and 16% respectively report weekly cut-offs.

155. To have piped water in the dwelling is almost universal, at least in the biggest cities (Palestine 99%, Cairo 87% and Zagazig 64%, Sana'a and Dhamar 92%, Rabat 81% and Oued Zem 59%). The reliability of the supply is not reported to be very high in Cairo and Zagazig, Ramallah and Oued Zem. Only a few households are using unsafe sources (in Zagazig 14%, in Rabat 8%, and in Sana'a 3%).

156. On affordability of water for the households, in order to measure economical as opposed to physical access, with the exception of Bethlehem and Oued Zem, half of the respondents in the cities agreed to the statement that "the cost of water does not restrict our consumption". In Bethlehem only 3% agreed, while in Oued Zem 14% did so. Notably, in Bethlehem one-third and in Oued Zem and Sana'a one-fourth of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement, indicating high economic thresholds restricting the consumption of water.

157. Regarding quality of the drinking water, the respondents were asked if "the quality of the drinking water used in this household is satisfactory". In Dhamar and Bethlehem the answer was "yes" (98% and 97%), while Zagazig and Oued Zem stood out as problem areas with only 38% and 18% respectively of the household having satisfactory drinking water. Cairo (69%) Ramallah (56%), Rabat (63%) and Sana'a (70% "yes") also had a substantial segment with unsatisfactory quality of drinking water.

158. Access to *pour-flush latrines* connected to a public sewerage varies widely by city--from 99% percent in Cairo, 90% in Sana'a, 81% in Rabat and 77% in Ramallah, to only 47% percent in Zagazig in Egypt.

159. It is less common to live in streets equipped with street lights. Ramallah/Al Bireh topped the list with 68 % of the households interviewed having light. In Rabat and Sana'a this is 50%,

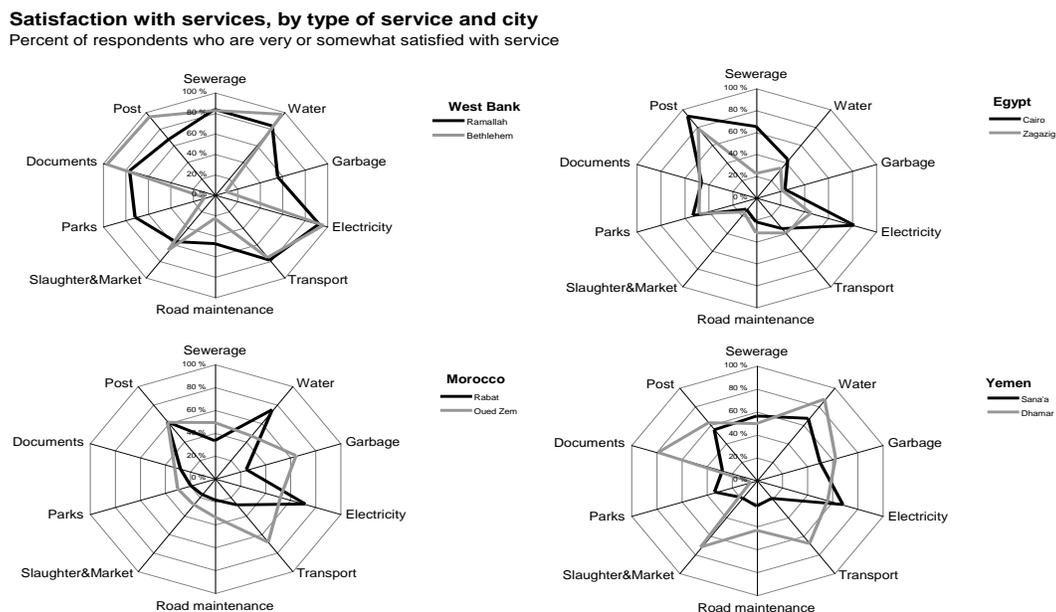
while in Cairo only 11% had lights. In all the cities between 10% and approximately one-third had no light in the streets at all, while the rest had partial lighting of their streets.

**160. Diverse Views on Satisfaction across and Within Countries.** When asked about the extent of satisfaction with the performance of electrical supply, water supply, sewerage and sanitation, garbage collection, local transport and road maintenance, cleaning and lights of streets, slaughterhouses and markets, parks, issuing of civil documents, and post services, the responses carried distinct differences in satisfaction with the various services across the countries and between two cities in the same country.

