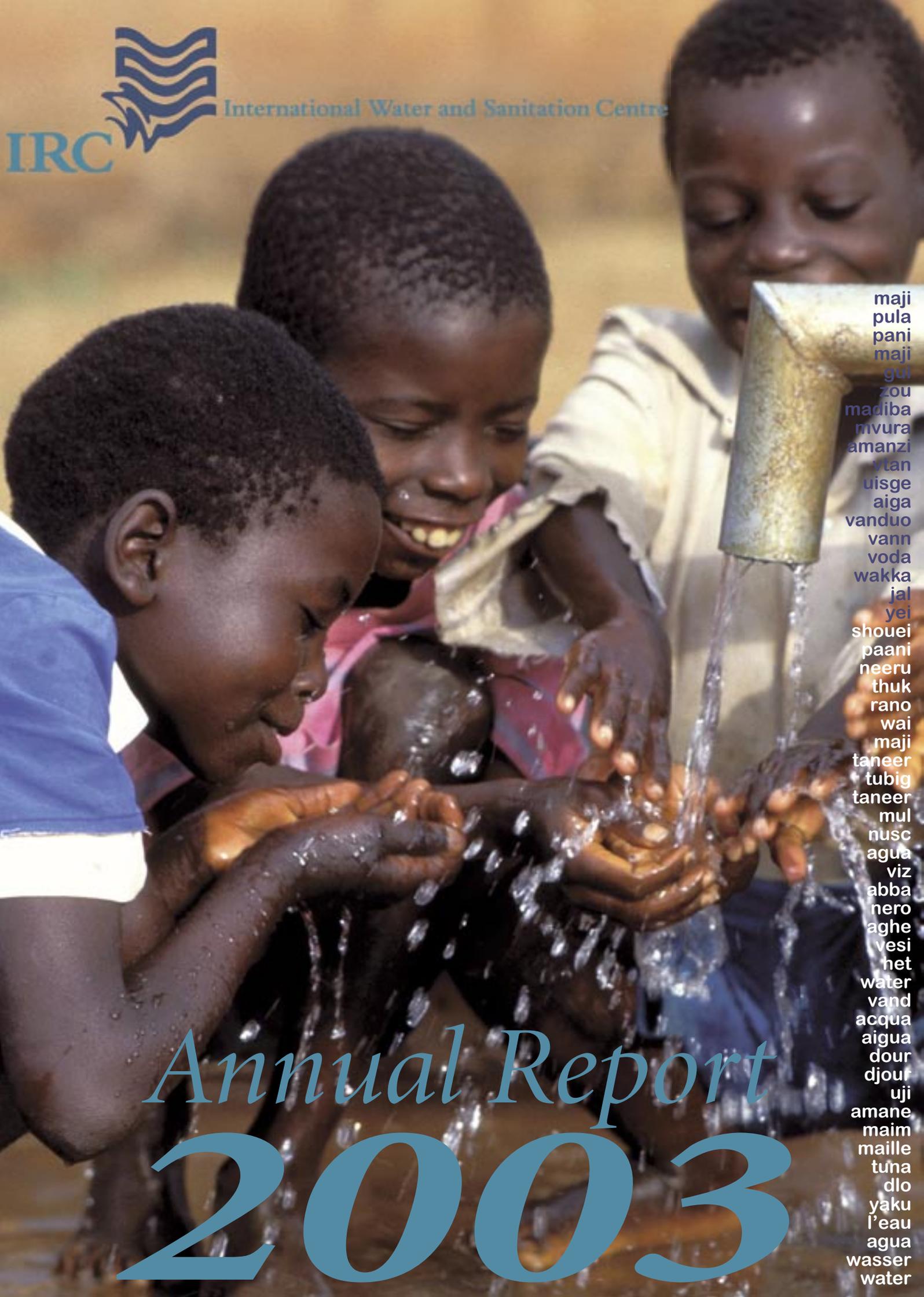




International Water and Sanitation Centre

IRC



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Annual Report 2003

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'IRC will continue to demonstrate its dedication to the shared goal of improving water and sanitation conditions in the developing world.'



The board focused in 2003 on improving the way the IRC Foundation is governed, by moving towards greater operational autonomy from its funding ministries. The appointment of a new Director, Paul van Koppen, who comes to IRC with long experience managing international water supply and sanitation projects in the private sector, marks a significant step in this process. Paul has overseen a refocusing of IRC's activities around its core strengths, as set out in the Business Plan for 2002–2006. In anticipation of the moves towards greater autonomy, due to be confirmed by statute by 2005, the Board restricted its role this year to supervision, rather than direct control and management of implementation of the Business Plan.

Over the course of the year, five full board meetings took place in Delft. Subcommittees met regularly to progress the autonomy process and to examine, in consultation with the Works Council and the Director, the best options for a new governing structure. A further subcommittee investigated options for closer collaboration with UNESCO-IHE within the context of IRC's moves towards enhanced autonomy.

The Board also held its annual meeting with the International Advisory Committee members, where it took the opportunity to explore what sort of position a more autonomous IRC would hold within the international water and sanitation sector.

