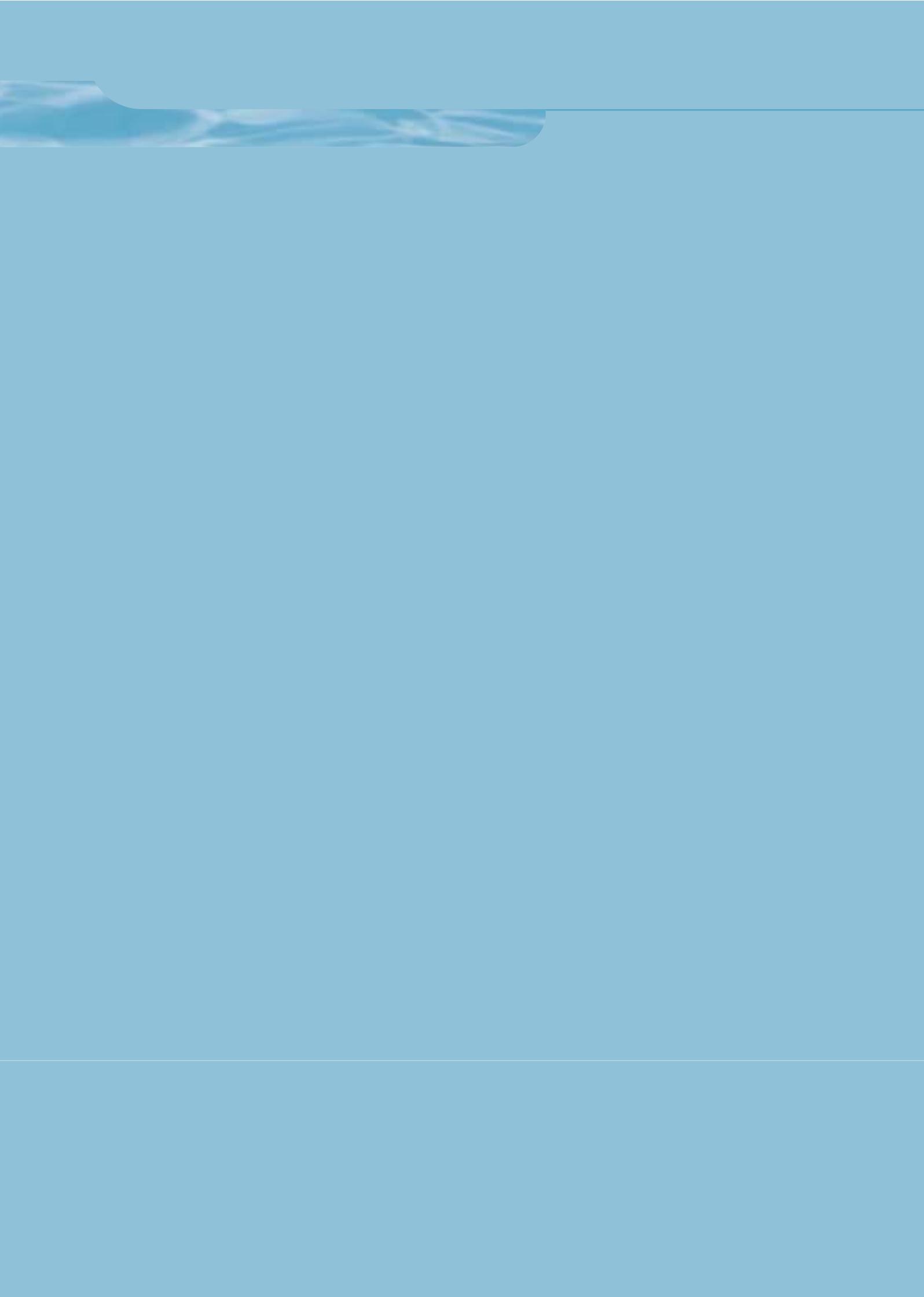




2002

Annual Report



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Vietnam: Boys practicing handwashing



IRC in 2002

In 2002 IRC took a new course of action based on the results of an external evaluation and with increased support from the Dutch Government. This enabled IRC to focus more on its core competences: i) providing improved access to and promoting the use of knowledge in the water and sanitation sector and ii) building the knowledge sharing capacity of Resource Centres (RCs) in the South. These two areas of work are mutually reinforcing as RCs are essential catalysts for sharing knowledge in their countries and facilitating its adaptation to the local setting.

It has been a hectic year in which IRC closed a number of long-term projects and worked in parallel on three main endeavours: implementation of the new business plan; re-organization; and collaboration with IHE. Based on its core competencies, IRC adjusted its organizational framework, developed a competence manual and new function descriptions and assigned staff to their new sections. During 2002, staff from IRC and IHE reviewed the potential for collaboration. Subsequently the Boards of both organizations agreed that the potential synergy of the two institutions needs to be fully exploited.