161. Palestinians appear to be the most satisfied across most services, with some exceptions: garbage collection and maintenance of local roads in Ramallah/Al Bireh and road maintenance, parks and garbage collection in Bethlehem. Egyptians are clearly less satisfied than the Palestinians. They are satisfied with the postal services, the supply of electricity in Cairo (but not in Zagazig), and to a lesser extent, with sewerage and sanitation in Cairo and for parks in both cities. But, they are particularly unsatisfied, both in Cairo and Zagazig, with garbage collection, slaughterhouses and markets, with road maintenance, local transport, and with sewerage and sanitation in Zagazig.

162. Moroccans are also rather unsatisfied with their local services. Less than half of the respondents were satisfied with sewerage and sanitation, road maintenance, slaughterhouses and markets, parks and issuing of civil documents. Even the relatively good scores for the remaining services are not very high. Yemenites are more satisfied than the Egyptians and the Moroccans if they live in Dhamar, but less than the Palestinians. In Sana'a, the respondents are unsatisfied with issuing of civil documents, parks, slaughterhouses and markets, road maintenance and transport, and somewhat satisfied only with electricity and water supplies, sewerage, post services and garbage collection. In Dhamar, the satisfaction is higher, but very low for parks and low for sewerage, and for the maintenance of local roads.

**Figure 1: Satisfaction with Services, by Type of Service and City**

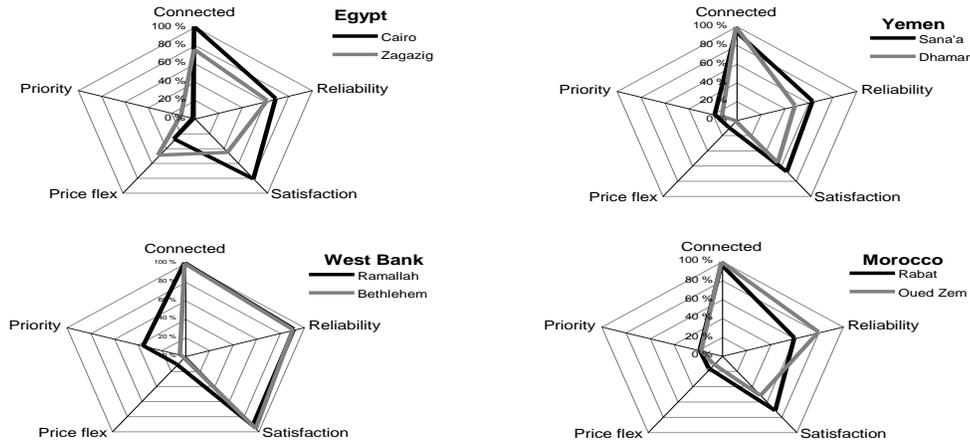


163. **Quality and Reliability.** The responses regarding access and quality of the services can be used to explore why the respondents are more or less satisfied with the services they are given. The figures below present a quick graphic overview of the various measures of stability and reliability, as perceived by users, in the study countries.

**Figure 2: Quality and Satisfaction: Electricity**

**Quality and satisfaction: Electricity**

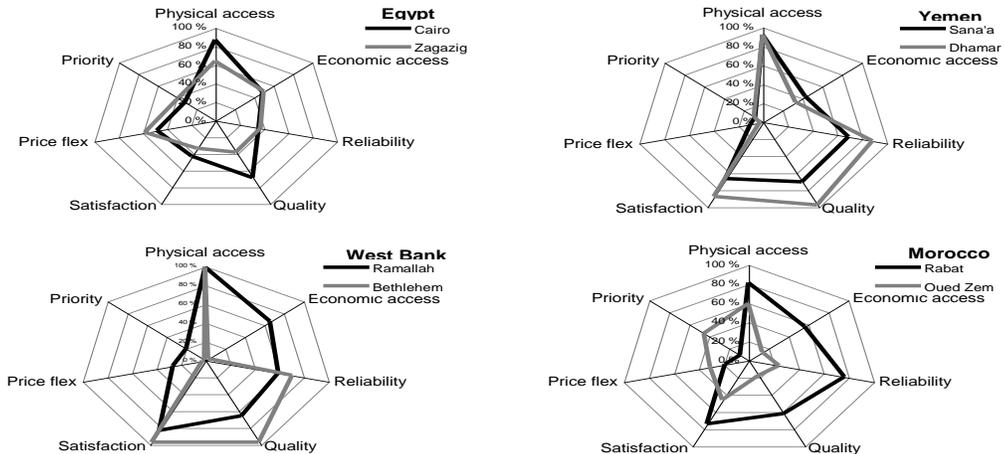
Legend Connected = Percentage of households connected to a network  
 Reliability = Percentage never experiencing problems with electricity  
 Satisfaction = Percentage very or somewhat satisfied with service  
 Price flex = Percentage willing to pay twice as much as today if service is improved  
 Priority = Percentage saying this service is first priority for improvement



