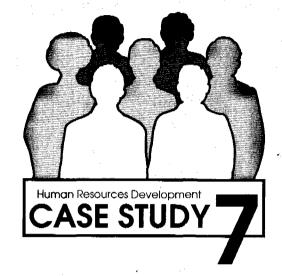
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Pooling resources beyond borders

WHO/CWS/89.14 original: English distr: limited

Pooling resources beyond borders

How seven small countries in Central America improved operation and maintenance of their water supply sectors by joining forces.

> A Human Resources Development Case Study No: 7 in a series

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Foreword

The World Health Organization (WHO) and the Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA) are jointly producing a thematic series of case studies focussing on Human Resources Development.

Our intention is to both illustrate and document various methods, used in different parts of the world, which aim at improving human performance.

Activities and projects selected for this series are all of an innovative nature. They show that there are usually a variety of methods other than classical classroom training to help people do their jobs better.

While country reports and project descriptions are common, one seldom finds detailed descriptions of techniques used. "What was done?" is answered more often than "How was it done?" In this series of case studies we aim to provide the reader with a total perspective of what was done, how it was done, why it was done and an assessment of its effectiveness.

These collected experiences should give the reader ideas, which can be adapted to improve other activities and projects in his or her own environment. We believe this series will be a source of inspiration for action and deliberate change.

Information for this specific case study was gathered during a field visit to Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala and Panama in October 1988. Participants in and designers of the GTZ Operation and Maintenance Training Project, CAPRE representatives, donor agencies and staff of water institutions were interviewed. Workshop reports and other written material also form the basis of this case study. We thank everyone for their contribution.

Alice Petrén, 10 April 1989

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Les opinions exprimées dans les documents par des auteurs cités nommément n'engagent que lesdits auteurs.

Contents

6	Water services at a low point
8	Regional group to tackle problems
10	Building up own capacity to train
12	Step one identifies training needs
14	Personnel trained jointly
20	Lessons learned
24	Other case studies

Summary

Water services at a low point

Own capacity for training

Why should we check this pump when it is working perfectly well?" The question reflects an attitude which one comes across all too often in some developing countries. "Why not save our efforts for when it breaks down? Then we can worry about it." The need for maintenance to ensure a smooth working system and to avoid far more complicated repairs is often not understood or apparent.

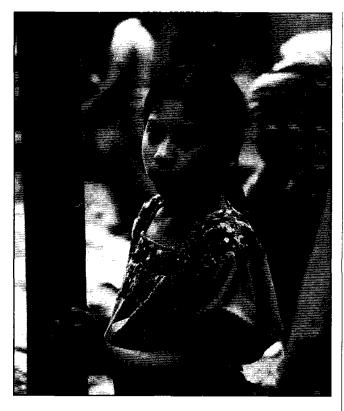
When the five Central American countries, together with Panama and the Dominican Republic, met in 1979, they realized that this was exactly the situation in their own water institutions. Operation and maintenance of the existing water systems was poor. No real effort had ever been made to keep up the quality of services.

The countries agreed that training of staff should be the starting point to come to terms with the deficiencies. Their water institutions needed ongoing staff development programmes. Technical workshops would simultaneously have to be established and equipped.

National coordinators, coordinators for new training units and technical groups, instructors, supervisors and technical staff were trained to tackle problems of operation and maintenance during the project period 1985-1987. In total, about 1,000 people in the seven participating countries have been trained to undertake tasks which will, in the long term, improve water supply services.

Today, several of the Central American countries have their own training units and have developed and strengthened their own capacity fortraining. Most of them have also set up workshops equipped for operating and maintaining the water supply systems.

Finance departments today communicate more intensively with operation and maintenance departments. This means that billing and collection are linked more closely to the actual water supplied and to meter reading. The various customer-related activities have also become more interlinked.