Despite the time required for these additional activities, staff were able to generate most of the outputs indicated in the annual plan. A complicating factor was the larger than anticipated number of externally funded projects that came in – the fruits of seeds sown before. As a result, it was not possible to spend sufficient time on some of the new activities and to adjust fully to the new course of action. Nevertheless, good progress was made and the transition of IRC will continue into 2003.

To strengthen its knowledge management capacity, IRC recruited two new staff members with an Information Communication (ICT) background and reviewed its ICT support system. Simultaneously IRC strengthened its approach to sharing more information products



Samoa: Cleaning a sand filter

developed by or jointly with others. This increased collaboration with other organizations is already showing some promising results, but it takes time to overcome institutional barriers. Many organizations still focus on developing and distributing their own products. Another important area was the development of strategies to strengthen the information handling and sharing capacity of RCs and the network of organizations they work with. IRC stepped up its activities in this field and supported initiatives in more than 20 countries to identify information needs and strengthen capacities of RCs and other government and non-government organisations interested in information sharing in the water and sanitation sector.

It has been a stimulating year and IRC can be proud of the work done together with its partners. The strengthened staff and healthy finances put IRC in an excellent position to enhance the impact of its activities and to support its partners better. IRC readily accepts the responsibility to ensure that its resources are put to best use for the benefit of people in greatest need in the world.

IRC is grateful to the Dutch Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for their continuing long-term support. It also appreciates the strong support that it received from partners and clients. IRC will continue to demonstrate its dedication to the shared goal of improving water and sanitation conditions in the developing world.

Joop B. Hoekman
Chairman, IRC Governing Board

Improving access to and use of sector information

Collection, synthesis and dissemination of information is one of the principal ways that IRC contributes to making the work of sector professionals and institutions more efficient and effective. It allows the professionals to help the world's poor to attain their water and sanitation needs in a more sustainable and effective way. IRC uses different mechanisms to facilitate access to and use of quality information and innovation. This includes the stimulation of organizations in the South to take up roles as (Knowledge) Resource Centres for the sector. Following a demand-based approach, IRC continually updates its knowledge base, emphasizing sector issues that rise in importance. Increasingly this is done together with other organizations, for example through the WELL Resource Centre Network for Water, Sanitation and Environmental Health development programme. In this five-year programme supported by the UK Department for International Development (DFID), IRC is working closely with the Water, Engineering and Development Centre (WEDC), London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) and eight southern partners to provide a range of information and advisory services in water supply, sanitation and environmental health.

The increased support of the Netherlands government allows IRC to address knowledge sharing more effectively. This has involved a change in operations that started to materialize in the final months of 2002. IRC expanded its team by adding staff with a strong background in ICT and knowledge management. The team reviewed the existing information processes, reflected on new requirements and prepared the foundation for a more comprehensive approach to knowledge management both internally and externally.

"I am happy to note that IRC is doing an extremely good work for facilitating the sharing, promotion and use of knowledge related to water and sanitation among different institutions".

Shanta Kumar, Union Minister of Rural Development, Government of India, in speech in the Netherlands

Enhancing access to information

IRC helps people to get access to quality information through its web-site and its data base, through answering questions and by working with sector staff in the field when on mission or in training sessions. Partners from the South are also playing an important role by contributing to the information base, the news service and by creating access to and promoting the use of quality information.

Users comment positively on IRC's web-site, its news services and its information base. This supports the finding of the 2001 evaluation that IRC's role as a reference and documentation centre is very much appreciated. IRC made its web-site more user friendly and added several issue-related pages. The number of visits to the web-site increased by 11% to 280 visits per day and the number of page views increased to 910 per day. New software purchased for documentation holding includes an Enquiry Management System. Staff scanned 168 unpublished documents and added these to the electronic library, raising to 2,068 the number of full text documents that can be made available on CD-ROM. The IRCDOC bibliographic database now holds over 14,800 records. This includes 1090 documents accessible via the web page (www.irc.nl/ircdoc). IRCDOC is popular, with over 7250 searches, and almost 18,000 page views.

In the first half of 2002, staff from IRC visited NCWSTI in South Africa to help staff there to develop their documentation centre and website. At their request, the site was hosted by IRC (<http://www.irc.nl/ncwsti>). This worked well during the year, except for a period when updates from South Africa were interrupted due to a staff change. Some other IRC partners such as CREPA have similar website arrangements with organizations based in Europe. Discussions with CINARA on mirroring their website did not progress, because CINARA is fully revising its site. It is clear that the electronic infrastructure and related expertise in partner organizations is still vulnerable. This requires further strengthening and resources.