**Figure 3: Quality and Satisfaction: Water**

**Quality and satisfaction: Water**

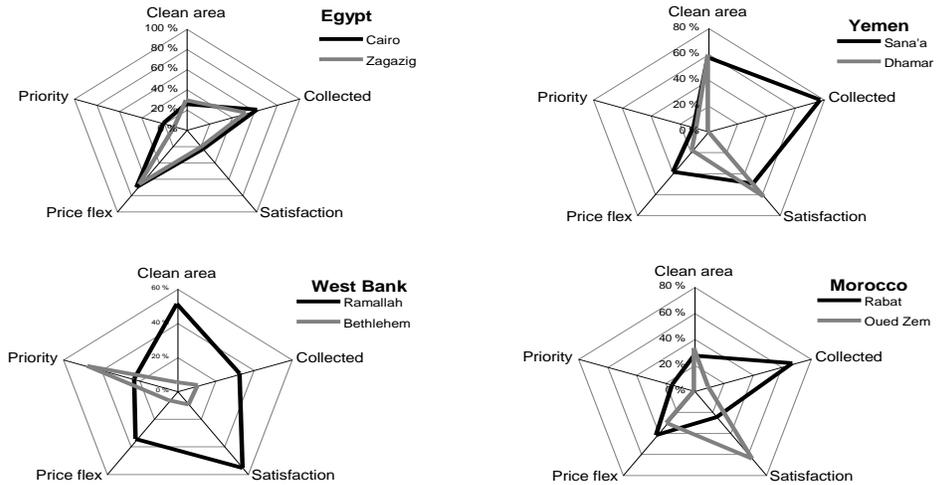
Legend Quality = Percentage satisfied with quality  
 Physical access = Percentage with water piped into dwelling  
 Economic access = Percentage not being restricted in use of water by its cost  
 Reliability = Percentage never experiencing problems with water supply  
 Satisfaction = Percentage very or somewhat satisfied with service  
 Price flex = Percentage willing to pay twice as much as today if service is improved  
 Priority = Percentage saying this service is first priority for improvement



**Figure 4: Quality and Satisfaction: Garbage Collection, Clean F**

**Quality and satisfaction: Garbage collection, clean neighborhood**

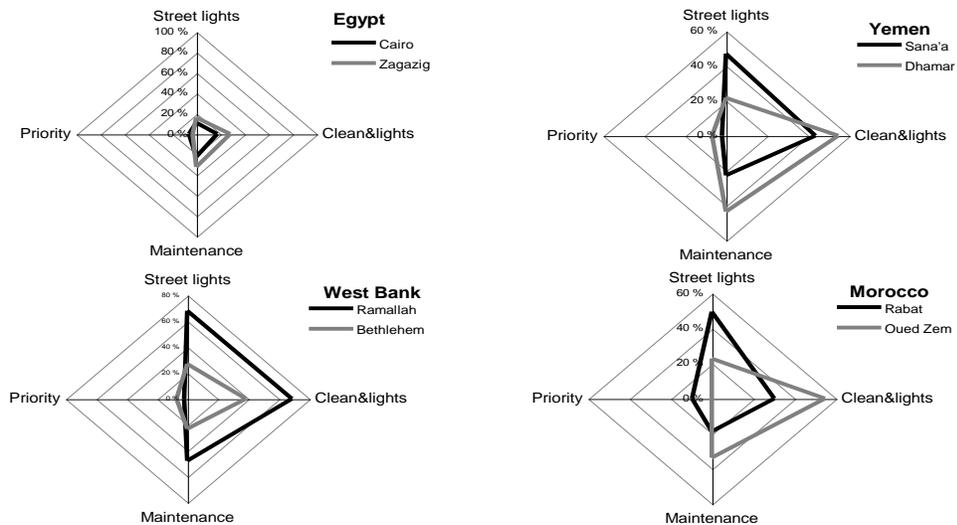
Legend Clean area = Percentage saying the neighborhood is clean  
 Collected = Percentage of household with garbage collected  
 Satisfaction = Percentage very or somewhat satisfied with garbage collection  
 Price flex = Percentage willing to pay twice as much as today if service is improved  
 Priority = Percentage saying this service is first priority for improvement



