



Annual Report 2006

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Introduction



Lodewijk de Waal



Paul van Koppen

2006 was an important year for IRC. We successfully completed our Business Plan for 2002-2006 and embarked on a new plan for the coming five years. We also became autonomous from the development cooperation and environment ministries that have traditionally provided our core funding. In the new situation, both ministries have agreed to provide funding under the new Business Plan.

The main theme running through all our activities in 2006 was capacity strengthening. IRC believes that capacity constraints are a major hurdle in achieving the Millennium Development Goals in the water and sanitation sector. Our efforts to strengthen capacities reflect the many roles that IRC plays in the sector: as a facilitator of learning and innovation, a trainer, a development partner, and a clearing house for expertise and information.

This Annual Report shows how those efforts have paid off over the past year. Our focus on strengthening capacity was expressed in a wide variety of ways. Together with UNESCO-IHE, Cap-Net, Streams and the Water & Climate Programme (CPWC), we played an important role at the 4th World Water Forum (WWF4) in Mexico. In September, we organised an international conference on *'Sustainable Water Supply and Sanitation: Strengthening Capacity for Local Governance'*.

In terms of information and knowledge management, IRC continued to provide a broad range of products and services, including the SOURCE family of newsletters in different languages. A comprehensive survey showed that these products and services are highly valued and are widely used by practitioners in the sector. And we welcomed new partners to our quarterly publication Source Bulletin, strengthening the dissemination of information to the WASH sector.

IRC's thematic work continued to attract much attention, impacting on policy discussions in the WASH sector at all levels. The theme of transparency and corruption moved forward with the launch, together with a number of partners, of the Water Integrity Network at the World Water Week in Stockholm. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation commissioned IRC to carry out an important landscaping study as part of its strategic exploration of the WASH sector.

All in all, we continued to build on the results of the external evaluation conducted at the end of 2005, which was very positive about IRC's added value for the sector. Financially, we recuperated the loss from 2005, giving us a solid basis to embark on the new Business Plan. The plan, which was drawn up in close consultation with our partners and stakeholders, incorporated the recommendations from the evaluation.

In the coming five years, IRC's role in the WASH sector will change radically. In particular, we will need to devote extra attention to forging innovative and effective partnerships. But our core concerns will not change: we will continue to do what IRC does best: strengthening capacity, disseminating information and developing knowledge.

IRC is grateful to the Dutch Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment and the Ministry for Development Co-operation for their continued long-term support. Last, but certainly not least, we would like to thank the IRC staff for their personal commitment and contribution to IRC's achievements.

Lodewijk de Waal
Chairman, Board of Supervisors

Paul van Koppen
Director

Highlights of 2006

Symposium issues call to strengthen capacity

The Millennium Development Goals have set a global capacity challenge to scale up water and sanitation services for millions of people and to make them sustainable. The drive to halve the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation comes as services are decentralised with the aim of making them more responsive to communities. However, responsibilities are often transferred to regions, districts or municipalities without matching resources, mandates and competencies.

IRC and UNESCO-IHE brought together key players from service delivery agencies, local government and NGOs to address these issues. The Symposium 'Sustainable Water Supply and Sanitation: Strengthening Capacity for Local Governance' issued a call to strengthen local governments in providing governance of the water and sanitation sector – taking responsibility for ensuring that people's needs are met.

The Symposium, held in Delft, the Netherlands from 26-28 September 2006, identified three key roles – governance by local government, service provision (which may be by local government, community-based organisations or the private sector), and support services to strengthen skills and resources and ensure that service providers fulfil their roles.

Strengthening capacity at this intermediate level, between national and community level, is crucial to achieving a suitable enabling environment, good governance, adequate support and competent staff.

With a series of background papers, real world presentations and opportunities to discuss and synthesise experiences, participants made recommendations for providing leadership and institutional change to strengthen capacity. These identify the roles of donors, national governments, local authorities and NGOs, and build on existing institutions and structures within countries rather than inventing new ones.

4th World Water Forum

Capacity strengthening was a central theme at the 4th World Water Forum in Mexico in March 2006. IRC was part of a consortium, with UNESCO-IHE, Cap-Net, Streams of Knowledge and the Co-operative Programme on Water and Climate, that took responsibility for the cross cutting theme on Capacity Development and Social Learning.

One session, organised with Cinara and Empowers, examined two cases where community participation and representation empowered marginalised groups and played a role in strengthening capacity.

Luis Velasco Valke, chairman of the Aguacol association in Colombia, showed how his organisation represents water committees with government bodies and shares information to strengthen community water management.

Sameeh Noimat, representing the Ministry of Agriculture in Jordan, spoke about involvement in the EMPOWERS programme, which is supported by IRC. EMPOWERS uses a learning alliance methodology to improve local integrated water resource management. It focuses on improving communication and negotiation between communities and district officials, breaking down barriers and improving confidence in decision making.

In this session, a 'devil's advocate' format was used to tease out the key lessons and identified what still needs to be done.



The Intermediator, the symposium newspaper

WELL Briefing Note

Background papers for the Symposium also became a source for a WELL Briefing Note 'Intermediate level capacity development in the water, sanitation and hygiene sector', highlighting the importance of institutional, organisational and human resources.

Smart Sanitation Solutions

'Smart Sanitation Solutions' gives examples of community sanitation solutions that help poor families improve their lives. HRH the Prince of Orange launched this colourful publication from the Netherlands Water Partnership, IRC and partners at the 4th World Water Forum.

RCD partners share lessons from five years of joint learning

"I have learned more in a week about my own organisation and the sector than I have in months at the office." These were the words of one participant following a Learning and Sharing workshop organised in Uganda for Resource Centre Development (RCD) partners in Anglophone Africa. Sharing lessons on how to set up an SMS service for local communities, developing 'Blue Pages' detailing local WASH sector organisations, and ensuring efficient learning and sharing within their own organisations and networks had the keen interest of all 14 participating organisations. A second workshop was also held in Delhi for partners in South Asia.

Great interest in SMS Q & A services

The SMS service set up in Tanzania to provide quick answers in the sector evoked keen interest from some African partners, who see this as an answer to the low Internet coverage on the continent. Pitio Ndyeshumba from the Water and Sanitation Network in Tanzania (WATSANET) was therefore in high demand during the last day of the workshop, when participants had time to consult each other on action plans. Participant TREND from Ghana went as far as to invite him to come and advise them on how to set up an SMS service for them.

Sharing and learning is difficult

Workshop participants agreed that sharing and learning is essential for the success of a resource centre. Lessons need to be shared to enable the development of up-to-date products and services that address real information needs. Reality, however, is often more difficult than theory. The participants identified several internal barriers to effective sharing and learning:

- knowledge is power and sharing knowledge can threaten a person's sense of security
- sharing and learning need time and resources
- there is no reward for learning and sharing
- there is a lack of systems and channels to enhance learning and sharing

Overcoming the barriers

The participants at both workshops were asked how these barriers could be overcome. Interestingly, the answers were very similar:

- Organise events away from the office to discuss how to improve sharing and learning
- Hold regular staff meetings with a structured agenda to support sharing and learning
- Recognise the importance of informal and unstructured sharing and learning. As one participant said: "It is okay with me if my staff have lunch till three once in a while. So many things get discussed during that time."
- Encourage formal personal communication through intranet, scheduled meetings, newsletters, notice boards, and so on.
- Ensure that staff write well-structured travel reports, attend lunch meetings, hold debriefing sessions after projects, and so on.
- Management must enhance learning and sharing within an organisation by allocating resources, facilitating the process, emphasising the need for team work, and so on.



The learning and sharing workshop for Resource Centre Development partners from Anglophone Africa held in November 2006 in Uganda

The Learning and Sharing project is collating lessons learned within resource centres over the past five years. More outcomes will be shared through the RCD community of practice (CoP).

Influencing Policy

Multiple use inspires policy makers

Together with the International Water Management Institute (IWMI), International Development Enterprise (IDE) and the TEC Global Water Partnership, IRC convened a well-attended session on multiple-use water services (MUS) at the 4th World Water Forum in Mexico in March. The session brought together local practitioners piloting integrated approaches to supply water for domestic and productive uses, and representatives of key international and national institutions from the domestic and irrigation sectors.

