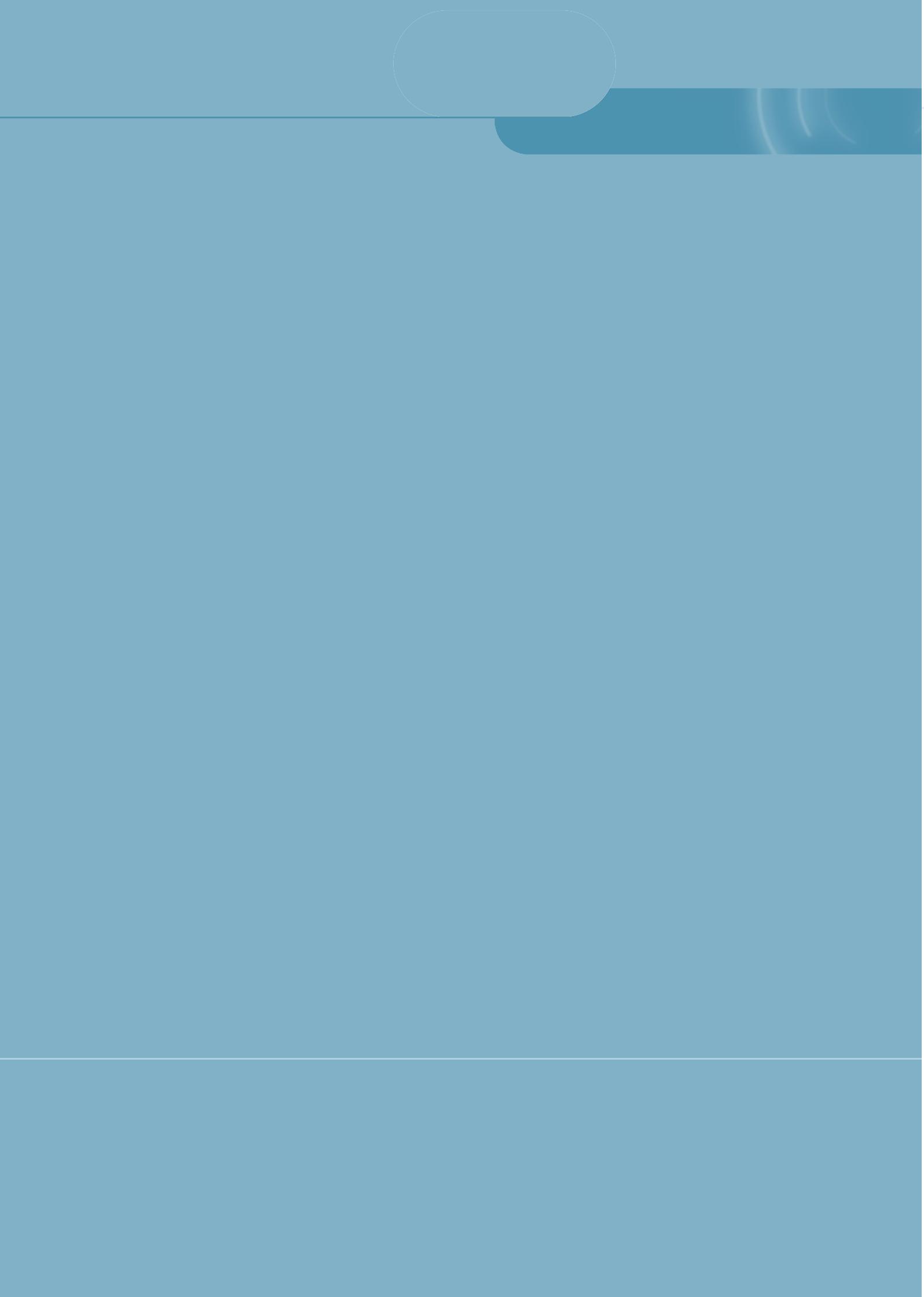




2000

Annual Report



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IRC in 2000

Triggered by the 2nd World Water Forum in The Hague water and sanitation received a lot of attention in 2000. The Vision shared in the meeting has raised hopes that everyone in the world will have access to better water and sanitation facilities in the next 25 years, provided we become more effective and more attention is given to the sector and particularly to sanitation promotion. The Forum gave IRC the opportunity to promote three important themes: Gender and Water, School Sanitation and Streams of Knowledge (SOK), the coalition of resource centres. As follow-up to the Forum an action plan was accepted for the water and sanitation sector in November at the 5th Global Forum of the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC) in Foz do IguaVu, Brazil. This plan places strong emphasis on advocacy, information sharing and networking, key issues IRC can build on and contribute to.