Guatemala and the other countries in the Central American region are all too small to initiate large training projects on their own. By joining forces however, they have been able to train over 1,000 people to undertake tasks which will, in the long term, improve water supply services throughout the region.

Being small and with little money, the countries also realized, when they first met in 1979, that they would profit from working together. By integrating their training activities and cooperating, they would benefit from each other's experience and save money. Strengthened by one another, they would also be able to formulate proposals and attract foreign money to pay for most of the training.

The regional cooperation committee which was subsequently set up works under the name CAPRE — the Comité de Agua Potable y Saneamiento para Centro America Panama y Republica Dominicana. The first problem it decided to tackle was operation and maintenance of existing systems and thus launched a training project with this focus. It took place with financial assistance and technical support from the German government (GTZ) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

Integrating activities

Regional cooperation committee

Setting the scene

Regional group to tackle problems

Working together

Water services in the Central American region have not expanded much during the 1980's. Most of the countries have had big problems with water losses and deficiencies in leak detection, with billing and collection and with maintenance of equipment. Efforts to improve the water supply systems have been directed at construction rather than operation and maintenance of existing ones.

In 1986, an average of 87% of the urban population in the region had access to water services. Figures ranged from 100% in Costa Rica and Panama to 76% in El Salvador. The region's rural population is, however, comparatively underprivileged. Costa Rica is an exception with as high a service level as 83%, while in Nicaragua only 11% and in El Salvador only 20% are served.

In 1979 the five Central American countries (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Honduras) and Panama and the Dominican Republic found that they were experiencing more or less the same difficulties. So they created CAPRE. They believed that working together would be fairly easy as the countries, besides having similar problems, also share the same language — Spanish — and the same culture and history.

A first step in setting up CAPRE was to identify the water institutions which it would be appropriate to include in this regional cooperation. In several of the countries there are both public and private enterprises providing water services. As Costa Rica had a big and quite developed water institution compared to the other countries, it was decided that it — AYA (Instituto Costarricense de Acueductos y Alcantarillados) — be the headquarters for CAPRE.

CAPRE is a consultative body with no legal status and with little money. Its main function is to raise funds and solicit technical assistance by linking up with universities and various institutions abroad. The national water institutions' presidents and executive directors form the CAPRE planning and coordination committee. A one-person secretariat handles coordination of activities and daily contact

between the participating countries. The CAPRE committee meets once a year. It took the countries some time to get the structures of cooperation going and then to launch a project. To agree on procedures, to prepare proposals and to raise funds is time-consuming.

So far, the Operation and Maintenance Training Project — known as the GTZ Project — is the only project implemented by CAPRE. Political

differences among the participating countries and regional instability have made it difficult to raise the money needed to materialize all of CAPRE's ideas, Meanwhile, if the countries had not started to work together, they would probably have been worse off as they are each too small to initiate large projects on their own.

Initially the project budget was US\$ 2,485,000 for a 30-month period.

This was made up of one million from the Inter American Development Bank (BID), a joint contribution of one million from the seven participating countries and US\$ 485,000 from the GTZ. But, as the BID pulled out at an early stage for political reasons and the countries did not manage to fulfil their part, funds have consisted essentially of the German government's contribution.

The project has helped get the CAPRE secretariat running and has led to the desired, improved regional cooperation. For example, there have been several earthquakes in the region and the countries have jointly produced emergency plans.

The GTZ Project is now at an intermediate stage. CAPRE hopes to focus future staff development on training in management and in leak detection. Other plans in the pipeline include strengthening CAPRE as a whole; producing and selling chemicals for water treatment, in a jointventure; and establishing an international training network.

Committee meets yearly



The official CAPRE logo. The committee groups together Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama and the Dominican Republic.