**Figure 5: Quality and Satisfaction: Local Roads**

**Quality and satisfaction: Local roads**

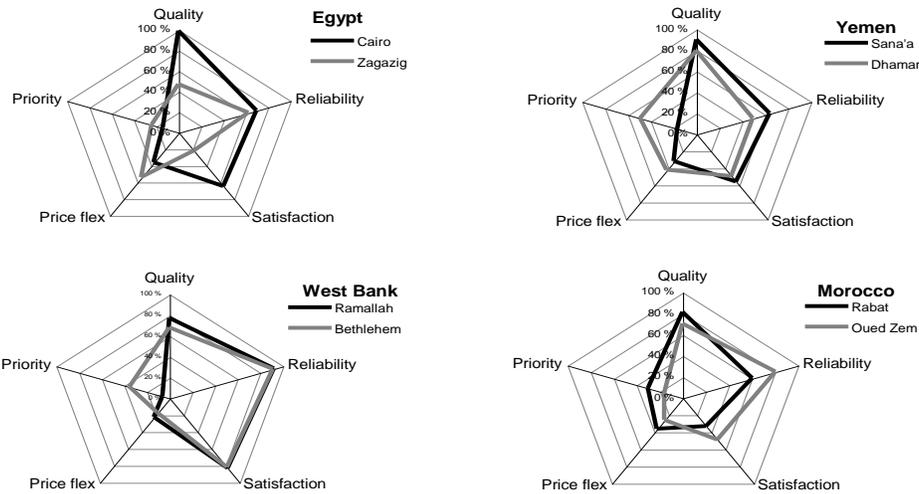
Legend Street lights = Percentage living in streets with lights  
 Clean&light = Percentage satisfied or somewhat satisfied with street cleanliness and light  
 Maintenance = Percentage satisfied or somewhat satisfied with street maintenance  
 Priority = Percentage saying street lights and cleanliness is first priority for improvement



**Figure 6: Quality and Satisfaction: Sewerage and Sanitation**

**Quality and satisfaction: Sewerage and sanitation**

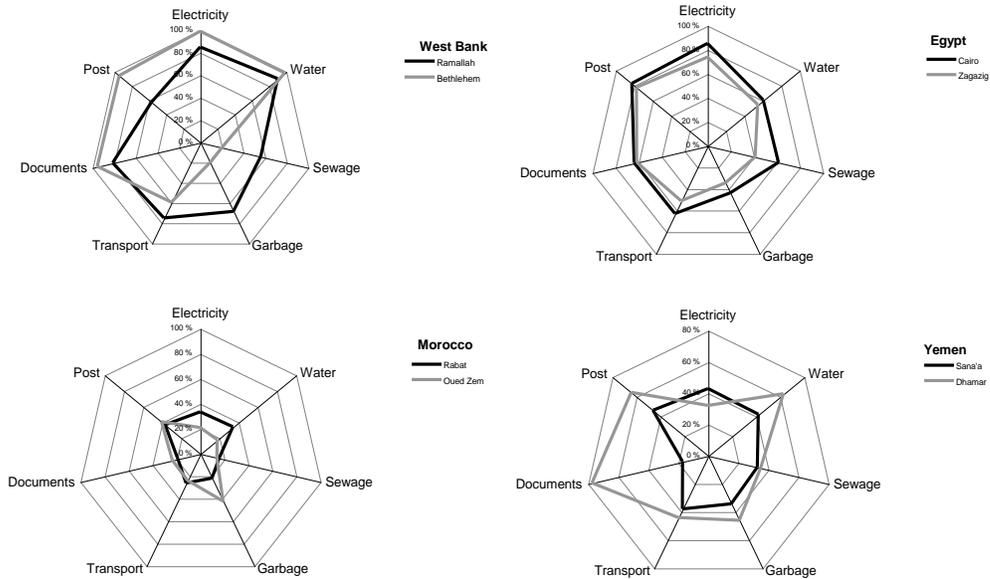
Legend Quality = Percentage with pour-flush toilet connected to public sewerage  
 Reliability = Percentage never experiencing problems with sewerage  
 Satisfaction = Percentage very or somewhat satisfied with service  
 Price flex = Percentage willing to pay twice as much as today if service is improved  
 Priority = Percentage saying this service is first priority for improvement