Throughout the year IRC continued to play a leading role in information sharing, being a strong ally of the WSSCC. The readership of the sector newsletter, Source Weekly and Source Bulletin and page views on the family of WEB pages IRC maintains kept growing. IRC played a stronger role in electronic conferencing. The electronic publishing of IRC documents proved very successful with the number of downloads/views already equaling our hard copy sales. Knowledge sharing through training was implemented primarily in the South with IRC's partners taking a large share of the work.

IRC continued to support learning and capacity building programmes resulting in a validation and expansion of the knowledge base in the form of publications, videos, articles and training programmes. Prominent areas included mainstreaming gender, monitoring, cost recovery, school sanitation, and



Nkouondja, Cameroon: pipes for the extension of the water supply system

management of community water supply systems. A new programme on sustained hygiene behaviour started with 10 partners and support from the EU and the Netherlands Government.

IRC strengthened its working relations with partners in the South through these learning programmes and by stepping up its networking activities. Together with partners we supported the participatory Vision development process. We also gave strong support to the establishment of the Gender and Water Alliance and the SOK coalition of resource centres. In December, a new activity started that explores how electronic information sharing can be enhanced among knowledge centres in the developing world and countries in transition. The aim is to establish leading information sharing points and national help desks that provide access to a shared frequently asked question and answer service.

Financially 2000 was less positive despite the hard work of IRC staff. Contributing factors were the core subsidy, which was at its lowest level in the last four years, and a decrease in the number of advisory missions.

For 2001 new challenges lie ahead including the discussions on the new business plan with the Dutch government, which can benefit from the evaluation of IRC that will be completed early in 2001. IRC will have to keep a close look at efficiency and will work even more with partners in the South and the North to ensure the greatest impact of its work. A specific aim is to expand the number of training activities. IRC will continue discussions with IHE, to fully exploit possibilities for synergy.

We are grateful for the long-term support from the Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This commitment and the dedication of the staff provide an essential basis for IRC to effectively contribute to improving the water supply and sanitation conditions in the developing world.

Joop B. Hoekman
Chairman, IRC Governing Board

Improving Access to and Use of Sector Information

Better use of quality information and building capacity of stakeholders and staff are essential to make the sector more efficient and effective. Awareness raising, documentation and information services, publications, and training and advisory services are specific mechanisms that IRC uses to provide sector staff and sector organizations with access to the latest sector information. Increasingly it benefits from the huge potential of electronic information sharing.

Advocacy

Raising awareness about sector issues is important to help obtain the commitment of decision makers to improve water and sanitation programming. IRC staff has published articles to share new thinking on various sector issues, provided support to media, and gave presentations at international gatherings. Periodicals in which articles appeared include *Waterlines*, *UNICEF Waterfront*, *New World Water*, *Water Resources Journal* and *Sustainable Development International*.

IRC supported the World Water Day (WWD on 22 March) by distributing information packages to its nearly 1,000 WWD contacts and maintained the WWD web site on the Internet. The theme for 2000 was Water for the 21st Century, with UNESCO being the responsible UN agency.

Example of advocacy support: contributing a chapter on advocacy and public awareness, in a study Strategy options for sewage management to protect the marine environment conducted for UNEP/Global Plan of Action, The Hague, together with IHE and NEI.

Water for the 21st Century

"The challenge we face, as we mark World Water Day 2000, is to set in motion a dynamic that will make this the century of world water security. Water has long been too low on the public policy agenda or presented only in terms of disasters, scarcity, and pollution or as a potential source of conflict. We need to take a constructive approach to water: it is an essential, shared resource; it should be treated as a foremost priority in every community from the local to the global. There is a fundamental truth which I would like to emphasize on this occasion: the water supply does not run dry when it is drawn from the well of human wisdom". Message from the Director-General of UNESCO

As part of the World Bank/One World and partners Water and Sanitation knowledge sharing pilot project IRC helped to conduct two more e-conferences. This included maintenance of the Think Tank web site. For the conference on small town water supply and sanitation CINARA ran a parallel e-conference and website in Spanish. The conference on the theme knowledge sharing and resource centres showed that resource centres can be catalysts for change, centres of excellence, and focal points for capacity building through training, research and knowledge management and sharing. Moreover, through their unique position in the sector, they can provide a bridge between research, knowledge and practice.

A clear message emerging from these conferences is that the proliferation of electronic conferences is causing fatigue. Furthermore, access to Internet and electronic communication is still limited in the South leaving many potential contributors out of reach. Traditional forms of information sharing such as by fax and in country workshops are still needed to avoid the “digital divide” increasing.

Documentation and Information Services

In 2000 IRC scanned 1,600 unpublished documents for the new electronic library and for future availability on CD-ROM. Over 600 new titles were added to the library catalogue. IRCDOC database on water and sanitation in developing countries now includes more than 13,000 references to documents, collected by IRC's Documentation Unit since 1984 and a growing number of documents available on the Web. The majority of the collection consists of (unpublished) grey literature. Since April researchers, students, and information gatekeepers did 3,558 searches in the IRCDOC database from outside. Staff responded to over 150 requests for information from visitors and external users and supported different IRC projects.