Part 1

Building up own capacity to train

Appropriate facilities

The basic idea with the GTZ Project has been to bulld a staff development capacity within each water institution. This has meant training instructors and having them take on the responsibility of transferring knowledge and skills. Once the initial training would be over, the activities should survive without external assistance. There were several different groups of staff which needed to be included in the training. This is what the initial plan for each country looked like:

- Three different types of coordinators and their deputies:
 - Coordinator of the project
 - Coordinator of training unit
 - Coordinator of technical group
- Several instructors and persons preparing training material
- 15 supervisors providing theory and practical guidance
- About 100 workers in operation and maintenance

To facilitate ongoing human resources development involved defining tasks, writing up job descriptions and preparing manuals for each position. Another activity was to establish a training unit. This included, for example, acquiring appropriate facilities and preparing training material. Also, and not least important, would be to create an atmosphere supportive of change.

A full-time project manager was hired to prepare a detailed project design. He was recruited from the Brazilian water and sanitation company, SANEPAR, which is well known for its success in improving its services (see Case Study No: 5 in this series). As in the case of SANEPAR, the staff's qualifications and their training needs were thoroughly examined prior to anything else.

"The project has aimed at providing methods and tools for starting up human resources development departments. In Costa Rica and

Panama there are training units specifically directed towards operation and maintenance, while in other countries, like El Salvador, the project results are poor", says Mr Stenio Fernandez Lima, who has been managing the GTZ Project.

For the Panamanian water institution, IDAAN (Instituto de Acueductos y Alcantarillados Nacionales), the GTZ Project has changed the attitudes of middle level managers. They are all eager to describe the advantages of the project. "This training project has made us much more efficient in operation and maintenance. Although we used to know of the problems, we couldn't organize the information systematically before and even less solve the problems", says Mr Tejada who heads the operation department. He believes that the introduction of various routines and more careful handling of the staff — which have come about as a result of the training — has made the business run more smoothly. The staff see problems in a similar way and are able to reach consensus on what steps to take to solve these.



Mixed success

Attitudes have changed

Street scene in Chichicastenango, Guatemala, Besides having similar problems, the Central American countries also share the same language and culture. This has meant that joint training and problem solving is all the more feasible.

Part 2

Step one identifies training needs

When designing the training project, the first step was to determine training needs. What exactly would the instructors, the supervisors and technical staff need to learn? What would the coordinators have to know to pursue the training? Although it was evident that operation and maintenance was very poor, a careful analysis of the situation in each participating country still had to be made. A questionnaire consisting of some hundred questions was formulated. An interviewing team made up of of two persons travelled to each of the seven countries and collected information. Below are some examples from the questionnaire they used:

as formulated. An interviewing two persons travelled to buntries and collected informe examples from the que	each ormatio	of the sev n. Below o	ren are
• Are there plans of existing connections?	ng pipe:	s and inter	.
	yes	no	
principal system	()	()	
other systems	\ddot{O}	\ddot{O}	
 Are there any manuals or maintain the compo Do you control water quapply standards? 	nents o	f the syste	m?
• What are the problems system?	in oper	ating the	
	yes	no	
lack of tools	()	()	
lack of trained staff	()	()	
defects in construction	()	()	

Do you have a department for control of

yes

()

no

()

leakages or similar?

engineers technicians operators

staff for leak detection

The list of questions was extensive in order to get a very detailed picture of each institution. An inventory of existing training facilities was drawn up at the same time. This enabled project designers to determine what capability each country had of dealing with its problems. The basis for strengthening operation and maintenance would be to establish a training unit specifically oriented towards those problems.

The analysis showed that operation and maintenance work differed among the countries. For example, in one country it was more important to improve metering, while in another it was leak detection. Thus, the training of workers concentrated on the most urgent problems faced by each country. As a complement to the job descriptions and the analyses of the water institutions, the course designers formulated a set of basic questions regarding each course. •

Inventory of facilities

Supervisors' course (example of questions raised)

What is a supervisor?