IRC is strengthening its capacity together with others to answer questions from the field better. This is done, for example, by

Number of page views

• Total IRC	
<i>managed sites</i>	900,000
• IRC home page	332,353
• World Water Day	245,871
• Sanitation	
<i>Connection</i>	106,920
• Source	53,776
• InterWater	30,098

Topics most reviewed:

- World Water Day
- Sanitation
- School Sanitation and Hygiene Education
- Community Management
- Communication and Advocacy
- Gender
- Urban

South Africa: Documentation Unit, NCWSTI



complementing and harmonizing our own question and answer service with the Immediate Technical Response service from the WELL project. Initially this was hampered by software not being compatible, but this can be overcome by mirroring responses on different web-sites. The service also includes a “frequently asked questions about IRC” section on our web-site.

“Abundant thank you for your detailed response to my query. This work is ongoing and always urgent - so I will greatly enjoy exploring the resources you've outlined”.

Kathy Eales, Mvula Trust, South Africa

Synthesize sector knowledge

Over the years, IRC has contributed to the development and testing of information products and to pioneering new participatory methodologies and gender-sensitive approaches in the sector. IRC has contributed particularly through programmes in which it worked with partners in the South and increasingly also from the North. This provides an excellent basis to further develop IRC's expertise in a number of selected areas. These areas are being addressed in projects funded internally as well as externally. The latter included the EU-supported project on sustainability of changes in hygiene behaviour, the School Sanitation and Hygiene Education (SSHE) project with UNICEF and the WELL project, where IRC headed the development of position papers on gender and on hygiene promotion. Another important project was Community Management of Rural Water Supply. This project was completed in 2002 after eight years. It provided a solid output in terms of publications, videos and training courses and a good basis for the new activities on Scaling-up Community Management. A key feature of these projects is that they allow participating organizations from the South to experiment with new approaches and adjust them to their local realities. This helps them to better support the sector in their country. IRC staff and partners (co) authored 19 articles and papers that were published in international periodicals and/or presented at international conferences. Topics that were addressed included cost recovery, sustainable livelihoods, sanitation,



South Africa: Capacity building workshop

community water supply, waste water re-use, school sanitation, hygiene promotion, institutional development, participatory learning and electronic distance learning.

Preliminary results of sustained hygiene behaviour project

Teams are very excited about the research and in several countries first survey findings have already led to proposed changes in future hygiene promotion.

In Uganda children were doing worse than women with handwashing after defecation.

Having soap near a latrine is not a good indicator for handwashing with soap after defecation as people store soap elsewhere and use it. Knowledge about the importance of handwashing is better than actual practice. Very interestingly the link between having water available and handwashing is not obvious

In 2002, IRC shifted to developing more information products jointly with others by bringing different organizations together both at the national and international level. IRC adopted the concept of facilitation of thematic groups. These groups are established around clearly defined topics in which IRC together with interested partners will develop new knowledge (innovation) or deepen the existing knowledge of itself and its partners, as well as promoting the use of this knowledge. Information products include items such as publications, training materials, newsletters and videos, developed for specific user groups in response to identified information needs. IRC used some of its current knowledge development projects that aim to fill specific information gaps, to initiate four thematic groups on respectively school sanitation, hygiene promotion, sustainable livelihoods and scaling-up community management. The last group involves among others WEDC, SKAT, WSSCC, Plan International and WaterAid. The participants have agreed to develop specific outputs that include learning workshops, advocacy material, training packages, websites and case studies and to issue overview papers. A start was made on developing an advocacy strategy for each of the thematic groups, using opportunities such as the African Sanitation and Hygiene Conference for poster presentations. This strategy includes encouraging staff involved in projects such as SSHE, to actively disseminate findings from the very beginning.

IRC staff worked on three other potential thematic groups: cost recovery; environmental sanitation; and water and small towns. They participated in the International Conference on Small Town Water Supply and Sanitation in Addis Ababa and are discussing follow-up with the Water and Sanitation Programme of the World Bank. A training workshop on cost recovery was organized with CREPA and a publication prepared by IRC staff. In preparation of the training, a CREPA staff member spent one month at IRC. A symposium on promoting access of the poor to sustainable water supplies for domestic

and productive uses in areas of water scarcity was prepared in the context of the joint Indian, South African and UK-funded action research projects to be held in January 2003 in Johannesburg. These activities have the potential to turn into a thematic group in 2003.