**Figure 7: Satisfaction with Service Providers, by type of Service and City**

**Satisfaction with service providers, by type of service and city**

Percent of respondents who says personnel is well informed, competent, polite, and easily accessible (average for the four)



**164. *High Differences in Scores on Satisfaction with Providers.*** The respondents were asked about the extent to which they were satisfied with the customer services they receive from personnel working with the various service providers – irrespective of whether they personally had been in contact recently – according to four characteristics: (a) well informed, (b) competent, (c) polite, and (d) easily accessible. The results are shown below.

165. The respondents rated their satisfaction to be high with most service providers in the West Bank and Egypt. The Palestinians rated their service providers somewhat differently between Ramallah and Bethlehem. Respondents were not quite satisfied with the customer services in garbage, sewage, and to some extent, transport. In Ramallah, the scores for post and sewage were lower than for the others. In Egypt, the satisfaction with the providers of garbage collection, water and transport received lower ratings than the others. In Morocco the users are unsatisfied with the customer services for all the service providers in both cities. The respondents in Sana'a were also relatively unsatisfied with all service providers, while the picture was a bit more varied in Dhamar where the respondents were both more satisfied and gave high ratings for the issuing of civil documents, post services and water.

**166. *But the Public is Not Fully Aware of Who is Providing Services.*** The respondents were asked to tell whether the local municipal authorities, central authorities, or private authorities were responsible for operating a list of locally delivered services. A fourth answer category was included for situations where public authorities are responsible without being part of neither the local nor the central authorities. Answers for a few of the services are given in the table below.

167. Respondents were also asked who they think should be responsible, regardless of the present authority, in order to provide the best quality service in a cost-effective way. This draws a relatively complex picture. In general, it appears that there is some support for privatization, and a mixed support for decentralization. There also emerges an intuitive and logical response: when the public is not satisfied with the service provision, they respond to the question about service providers with preference for another kind of provider than the one they have. However, suffice to say, the interpretation of the data is not straightforward and the sample sizes are too small to draw any final conclusions.

**168. *Rather Low Feeling of Effectiveness of Methods for Participation.*** Questions intended to measure people's perception about the effectiveness of holding decision-makers accountable through various means of popular participation and influence, give a picture of rather low opinions of the potential for influence using these means, but there are notable exceptions. The question was phrased the following way: "There are various opinions whether a person can influence effectively the decision-making processes in the municipality. Using this scale, where '1' stands for 'very ineffective' and '10' stands for 'very effective', tell me, how effective, in your opinion, could the following activities be in influencing decision-making in your municipality?" The responses are given in the table below.