The readership of Source Water and Sanitation News Service continued to grow. This service was launched by WSSCC and

Involvement in electronic conferences:

- *Water and sanitation services in small towns*
- *Knowledge sharing and resource centres*
(<http://www.oneworld.net/think-tank/water>)
- *Seven WSSCC preparatory e-conferences*

Nkouondja, Cameroon: the rule is, no cleaning at the tap



Requests for page views on the Source web site:
44,078 (an average of 120 per day).

IRC as a joint endeavour in 1998. Both Source Weekly and Source Bulletin provides news on the website, but also by e-mail. Hard copies of Source Bulletin are provided to more than 5,000 readers in 126 countries, mainly in the South. In response to requests from subscribers the electronic versions of Source Weekly and Source Bulletin were merged. The combined e-mail circulation increased to nearly 1,800 subscribers.

Electronic Information

Page views on IRC's web site
188,226, (an average of 515 per day) (<http://www.irc.nl/>)

The IRC web site has expanded and attracted visitors from over 140 countries. The number of successful requests for pages doubled. The pages are optimised for low bandwidth, so even with slow Internet access the web site can be viewed well. Visitors are mostly from the western world where full Internet access is much higher than in the developing world. The number of visits from developing countries is roughly 15 percent of the total, the same as last year.

IRC web site

With over 700 content pages, the IRC web site is one of the largest in the field of water and sanitation. The site gives thematic information, and information about IRC's products, services, and projects. Most of it is in English, but there are also French, Spanish and Portuguese sections. Additions in 2000 include a search engine and a search interface to make the IRCDOC bibliographical database accessible online.

Partner organizations are also increasing their use of the Internet and use electronic mail for conferences. Five partners from East and Southern Africa joined IRC staff in the first five-day workshop on strengthening their electronic information services. The workshop was conducted in Johannesburg in November, and co-organised by IRC and Mvula Trust in South Africa. In 2000, IRC continued to maintain the WSSCC's website, including the Global Environmental Sanitation Initiative (GESI),



Nkouondja, Cameroon: Jacqueline, secretary of the tap committee

Source Water and Sanitation News, and the InterWATER Guide to Water and Sanitation Information. The GESI website was updated regularly with news items from Source Weekly and other sources.

Number of page views
WSSCC site: 67,383
Source pages: 44,078
GESI pages: 13,552
InterWATER site: 22,532.

Two new sites were developed with assistance from WSSCC partners in 2000: Managing Water for African Cities website (MAWAC) with 21,912 page views since February, and the Sanitation Connection site with 5,814 page views since end July.

Special Interest Group on Water Information launched

Making use of the opportunity of the 2nd World Water Forum a launch meeting for a Special Interest Group on Water Information was held at the Royal Library, in The Hague, in March. The group, which was chaired by IRC, comprises information professionals dealing with water information from the various user groups in the freshwater sector. The informal group aims to improve co-ordination in the collection and dissemination of information about water. It uses the Internet to keep up with recent developments in information technology. Members agreed to work together to ensure that issues and information relevant to water are placed on the policymaking agenda while acknowledging that problems encountered in receiving sufficient resources to maintain their information services need to be resolved.

Publishing

In 2000 IRC published an important book in two volumes that consolidates some ten years of experience: Action Monitoring for Effectiveness (aMe): improving water, hygiene and environmental sanitation programmes. It includes a general part and fact sheets.

Five titles were co-authored and published by others including:

- Methodology for Participatory Assessments,
- Independent Water and Sanitation Providers in African Cities: full report of a Ten-Country Study, both with the Water and Sanitation Programme of the World Bank.

La Sirena, Colombia: monitoring water quality



As part of the SDC Mozambique initiative to make key publications available for Portuguese-speaking water professionals three IRC titles were translated in 2000.

IRC published a new publications catalogue and at the same time expanded its dissemination policy by making publications available online, free of charge. The new publications catalogue can be found at:

<http://www.irc.nl/products/publications/index.html>

*“Thanks for making this publication available. I have ordered an e-mailed copy, and within a very short time period, it arrived on my desk! Marvellous service! It means such a lot to us here in developing countries to get access via the Internet to publications that we would normally not be able to afford. Keep up the good work!”
Martha Pretorius Water Research Commission, PRETORIA.
South Africa*