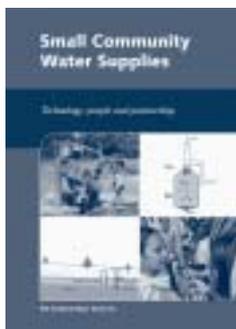
Publishing and dissemination

IRC's joint publication with WHO on operation and maintenance was translated into the Laotian Language

IRC seeks to bring down the costs of knowledge products and to progressively foster a network of information outlets in developing countries. IRC published five peer-reviewed publications dealing with community management, school sanitation and hygiene education, water supply technologies, sustainable cost recovery and experiences with resource centres. The last two are also available in electronic form. Some of these were co-published respectively with the Royal Tropical Institute and with UNICEF. Three earlier IRC titles were made available in electronic form as well. The sales of hardcopy publications almost met the target of some 4000 copies. Publication downloads and views increased to 14,400 going well over the target of 10,000. The IRC catalogue is available on line at <http://www.irc.nl/products/publications/index.html>

Through the WELL project staff from developing countries can apply for a limited number of free of charge publications available through IRC, WEDC and LSHTM

Despite the boost in electronic publishing, hardcopy information remains essential, because of the low Internet connectivity in the South. To help those that will not have ready access to Internet for many years to come, IRC arranged with partners in the South to distribute titles in IRC publication series at subsidized rates. This "solidarity pricing", e.g. making publications available at locally affordable prices, is crucial for sector staff to get access to important information. Two partners, CINARA in Colombia and CREPA in Burkina Faso have initiated the sales of IRC titles in their country at low cost to test the approach.



IRC published a fully revised version of TP 18 Small Community Water Supply: Technology, People and Partnership. This best seller in IRCs series was rewritten (now TP 40) with half of the authors now coming from the South. It was co-financed by the Dutch Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment.

The new Thematic Overview Paper series (TOPs) consists of a new type of particularly web-based publications on key themes. They combine a concise digest of recent experiences, expert opinions and foreseeable trends with links to the most informative publications, websites and research information. Each TOP contains enough immediate information to give a grounding in the topic concerned, with direct access to more detailed information and contact details of resource centres or individuals who can give local help. Reviewed by recognized experts and updated regularly with new case studies, research findings, etc, TOPs provide water, sanitation and health professionals with a single source of up-to-date thinking and knowledge in the sector.

Work started on nine TOPs, three of which were ready for publishing in the first quarter of 2003 and the others needing a few more months. Several of them are prepared by external advisors. Some are also co-funded such as the one on Sanitation policy that was developed with the USAID supported Environmental Health Programme (EHP).

The first three TOPs that will be published on IRCs web-site in the first quarter of 2003 deal with:

*Hygiene promotion,
Advocacy and HIV/AIDS.*

*Staff from the
USAID/EHP programme
indicated that EHP was
pleased to collaborate with
the IRC to develop a
sanitation policy TOP*

Sector News

The readership of the electronic Source Water and Sanitation news service was popular, with an average of 145 page views per day. Source gives readers a concise digest of sector news collected from a wide variety of sources. It is a cost-effective way of keeping readers up-to-date with what is going on around the world. This shared service from the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC) and IRC is well appreciated. In the course of the year an important benchmark was made when Source was also published in Spanish together with CINARA from Colombia and in French together with CREPA from Burkina Faso and H2O and PsEAU from Paris. The subscription to the English version increased by 16% to 2,150. The first Spanish Source, Noticia Agua y Saneamiento, was emailed to 2,500 addresses and triggered several responses from satisfied readers. Six monthly versions of the French Source, Sources Nouvelles, were sent to 595 subscribers and a paper version was sent to 1,100 persons in 62 countries. Paper copies of the English Source Bulletin were provided six times during the year to more than 5,400 readers in 126 countries, mainly in the South.

"I would like to add my congratulations for your excellent newsletter, it is much appreciated", Nozi Mjoli, Water Research Commission, South Africa

"I would like to continue receiving SOURCE because it is such a valuable resource for sector professionals". Dave Matter, WaterAid, Zambia

"I just wanted to start the year of right and send a note of thanks for producing such a fine newsletter. It is keeping my interest in such an important cause".

Tom Ciglotti, Canada

Advocacy and promoting information use

Persuading decision-makers to give priority to investments in improved water, sanitation and hygiene is becoming more and more critical. Equally important are activities that orient sector professionals to new and more effective ways of working and help them to involve stakeholders better in improving sector performance. Users of water supply and sanitation services also need to be reached directly to help them to change harmful practice and adopt new behaviours such as hand washing. IRC supports this by promoting key issues at international events and publishing this information in articles and by training and advisory missions. The missions provide good advocacy opportunities, making the knowledge of IRC staff available to others, but also excellent chances for IRC staff to be in the field and learn about latest developments.

National Sanitation Awareness Workshop held in September 2002 calls for action in Ethiopia

IRC helped facilitate a Workshop on National Sanitation Awareness in Ethiopia, bringing together a group of 60 professionals representing stakeholders from various ministries, universities, municipalities, NGOs, and multilateral agencies. The adopted Adama Declaration calls for the establishment of a National Sanitation Platform, with the secretariat in the Prime Ministers Office, to translate commitment into action to improve the bad sanitation situation (only 17 percent coverage, 2001 MoH).