**Table 1: User Views on Who Should Provide Services**

Providers	Operating				Should operate				
	Local	Central	Public	Private	Local	Central	Public	Private	
<b>Electricity</b>									
Egypt	Cairo	40 %	18 %	38 %	3 %	55 %	16 %	15 %	13 %
	Zagazig	28 %	41 %	26 %	5 %	39 %	28 %	19 %	13 %
West Bank	Ramallah	3 %	19 %	1 %	76 %	7 %	39 %	0 %	51 %
	Bethlehem	92 %	4 %	0 %	3 %	89 %	6 %	0 %	5 %
Yemen	Sana'a	10 %	8 %	2 %	79 %	13 %	5 %	13 %	66 %
	Dhamar	72 %	17 %	5 %	7 %	74 %	15 %	5 %	7 %
Morocco	Rabat	24 %	14 %	41 %	16 %	25 %	14 %	26 %	32 %
	Oued Zem	24 %	71 %	1 %	0 %	30 %	52 %	0 %	15 %
<b>Water</b>									
Egypt	Cairo	23 %	14 %	56 %	7 %	43 %	18 %	18 %	21 %
	Zagazig	12 %	55 %	27 %	6 %	26 %	34 %	19 %	20 %
West Bank	Ramallah	6 %	45 %	1 %	47 %	7 %	56 %	0 %	35 %
	Bethlehem	93 %	3 %	0 %	3 %	95 %	0 %	0 %	5 %
Yemen	Sana'a	14 %	5 %	1 %	79 %	11 %	7 %	13 %	67 %
	Dhamar	77 %	16 %	5 %	2 %	78 %	15 %	5 %	2 %
Morocco	Rabat	20 %	18 %	41 %	17 %	24 %	14 %	27 %	32 %
	Oued Zem	63 %	31 %	1 %	0 %	58 %	25 %	0 %	12 %
<b>Sewage and sanitation</b>									
Egypt	Cairo	23 %	9 %	62 %	5 %	44 %	20 %	19 %	16 %
	Zagazig	12 %	26 %	29 %	28 %	25 %	27 %	24 %	23 %
West Bank	Ramallah	85 %	2 %	0 %	0 %	60 %	23 %	0 %	14 %
	Bethlehem	93 %	4 %	0 %	2 %	53 %	1 %	0 %	46 %
Yemen	Sana'a	15 %	6 %	1 %	76 %	12 %	5 %	13 %	68 %
	Dhamar	63 %	18 %	3 %	16 %	65 %	17 %	3 %	15 %
Morocco	Rabat	68 %	7 %	6 %	10 %	28 %	4 %	15 %	50 %
	Oued Zem	59 %	34 %	0 %	0 %	55 %	26 %	0 %	13 %
<b>Garbage collection</b>									
Egypt	Cairo	27 %	9 %	4 %	60 %	18 %	15 %	13 %	54 %
	Zagazig	52 %	8 %	14 %	20 %	20 %	11 %	20 %	48 %
West Bank	Ramallah	98 %	2 %	0 %	0 %	62 %	20 %	0 %	16 %
	Bethlehem	98 %	1 %	0 %	1 %	30 %	0 %	0 %	70 %
Yemen	Sana'a	25 %	6 %	3 %	63 %	16 %	3 %	6 %	73 %
	Dhamar	68 %	17 %	3 %	11 %	68 %	16 %	3 %	13 %
Morocco	Rabat	81 %	2 %	3 %	8 %	36 %	3 %	9 %	49 %
	Oued Zem	76 %	18 %	0 %	3 %	76 %	6 %	0 %	15 %
<b>Local transportation</b>									
Egypt	Cairo	58 %	27 %	13 %	2 %	33 %	10 %	15 %	42 %
	Zagazig	33 %	42 %	4 %	21 %	23 %	7 %	17 %	52 %
West Bank	Ramallah	1 %	15 %	1 %	67 %	13 %	44 %	0 %	41 %
	Bethlehem	13 %	5 %	11 %	71 %	16 %	3 %	20 %	61 %
Yemen	Sana'a	34 %	5 %	4 %	55 %	12 %	5 %	7 %	73 %
	Dhamar	68 %	24 %	2 %	6 %	68 %	22 %	5 %	6 %
Morocco	Rabat	31 %	7 %	6 %	46 %	18 %	8 %	14 %	55 %
	Oued Zem	22 %	23 %	0 %	51 %	31 %	15 %	0 %	51 %

**Table 2: Effectiveness of Participation Methods**

<b>Effectiveness of methods to influence decision-making in the municipality (mean)</b> (1= very ineffective, 10=very effective)		Use of media	Voluntary work in organization or committees	Personal	Attending discussion meetings	Participation in public protests
				contact with municipal gov't/assembly		
Egypt	Cairo	3,5	4,1	3,5	3,6	2,4
	Zagazig	4,0	4,2	4,4	4,5	4,1
Yemen	Sana	5,5	6,4	3,1	7,1	7,5
	Dhamar	6,2	5,1	7,2	3,8	5,5
West Bank	Ramallah	6,8	6,0	8,7	5,0	6,2
	Bethlehem	2,0	4,5	7,9	2,3	2,1
Morocco	Rabat	5,2	6,0	5,5	7,3	6,2
	Oued Zem	3,2	2,6	6,6	2,6	3,7
<b>Total</b>		<b>4,5</b>	<b>4,9</b>	<b>5,8</b>	<b>4,5</b>	<b>4,7</b>