A supervisor should know how to motivate and encourage his subordinates to perform well. This includes knowing how to evaluate, how to communicate, and how to criticize and reward people. It also means being an instructor. A supervisor takes on several responsibilities and reports to those above him, to those he supervises and to other colleagues.

How can you demonstrate certain tasks?

Tasks can be demonstrated on the spot by the supervisor or by others in the unit. Tasks can also be described through films, slides and video cassettes. The demonstration includes preparing the presentation and allowing time for the trainees to apply what they have learnt. The supervisor should then verify whether subordinates have executed the task correctly.

Part 3

Personnel trained jointly

Training the trainers

The courses for coordinators, instructors and supervisors included to a large extent the same topics. They all learned the basics of analyzing the tasks of different job categories and methods for problem solving and planning. At this level, trainees from participating countries were brought together. Workers in operation and maintenance on the other hand, were trained "at home". Panama, Costa Rica and Nicaragua formed one group, and El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala and the Dominican Republic the other. Bringing together the coordinators meant being able to take advantage of economies of scale. It also laid a foundation for future contacts and cooperation.

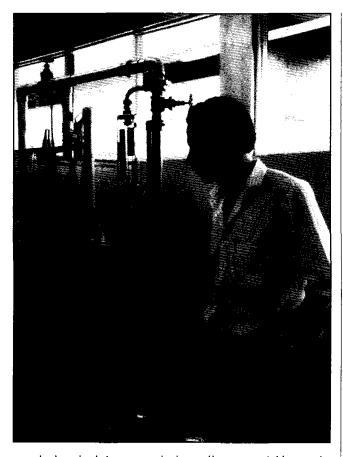
In all, 14 coordinators were trained to set up training units for their own operation and maintenance departments; 18 coordinators to head technical groups, 56 people to become instructors and prepare training material, 132 supervisors and 769 workers. The following describes briefly the training each group received:

Coordinator of training unit

The future training coordinators got general guidance on how to structure a human resources department including overviews of how to recruit, set salaries and coach staff. The course covered how a training section could be established within the operation and maintenance department and the coordinator's own role in this.

The course also included discussions about how to train trainers and exercises for formulating teaching objectives. For example, trainees had to learn to recognize the difference between a general description of a course and clearly stated objectives about what should or shouldn't be taught. The trainees also learned about different instructional techniques and audiovisual aids. How do you motivate people to perform better? How do you run an inspiring class? A broad spectrum of topics was dealt with during the five weeks.

They were also introduced to the process of



Mr Araya (right) heads the metering department at Costa Rica's main water institution, AYA. Since participating in the GTZ Project's training course he has regularly given courses for mechanics at a workshop next to the newly established training unit.

analyzing training needs, how they would have to analyze tasks for each position, look at each job holder's qualifications and check if these corresponded to the institution's goals and objectives.

At the end of the course, the coordinators had to develop a year-long training plan for their institutions. This was done in collaboration with the Heads of the Costa Rican departments of Operation and Maintenance and Finance.

Costa Rica is possibly the country which has come the furthest in building its training capacity. AYA, which is the main water institution, has a human resources department and has created a full development plan for its staff. "Our priority for training activities is still operation and maintenance,

Analyzing training needs

Courses in administration

but we also train trainers and offer courses in administration and management", explains its chief, Mr Rodriguez Rodrico. His subordinate, who plans the training, points to a large diagram. It displays the priorities horizontally and indicates, in a vertical direction, the departments involved.

Coordinator of technical group

These coordinators also underwent general management training in planning, defining roles and responsibilities and in how to organize their own job. A coordinator's tasks are to transfer knowledge and to monitor and evaluate the performance of others.

The specific training for this group focussed on technical issues. When the project started, pipe leakage was a key problem in operation and maintenance departments. During the course trainees learned about metering as an important tool for detecting leakage. They were introduced to technical terminology like macro-metering and network surveys and to different programmes for controlling water losses.