IRC staff participated in the World Summit for Sustainable Development in South Africa and shared an information booth with GWA and IHE in the WaterDome. IRC presented two new displays: i) Bridging the knowledge gap; and ii) Joint learning with partners; and distributed its updated leaflet: "Bridging the knowledge gap for improved water, sanitation and hygiene for all". The Centre helped GWA with the development of a display and a new leaflet "Sidestream or mainstream? Making all water uses the business of women and men". IRC also participated with an information booth and with presentations at the



India: Group discussion

WEDC conference in Calcutta and at the African Sanitation and Hygiene Conference.

IRC continued its role as the Internet focal point for World Water Day (WWD) information exchange <http://www.worldwaterday.org> and spread E-mail news about events and information supporting the year's theme "Water for Development". There were more than a quarter of a million page views on the WWD site, nearly a third of them registered in March 2002. More than 110 WWD events were submitted for publication on the site and comments were received from all parts of the world. IRC gave a presentation on WW Day on 22nd of March in a symposium organised by PROTOS for the development community from Belgium and the Netherlands in Brussels.

"The videos on community water management you have sent are being shown to community organizations, in particular to women" – "and so can see the problem of water elsewhere in the world".

Pamela Chatterjee, volunteer working in the Kumaon region of the Himalayas, Uttar Pradesh, India

IRC organized two electronic conferences, one on School Sanitation and Hygiene Education with UNICEF and one on Scaling-up Community Management. Both were well appreciated by participants. An important lesson was that facilitating a successful e-conference takes considerable time. An e-mentoring experiment was undertaken in the EU-supported project on capacity building in integrated water resources management (IWRM). Through the use of a Yahoo group, participants were helped to apply what they learned in a training programme in NCWSTI, South Africa. One IRC staff member was moderating the group helping them to overcome problems with the system and from NCWSTI a staff member was specially dedicated to guide the group through their exercises. In various IRC projects, Yahoo groups were successfully used as e-collaboration tools for group work on specific themes. These and

earlier experience with an E-course with The Network University from Amsterdam provided a good basis for IRC to participate in the IHE organized WET-symposium aiming at taking E-learning further. It also resulted in a presentation by IRC staff: Lessons learned on Electronic Distance Learning in the expert meeting on Electronic Distance Training on Sustainability in African Local Governments organized by ICLEI and IICD in The Hague.

Training and advisory services

The minister of rural development from India opened the workshop on sustainability of changes in hygiene behavior, jointly organized by the SEU Foundation and the IRC in Kerala. He stressed the importance of this theme and indicated that the ministry has drawn up schemes to extend drinking water facilities to all uncovered areas by March 2004.

IRC staff are directly involved in knowledge sharing and promoting its use through training activities and advisory missions. Increasingly this is done in a support role to partners in the South. Activities in IRC itself focus much more on training of trainers (ToT). Training activities included one study tour involving high level Indian sector staff, a workshop on scaling up community management, a training course on IWRM, a ToT on Hygiene Education and Promotion in the Netherlands and seven short courses run by partners. In the Netherlands some 42 percent of participants were women and in the South 22 percent. IRC also contributed lectures to different organizations including IHE and Médecins sans Frontières and supported MSc students at IHE in their work. The Centre supported several (3 to 10 days) in-country workshops on awareness raising on IWRM, school sanitation and scaling-up community management,

Training Courses of partners supported by IRC: Community Management, Kenya; Environmental Sanitation in India, Gender mainstreaming, South Africa; Operation and Maintenance, Mozambique; Methodology for Participatory Assessment, Mozambique and Nepal; Hygiene Education and Promotion, Sri Lanka; Cost Recovery, Burkina Faso and Monitoring in Nicaragua.

IRC expertise was used in 24 advisory missions during the year, involving 20 different staff members. The biggest client during the year was DFID, followed by DANIDA and The World Bank. A total of nine different external support agencies used IRC's advisory services. The

missions undertaken to 15 countries showed a similar trend to last year with a shift in focus in their key themes from water supply to policy and institutional development issues (10), sanitation and hygiene (6), participatory methodologies (5) and gender issues (4).

Participation of the IRC and WEDC team in the process of sector reform in India may well be the most challenging advisory task of the year 2002. The Government of India, its Ministry of Rural Development and the Rajiv Gandhi National Drinking Water Mission, committed themselves to reforming the rural water supply and sanitation sector. Together with UNICEF they invited IRC to assist in this sector reform that seeks to put in place a decentralized framework throughout India to ensure sustainable, safe drinking water supply and effectively-used sanitation facilities with relevant hygiene behaviours. IRC supported the development of the capacity building strategy for this extraordinary undertaking. The approach selected combines motivation, skills creation and actually applying these skills. The development process included: strategic planning by senior leaders, detailed scoping studies in selected districts and initial training and motivation of some 200 key trainers/capacity builders.