The response from the participants was enthusiastic. "One of the most exciting things this week," said Roberto Lenton of the Global Water Partnership (GWP), who highlighted how the session offered practical ways to implement integrated water resources management (IWRM): "I enjoyed this series of presentations enormously. It dealt not only with problems locally but also with challenges of scaling up. These multiple-use systems approaches are exactly perfect examples of what we like to think GWP is all about... they integrate solutions to difficult problems of water and development."

Participants from around the world described local actions that illustrated how, in widely varying conditions, multiple-use water services are applying integrated approaches to meet poor people's needs for access to water. Benefits include improved food security, incomes and health, and improved sustainability of water systems.

During a panel discussion, a number of challenges and cautions were raised:

- could MUS approaches undermine efforts to improve sanitation and health?
- can they reach the ultra-poor?
- in peri-urban and urban areas where people are served with expensive treated water, how can we meet multiple needs from multiple sources?
- how is it possible to integrate ecological sanitation, including the re-use of grey water?

The findings of the session will be taken forward in future efforts to develop a broad partnership to realise multiple-use water services.

Policy brief on multiple-use approaches

In February, the IWMI, GWP and IRC published a policy brief in the IWMI Water Policy Briefing series entitled 'Taking a multiple-use approach to meeting the water needs of poor communities brings multiple benefits'. The brief argues that 'poor people need and use water for a wide range of essential activities, including earning much-needed incomes' and that 'deliberately making provisions for these multiple uses of water when designing and managing water-supply and irrigation schemes could greatly reduce poverty, increase gender equity, and improve health - at little additional cost.' The brief clearly sets out what multiple-use approaches are, and their benefits.

Nine cities and 32 partners SWITCH on to water needs of the future

In April, the 32 partners in the SWITCH project attended the launch meeting in Delft. SWITCH (Sustainable Water Management Improves Tomorrow's Cities' Health) aims at developing and applying scientific, technological and socio-economic solutions that contribute to effective urban water management. The project is a partnership between the European



IRC and partners feature in Human Development Report 2006

IRC and partners' work on school sanitation and productive uses of water are quoted in the authoritative Human Development Report 2006 Beyond scarcity: Power, poverty and the global water crisis. Debunking the myth that the crisis is the result of scarcity, this report argues poverty, power and inequality are at the heart of the problem.

In Chapter 3 'The vast deficit in sanitation', IRC's work with UNICEF on Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Education for Schools is used as a source for an item on 'Children as agents for change'. Chapter 5 of the report, 'Water competition in agriculture', draws on a paper and an article by IRC staff and partners.



Lodz city Learning Alliance members' workshop on site. In the background a retention pond for storm water annex recreational area. Lodz has 18 rivers and plans to rehabilitate meandering to increase ground water infiltration.

Union and a consortium of 32 worldwide partners and will run for five years. The idea for the project was developed by IRC, which invited UNESCO-IHE Institute for Water Education to take the lead.

The project, which was presented at the 4th World Water Forum in Mexico City, attempts to project the needs of the 'City of the Future', 30-50 years from now. It addresses challenges related to the quantity and quality of water, ineffective sanitation systems, poor governance and costly water management, against the background of pressure from population growth, urbanisation and climate-change. SWITCH is designed to cover all elements of the

urban water cycle: water demand management, storm water management, waste prevention, treatment and re-use, governance and asset management, river rehabilitation and eco-hydrology.

Three activities, nine demonstration cities

SWITCH will test new solutions in nine demonstration cities: Accra (Ghana), Alexandria (Egypt), Belo Horizonte (Brazil), Beijing (China), Birmingham (UK), Hamburg (Germany), Lodz (Poland), Saragossa (Spain) and Tel Aviv (Israel). Partners will carry out research, training and demonstration projects. Learning Alliances will be set up to ensure a smooth exchange of knowledge and experience between activity clusters and between the cities.

SWITCH is expected to have wide-ranging practical impacts in cities. In the words of UNESCO-IHE director Richard Meganck: "The City of the Future depends on the success of this project".

Research-inspired Policy and Practice Learning in Ethiopia and the Nile Region



A field trip for the RiPPLE project

IRC will play a substantial part in a new five-year research programme to advance evidence-based learning on water supply and sanitation financing, delivery and sustainability, and improve equity of access for the poor in Ethiopia and the Nile region.

The Research-inspired Policy and Practice Learning in Ethiopia and the Nile Region (RiPPLE) programme, which is being financed by DFID, started in July 2006. The leading partner is the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) and other partners include WaterAid Ethiopia, the Institute of Development Research of Addis Ababa University (IDR) and a range of network partners.

RiPPLE will be executed in six districts (woredas) in three regions in Ethiopia (Oromiya, SNNPR and Beni-Shangul-Gumuz). IRC will play a major role in the communication and learning for change components and will assign the equivalent of more than one full-time staff member to the programme over the five-year period.

The main components of RiPPLE are:

- the establishment of Learning and Practice Alliances (LPAs) in the six districts and three regions, with one at national level
- six Longitudinal Action Research studies (LARs), which will provide the thematic scope of RiPPLE
- capacity building on communication and media for LPA participants and others.

RiPPLE also intends to support the University of Addis Ababa and the Ministry of Water Resources in developing resource centre functions that will help sustain learning in the sector within Ethiopia.

India uses SSHE resource guide in technical notes for states

The Indian central government has drawn on the UNICEF/IRC Indian Resource Guide on School Sanitation and Hygiene Education (SSHE) in drafting guidance documents for all the states in India. Their Technical Note 'School Water Supply, Sanitation & Hygiene Education: India' quotes extensively from the guide.

In addition, the programme's director said that IRC had made a valuable contribution to its construction strategy. By using IRC communications software for the strategy, officials responsible for district planning are forced to plan for training before initiating construction.

This work has contributed to the Total Sanitation Campaign active in India since 1999, which aims to put 385,000 school sanitation facilities in place by the end of 2006, with 60 per cent of the funding coming from the national budget, 30 per cent from participating states and 10 per cent from communities.

Water Integrity Network launched to 'keep water clean'

IRC has collaborated with Transparency International, the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI), Swedish Water House (SWH) and Water and Sanitation Program-Africa (WSP-Africa) to found the Water Integrity Network. The network, which aims to tackle widespread corruption in the sector, was officially launched at the 2006 World Water Week in Stockholm.

"The Water Integrity Network hopes to help plug a leak which effectively serves as a barrier to improving the lives of poor people around the world", said Dr Donal O'Leary, Senior Advisor at Transparency International, which hosts the WIN Secretariat. The WIN will address the need to raise awareness and facilitate effective anti-corruption activities on the ground, from influencing national policy through to community-level initiatives involving the private and public sector. It is open to new members from the public and private sector and civil society who want to rid the water sector of corruption.

Advocacy training for sector staff in Niger

Based on a sector assessment in March CREPA and IRC helped facilitate a two-day workshop in July, to provide advocacy training on water, sanitation and hygiene to 25 people from ministries, local authorities and NGOs in Niger. The workshop resulted in an advocacy strategy on hygiene promotion. In Niger hygienic toilets and latrines are hardly available, which contributes to a child malnutrition rate of 39.6 percent.

The workshop was one of the activities of a regional project in Ghana, Mali and Niger on advocacy for WASH Millennium Development Goals, initiated by Water Aid and financed by USAID in the context of the West African Water Initiative (WAWI). It provided a mix of interactive presentations, group work and sharing of advocacy examples. The participants agreed to form a task force in Niger to further develop an action plan, in which two ministries and two NGOs will be involved.

MoU with Ethiopian Ministry of Water Resources

The Ethiopian Minister of Water Resources, Ato Asfaw Dingamo, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with IRC at the end of October 2006. The main focus of the MoU will be on research.

The Ministry's research department and IRC will cooperate on research projects, identify opportunities for building the capacities of the Ministry staff, and help the Ministry design a long-term strategy for research in water resources and water services.

Use and impact

IRC staff prolific in 2006

Publishing articles in journals and conference papers is a major outlet for IRC staff and its partners' advocacy and information-sharing work. In 2006, IRC staff published 70 articles and papers. Capacity strengthening, IRC's key topic in 2006, scored highest with 30 publications. We also published 21 general feature articles in Source Bulletin, seven of which were stories from the field. These have proved to be the most popular among readers.