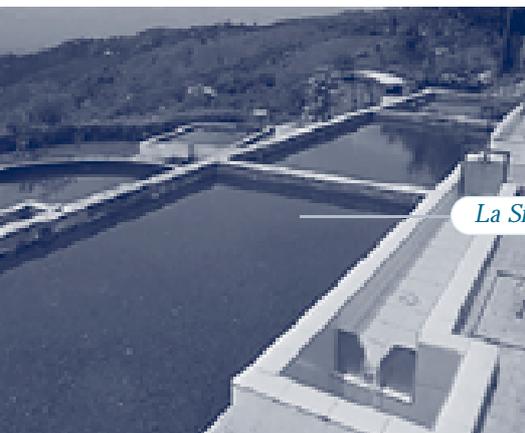
Electronic publishing

Four publications have been made available online as Adobe Acrobat PDF files, with very promising results as downloads and views equalled our hard-copy sales. The titles deal with Integrated Water Resource Management in Water and Sanitation Projects, Drinking Water Source Protection, Operation and Maintenance and Technology Transfer in the Water Supply and Sanitation Sector. More titles will be made available in future. The service now also includes the possibility to receive the publication by e-mail.

The hard copy distribution of 3600 IRC publications was a little less than last year. Overall distribution increased by 80% as result of the large number of downloads of the IRC titles that are available electronically.

Training Activities

Training is an important mechanism for transferring the experience gained by IRC and its partners. IRC's training programme is comprised of short training courses and briefing programmes, tailor-made courses upon request, and organization of study tours and workshops. Increasingly IRC's partners in the South provide courses, with limited support from IRC.



La Sirena, Colombia: water treatment plant

The 2000 courses included: Hygiene Education and Promotion, Monitoring for Effectiveness, Gender in Water Supply and Sanitation Programmes, Management for Sustainability, Environmental Sanitation and Operation and Maintenance, and Community Management. A new course started on School Sanitation and Hygiene Education. The new methodology of taking the course out of the classroom and basing them on field experiences worked well.

Tailor-made briefing programmes were provided on subjects including gender, sanitation, water management, environmental WSS issues and rural WSS.

Some 120 trainees participated in five training courses and six briefing programmes given in IRC. Another 660 trainees participated in courses of partners in Africa, Latin America and Asia.

“I did attend the course in Management for Sustainability in Cameroon and the project proposal that my colleagues and I produced during the course was met with a great response, so much that the issue of community management and the involvement of women have taken center stage since then. Thanks to IRC for that!!”

New Training Course on Community Management

NETWAS, a partner in the Community Management project, organized together with IRC a first training course on Community Management of Rural Water Supply Systems in Nairobi, Kenya. It addressed the main principles and key requirements for successful community management of rural water supply systems, such as: strengthening community management tools (rules and regulations, improved communication, transparency in decision making, etc.); management skills, appropriate service levels and cost recovery.

The Art of Facilitation was an important component of the course. This helps participants to improve their personal skills to work with communities and facilitate participatory processes. It enabled them to experiment with their newly acquired knowledge and skills. The course drew from the experiences of the participants and from the knowledge and experience of NETWAS and IRC. All participants received a “community management kit” with manuals, a video and basic reference materials on community management.

Together with the (European) Network University (TNU) in Amsterdam IRC conducted a pilot test of an innovative, interactive, three-week course on the Internet on a key theme for water professionals and decision-makers: Institutional changes in the urban water and sanitation sector - risks and opportunities. Topics included: public-private partnerships, stakeholders' interests, sector characteristics/specifics, private sector participation, and sector trends. Improvements were made on course content, structure of the web, and interactivity. TNU and

IRC jointly marketed activities for the first online course scheduled for February 2001.

Advisory Services

IRC expertise is requested for project formulations, appraisals, evaluations, monitoring, technical support, workshops and seminars. Missions are selected from requests received from ESAs and national governments; based on the degree to which they match the development issues that IRC and its partners are pursuing. In 2000 the missions handled showed that the key principles from the Water for People VISION 21 are taking root in the field. The people-centred approach, institutional development and capacity building featured in the majority of them and often included a demand for training of local staff in these areas.

IRC carried out 18 support missions over the year. This is a lower number than in 1999, primarily as a result of the changes in the policy of the Dutch government towards supporting sector wide approaches, thus gradually replacing the conventional projects.

The biggest assignment was in West Africa for the new client Plan International IRC did a forward-looking assessment of their water and sanitation programme in four countries of the region, Burkina Faso, Mali, Senegal and Togo. Findings of six sample communities in each country were validated through triangulation and discussions with local and national stakeholders. Everyone had the opportunity to review and comment on the findings and recommendations of the evaluation, as well as to get acquainted with the use of participatory methodologies. This clearly showed all concerned the potential for stronger community involvement. Plan has requested IRC and partners longer-term support in the area of more methodological participatory approaches. Plan considers this to be essential for increased understanding and feeling of ownership by communities concerned.