The World Bank contracted IRC to help develop an assessment of the AusAID-financed WSES project in Flores, Indonesia using the Method for Participatory Assessment and train staff from Indonesian NGOs to implement and use these assessments. Work included field visits to selected communities in Flores, generating information about the sustainability and use of the water supply and sanitation facilities

Countries where IRC staff has supported activities in 2002: Bangladesh, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Colombia, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Kenya, Mexico, Mozambique, Nepal, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Philippines, Samoa, Senegal, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Uganda, Vietnam, Yemen and Zambia.

Minister of Rural Development Mr Shanta Kumar accompanied by Mr. Kumar Alok, Deputy Director (sanitation) visited IRC to discuss the HRD programme for decentralization of the water sector in India. They highlighted the importance of the sector reform process and praised the role of IRC and WEDC in the capacity building process that underpins the changes that are required.

Samoa: Participants in an awareness raising workshop



Resource centre development

The need to improve knowledge sharing is increasingly appreciated and leads to many capacity building initiatives and coalitions. To reach the Millennium Development Goals we need to work on sharing knowledge and enhancing its effective use to prevent duplication of what does not work and to enable scaling up of what has proven to be effective. IRC strongly believes that knowledge sharing is to be done at the country level through Resource Centres that build on a network of organizations working in the sector contributing to the generation, validation and sharing of knowledge and information. These organizations are crucial to provide access to and encourage the use of both electronic and hard copy information.

To support these organizations properly and to ensure the application of demand-based information sharing, IRC is developing new thinking, approaches and skills together with its partners. IRC builds on past experience developed in applied research, training projects and advisory work that gives insights in adapting information to local situations and in enhancing collaboration with sector players. Some of these activities continue, as indicated in the earlier sections of this report. Other useful experience stems from the Streams of Knowledge project that came to a close after a period of three years.

Strengthening resource centres and their networks

The new direction of IRC focuses on supporting initiatives to strengthen knowledge sharing and information brokering capacity in the South. This process is well underway in ten countries including Burkina Faso, Colombia, Kenya, Nepal and Sri Lanka, involving both long-term and more recent partners of IRC.

This includes advocacy and planning activities as well as the consolidation of earlier information activities with partners. Activities were also used to strengthen the IRC team and to try out different approaches.



India: Staff on scoping study in the field

Resource Centre Network Development in Nepal

In October 2002 an advocacy workshop on resource centre development was held organized by NEWAH with support from IRC. For NEWAH this was a new approach but they could build on the information sharing culture they had in their own organization. Participants coming from government as well as non-government organizations appreciated the workshop and acknowledged that information should be better organized and demand responsive rather than supply driven. They truly saw a scope for collaboration and established an interagency task-group to take the process further, starting with an information needs assessment of the different stakeholders involved in the sector.

Activities were rather new in the ten countries, putting emphasis on getting insight in the interest in and feasibility of bringing organizations together to work jointly on information sharing and promotion of its use. This includes countries fairly new for IRC such as Bulgaria, Rumania, Vietnam, and Yemen. IRC, often together with partners or through consultants, facilitates the process that includes mapping of the actors and establishing information needs. For both types of countries the overall philosophy is to help establish a core group of dedicated and complementary organizations that can take the process further in their country.

Resource Centre Workshop in Sri Lanka

Professionals from 19 organizations met to explore steps required to “achieve access to the collective memory of sector information in Sri Lanka in support of providing safe drinking water and adequate sanitation to all by 2025”. The meeting was convened by the Secretary of the Ministry of Housing and Plantation Infrastructure. Participants addressed institutional issues, advocacy requirements and quality assurance of information. They agreed to conduct detailed assessments to explore information gaps in the sector.

IRC support to many of these processes was fully funded from the core budget. In a number of cases activities were financed or co-financed from other projects. For example, the so-called scoping studies in NETWAS, Kenya. CINARA, Colombia, TREND, Ghana, IWSD, Zimbabwe, SEUF, India and ICDDR, Bangladesh were funded through the WELL project. This helps to build synergy. The WELL partners, for example, came together in April in IRC to discuss RC Network Development taking full benefit from the IRC experience and the results of the STREAM project. The activities in the WELL project on the other hand also included thematic scoping studies and these helped to identify knowledge gaps and research needs in some of the RCs.

IRC strongly supports the Streams of Knowledge Coalition.

The STREAM project that IRC implemented over the last three years provided important insight into the development of Resource Centres and delivered a number of tools that can help to strengthen these centres and their networks. It also provided the framework for the development of the Streams of Knowledge Coalition. IRC strongly supported the development of the proposal to help establish this network and hosts the secretariat of SOK on a temporary basis.