Articles and papers

Topic	No.
Capacity strengthening	30
Learning alliances and RCD	5
Multiple use, economic benefits	7
Knowledge management and sharing	5
Sector policy	5
Sanitation	5
Financing	4
Local governance	3
Monitoring	2
Giving poor a voice	2
Other topics	2

Articles in Source Bulletin

Topic	No.
Field stories from Nepal, Kenya, Egypt, Tanzania, Madya Pradesh, Bolivia	7
MDG 7 Readers' Opinion	2
Resource centres' work	3
Capacity strengthening	2
Financing	2
World Water Day	3
Sector policy	2

Here are just two examples of the wide range of articles and papers produced by IRC staff:

- Thematic Document, *Cross-Cutting Perspective C: Capacity Development and Social Learning*, 4th World Water Forum, Mexico City, March 2006, UNESCO-IHE Cap-Net UNDP, IRC (Erma Uytewaal), STREAMS, WWC, Water Council and the Water and Climate Dialogue, with contributions from the World Bank
- *On knowledge divides and joined up thinking - Anybody interested?* Peter J. Bury (IRC), Atanu Garai, Baharul Islam, Patrick Ngulube, Julie Ferguson, Sarah Cummings, Editorial in *Knowledge Management for Development Journal*, Vol 2, no. 3, 2006, p 1-4

Learning and action score highest in readers' survey

In 2006, the Information and Communication department conducted a survey on a number of IRC's services, focusing on the family of Source newsletters and other publications. One of the main outcomes of the survey was that readers rate personal learning, action on programmes and advocacy as the top-three information needs met by IRC articles and publications.

In total more than 240 users of IRC newsletters and publications responded to e-mail, web site and paper surveys. Just over half were readers of Source Bulletin on paper. The French and Spanish results were more or less similar to the English ones.

The majority of respondents described themselves as sector professionals. Only eight policy-makers responded, which confirms international findings that this category uses internet and e-mail the least. E-mail is by far the most preferred channel through which people want

to receive information from IRC, but the web site and hard copies still scored quite highly. IRC publications and the web site scored in the top three sources of information on water and sanitation issues. Nearly two-thirds of respondents said that Source Bulletin is the most important periodical on water and sanitation sector news, and for 38 it is one of the top three. The respondents mentioned 40 other important periodicals, among which Waterlines and the WEDC Bulletin scored highest.

Use of Source articles

Nine out of ten respondents provided examples of how Source has helped them in their work. Readers from around the world described the many different ways they used the newsletter, including staying up to date with current publications, as a source of information and reference in papers and research studies, for help in securing funding, and for training purposes. Articles from Source Bulletin were used in village committees, in primary schools, to develop knowledge management capacity, proposal writing, running a workshop for community leaders.

One reader from Bangladesh explained how the article on 'School sanitation in Bisozi Primary School Uganda' (Source Bulletin No 43 Feb 2006) had been useful:

"Through a local NGO this example has been communicated to three primary schools here and there is awareness and action. I also came to know about impact of arsenic on children here. I became aware of the mode of participation in KM".

Publications very useful

Of the 100 replies to the question how useful respondents find IRC's publications for their work, 97 said they were useful or very useful. The main ways in which publications were useful were in writing theses, knowledge management, teaching workshops, field awareness, and keeping up with WASH sector news.

Source Weekly and the Source Bulletin were the primary channel through which respondents are aware of IRC titles. The IRC web site is also an important source, and many others hear about publications from colleagues or through promotional mail from IRC. The strong points of IRC publications are that they are comprehensive and practical, while the most important disadvantages were that they are too academic and expensive. A lot of respondents avoid the price problem by using IRC's free download service, though others were not aware of the option or did not have a fast enough Internet connection.

Barriers

Nearly three-quarters of respondents indicated that there were barriers to them obtaining hard copy IRC publications, the main reasons being that the price is too high and the difficulty in transferring money. For a sixth of respondents, lack of access to the internet and too slow connections presented an obstacle in downloading publications from the IRC web site.

Life skills-based hygiene education

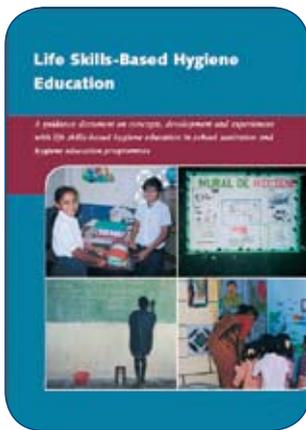
Life skills-based hygiene education, published by IRC, is "very well suited to the needs of government policy- and decision-makers, members of international organisations and NGOs involved in school sanitation and hygiene education. It is a very worthwhile guide for anyone interested in child-friendly primary education, building life skills aspects of primary education, and all involved in school sanitation and hygiene education", wrote Nicola Robertson, Programme Development Unit Manager at Concern Universal, Malawi, in a book review in *Waterlines*, Vol. 25 no. 1, July 2006.

Water Stories book enhanced project impact in Western Kenya

"The Water Stories book you sent to me really enhanced my project activities to achieve optimal impact", wrote Salim Mayeki Shaban, project team leader of the Scaling-up Implementation of Hygiene Promotion, Water and Sanitation Project (BUHEWASA) in the Bungoma district, Western Kenya, in a letter at the end of December 2006. The Water Stories book was published by IRC in 2003 to commemorate its 35th anniversary. It is a collection of stories relating to water from around the world. Mr Shaban was one of 25 people to receive a copy of the book in appreciation for sending back the 2006 IRC survey on Source Bulletin.

In a nutshell, the book convinces the reader of the need for a life-skills approach to education, and provides excellent and detailed guidance on the development of appropriate life skills-based hygiene education (LSBHE). It describes practical ways to teach life skills together with primary school sanitation and hygiene education, enabling children to acquire not only knowledge, but also to develop positive attitudes and skills to help them to improve their own lives, and those of their families and communities.

Sensitive issues such as HIV/AIDS, children's rights, child abuse, gender and local beliefs are gently woven throughout the document in very simple, practical and acceptable ways, suitable for child-friendly approaches even in the most conservative cultures.



Life skills-based hygiene education

Postma, Leonie; Getkate, Renate and van Wijk, Christine (2004), IRC International Water and Sanitation Centre, ISBN 90-6687-045-1. Order code: TP 42-E or download free from <http://www.irc.nl/page/10453>

ODI uses IRC's trends analysis and scenario planning in tools guide

Ben Ramalingam, member of the Research and Policy in Development (RAPID) Programme at the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), London, has used IRC's trends analysis and scenario planning as an example in his excellent new handbook **Tools for Knowledge and Learning: A Guide for Development and Humanitarian Organisations**.

Ramalingam uses the IRC example in a chapter on Scenario Testing and Visioning. He describes how IRC constructed four scenarios for the future of the water and sanitation sector on the basis of a trend analysis. The scenarios indicated conflicting directions in which the water, sanitation and hygiene sectors could develop in order to achieve the MDGs.

The four scenarios present exaggerated, though not impossible, futures based a combination of the most important trends. As Ramalingam points out, it is necessary to explore different potential futures to be sure that a chosen strategy is sufficiently robust for an organisation to achieve its vision. If these extremes are not considered, and then some of them happen, an organisation can find itself badly on the wrong track.

Tools for Knowledge and Learning: A Guide for Development and Humanitarian Organisations is available online at http://www.odi.org.uk/rapid/publications/Documents/KM_toolkit_web.pdf.

IRC scaling-up work features in World Bank toolkit

World Bank staff have used IRC work and outputs on scaling-up in a revised version of their toolkit for multi-sector projects on rural water supply and sanitation. Since its launch in December 2002, the web-based toolkit has received over 33,000 hits and the Bank's Water Help Desk has been asked for copies of the CD-ROM and publications in various languages. The toolkit was revised in 2004.

The key issues section of the toolkit makes considerable use of IRC's TOP on Scaling up Community Management of Rural Water Supply, and links to the IRC thematic group and some of its papers, including the one on our work on Qualitative Information Systems (QIS).

Resource Centres

Tangible information products and services for the sector

In 2006, the Resource Centre Development programme, funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DGIS), came to an end. The programme started with a simple idea: unlearned lessons have a high cost. It was clear that the WASH sector would learn more quickly and perform better if there were organisations that could provide independent products and services focused on meeting information needs. Over the past five years, IRC and partner organisations from more than 18 countries have shown the value of Resource Centres by offering tangible information products and services that have become part of the knowledge background for the sector.