"We all feel more motivated and responsible in relation to our jobs. Today here in Panama, at IDAAN, there is a common language among the employees, we share the same objectives and look upon problems in the same way", explains Mrs Ambar De Pinzón.

She was trained to coordinate a technical group and is proud of the improvements. Still, there is something that really bothers her: "The top management does not give us enough support and so we can't fully benefit from the training. Also, as Panama is in an economic crisis, we don't have the money to carry out proposed solutions."

Instructor

In all, 56 instructors were trained during a sixweek course which was divided into three twoweek phases: phase one involved two weeks in

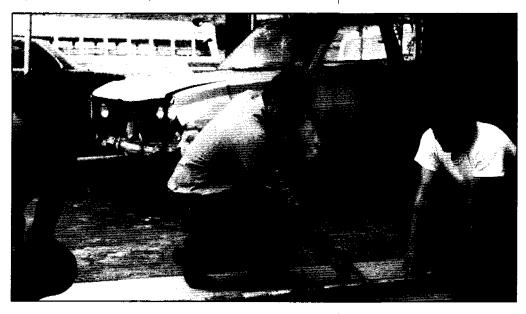
Focus on technical issues

Proud of improvements

the classroom, phase two consisted of field-work and the last phase was on-the-job training.

The course modules introduced the participants, who were well trained technically, to a broad spectrum of teaching methods. Just because someone knows how to perform a task does not imply that he or she is capable of transferring this knowledge or skill to others. The ability to teach and train others was a crucial aspect of the GTZ Project.

On-the-job training

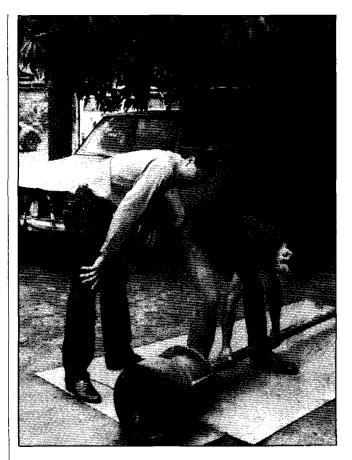


The trainees were taught to prepare presentations, and introduced to group work and audiovisual aids. Why should they actually teach others and about what? They learned this could be answered by stating teaching objectives and by analyzing the relationship between teaching and the organization's objectives. What is our organization aiming at and what are the staff's qualifications? The gap in between would indicate what the needs were for staff development.

"We don't need foreign consultants to do things. With better cooperation between our countries, we can improve things ourselves", says

At the workshop in Panama, Mr Millán explains to workers how to maintain the pipes.

Workers have to be familiar with all the different tools and pieces which are used in the Panamanian water supply system.



Rolando Araya, Head of AYA's Metering Department in Costa Rica. In 1985 he participated in the course for instructors conducted by the GTZ Project. Since then he has at several occasions run courses for mechanics and repair workers.

"The course layout was clear and good, but I have missed a follow-up. You don't become a good trainer after a two-week course." When he gives a course, Mr Araya uses traditional methods such as lecturing and using a blackboard, but also includes practical exercises. He is aware that the students will remember things better if they can see and touch the tools and pieces which they will be working with and repairing.

Mr Araya became the manager of 140 people

Follow-up is missing

after the course: 16 mechanics and 13 maintenance teams made up of seven workers each plus some other staff. He says that the metering system has improved quite considerably during the last few years. The GTZ Project was successful in introducing new concepts and preparing people to deal with the problems they were encountering.

There were about 18 participants in his course. Some were from Panama and Nicaragua. One was Mr Armando Millán, who today heads the electro-mechanical workshop in Panama's water institution IDAAN. "This workshop did not exist five years ago. It is a result of the CAPRE training project."

Mr Millán was trained as an instructor, although he was already giving courses at the University. "To catch a trainee's attention, to keep it and to motivate the trainee is as important as your message. These were some of the many things I learned that you have to consider as a teacher. Before I used to speak all the time, now I let others be heard. I change subjects and methods, and now take a quite different approach to my teaching at the University. In fact, I have introduced my wife to this more active way of teaching, so even she has changed her style."