A senior staff member of IWSD in Zimbabwe and NGO Forum in Bangladesh came to IRC for a one month study and briefing period to help orient their organization in increasing their knowledge sharing capacity.

Some lessons learned so far

Documenting and synthesizing experiences and learning lessons from these activities were and are key activities. Initial experiences show that in many countries knowledge and information sharing has a low profile. Information is not an issue for which governments commit resources easily. The emphasis of governments remains on construction of facilities to increase coverage. So raising awareness of the importance of information to improve sector performance is an important challenge. Current knowledge sharing practice is not sufficient and the progressing decentralization makes this even more obvious with growing numbers of staff requiring to adjust their thinking and improve their capacities. The RCs and their networks already play an important role through focused training and can play a much bigger role by creating better access to good quality information. The initial experience shows by and large three situations. In a few countries the emphasis of the IRC support is on strengthening the capacity of one resource centre and increasing its role in the sector. In other countries pilot projects in information sharing are started involving different partners, and in the third case support is oriented towards setting up an information sharing network.

Knowledge management scans are underway in 3 organizations with support from IRC and WEDC. A scan provides insight into the relative strength and weakness of the organizations in knowledge management and provides a basis to identify areas for specific improvements. Preliminary findings show that all three are relatively weak in evaluating the use of knowledge, in the available hard and software and to some extent in the knowledge-sharing culture and structure. In other areas, such as the identification of required knowledge, the generation, the sharing and the application, differences exist between organizations making it interesting to share experience among them.

Development of information sharing capacity in countries is not an unambiguous and straightforward process. Many organizations are developing information products, often as a result of projects. Through these products they want to promote their approach and their organization and in many cases this leads to a fairly supply-driven approach. So the real challenge is to bring these organizations together with the users and jointly establish the information needs and opportunities to share the work. This process is not automatic and requires good facilitation to establish win-win situations and make stakeholders believe in sharing information. It is essential to have a truly open communication with the stakeholders and to ensure that the leading organization(s) do not consider the “project” as a (financial) opportunity they would like to keep for themselves alone.

Innovative capacity building

Tomorrow’s professionals will have a major influence on approaches to water, sanitation and hygiene improvements around the world. For this reason, IRC has developed an innovative programme for Junior Professional Officers (JPOs) that receives support from DGIS. In this programme, eight JPOs from resource centres in the South come for some 18 months to IRC and in return 4 Dutch JPOs take their place for two times 18 months in their parent organization. This programme started in 2002 and the Dutch JPOs after an initial training in IRC started to work in the resource centres of their first stationing. So far four JPOs from the resource centres have found their niche in IRC. They received formal training which involved also support from outside experts for training and were trained “on the job” through their participation in projects and in training activities. The participation of the JPOs in these programmes has been rewarding for the JPOs, for IRC and for the resource centres. The JPOs learned a lot about water and sanitation sector realities, programme management and planning and information development and sharing. Each of the JPOs also adopted a specific theme in consultation with their parent organization to deepen their knowledge and experience thus equipping them better for their future work.

JPOs in action



Partners around the World

IRC's operations involve a wide range of external support agencies and resource centres in the North and the South. To make a real difference it is essential that organizations which support initiatives in the South share their efforts better, as this will avoid duplication and enhance effective knowledge sharing and use. With the stronger support from the Dutch government and the new approaches of encouraging the development of thematic groups and joint publishing, IRC has been able to step up a number of shared activities and more are in the offing.

Partners in the South

CFPAS, Mozambique;
CINARA, Colombia;
CREPA, Burkina Faso;
Foundation for Technical Cooperation (COSI), Sri Lanka;
IWSD, Zimbabwe;
Mvula Trust, South Africa;
National Community Water and Sanitation Training Institute, South Africa;
Nepal Water for Health (NEWAH), Nepal;
NETWAS International, Kenya;
NGO Forum DWSS, Bangladesh;
PCWS - ITN Foundation, Philippines;
Socio Economic Unit Foundation (SEUF), India;
TREND, Ghana

Because of the new orientation IRC has been able to increase significantly the numbers of partners it works with in the South. This includes both partners with whom IRC has had long-term collaboration and new partners. IRC not only collaborates directly with these partners, but also uses opportunities to bring them together. This is very much appreciated as it offers a good possibility to learn from each other.

Synergies among Southern resource centres have been improved by the IRC-supported *Streams of Knowledge* project, the WELL project and IRC's research and development projects. Links with Southern resource centres are at the heart of IRC's Business Plan. We therefore strongly supported the SoK interim Board of Management to develop a proposal for a three-year project to further develop the SoK foundation. Towards the end of 2002, DGIS agreed to fund this proposal with the secretariat being hosted by PCWS in the Philippines. This is a good follow up to the SOK project of IRC, which has been very important to gain insight in the roles and realities of resource centres and their potential support for the sector. The SoK partners have jointly developed a "toolbox" for strengthening the management and organisation of resource centres.