Bridging the information gap

Lessons for further development

Although the RCD programme has come to an end, the Resource Centres will continue to develop their activities. From the beginning, the RCs' mission was to strengthen their own and other stakeholder capacities through joint action research, training courses, advisory work, technical publications, question & answer services etc.

The first five years of the programme have been a learning experience for the Resource Centres. From that experience, patterns have emerged which should inform future initiatives to take the RC process forward:

- Strengthening organisations to make them into Resource Centres requires a long-term commitment to knowledge management, individual, organisational and institutional development, and dedicated resources in time and money.
- The complex functions of a Resource Centre can only be fully achieved in a committed network. Advocacy, team-building and facilitation skills are essential.
- RCs have to adopt an attitude of sharing, trusting and empowering each other.
- Joint action learning projects, participatory assessments and evaluations, and interactive training courses are among the most effective ways to strengthen capacities with and within Resource Centres.
- In spite of paying lip service to encouraging RCs, donors do not readily allocate funds for their development. RC staff have to develop fund-raising skills and find ways of combining resources together to achieve sufficient funding for long term sustainability.
- Resource Centre functions are increasingly needed and IRC and its partners are looking into scaling up the concept. Applying the lessons of the RCD programme will directly contribute to improved and more sustainable capacities in the sector.

Examples of RC information products and services:

- The Resource Centre in Uttaranchal, India, released a directory (Blue Pages) of sector organisations, listing their objectives, activities and contact details.
- The CREPA network in West Africa provided successful training courses on financing and cost recovery, responding to overwhelming demand;
- The Water Information Network in South Africa developed a web site that is now jointly managed by the five lead RC organisations;
- CFPAS, a training centre in Mozambique, produces a newsletter that highlights WASH sector news in Portuguese for the PALOP countries (Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau, Mozambique and São Tomé and Príncipe);
- The RC network in Tanzania set up an SMS-based question and answer service so people could get help with water issues via their mobile phones;
- NETWAS in Kenya raised School Sanitation on the national agenda through an advocacy

"The RCD programme came at just the right moment for the Institute, especially for the Communication and Education Group, since it increased the scope for creativity, for developing new products and for professional growth and internal legitimacy in general. A new group such as this needed to show results, and the programme made this possible."

Rodrigo Galvis Castaño of IRC partner Cinara, the specialist water and sanitation resource centre at the Universidad del Valle, in Cali, Colombia

- campaign using videos, fact sheets and other tools;
- Cinara in Colombia developed an information and communication unit that has set up a successful intranet and institutionalised the sharing of experiences within the organisation;
- WESNET in Pakistan has organised advocacy meetings and training courses bringing all sector stakeholders together.

New directions for RCD under IRC's new Business Plan

Five years of experience with the RCD programme produced a number of important lessons learned, some of which have been incorporated into IRC's new Business Plan. The main conclusions are:

- There is widespread acknowledgement of the need for capacity development for sector learning and to make better use of available information and knowledge in the WASH sector.
- Most services and products of the RCs are not cost effective.
- Funding for initiatives directly aimed at improving Knowledge Management (KM) in the sector is difficult to access.
- Sustainability is a key challenge. To persuade the sector to buy in more strongly to the resource centre concept, initiatives will have to build a track record of proven impact.

In the new business plan, Resource Centre functions and Knowledge Management (KM) will be promoted and strengthened by:

- integrating RC functions into ongoing and new programmes, rather than by developing separate programmes for improving KM in the sector;
- encouraging existing national networks to include KM in their mandates, rather than starting new partnerships or networks;
- encouraging member organisations to make contributions by, for example including RC functions in their project proposals;
- laying more emphasis on products and services that demonstrate the added value of initiatives to the sector;
- maintaining a global learning and sharing platform

For IRC this will mean:

- maintaining the function of a global learning and sharing platform for RCD (conceptual development, exchange between RCs, lessons learned, advocacy),
- placing a greater emphasis on South-South interaction;
- building stronger linkages between RC functions, thematic work, action research, learning alliances and information and communication, in programmes where IRC is involved.

IRC going South

Anticipating implementation of its new business plan, IRC foresees the need to increase the efficiency and flexibility of its core programmes and the way it works with its partners in the South. Where appropriate, and in response to the demands of our regional and country programmes, IRC is considering different options for collaboration, including longer term assignments or missions. A first pilot has started in East-Africa, based in Kampala, Uganda. Depending on the results, more and alternative options will be explored.

Support Group in Latin America continues to promote RCD process

The support group (GPS) set up in Latin America in 2005 at the co-initiative of CEPIS-OPS and IRC continued to promote and support Resource Centre Development processes in 2006. CEPIS-OPS in Lima has a regional mandate in the WASH sector including IM/KM. The organisation was keen to work with IRC to strengthen the sector's capacity in the Latin American region.

In early 2006, with WSP, SNV and Cinara now also part of the initiative, a joint action plan was drawn up, committing all members to advocate for, facilitate and support national KM and RCD processes for enhanced capacities for local WASH governance.

As there is as yet no formal governance structure for supporting and promoting RCD in Latin America, it was decided first to organise a number of concrete activities and address the issue of a suitable structure for collaboration at a later stage.

In 2006 the GPS facilitated and supported national KM/RCD initiatives in Honduras, Nicaragua, Bolivia and Peru. It also developed a number of products and services, including an extranet to enable virtual communication, case studies of existing on RCD practices in Latin America, drafting of conceptual documents RCD and KM in Latin America, and advocacy including the production of PowerPoint presentations.

Action plan

At the end of 2006, there was an evaluation among the GPS members and agreement was reached on an even more ambitious action plan for 2007. The plan maintains the main strategic action lines of the first plan:

- Advocacy for KM at the regional level and providing a platform for sharing and learning among the countries of the region
- Support for country processes for enhanced local WASH governance by improved KM and RCD.

Honduras

The work developed with the GPS in the last few years has laid a solid basis for continued support from IRC in the context of a new regional approach. In Honduras, which is prioritised as a focus country in the regional programme for Latin America, IRC has agreed a long term collaboration programme with RASHON, the country's water and sanitation network. The programme will run from 2007-2011 and will support activities to strengthen capacities for local WASH Governance and the role of IM/KM.

RCD practitioners use Skype for learning and sharing

IRC and resource centre partners have recently been experimenting with using innovative and cheap Skype voice, chat and text options on the internet to develop collaborative papers. Skype is an internet-based facility for making free calls with other Skype-users and cheap phone calls to land and cellphones.

Joint papers

In June, IRC's Peter Bury and Ndala Duma of the Water Information Network in South Africa used Skype to produce a paper together, as a contribution to the online KM4Dev journal in September. The title of the paper is 'Dreams and realities... capacity building for networking in the Water Sanitation and Hygiene Sector: a dialogue between Ndala and Peter.'



School visit in Cali

WELL briefing notes

IRC is a partner in the WELL resource centre for water, sanitation and environmental health, managed by the Water, Engineering and Development Centre at Loughborough University, UK. Activities this year focused mainly on the development of facts sheets and policy notes.

This series of four-page briefing notes discusses the role and importance of water supply, sanitation and hygiene in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In 2006, IRC provided information for briefing notes on the following topics:

- *Finding Water and Sanitation Information on the Internet*
- *People-Centred Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM)*
- *Scaling Up Community Management of Rural Water Supply* ▶

- ▶
- *Money matters; Cost estimates, budgets, aid and the water and sanitation sector*
- *Breaking sectoral barriers for School Sanitation and Hygiene Education (SSHE)*
- *Roadmaps for the Water Supply and Sanitation MDGs. Will they lead the way?*
- *Guidelines for assessing cost-effectiveness of hygiene promotion*
- *Capacity Development for intermediate levels*
- *Donor Harmonisation and Alignment; An overview for the Water Sector*

In July, Peter invited two former participants in the JPO exchange programme to join him and Ndala in preparing a paper for IRC's symposium 'Sustainable Water Supply and Sanitation: Strengthening Capacity for Local Governance' at the end of September. They produced a paper called 'Resource Centres developing capacity of Local Government: Using Skype for learning and sharing dialogue among Resource Centre Development practitioners'.

The authors used Skype's chat and voice conference facilities to agree on method, topics and questions, for analysis and learning lessons, and for editing. Drafts were circulated by e-mail for editing and final endorsement by all authors.