Supervisor

Supervisors followed a two-week course. It had a lot in common with the course for instructors except that supervisors learned more about job analyses while instructors concentrated on teaching techniques. The first week covered general concepts in the area of teaching, leading people and analyzing needs. They learnt, for example, about different leadership styles and different roles people take on during meetings (see page 21). The second week was used exclusively for drawing up job analyses.

After an introductory day on the concept of job analysis and its objectives, the groups proceeded into the field to produce a task analysis and job description themselves. •

Introducing new concepts

New teaching methods

Job analyses

For the future

Lessons learned

▶ Working together makes everyone stronger.

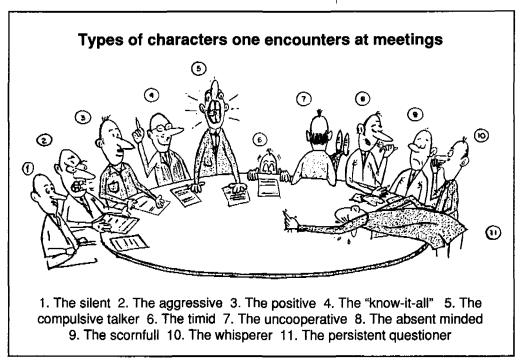
This can be said on a country level as well as on a multi-national level. By starting the regional cooperation committee, CAPRE, the Central American countries, Panama and the Dominican Republic were able to get foreign aid to tackle their problems. As the countries are small, they would not have managed to get a training project like the GTZ Project running without outside assistance.

> Training must to be tailored to actual needs.

In the case of the GTZ Project, a thorough analysis of needs was made before the training programme was designed. In t his way it could meet the needs of each specific country. The training was also tailored to the different jobs based on the task analyses.

- ▶ Communication is an important ingredient for development. By establishing CAPRE the participating countries have now got an organized forum for communicating with each other. When one country can't find a solution to its problems, the others are there and can be reached through CAPRE. Or, the others can be reached directly—the GTZ Project has facilitated horizontal contact between the staff of different water institutions. Supervisors contact other supervisors, instructors get in touch with others, etc.
- ▶ Improvements require an honest will for change. The CAPRE project had varied success in strengthening the operation and maintenance in the participating countries because attitudes towards deliberately changing things differed. Where the staff had an insight into the problems and wanted to do something about them, but lacked solutions, the training project led to the desired results: workshops, better skilled staff and human resources departments. However, at some water institutions, where the will to change was not really there, no big improvements took place.

▶ Individuals must themselves recognize the value of undergoing training. Several persons, like Mrs Ambar De Pinzón and Mr Millán in Panama, have described in this case study how the training helped them perform better. They are happy to produce a "before-and-after" picture of their work situations. Some others were of the opinion that they did not need much training and in particular not by foreigners. It seemed here to reflect a fear of something like "Am I not good enough?"

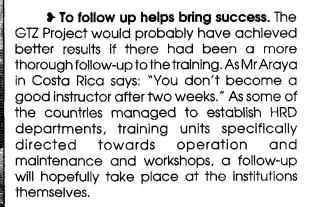


▶ Support from the top-level is crucial for sustainable development. As the GTZ Project was directed towards operation and maintenance, middle level managers were selected for training. In some countries, they would return and get full support to implement their new ideas, while in others the top management would be fairly ignorant about their newly acquired skills. To achieve good results the trainees stress the importance of supportive attitudes from above.

Adequate preparation leads to motivation and responsibility, in Panama, the staff felt that they were equipped with much better methods of how to analyze needs, to plan and to lead others thanks to the GTZ Project. As they are now more

capable of responding to the demands of their positions, they feel more interested in

their tasks.