Aguacatan, Guatemala: monitoring water pressure

Two mid-term missions were done for the Department for International Development Co-operation of the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. They were examples of two rather different development environments, the first one in Ethiopia and the second in Egypt. However, the people-centred approach as the key for achieving lasting results is highlighted in both cases. The Ethiopian case highly emphasises the benefits of self-reliance in rural development, where the driving force is the community through its elected bodies. The Egyptian case highlights the need of a regional water utility to become customer oriented in order to achieve financial sustainability.

In Bangladesh IRC put its new book on monitoring for effectiveness into practice, assisting the national NGO Forum for Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation with its 550 affiliated NGOs in implementation of a monitoring system.

Sigomere, Kenya: cleaning the stand post



Supporting Sector Innovation

Together with its partners, IRC continued to support learning and capacity building programmes. These lead to enhanced capacities in the participating organizations, enabling them to better support the sector by being able to match international information with local conditions and to properly document local experience. The results in turn are an important validation and addition to the knowledge base in the form of publications, articles and training programmes. IRC's internal development projects increasingly become platforms for discussion in the organization. These projects enable us to involve staff teams in the development of new themes and long-term projects that keep us on the cutting edge. Advisory missions and information requests help us to focus on new developments. Unfortunately these could not always be integrated into new projects, because funding cannot always be found, even for important themes related to sanitation and urban issues. The following section gives an overview of some of the main topics that were addressed in 2000.

Community Water Supply

Management of water supplies remains an enormous challenge in the developing world. With ongoing decentralization the roles of municipalities and community-based organizations (CBOs) are growing. Lessons learned in the Dutch government-supported Community Water Management project are contributing to the knowledge base and to the tools, strategies, and training. These enable staff from local and regional government institutions and NGOs to play a facilitating role toward CBOs. The project experience has been disseminated in video's, articles and conference presentations. Different publications and articles will follow in 2001.



Aguacatan, Guatemala

Dissemination in Colombia

In Colombia CINARA and IRC presented Community Water Management at Agua 2000 a bi-annual three-day event organized by CINARA. This was followed by a workshop with 50 participants who were interested to learn more about the experiences in the community management research and dissemination project. The first showing there of the global advocacy video "The Seventh Video" (a new product of the community management project) was received with a lot of enthusiasm. This video is based on six locally produced country videos, which are used by the various country teams in workshops, promoted on national television and sold on request.

Another important source of information on community water supply that became available is the updated information and training package for managers and planners Operation and Maintenance of Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Systems jointly published with WHO. Together with WHO, IRC finished the update of this package that was first prepared under the aegis of the WSSCC. Under the umbrella of the WSSCC Lusophone Initiative IRC used the package in a third national workshop on O&M in Mozambique.

Together with the Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment IRC organized a workshop on cost recovery, which is one of the key factors of sustainable management in water supplies. Participants commented on the draft review of cost-related issues in water supply systems that will be published in IRC's Occasional Paper Series and planned a larger meeting on the subject in 2001.

Watershed management and livelihoods

Watershed management has rapidly expanded during the 1990s to become the approach of choice for a number of donors and other ESAs to dealing holistically with issues of rural development, environmental protection, and water resource management.

Recent work carried out for DGIS has highlighted both the undoubted successes of the approach, but also a number of important weaknesses and dangers. High among these is that many of the benefits of watershed management are being unequally distributed, with relatively better off water users benefiting at the expense of the poor and particularly women.

IRC finalized a review of international experiences in roof-water harvesting for DGIS. Key suggestions were to continue to support well targeted and demand-responsive NGO and CBO efforts in this sphere. Where feasible this needs to include support

to small-scale, community-based rainwater utilisation for agricultural purposes serving community livelihood (social, economic, health, well being), particularly of women and the poor. There are exciting and positive experiences from India in particular that give strong support to this approach.

Moving Sanitation Centre Stage

Environmental sanitation and hygiene are crucial if water supply provision is to have any positive impact. Sanitation and hygiene received a prominent place in the new three-year work plan of the WSSCC that was adopted in Brazil. IRC's innovative work with its partners in this area is centred around approaches towards sustainable changes in hygiene behaviour, school sanitation and hygiene education, and the development of consultation processes to improve wastewater treatment and disposal in urban hamlets. We hope that with the growing awareness of the need for sanitation interventions, more funding will become available to take this work forward and truly advocate for sanitation improvements.

Changing hygiene behaviour such as washing hands after use of a toilet or latrine is increasingly being recognized as crucial for achieving health improvements in the sector. Little is known, however, about what make these behaviours sustainable. To fill this gap IRC, two European partners and NGOs from six developing countries are involved in a three-year action research programme. With support from the INCODEV programme of the European Commission and from the Dutch government, field studies will be done and documented and results will be shared in-country as well as internationally.