Extremely productive and satisfying

In July, the four authors convened a final Skype session to reflect on the joint learning and sharing. They concluded that it had been an extremely productive and satisfying experience, an "extremely affordable; quick; stimulating and effective way to achieve our goal within a short time." Ndala Duma added: "I particularly like Skype now, before I didn't feel its use that much, but now that I've been exposed practically to it, I know its advantages. I think it'll be a useful tool for further RCD communication."

JPOs give their verdict on programme

In March, the four participants in IRC's Junior Professional Officer programme for 2005-2006 took part in a final workshop to reflect and to look to the future. The JPO programme was set up in 2001 to give young professionals a chance to acquire wider experience and take it back to their own organisations and countries.

Striking a balance

One of the main topics of the workshop was the design of the JPO programme. The participants discussed the role of the JPOs during their three-month internship at IRC, the importance of striking a balance between their own learning and their value for the organisation. Some of them said that they would have liked to have been more involved in IRC projects, though they were aware that this was limited by the short duration of the internship.

The programme also includes a period of internship at an IRC partner organisation. The JPOs felt that one learning point for the future would be to improve communication between their home organisation, IRC and the host organisation. That would enhance the general value of the programme and help both the JPOs and the host organisations to get the best out of the internship. One way of achieving this would be to involve all the actors more closely in the Personal Development Plan that all JPOs draw up before starting on the programme.

Valuable experience

On the whole, Felicité Chabi-Gonni from CREPA in Burkina Faso, Kingsley Archeamong from TREND in Ghana, Adeel Aslam Khan from WESnet in Pakistan, and Dony Philip from SEUF in Kerala, India, found the programme a valuable experience. They found that, in addition to the exposure to new professional knowledge and experiences, living and working in another culture taught them a lot about their own cultures. Reflecting on how it would be to return to their homes and their work, they agreed on the importance of keeping in touch with IRC and their fellow JPOs.

These and the many other outcomes and recommendations of the workshop will be useful in evaluating and improving the programme.

Informing and Communicating

Ask IRC

Ask IRC provides access to WASH information resources through an online Question and Answer service. The Q&A service dealt with 593 requests for information in 2006, a large proportion of which came from developing countries. IRC collaborates with Cinara in Colombia and CREPA in Burkina Faso to respond to questions in Spanish and French.

To improve the service, IRC has set up a WASH helpdesk blog, on which IRC information and content specialists publish answers to questions. In 2006 questions were answered on the use of matching funds in the water sector, corruption, steps to take to start a latrine programme, Islam and water, hygiene education materials, and the right to water.

For each Q&A, links are given to relevant WASH information and keywords are added using the InterWATER Thesaurus. This makes it easier to find information on a specific topic.

Questions dealt with in 2006:

English: 377, 59% from developing countries

French: 66, 65% from African countries

Spanish: 150, 95% from Latin America

Collaborative database to tackle the digital divide

Development and trends in technology bring with them a continuous need for new information. With so much attention being given to the 'digital divide' and 'knowledge apartheid' affecting developing countries, a collaborative database could help remove access barriers to information on water, sanitation and hygiene.

In the WASH sector, the decentralisation trend will increase information needs at local level from government, NGOs and the private sector. There will be a growing demand for information on technical developments in nanotechnology, biotechnology and ecological sanitation. WASH sector professionals, particularly those in the developing world, need a single search window providing easy and affordable access to the latest and most relevant documents that can support attainment of the WASH-related MDGs.

IRC therefore supports the idea of a collaborative sector database, an 'information house' founded on realistic measures to reduce information access barriers. This WASHDOC database, which should incorporate IRC's own IRCDOC library database, is an opportunity to improve information management for the WASH sector in general, and to increase the availability and accessibility of information for WASH sector professionals.

New interface

IRCDOC has a new interface for simple search. The database provides 16,000 references to documents. Records are indexed manually by information specialists at IRC and its Southern partners Cinara (Colombia) and CREPA (Burkina Faso).

GWA and Cap-Net partners in Source Bulletin

IRC's quarterly publication Source Bulletin saw the start of a series of exciting new changes in 2006. The Gender and Water Alliance joined IRC as a partner in producing the Bulletin. Cap-Net, the international network for capacity building in integrated water resources management, will also join as a new partner in 2007. Coverage of gender issues and IWRM will be strengthened as GWA and Cap-Net each contribute two pages of stories from the field and about their organisations.

IRC site in top five

In its new guide 'A Good Place to Start', the Institute of Development Studies' Knowledge Services department in the United Kingdom has selected the IRC web site (www.irc.nl) as one of the top five sites on water and sanitation. The department's staff were asked to recommend five sites that they considered good places to find information on over 30 development themes. The web sites were chosen because they are easy-to-use and offer a broad range of free materials.

'A Good Place to Start: The IDS Knowledge Services Guide to Finding Development Information Online'
Edited by Gabrielle Hurst and Cheryl Brown



Sharing knowledge at the KM workshop in Burkina Faso

Updated InterWATER thesaurus now available online

In 2006 IRC updated its InterWATER thesaurus and made it available online. The thesaurus, a standardised vocabulary for water and sanitation concepts, was first published in 1987 by IRC and the Water Research Centre in the United Kingdom as a contribution to the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade.

The InterWATER thesaurus is available in English, French, and Spanish and has been translated into Arabic by CEHA, the WHO Regional Centre in Jordan. It can be used to index, store and retrieve information, and as a translation tool. Users can check terms in Spanish or French to see what their equivalent is in English, and vice versa.

IRC hopes more organisations working in the water supply and sanitation sector will be interested in using the updated thesaurus as a tool for the improved exchange of information and therefore encourages organisations and individual users to come up with suggestions for new terms.

eZ Publish user group

IRC has set up a user group for eZ Publish, the shared portal architecture used by IRC and its partners. The aim of the group is to give users the opportunity to meet and share their experiences, to learn from each other and to work together to find solutions to shared problems. The meetings are the first steps towards the development of a community of practice for eZ Publish users.

The group's first meeting was held in Delft on 13 September and was followed by a workshop on 29 November 2006. Participants in the workshop were GWA, WASTE, AT@work and SWITCH. The topics discussed included the structure of eZ Publish, how to achieve secure access to the site, e-conferencing, workflows and future developments.

Knowledge Management – a TOP priority at IRC

IRC's focus on knowledge management (KM) goes back a long way. KM was a basic element of the 2000 Streams of Knowledge initiative and became a major topic at the World Information Summit 6 organized by IRC in 2003 to mark its 35th anniversary. Since then, KM has been mainstreamed within IRC. It was responsible for the KM component in the WELL project (2002-2007) and an introduction to KM was a standard element in the JPO (junior professional officer) programme. Five partner Resource Centres enrolled in KM learning/training workshops and presented their progress at the WEDC conference in Kampala in 2005. Both of IRC's major conduits for sector learning, Resource Centre Development (RCD) and Learning Alliances (LA), build on IRC's knowledge on KM's underlying fundamentals of information management and knowledge sharing mechanisms.

IRC efforts to contextualise global insights and good practices on KM for the WATSAN sector have resulted in a TOP (thematic overview paper). The paper attempts to clarify some of the issues around knowledge management. It explores current thinking on KM, discusses important factors relating to it, such as people, processes, technology and strategy, and identifies possible enablers and barriers to success. It also provides guidelines to improve KM at the personal and organisational level. The paper includes comprehensive sections with examples, further reading, TOP models and tools, web sites, contacts and references.

The TOP is being translated into French and Spanish by IRC partners CREPA and Cinara.

Knowledge and information management in the water and sanitation sector: a hard nut to crack

Jan Teun Visscher, Jaap Pels, Viktor Markowski and Sascha de Graaf (2006)

Giving local partners and the poor a voice in development

IRC works together with local partners in 21 developing countries on information and knowledge sharing for improved and hygienic water and sanitation provision. In October, Dick de Jong and Jaap Pels of IRC produced a peer-reviewed paper and gave a poster presentation at the World Congress on Communication for Development in Rome, entitled 'Giving local partners and the poor a voice in development'.

The paper highlights lessons learned from eight years of participatory action research to solve water problems in 22 communities and from school sanitation work by IRC and partners. All the evidence presented leads to the conclusion that 'Communication for Development' should be 'Two-way Communication in Development: basic, practiced and leading to action on the ground every day'.