- If done in a systematic way, setting up a training unit can be easy. Today there are training sections which focus on operation and maintenance in all the countries which participated in the GTZ Project. By systematically approaching the problems, analyzina the tasks and clarifying what is needed in terms of organization and training, the results were good.
- Starting off on a smale scale is better than **not at all.** Costa Rica is the only country which has a full-blown human resources development department which includes a training unit for operation and maintenance. This is partly as a result of training provided during the GTZ Project.

In the other countries the training units are still quite small. However, in all cases there has been an improvement on the situation before when the countries didn't have anything at all. Starting off on a small scale, slowly gaining experience and expanding activities, is effective.

- ▶ Success brings more success. When people feel confident and realize that they have improved the quality of their work, they are more likely to take on new challenges and to continue to make changes. Also, succeeding with a task tends to make one enthusiastic and this spills over into other areas. "If we could do this, why not do that?"
- ▶ Trainees must be carefully selected. When people from different countries are brought together there is a risk that the group is not homogenous. Some people critized the GTZ Project for not being country specific enough. They believe that although there are regional similarities in idiom and culture, the development level, literacy level etc, differ and can have serious effects on a project. Thus, the selection of trainees is crucial for the success of the training.
- ▶ Confidence building is important. Many of the GTZ Project trainees apparently felt much more confident in their jobs after the training. Amongst other things, they are now better able to analyze their own job and that of others and can therefore analyze what is needed by their institution. ◆

Some titles in this series of Human Resources Development case studies

Managing the managers

How the Philippines Local Water Utilities Administration monitors and supports General Managers of 350 Water Districts scattered all over the country.

2 Job descriptions prove their worth
How a training package was developed
during an Organization-Management-Training
Project for 11 Indonesian cities and is now
being applied nationwide.

3 Training programme gets a new profile

How the Water Resources Institute in Tanzania reshaped its curricula to meet the country's need for skilled technicians.

4 Strategic planning workshop sets project on its feet

How a workshop in Tanzania constituted the turning point for implementing a Health-Sanitation-Water programme.

5 People in focus

How the Brazilian water and sanitation company SANEPAR achieved success by putting its staff and customers first.

6 Manpower planning in progress
How Indonesia's water supply sector
forecasts its manpower needs using only one
variable.

Copies can be obtained by writing to the WHO. If you want more information about a specific case study or maybe have ideas about HRD activities to be shared with others, please contact:

Manager, EHE/CWS
World Health Organization
1211 Geneva 27, Switzerland



July 6, 1989

Dear Case Study Reader,

Since the beginning of this year we have sent you six case studies out of a series. To date, unsolicited feedback from a number of readers has been extremely positive about the cases published. We want more opinions - yours.

Our idea is that the case studies on real life experiences in performance improvement will provide inspiration to others. We hope that from these stories you will gain ideas about, for example, how to go about solving problems, designing training programmes or evaluating your activities and progress. The approaches described have been effective in different cultural and organizational settings. In brief, the stories aim to encourage performance improvement - whether it be in people doing their jobs better or in water utilities functioning more efficiently. Has this been achieved?

To help us meet your needs, please complete the following opinion survey and return It in the enclosed envelope. We would appreciate receiving your opinion by 10 September 1989.

Alice Petren

Nell Carefoot Community Water Supply & Sanitation/ EHE

World Health Organization

Do you (generally) read the case studies you get? yes word for word I generally skim them I don't usually read them What happens when you receive the case studies? I generally read them immediately I skim them immediately I put them aside for later reading I give it to a colleague for reading I place it in a library	
I take it home from the office	
I throw it awayl)i
About how many people read or see your copy of the cases? About how many case studies have you read thoroughly?	
topic selection comments? readability comments? readability comments? relevance comments? relevance comments?	

readability of the case studies?	In writing these cases, is there something that we have not thought about (Please comment):	which you	u miss?
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