The partners involved in the hygiene behaviour research:

- Community Water and Sanitation Agency (Ghana)*
- *Foundation for Technical Cooperation (Sri Lanka)*
- *Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ, Germany)*
- *IRC International Water and Sanitation Centre (Netherlands (co-ordinator))*
- *London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (UK)*
- *Nepal Water for Health Organization (Nepal)*
- *NETWAS International (Kenya)*
- *Socio-Economic Unit Foundation (India)*
- *WaterAid (Uganda)*

Sustaining changes in hygiene behaviour

This Concerted Action combines field research in six African and Asian countries with networking and dissemination activities. Its specific objectives are to:

1. *Develop an active network in the field of hygiene promotion;*
2. *Assess the level of sustainability of behavioural change one to two years after hygiene promotion interventions;*
3. *Develop a methodology for simple, cost-effective longitudinal monitoring of behavioural changes;*
4. *Find causal relationships between project approaches and external conditions and sustainability of changes in hygiene behaviour;*
5. *Determine policy and programming implications and influence policy to increase the effectiveness of water and sanitation programmes.*

Together with UNICEF, IRC embarked on two new school sanitation and hygiene education programmes. The first is being carried out in six countries: two each in Asia, Africa and Latin America while the second focuses on specific states within India. The overall aim of both projects is to ensure that good strategies and tools are being tested and implemented that will improve the health and wellbeing of present and future school-aged children. The activities include the development and testing of country-specific, child-centered, skill-based teaching programmes and low-cost technology options to improve the school environment. The programme moved into full swing, with the programme approach agreed, draft country action plans developed and with the publishing of the SSHE Notes and News in three languages. IRC also helped to set up the SSHE web site, which is available from the IRC as well as the UNICEF WES site, see <http://www.irc.nl/sshe/index.html>.

First workshop

In March 2000 the first programme workshop for the UNICEF/IRC school sanitation and hygiene education programmes was organized in Delft with participants and resource persons from 11 countries, including from the seven programme countries: India, Nepal and Vietnam in Asia; Burkina Faso and Zambia in Africa; Colombia and Nicaragua in Latin America. In India the programme is feeding into a UNICEF supported Government of India programme that aims to reach out to some 125,000 schools over a five-year period.

Support includes carrying out various support missions to the countries that are involved in the SSHE global project as well as to India. These missions mainly focus on the development of life skills based hygiene educational materials, the training of trainers and teachers on SSHE as well as on the development of indicators for monitoring and evaluation.

Sigomere, Kenya: water kiosk



WEDC and IRC were sub-contracted by the WSSCC to prepare the prototype of the Sanitation Connection web site that was officially launched at the Fifth Global Forum of the WSSCC. Sanitation Connection functions as a virtual partnership with a range of sector players taking responsibility for the provision and maintenance of state-of-the-art information on selected issues, see <http://www.sanicon.net/>.

Urban Water Supply and Sanitation

Management options for water supply and sanitation systems in large communities and small towns remains an important theme for IRC. The population in many of these towns is growing quickly, making good water supply and sanitation systems a necessity. As result of the decentralisation process new management options are needed for these systems.

“I am working on an urbanisation plan for Mozambique and your publication helped me to find different solutions for sanitation problems we will still have to solve.”

Much can be learned from public facilities and community-managed systems for these intermediate towns but also from the informal sector that often operates at neighbourhood level in large cities. Private entrepreneurs and informal operators are sometimes even more important than the formal service providers, particularly for the low-income areas. This was one of the findings by IRC staff and their African partners in a research programme initiated by the World Bank Water Supply and Sanitation Program (WB-WSP), on small-scale independent providers (SSIPs) of water and sanitation services in ten cities in sub-Saharan Africa. The WB-WSP published the outcomes in a full report in the Working Paper Series, 2000: Independent Water and Sanitation Providers in African Cities, that was co-authored by an IRC staff member.

IRC, together with the WSSCC and WEDC contributed to the information sharing and awareness-raising component of the UNCHS (Habitat) initiative on Managing Water for African Cities. IRC inputs included development of the MAWAC web site <http://www.un-urbanwater.net>, and contributing to



Sigomere, Kenya: the water committee discusses extension of the water supply system

workshops. Two staff members produced a strategy paper *Managing Water for African cities: Developing e-mail and Internet tools*, at: <http://www.urbanwater.net/programme/internet.html>

Institutional Development

IRC's project activities in the area of institutional development aim to contribute to closing the gap between policy and practice by helping sector institutions in selected countries to review sector problems with stakeholders and jointly develop sector improvement programmes. They also comprise crosscutting activities such as gender mainstreaming and monitoring.

The Streams of Knowledge (SOK) partners are jointly developing a "toolbox" for strengthening management and organization of resource centres. Different partners have taken the lead for the development of different tools: self assessment guidelines, a guide for organizational strengthening of potential resource centres, an impact assessment methodology, quality assurance guidelines, and web site development/electronic information tools. The Sounding Board Group of SOK met twice to discuss progress and steps towards testing the tools.