The paper also stresses access to safe and adequate water and sanitation as a fundamental human need. Developing sustainable capacities to meet this need in developing countries is one of the key challenges for the water sector as a whole. The paper and presentation highlighted the added value of communication in development work.

IRC and its partners apply a variety of instruments to promote communication, including learning circles and vertical/horizontal coalitions, communities of practice, 'infomediaries', help-desks, communication technology, and mutual learning with target groups.

The main conclusion from the presentation was that communication for development should be two-way, basic, practiced and leading to action on the ground every day.

Communication is development

The key message from participants in the congress to policymakers was clear and simple: 'Go home and listen to your people'. On the basis of the premise that development initiatives devoid of communication measures are essentially ineffective, they called for a massive increase in communications efforts, under the slogan 'Communication is development'.

TOP 10 downloads of documents published by IRC		No. of downloads
TOP	Uso Eficiente	2115
TOP	Waste Stabilisation Ponds	2046
TP	The Joy of Learning	1864
TOP	Hygiene Promotion	1010
OP	Ensuring Sustained Beneficial Outcomes WS	929
TOP	HIV/AIDS	819
MDG	Monitoring MDGs (Spanish)	745
TOP	Knowledge management	737
TP	Life Skills	664
TOP	SSHE (Spanish)	664
Total		11593

Developing Knowledge

IRC helps Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to move into WASH sector

In 2006, IRC teamed up with Cranfield University and AguaConsult in the UK to carry out a landscaping study for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The Foundation recognises the fact that safe water and sanitation are essential in the fight against AIDS and other infectious diseases, and is exploring the WASH sector as a potential new area for support. In pursuit of this aim, the Foundation wishes to focus on demand and market opportunities and involve high-level practitioners from all over the world. It approached IRC for help after coming across the IRC web site repeatedly during web research on the sector. The aim of the study was to identify interventions with the potential to provide effective, sustainable and scalable services.

The partnership made an explicit effort to include experts from a wide range of countries as well as from outside the sector, who helped both focus and challenge the work of the study. The collaboration resulted in three papers for the Foundation: a main report presenting global conclusions and recommendations, and supporting documents focusing specifically on approaches and technologies in the WASH sector. The findings were all brought together in a detailed PowerPoint presentation.

Real opportunities for change

The study's conclusions and recommendations strike a positive note for the sector:

- The problems associated with inadequate WASH services are huge, but there are real opportunities to make a difference.
- Action in the WASH sector creates new opportunities for the poor, including better health, time and energy saving; privacy, dignity and safety; and improved livelihoods and education.
- When all actors cooperate together and there is ownership, real change can take place.
- There are no silver bullets, but plenty of opportunity for the scaled-up application of best practice which has been proven at pilot scale.
- Many barriers to progress in WASH lie outside the sector. Weak institutions and poor governance affect the ability to 'do business' effectively, to bring about beneficial change, and to focus on poverty reduction.

Promising and innovative

The supporting documents identify promising and innovative approaches and technologies to help pursue the opportunities for change in the sector. Potentially successful approaches include reforming service delivery to promote self-help and private sector solutions, and scaling up support systems by strengthening capacity at all levels. The study identifies a whole series of technological innovations that could bring about real improvements, ranging from advanced sensors to monitor water resources to low-cost methods for tapping those resources and for storing and treating water.

IRC hopes to continue its collaboration with the Gates Foundation in 2007.

Meeting the costs of achieving the MDGs in the WASH sector

Target 10 of Millennium Development Goal 7 aims 'to halve the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water and sanitation by 2015'. The costs of achieving this target are estimated at between US\$6.5 billion (UN MDG Task Force on Water and Sanitation) to US\$75 billion (World Water Vision) per year. The accuracy of these widely varying estimates is in itself a source of controversy, but the major challenge for the WASH sector is how countries, and developing countries in particular, are going to finance the steps required to achieve the target.

IRC played an active part in addressing these challenges in 2006. In a report published as a WELL briefing note in September, IRC's Catarina Fonseca and co-author Rachel Cardone analysed the financing problems facing the sector using data from 12 Sub-Saharan countries.¹ Later in the year, the same two authors published a background paper on innovative financing for the UN-HABITAT publication 'Meeting Development Goals in Small Urban Centres: Water and Sanitation in the World's Cities 2006'.² And in August, IRC co-organised a debate (with UN-HABITAT) during the Stockholm Water Week on official development assistance (ODA) versus market-based mechanisms as offering the best solutions, with a focus on the problems facing small towns.

In the first half of the year, IRC economist Catarina Fonesca teamed up with colleagues from Cranfield University in the UK to prepare guidelines on user fees and cost recovery for water, sanitation and irrigation projects. The guidelines, commissioned by the African Development Bank, are aimed at ADB staff, regional member countries, service providers and investors in the sector.

Costs underestimated

The WELL briefing note concludes that the cost estimates for the provision of water and sanitation are grossly underestimated, as they do not include many elements required to make services sustainable. Despite recent increases in levels of aid, the 12 countries analysed in the note are very unlikely to find the funds necessary to meet the MDG targets. The note makes a number of recommendations:

- Cost estimates should be updated to include capital maintenance and on-going support costs
- Donor agencies should streamline their own processes to make aid more predictable and consistent
- NGOs and other providers of finance in the WASH sector should publish their accounts to fill the information gap regarding expenditure in the sector.

The lack of information on financial expenditure data and unit costs is a crucial shortcoming in the sector, and impairs progress towards a transparent system in which to make informed and participatory decisions and attract additional finance.

Small towns stuck in the gap

Small towns in particular are suffering the consequences of the financing gap in the water and sanitation sector. Often located on the border between urban/rural or peri-urban/urban areas, they are too small to attract public and private investment, but too large to benefit from community-based financing mechanisms. Both the background paper and the debate in Stockholm called for innovative financing methods that combine both ODA and market-based mechanisms to address these problems. This requires expanding the range of potential stakeholders beyond development agencies and central governments to include NGOs, local banks, lower tiers of government, and users. Innovative finance can move beyond

Water and Sanitation: Institutional Challenges in India

This book records the proceedings of a seminar organised in 2003 by the Indo-Dutch Programme on Alternative Development (IDPAD) at which researchers and practitioners from India and the Netherlands discussed developments in the Indian drinking water and sanitation sector.

It is co-edited by IRC's Christine Sijbesma and Meine Pieter van Dijk of UNESCO-IHE, and includes chapters by IRC staff members Kathy Shordt and Patrick Moriarty. Part I of the book describes the shift towards a decentralized demand-driven sector, the growing water crisis and the challenge for financial sustainability. After describing and analysing the institutional challenges in the water and sanitation sector in India, the book draws conclusions on private sector participation in the urban sector, compares developments in water resources management in India with similar developments in Europe and outlines the areas for further research.

capital investment to tackle issues like operational efficiency, business development skills and connection fees for the poor.

Innovative financing mechanisms

One example of an innovative funding mechanism providing finance for the WASH sector is the community development fund in the Amhara Region, Ethiopia, being implemented by the FINNIDA Rural Water Supply Programme. The community development fund is essentially a grant disbursed to communities through a microfinance institution with screening and follow up from local government. A report by IRC and Rambol-Finnconsult on CDF implementation shows that the mechanism has improved community and local government capacity to implement projects, and promoted the supply of material and equipment by the private sector. This success is reflected in the increased number of water points constructed in one budget year. Since the CDF was introduced in two *woredas* (localities/districts) in 2002, the average implementation of water points per *woreda* has increased from 25 to 54.6 in 10 *woredas*. This means that 215,000 new users can be serviced every year, keeping up with population growth.

- 1 *Cost Estimates, Budgets, Aid and the Water Sector: What's going on?* Catarina Fonseca and Rachel Cardone, WELL Briefing Note 36, September 2006
- 2 *Experiences with Innovative Financing: Small town water supply and sanitation service delivery*, Rachel Cardone and Catarina Fonseca, Background paper for the UN-HABITAT publication, Meeting Development Goals in Small Urban Centres: Water and Sanitation in the World's Cities, July 2006



Damiya, Deir Allah District, Jordan, features in the film Nor any drop to drink. Damiya lies in the Jordan Valley close to the border with Israel. Damiya is under extreme climatic pressure. It is part of the Deir Allah region. This dry region lies on the lowest and hottest place on Earth. The project leaders of Damiya village are the second and third from the right.

