



Over 2.5 billion people lack access to sanitation, more than twice the number lacking power or water. Wherever The Need is looking for commercially viable models for slum sanitation. Natural Innovation is exploring ways to help reduce the cost and increase the safety in their materials safety.

While in the UK in June 2011 I was introduced to David Crowweller of [Wherever the Need](#) (WTN) who filled me in on their project to create a viable business model for sanitation so that micro-enterprises could run slum toilets in areas that neither municipalities nor Aid dollars are likely to reach for a long time. David explained that in India, poor people will not spend money to use a toilet so the models adopted by Sanergy in Kenya are less likely to work.

Instead WTN is looking to generate sufficient revenue from the sale of compost and fertilizer to cover the construction and operating costs of slum toilets. In August I visited Paramasivan who runs the [indian office of WTN](#) and spent a day touring their trials in the slums of Cuddalore. The cultural challenges, from poverty, cast, unclear land ownership etc are huge, and often lead to sub-optimum solutions such as individual stalls spaced out around an area rather than a single block.

Natural Innovation hopes to help WTN through it's collaboration with ReAllocate to source mechanical engineering talent to solve specific challenges of safe waste handling, and chemical engineers to improve the cost effectiveness of turning liquid waste into fertilizer. WTN are also looking for an engineer to work with them to reduce the construction costs.