Nita Bhalla – Solar Lanterns Replace Kerosene Lamps In Indian Urban Slums

NEW DELHI (Thomson Reuters Foundation) – An Indian social enterprise start-up is helping people living in urban slums to use clean energy by changing their kerosene lamps for solar lanterns and wood fires for more efficient cooking stoves through a simple payment scheme.

Ills.: Reuters

Pollinate Energy, which began operations in 2013, is one of thousands of social businesses in India which are tapping into the clean energy market, in a country where 35-40 percent of the population have no access to electricity.

While the majority of those without power live in rural areas, many poor urban communities are also forced to live by candlelight, use polluting fuels like kerosene, or "steal energy" by illegally tapping in to the power lines of wealthier neighbouring residences.

In Bangalore – best known as India's IT hub – Pollinate Energy markets and sells renewable energy lanterns and stoves on a five-week, interest-free payment plan to families living under tarpaulin sheets in the city's slums.

"There are actually a lot of organisations selling clean energy products in the rural sector already, and we found that there was a big gap in the market in the urban sector," said Monique Alfris, co-founder of Pollinate Energy. "Nobody believes that there are people in urban environments who are using kerosene for light."

Africa Check ~ Kate Wilkinson – Does the ANC have a 'good story to tell'?

The African National Congress has been in power in South Africa for twenty years. In the run-up to the 7 May election, it says it has a "good story to tell" about its performance over that period. This is the first of two reports evaluating key claims. Researched by Kate Wilkinson for AFRICA CHECK.

In this – the first of two reports – we evaluate some of the key claims that the ANC has made in its campaign to win over voters ahead of the country's general election on 7 May.

"In 1994, 1.2-million families were without homes. In 2013, more than 3.3-million families have free homes."

The claim is *incorrect* and the comparison is flawed. In 1994, the Housing White Paper estimated that there was an urban housing backlog of 1.5-million houses, not 1.2-million. Two years later, in 1996, the national census revealed that 1,400,000 shacks or informal dwellings remained in the country. This represented 16% of the nearly 9-million households in South Africa at the time.
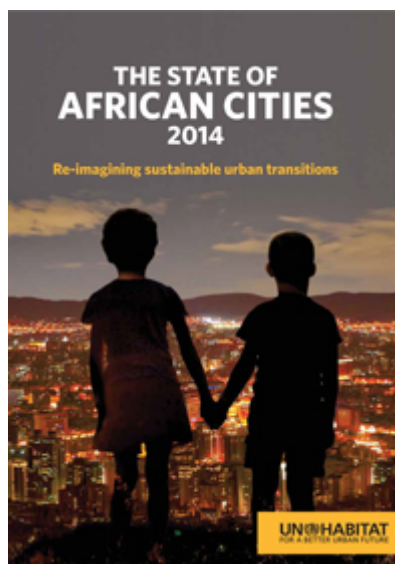
The 2011 national census found that the number of informal dwellings or shacks had increased to just over 1.9-million. This represented 13% of all households in South Africa; a decrease of 3 perecentage points since 1996.

Data compiled by the Department of Human Settlements shows that almost 2.8-million "housing units" and 876,774 "serviced sites" were completed between 1994 and December 2013. This is a total of nearly 3.7-million "housing opportunities".

The ANC claims that 3.3-million families have free homes. But the real picture is far more complex. By definition, "housing opportunities" created by the department are not all free and increasingly involve the provision of "serviced sites", not houses.

Read more: http://www.dailymaverick.co.za/africa-check

UN Habitat – The State of African Cities 2014

The African continent is currently in the midst of simultaneously unfolding and highly significant demographic, economic, technological, environmental, urban and socio-political transitions. Africa's economic performance is promising, with booming cities supporting growing middle classes and creating sizable consumer markets. But despite significant overall growth, not all of Africa performs well. The continent continues to suffer under very rapid urban growth accompanied by massive urban poverty and many other social problems. These seem to indicate that the development trajectories followed by African nations since post-independence may not be able to deliver on the aspirations of broad based human development and prosperity for all. This report, therefore, argues for a bold re-imagining of prevailing models in order to steer the ongoing transitions towards greater sustainability based on a thorough review of all available options. That is especially the case since the already daunting urban challenges in Africa are now

being exacerbated by the new vulnerabilities and threats associated with climate and environmental change.

Download the PDF: http://unhabitat.org/the-state-of-african-cities-2014/

Amanda Burden ~ How Public Spaces Make Cities Work

More than 8 million people are crowded together to live in New York City. What makes it possible? In part, it's the city's great public spaces — from tiny pocket parks to long waterfront promenades — where people can stroll and play. Amanda Burden helped plan some of the city's newest public spaces, drawing on her experience as, surprisingly, an animal behaviorist. She shares the unexpected challenges of planning parks people love — and why it's important.

Pre-paid Meters: Bringing Affordable Water To The Slums Of

Kampala

Mariam is the only child of 22-year-old single mom Rehema. On the way to and from the local spring, near the Rubaga slum in Uganda's capital city, Kampala, she toddles behind her mother. It's a journey they make four times a day to bring home enough water for drinking, cooking and washing.
Even little Mariam carries a jerry can of water: while Mom struggles under the weight of two 22 pound (10-liter) yellow jerry cans, Mariam follows behind carrying a bright red 11 pound (five-liter) jerry can – quite a feat for such a young child.

Rehema knows the quality of the spring water is questionable and could be risky for her daughter's health. Kampala's poorly constructed pit latrines and a high water table are a lethal combination as feces can easily contaminate the water supply. It's not just water quality that is an issue. Accessibility is also a major challenge. With hundreds of people relying on the spring for water, crowds build up, with long waits common in the morning and evening when the heat of the sun is not so fierce.
Rehema commented: "It's very difficult to collect water from there. At 8 or 9 p.m. it is so crowded that it can take more than 30 minutes."

See more at: http://www.washfunders.org/affordable-water-to-the-slums-of-kampala

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Paula Lucci – Putting An Urban

Dimension In Post-2015

Ills.: answers.com

www.globalpolicyjournal.com. April 2014. If we are to end poverty, we must think about urbanisation. The world's population is becoming increasingly urban and the number of people living in slums is set to rise. Urban poverty and sustainability have been longstanding themes in the discussion on what should replace the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) when they expire in 2015: the type of infrastructure built to accommodate these people in urban areas will have a bearing on sustainable development for decades to come. How might a new set of goals do a better job than the MDGs at addressing the problems and opportunities of urban areas?

While it's clear that urbanisation and urban poverty need to be factored in to a new development agenda, working out how is much trickier. Urban poverty is defined by a number of dimensions: income, health and education are part of urban poverty, just as they are part of poverty in any other context. Further, urbanisation (the increasing share of population living in urban centres) is a dynamic and context-specific process: its consequences on the economy and poverty reduction, society and the environment depend on local circumstances and how this process is managed. As such, it does not lend itself to be easily framed in the SMART targets and indicators language of the MDGs.

Read more: http://www.globalpolicyjournal.com/putting-urban-dimension-post-2015