Nor any drop to drink

EMPOWERS (Euro-Med Participatory Water Resources Scenarios) is a partnership of fifteen organisations, including IRC, which aims to improve long-term access to water for communities in Egypt, Jordan, the West Bank and Gaza. In 2006, with co-funding from IRC and the Zero-M project, EMPOWERS produced a documentary film entitled 'Nor any drop to drink'.

'Nor any drop to drink' was compiled from three country films produced by young filmmakers from Jordan, Egypt and Palestine. The three country films and the compilation are searches into how local people and institutions on the ground work together in solving problems of water scarcity. The film is distributed by the UK-based Television Trust for the Environment (TVE), as part of its Earth Report series. Its first screening in the region will be in April 2007 at the MEDA international conference on sustainable water management. In June, it will be shown during the opening ceremony of the 'Water is everybody's business' forum in Amman, Jordan, where water experts from all over the world will meet to discuss local water governance and policies for the Middle East.

Assessment concludes that school water programmes work

In March the final workshop took place in Vietnam of an international assessment study of the School Sanitation and Hygiene Education (SSHE) six country pilot programme. IRC worked on the project, which ran from 1999-2003, together with UNICEF and local partners from Burkina Faso, Colombia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Vietnam and Zambia. During the study, local research teams assessed the impact of the project on schools that had participated in the programme in each country and compared them with control schools.

All-round improvement

The main finding of the study was that facilities to provide water were still available and in working order in more than 80% of the participating schools 12 to 18 months after the project had finished. The schools performed better on all SSHE indicators than before the project and better on most indicators than the schools in the control group.

In all countries, the programme schools did far better than the control schools in the use and cleanliness of toilets. There was considerable discussion about who should clean the latrines. In some countries janitors or caretakers were hired, while in others, the pupils themselves did the cleaning, supervised by teachers.

Availability of soap

One persistent problem in most of the schools is the availability and use of soap. This jeopardises efforts to encourage pupils to wash their hands with soap. There seem to be many reasons for the shortage, including expense and the fear of it being stolen. Given the major health benefits of using soap, creative solutions will have to be sought to ensure its availability.

Use of assessment results

Feedback sessions on the assessment outcomes have been organised in all six countries and the outcomes of the programme have been used to strengthen SSHE methodologies and programmes. The team from Vietnam, for example, has agreed with the Ministry of Education that the 2006-2010 country programme cycle will concentrate on a number of activities to boost SSHE nationwide. These include finalising child-friendly school water, toilet and handwashing designs and scaling them up as standard for all schools in the country, focusing training on more than just teachers, and advocacy.

EU to profile 4WS project as best practice

The 4WS project – *Women, Wellbeing, Work, Waste and Sanitation* – has been selected by the European Union to be profiled as a best practice as one of ten from a possible 100 projects. IRC was a partner in the multidisciplinary action research project, which ran from 2003 to 2006 and was funded by the EU. The other partners were universities and NGOs from India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, the Netherlands and Finland, together with the local authorities of six peri-urban coastal settlements in the three South Asian countries.

The project used participatory methods to promote the adoption of improved sanitation and hygiene, training local women (and men) to produce and install sanitation facilities, generate work and improve their status. The results were impressive. In Bangladesh and Kerala, women were taught how to build toilets and rainwater harvesting tanks. In all of the participating communities, sanitation conditions and practices improved, reducing the risk of water-borne diseases. In Bangladesh and Kerala, the improvements achieved by the project are being expanded to other communities and tiers of government. And the capacity of the teams involved in the projects has been strengthened.

On to 6WS?

The success of the project has resulted in a new proposal for a project on 'Women, Work, Water, Wastewater, Waste, Wellbeing and Sanitation' (6WS), requested by the EU under Phase II of its Asia Pro Eco Programme. The project, which has not yet received funding, is to find out whether the approach pioneered in 4WS can also work in urban slums.

UNICEF/IRC SSHE launch global information sharing project

UNICEF and IRC launched a joint project on global information sharing in 2006 in support of UNICEF's global leadership role in school sanitation and hygiene education (SSHE). The project aims to provide stakeholders worldwide with high quality information necessary for SSHE programming and to promote SSHE so that it is given due priority in education and public health programmes. The project builds on recent learning and best practices in school sanitation. Refer to <http://www.schools.watsan.net>

Corruption and Transparency in the Water and Sanitation Sector

Corruption undermines water and sanitation services. It is those without a voice, the poor, who are systematically deprived by corrupt systems. Using resources honestly and effectively, rather than using more resources is arguably an answer to achieving the MDGs for sustained water and sanitation services. However, there has been relatively little work to enhance honesty and transparency and reduce corruption specifically in the WASH sector.

To help tackle these issues, IRC has set up a programme focusing on transparency and good governance. One outcome of the programme is the new Water Integrity Network. In December, a Thematic Overview Paper on corruption and transparency in the WASH sector was published. The paper offers a brief overview of the issues, approaches and information resources, followed by an introduction to the rapidly growing literature on corruption, transparency and honesty in the sector. It concludes that a long-term perspective with sector-specific work on parallel fronts offers the most realistic prospect for tackling the problem.

About Corruption and Transparency in the Water and Sanitation Sector

Kathleen Shordt, Laurent Stravato, Cor Dietvorst

WASHIRIKA: partnership package to improve service delivery at intermediate level

Over the last few years a common thread in the work of IRC and partners has been improved local governance and service delivery and how they can lead to increased and sustained coverage for the poor. Community ownership and management is widely seen as the basis for pro-poor, appropriate and sustainable services. Yet support from local government, civil society institutions and other intermediate level actors is essential. At present, however, many of these actors struggle with their responsibilities and with roles for which they are not fully equipped in terms of financial resources, knowledge, methodologies, tools and experience.

To address this problem, IRC is compiling a package of knowledge and information products, tools and approaches for strengthening of intermediate level governance processes for improved water, sanitation and hygiene services. The package is known as WASHIRIKA, which means in Kiswahili 'partners', a Bantu language spoken in East Africa.

Strengthening service delivery

WASHIRIKA is an effort to consolidate the best materials and outputs of IRC and its partners into a coherent and useful body of information, including models, tools, case studies and tricks of the trade. It is intended to provide a framework that will strengthen service delivery at decentralised levels, addressing relevant issues like planning, support for community institutions, technology, the supply chain, financing, etc. It will offer tools for advocacy, learning workshops and training, short and accessible documentation, power point presentations and case studies.

Partnership is central to local governance and to WASHIRIKA. IRC hopes to involve a wide range of partners in developing, testing and using the package, so that it will become a shared output which the contributing organisations can use and adapt freely. The process will lead to a new 'bottom-line' of shared knowledge and language in local water governance and WASH services delivery.

WASHIRIKA is mainly aimed at trainers, programme staff and institutional leaders. In practical terms, the goal is to create a pool of experts who can support capacity building processes for local governance and confidently use a range of high quality tools and approaches.

The package is structured in a series of levels in pyramid form, reflecting the relative quantity of material at each level:

Level 1: Briefing and advocacy session on developing capacity for service delivery at the intermediate level.

Level 2: Short course in local water governance and WASH services.

Level 3: Consolidated body of materials to support the course

Level 4: Local governance pages on IRC web portal.

Level 5: Resource base of information and knowledge products from IRC and Partners.

WASHIRIKA will be presented in the second half of 2007.



WASHIRIKA pyramid

Staff and Human Resources

IRC believes in the value of an international and well balanced workforce capable of meeting the new and challenging objectives of the new Business Plan. At the same time, a stimulating environment for professional and individual development is essential within the framework of a learning organisation. This requires a flexible package of employment conditions in which new and creative ways are to be explored and found next to the more traditional terms of employment.

In 2006 the Personnel Manual, including IRC's human resources policy and procedures, was updated. This was partly in response to several changes in Dutch employment regulations, including a new Health Insurance Policy and the introduction of the *Levensloopregeling*, a regulation under which employees can, for example, take sabbatical leave. Both items are now integrated in IRC's employment conditions and incorporated in the KPA. The KPA, introduced in 2005, offers flexible options for exchanging leave days or other employment-related items for benefits such as increased pension premiums.

Training and education activities were scheduled according to needs and budgets, and incorporated in the personal plans and sectional programmes. Special Personal Development

Employee in focus: **Debby Gruiters**



Before joining IRC, Debby worked in Italy as a European Project Manager for a consultant company based in Rome. The projects she managed were co-financed by the EC and were carried out with partner organisations in different European member states.