The tools include: self-assessment guidelines; a guide for organisational strengthening of potential resource centres; an impact assessment methodology; quality assurance guidelines; and web site development/electronic information tools. The Sounding Board Group met twice in 2002 to discuss progress and follow-up.

International partners

IRC continued its long standing and mutually beneficial partnership with the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC). Joint products such as the Source news service and the InterWATER database on sector organisations receive good response from the field. Publicity was given to the new WASH advocacy campaign and the organizations jointly promoted activities around the scaling-up of community management.

IRC work with the Water, Engineering and Development Centre (WEDC) at Loughborough University and London School of Hygiene

and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) in the UK expanded. Partly this happened in the context of the WELL project, but also through other programmes such as the EU-supported sustained hygiene behaviour project.

Collaboration with UNICEF has continued well through joint work on school sanitation and hygiene education and supporting sector reform in India. This also holds possibilities for the future. The 2001 World Water Day activity with WHO continued into 2002 with regular updates on the web-site until the launching of the new theme in March. IRC worked closely with the Water and Sanitation Program (WSP) both on the Sanitation Connection development and on further development of the Methodology for Participatory Assessment. IRC staff participated in different meetings organized by WSP including the advisory group meeting in Dakar, Africa.

IRC is a member of the Streams of Knowledge Coalition and strongly supports the Gender and Water Alliance (GWA). This support has been reinforced by the secondment of a staff member from IRC as GWA's Executive Secretary and by IRC hosting the Secretariat. GWA has maintained the momentum generated by its successful launch at the Second World Water Forum in March 2000. The international coalition of like-minded individuals and agencies has become the primary voice for gender perspectives in the broad water resources sector. Throughout the year, GWA members have spread the gender messages in a wide range of workshops, seminars and conferences. They have developed different activities with support from DFID and DGIS including training materials and training workshops. IRC has assisted the alliance in preparing advocacy and promotion materials and shared a stand with them at the World Summit of Sustainable Development in South Africa.

Partners close to home

Staff from IRC and IHE jointly reviewed the potential for collaboration through four working groups. The overall conclusion was that there is a lot of potential for synergy particularly in the context of IHE becoming the UNESCO-IHE Institute for Water Education. Combining operations has the potential to ensure long-term continuity, gain larger impact and outreach and enhance the quality of products and activities. The discussions were very useful and will be continued in 2003 when the new institute is operational. The discussion led to closer contacts between the two organizations and IHE staff will, for example, develop a few TOPs in 2003. A joint mission was carried out to Yemen to explore the potential for RC development and a joint briefing programme was organized for Indian sector professionals. IRC staff contributed to the IHE post-graduate training programme on sanitary engineering and to various workshops and provided guidance to MSc and PhD students. For CAPNET, IRC and the WSSCC started the development of an on-line tutorial on IWRM.



Zambia:
School Sanitation Report

International partners
Environmental Health Programme (EHP), HR Wallingford, H2Onet, IMWI, LSHTM, Plan International, PSeau, SKAT, UNDP, Unicef, WaterAid, WEDC, WHO, World Bank, WSP, WSSCC

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 provided IRC with a core budget of approximately 2 million Euro in 2002. This core budget includes some 0.9 million Euro, that is directly provided to partners or used for travel and information products. This is 0.7 million Euro higher than in 2001 because this is part of the revised support from DGIS that previously was provided through separately funded projects. The core budget is supplemented with income from services and programmes requested by national governments, multilateral and bilateral donors, UN agencies, international development banks and NGOs. In the year 2002 the supplementary income amounted to some 1.2 million Euro. Aside from their share of the core subsidy, another 400,000 Euro was passed through IRC to partner organizations in the South. Furthermore, IRC was able to involve several of its partners in advisory missions and training activities.

IRC is very grateful for the new subsidy arrangement and is gradually accommodating its activities to the new situation. In the first year of the new business plan it was not yet able to fully utilize all available resource as some activities took longer to develop and externally funded activities required more time. Activities are picking up quickly however and with that a higher budget has been established for 2003 as part of the overall five-year plan. In line with the new arrangement with the Dutch government IRC was able to maintain a positive financial balance that allowed it to safeguard the value of its resistance capital. In line with the new arrangement with the Dutch government IRC was able to maintain a positive financial balance that allowed it to safeguard the value of its resistance capital.

Staff

The activities described in this report have been carried out by IRC's staff of 38, the junior programme officer and several RC partners. Disciplines represented among IRC staff are information science, information and communication technology, engineering, sociology, anthropology, economics, and journalism. Some 25% of staff hails from outside the Netherlands. Towards the end of the year IRC strengthened its team by recruiting two additional staff members with experience in information and communication.

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.

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