Mainstreaming gender is a leading theme in IRC's programme. It concerns the process of assessing the complex relationship between productive and domestic uses of water and its implications for women and men. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's needs and experiences an integral dimension of any planned action, from design and implementation, to monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres. Better sharing of burdens, benefits, responsibilities, and decision making between women, men and children is what gender mainstreaming is all about.

The Methodology for Participatory Assessment (MPA) developed by IRC and the WB-WSP was fine-tuned and used in new

"The experiences and approaches catalogued in your publications have helped shape our ideas on our approaches to community ownership and management. Secondly, technology options for both water and sanitation services as given in your publications have helped our engineers in their designs of appropriate water and sanitation systems for communities... Thirdly, your publications are helping us develop an Operation and maintenance manual to help these communities (WATSAN Committees and Water Boards) handle these problems in the field. Fourthly, our training packages for all level of stakeholders in the sector have been enriched with ideas from IRC."
Ghana

Sigomere, Kenya: NETWAS training of water committee members



programmes including the evaluation of the programme of Plan International in West Africa. One of the IRC colleagues is now completing her PhD thesis on the methodology. The results confirm the potential of the MPA to combine sustainability assessments with gender and poverty analysis, as shown in the joint WB-WSP and IRC publication: *Methodology for Participatory Assessments, with Communities, Institutions and Policy Makers – Linking Sustainability with Demand, Gender and Poverty*.

IRC has developed new, action-oriented strategies and methods for monitoring. The focus is on the use of monitoring information at the lowest relevant levels to improve projects and programmes over the short term. The approach is problem-focused and participatory and is being introduced in projects and programmes through participatory training. Based on the experience with training courses in conjunction with regional partners in Sri Lanka (COSI), Kenya (NETWAS) and South Africa (National Community Water and Sanitation Training Institute -NCWSTI) an IRC Technical Paper Series on the approach, *Action Monitoring for Effectiveness*, was published with support from the Government of Denmark.



Lele, Nepal

Partners around the World

Easy access to knowledge, experience and advice is essential for professionals in the developing world. This will help them to optimize their inputs in the sector and ensure a more effective use of financial resources. Providing this access requires well-positioned sector resource centres in their own countries that in turn can help them obtain information that is adapted to their conditions. To that end IRC has continued its quest to strengthening resource centres in the South, a process that is strongly facilitated by the opportunities provided by the Internet.

Partners in the South

Long-standing collaboration continued between IRC and its partners in the South working together in different activities including training programmes, documentation and information services, and applied research. To further strengthen this collaboration IRC strongly supported the development of Streams of Knowledge (SOK), the global coalition of resource centres. The mission of this coalition is to help close the gap on unmet needs by:

- achieving equitable access to information;
- focusing knowledge where it can help to build capacity;
- promoting action learning, whereby people benefit from their own experiences.

The SOK coalition presented itself in a joint information booth at the World Water Fair in The Hague that was held in conjunction with the Second World Water Forum, March 2000.

In the course of the year the SOK partners held regional and national meetings. These helped to increase the interests in the coalition and to identify specific for collaboration.

Another important activity that is strongly supported by IRC is

SOK coalition launching partners:

South

*CINARA, Colombia,
CREPA, Burkina Faso,
Institute of Water and Sanitation
Development (IWSD),
Zimbabwe,
NETWAS International, Kenya,
Philippine Centre for Water and
Sanitation (PCWS)*

North

*Programme Solidarité Eau (pS-
Eau), France,
Swiss Centre for Development
Cooperation in Technology and
Management (SKAT),
Switzerland.
IRC, The Netherlands*

Hasis, Pakistan: the men of the community meet to elect the new care taker



the Gender and Water Alliance, which provides major opportunities to work closely with partners. In the 2nd World Water Forum, the Gender and Water Major Group session was coordinated by IRC. A wide range of organizations participated in this session and together reviewed key questions on what we can do better in the 21st century. To ensure proper follow-up the Alliance was launched at the Forum and at the end of the year already comprised 110 individuals and organizations as members. They began advocating the key gender and equity messages in a wide range of international meetings. The Alliance with its secretariat housed at IRC, has set up a list server to facilitate communication, elected an interim steering committee, and is in the process of seeking financial support for the GWP Associated Programme on Mainstreaming Gender in IWRM.

International Partners

The relationship with the WSSCC remained strong and very visible. The WSSCC is a unique platform for the sector in that it brings together NGOs, donor agencies, professional institutes and others. IRC worked closely together with the WSSCC in the Vision process, putting special emphasis on introducing gender and equity concerns. IRC also participates actively in other WSSCC activities together with a wide range of other sector organizations. For the WSSCC executive summaries were provided of the WSSCC web sites, including GESI and Source, MAWAC work, Gender Network, and the Lusophone Initiative, for the Fifth Global Forum in Brazil. IRC staff also contributed to the seven electronic conferences that fed into the Brazil meeting.