'I had a great time working in Italy, but even though my projects were targeted at disadvantaged groups in society, I still worked for a commercial company. Working for an NGO always appealed to me, so when I got this opportunity I did not need to think twice! IRC makes an important contribution to meeting

the fundamental needs of people in developing countries. Unfortunately, access to safe and adequate water and sanitation services is not yet a reality for all. The dissemination of knowledge on such important matters is fundamental, and through the pooling of expertise and the transfer of know-how I believe that IRC really makes a difference'.

At IRC Debby set up the Project Coordination Office, which deals with acquisition, resource planning and contract management issues. 'When I came here, IRC was just starting to develop a new five-year business plan, and the new Project Coordination Office fits in really well in the overall internal change process. During my first year I developed new internal procedures for proposal development and contract management, with a central role for the PCO as process facilitator, information provider and advisor to the Management Team'.

IRC intends to professionalise and intensify its acquisition process, in order to raise external income in the coming years. 'When the number of contracts from different funders increases, risk assessment and resource planning become important factors in decision-making. We want to make sure that our efforts result in sustainable regional programmes with maximum impact on the ground. This means that we have to carefully select the type of projects we support, and try to get as much leverage on funding as possible in the regions we work in. I believe that IRC is now in a good position to achieve the objectives of its new business plan. The combination of its well-known expertise in the water and sanitation sector and a stronger internal organisation can only lead to good results. I also believe that it is good to remember that, although we are a non-profit organisation, we also aim to work non-loss'!

Trajectories were developed and agreed with five employees. These plans will guide and stimulate an individual process of growth and development, both professional and personal.

Staff composition

Staff turnover was low in 2006, with two staff members leaving (Laurent Stravato and Rosalyn Olyslager) and four new colleagues joining (Rutger Verkerk, Debby Gruiters, Carmen da Silva Wells and Alana Potter). Sandra Segura and Leyla Ozay joined us for a number of months, doing an internship at IRC as part of their study.

In 2006, IRC started making use of associates as a new and flexible way of tying international renowned experts to our organisation. Rachel Cardone, Charles Batchelor and Jan Teun Visscher are the first three associates under this new modality, specified in the new Business Plan (2006-2011). In another innovative development, IRC 'went South', positioning staff member Jo Smet in Uganda to support the East Africa regional programme. This long mission is regarded as a pilot under the new strategy and will take at least two years.

At the end of 2006, IRC employed 43 staff members (38.5 FTEs) of which 25 were female. The average age was 42, with a range from 27 to 62. The majority of staff have a permanent employment contract (over 80%) and work full-time (almost 70%).

Employee in focus: **Harry Oosterveen**



Shortly after IRC created its first web site, a position was created to further develop the Internet presence. Harry Oosterveen filled that position in 1998 and has been with IRC ever since. Before that, he worked on information management for rural development programmes in Thailand and the Philippines. He has a Masters Degree in Electrical Engineering and in Development Studies from Twente

University in the Netherlands.

'The years that I lived abroad were also the years that the Internet became popular. It was a great way of staying in touch with friends and relatives back home and, of course, the Dutch football results. But also, considering the costs of hardcopy publications and newsletters, it was a tool with great potential for disseminating relevant information from our programme. So I started figuring out how it worked, experimented, and set up a web site for the programme.'

'In the first few years, IRC's web site was mainly a one-way repository for information. I was busy collecting

information and creating web pages. For the past five years or so, however, it has really been a team effort: any member of IRC staff can contribute to our current web site, and my role is more to enable and facilitate than to produce. The web site is not only a repository, it also supports processes: take, for example, organising e-conferences, producing Source and maintaining IRCDOC. That makes my work more interactive, and I like that. And it has become even more interesting since we have started hosting and supporting the web sites of many partner organisations. The best experience for me is when people discover how they can use the Internet themselves to share their information and communicate.'

Financial report

Income

IRC's income increased modestly in 2006, mainly due to a rise on all income lines. Core funding from the Dutch Directorate General for International Co-operation (DGIS) was equal to the remaining portion of the five-year grant. Income from externally funded projects rose by 55,000 euros to almost 1 million euros, at par with the targeted amount. Other income, mainly sales of publications and interest, was slightly higher than planned.

Major clients for external activities in 2006 were DGIS, DFID (especially for the WELL & RiPPLe programmes), the EU (mainly SWITCH), UN-Habitat and UNICEF.

IRC income 2002-2006 (1000s of euros)					
	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002
Core funding	2498	2416	2673	2883	1998
External income	981	926	1238	1008	1194
Other income	99	73	78	107	92
Total	3578	3415	3989	3998	3284

Expenditure

Personnel costs for 2006 were higher than in 2005, mainly due to higher costs for recruitment and hiring of temporary staff. The number of staff under contract remained constant over the year 2006 (38.5 FTEs) but three vacancies remained unfilled at the end of 2006. Because of the higher income levels, core funded projects were able to utilise a higher budget than planned. Overhead costs decreased again in 2006 as a result of tighter cost control and fewer unpaid debtors. Extraordinary items mainly took the form of losses due to the depreciation of foreign currency reserves. The overall surplus for 2006 has been added to our general reserves.

IRC Expenditure 2002-2006 (1000s of euros)					
	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002
Personnel	2364	2267	2282	2231	1883
Core funded projects	670	795	999	1150	891
Overheads	424	443	647	504	462
Extraordinary items	18	-19	21	74	9
Total	3476	3486	3949	3958	3245
Surplus	102	-71	40	39	39

Remuneration for Board members and the IRC Director

The IRC Director received a total gross salary of 93,980 euros.

The Chair of the Board received a remuneration of 4,000 euros.

The members of the Board received a remuneration of 1,600 euros each.

Governance

In mid-2006, the 'enhanced autonomy process' was officially concluded for IRC with the legalisation of new statutes. With the new statutes, IRC has become an independent NGO under Dutch law, giving it greater flexibility to operate professionally in the water and sanitation sector. At the same time, a new governance structure was implemented. IRC now has a Board of Supervisors, which will adopt a more distant stance towards management of the organisation than the previous Board of Governors, leaving more responsibility and power with the Director. Consequently, new by-laws have been drafted for the Director and the Board, improving transparency and accountability in the organisational management.

The Board also focused on finalising the new Business Plan 2007-2011. Major inputs for the new Business Plan came from the results of the external evaluation in 2005, the internal strategic development process and discussions with the Directorate General for Development Co-operation (DGIS). The proposal for the new five-year programme was submitted in July and approval was received from the Ministry at the end of November. In essence, the new five year programme will provide the means for IRC to continue in its role as a centre of expertise on information and knowledge management and capacity building for the WASH sector.

In 2006, the IRC Board met four times for a regular meeting: on April 6, June 19, September 19 and November 28. On March 1, a special Board meeting took place to discuss the Business Plan 2007-2011. It approved the Financial Accounts for 2005 in April and the Annual Budgets for 2007 in November. The Chair of the Board met with the Works Council and the Management Team on February 24. To mark IRC's new autonomous status, a special session for the staff and Board was organised on October 19.

IRC Supervisory Board as at 31 December 2006 (present and former jobs displayed, including relevant additional functions):

- L. de Waal (Chairman)
Director of Humanitas Vereniging (as of June 2006)
Vice-Chairman of FMO (Netherlands Development Finance Company)
Chairman of Supervisory Board of SNV (Netherlands Development Organisation)
Member of Supervisory Board of Technical University of Delft
Member of Advisory Board of RNTC (Radio Netherlands Training Centre)
- G.W. Ardon (Secretary-Treasurer)
Head, Water Supply and Water Waste Department, Directorate General for Environmental Protection, Netherlands Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment
Member of Board of Rioned

Members:

- A. Leusink (Deputy Chairman)
Entrepreneur and advisor in water and environment, former Managing Director of NEDECO, Netherlands Engineering Consultants
Governor of Cooperative Programme on Water & Climate
Member of Supervisory Board FILTRIX BV
- W.A. Segeren
Former Rector, International Institute for Infrastructural, Hydraulic and Environmental Engineering (IHE)
- J.C. van Winkelen
Chairman of the Executive Board, Vitens N.V.
Member of Supervisory Board of Wetsus (Center for Sustainable Water Technology)

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