IRC is also active with the other international partners represented on its Governing Board, with whom additional joint initiatives were developed. With UNICEF collaboration on school sanitation promotion continued in seven countries, with IRC also providing inputs in the development of a new proposal that is being submitted by UNICEF to DFID.

Operation and maintenance has been the foremost area of



Hasis, Pakistan: in winter the pipes freeze and women have to fetch water from the canals

collaboration with WHO for the past several years. The upgrade of the O&M training package was completed consolidating the experience that has been developed over the years. Discussions were initiated with WHO to enhance collaboration putting much more emphasis on other themes and particularly on hygiene promotion and behavioural change. With Water and Health being the leading theme for World Water Day 2001 and WHO being the lead agency, an agreement was made for IRC support, particularly related to the maintenance of the WWD web site and the active dissemination of WWD materials. With the WB-WSP the results of the research programme on gender and sustainability were published as well as the result of the review of the role of small-scale independent water supply providers in low-income urban areas in sub-Saharan Africa.

Discussions were initiated with other potential partners including WEDC and London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

Partners Close to Home

IRC staff members contributed to IHE's post-graduate training programme for sanitary engineering, and to occasional workshops, as well as providing guidance to MSc and PhD students. IRC staff supported the further development of the inter-university programme of IHE and the University of Valle in Colombia. The library collection of IHE and the IRC documentation collection have been brought together in one location in the building, with the day-to-day management of the IRC collection being outsourced to IHE.

Support to DGIS:

- *assistance on communication, gender and the 20-20 initiative on social spending before and during the 2nd World Water Forum as well as for the Fifth Global Forum of the WSSCC;*
- *desk reviews and field reports on handpumps (India), health (Switzerland), institutional changes (West Africa);*
- *drafting of a paper on sector wide approaches together with IHE based on questionnaires and desk study of five countries;*
- *a review of international experiences in roof-top water harvesting.*

On request from VROM IRC provided support to some activities that will ensure better access to important sector information.

Work with the Netherlands Development Organization SNV included advisory missions in the field as well as support to development of their water policy and providing access to water information in the Netherlands for their counterparts in the field.

Through its Documentation Unit, training programmes and guest lectures, IRC continued providing information exchange for Netherlands-based institutions. Support through training assistance, lectures and guidance for students is regularly provided to the Royal Tropical Institute (KIT) in Amsterdam, the Institute for Housing Studies (IHS) in Rotterdam, the Institute for Social Studies (ISS) in The Hague and Médecins sans Frontières in Belgium.

In 2000 the Network University from Amsterdam is a new partner on internet-based distance learning with which mutual beneficial collaboration started.



Hasis, Pakistan: Handpumps remain a reliable water source for many people

General Information

Finance

IRC is an independent, non-profit organization supported by and linked with the Government of the Netherlands, UNDP, UNICEF, WHO, the World Bank and the WSSCC. The Netherlands Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs provide IRC with a core budget of approximately 1.1 million Euro* annually. This is supplemented with income from services and programmes requested by national governments, multilateral and bilateral donors, UN agencies, international development banks and NGOs. The supplementary income amounted to some 1.1 million Euro. Aside from its own income, another 700,000 Euro was passed through IRC to partner organizations in the South. Furthermore, IRC was able to involve several of its partners in advisory missions.

Despite the strong efforts of IRC staff, 2000 was not an easy year financially. This was largely due to the lower subsidy level, the lower number of advisory missions and the moderate results of tendered projects. The end result was only just positive, because the limited loss on normal operations was compensated by an exceptional benefit stemming from the increased value of our dollar account. For 2001, the last year of the current business plan, the subsidy level is slightly lower than for 2000, requiring us to increase our income level and work cleverly and more efficiently while remaining alert of the changes in the sector.

Staff

The activities described in this report have been carried out by IRC's staff of 35 and its partners. Disciplines represented among staff are information science, information and communication

Hasis, Pakistan: the new care taker



* 1 Euro = US\$ 0,90

technology, engineering, sociology, anthropology, economics, and journalism. Some 25% hail from outside the Netherlands.

An important role of IRC staff in carrying out the organization's activities is that of facilitator, guiding partners in coming to grips with sector problems, and jointly identifying and testing solutions. IRC also draws on staff from partner institutions in both the North and the South that have complementary skills.



Hasis, Pakistan: the women make a village map on water

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Inside: Community Water Management Dissemination programme of partners in Cameroon, Colombia, Guatemala, Kenya, Nepal, Pakistan and IRC.

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