Many routine work meetings also took place throughout the year between the Director, the Chair and other members of the Board.

At a short ceremony at the opening of the Sixth Water and Information Summit (WIS 6), the IRC Board expressed its gratitude to Jan Teun Visscher, who stepped down as Director after serving for six years. After successfully steering IRC to its present healthy condition, Jan Teun is now focusing his energies in a more academic field.

The Board would also like to express its gratitude to the Dutch Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for their continued long-term support, and to thank the IRC staff and management for their personal commitment and contribution to our programmes and projects. We are looking forward to another busy year in which IRC will continue to demonstrate its dedication to the shared goal of improving water and sanitation conditions in the developing world.

Joop Hoekman
Chairman, IRC Governing Board

'Our culture of working through partnerships and networks will be an important element in increasing our impact.'



Taking on this job at the beginning of 2003 was for me a personal challenge. I saw IRC as an organisation with a unique role within the international water and sanitation sector, that does an outstanding job in its core areas of developing, communicating and promoting the use of knowledge. My task was to help to reshape this organisation according to the new Business Plan, and to increase the global reach and impact of IRC's work.

Attending gatherings of the international water and sanitation sector, for instance the 3rd World Water Forum in Kyoto, I was often struck with the positive feedback that I received from those familiar with IRC's work. Yet I also came across many for whom the IRC remains an "untapped mine": a rich source of information and skills that they have yet to make use of. I see it as my challenge to try to let more organisations and people make use of our IRC resources.

In 2003, while continuing the organisational changes agreed in the Business Plan of 2002–2006, we were able to focus on implementing our core areas of work. We can therefore look back to a successful year which closes with our key programmes well on track. The restructuring required significant staff changes. It was hard to say goodbye to those who left us, all of whom had played their role in making IRC what it is today. We were pleased, however, to welcome newcomers, bringing new ideas and skills important for the implementation of our Business Plan.

While we are pleased with our progress, there is still so much we want to do. Implementing our current Business Plan is of course a priority. However, our ambition is to go beyond this. Crucially, we want to improve our effectiveness and increase the impact of our work. To this end, in 2003 we asked all our main stakeholders to let us know what they think about our performance, our impact and sector trends. You can read more about this in the Report. We will continue similar feedback exercises in coming years, to help us align our work with the needs and programmes of the sector and with other organisations that have similar goals and objectives.

Our culture of working through partnerships and networks will also be an important element in increasing our impact. We always look at ways to amplify the effect of our resources and the impact of our activities by collaborating with others. In 2003 we started revitalising existing partnerships and networks, and establishing new ones, both internationally (as with the Streams of Knowledge Global Coalition of Resource Centres) and in our home country (with the Netherlands Water Partnership). This is an approach we will continue in 2004.

I hope that you will enjoy reading this Report, and that it may stimulate ideas about how we can work together. We look forward to more suggestions for joint action and collaboration, supporting our mission and strategy to improve water and sanitation conditions for the world's poorest communities.

Paul van Koppen
IRC Director

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'P' followed by a long horizontal stroke that loops back under the 'P'.

Meeting the MDG challenges

The IRC mission is to make it easier for professionals, organisations and government institutions to share, promote and use knowledge. IRC builds the skills and capacities of organisations that work with communities, so that they can better support poor men, women and children in developing countries to obtain adequate and sustainable water and sanitation services. IRC draws on 35 years of experience, on the expertise and dedication of its staff and, above all, on the mutual respect and understanding developed with Southern partners.

The challenges for 2003

As part of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), nations have committed themselves to halve the number of people without access to safe water and sanitation by 2015.

The challenge is to ensure that the water supply and sanitation resources that are allocated to meet MDG targets are used effectively. Those who plan, construct, operate, use or maintain facilities must have the information they need to avoid past mistakes. District government and support agencies need to know how they can help create an environment that supports community efforts to manage their facilities. Effective advocacy is required to ensure that the needs of the poor are not sidelined.

Increasingly, international aid goes as 'basket funding' to national governments, who take primary responsibility for deciding how each country's MDGs will be met. Governments are, however, urged to decentralise their approach.

This situation offers many opportunities, but also poses significant challenges. Too great a focus only on reaching targets risks repeating the errors of the 1980s – the 'Decade of Water'.

- Many systems installed during the Decade fell into neglect and disuse, because insufficient attention was paid to ensuring that they were appropriate and sustainable.
- New systems did not yield expected health benefits because of a lack of attention to hygiene behaviours.

Targets also risk disadvantaging poor and isolated rural communities, if governments or private suppliers concentrate on urban and better-off populations.

If these dangers are to be avoided, communities and families, and the agencies that support them, need access to relevant and reliable information. IRC's work with its Southern partners and communities on planning, installing, using and maintaining water supplies has enabled the organisation to share lessons with the sector and community organisations that could bring the goals for water and sanitation within reach. ◆

'The partnership with IRC helps to build our capacity as resource centres. We get a platform of exchange with other countries. Centres like ours can use some of their expertise and really try to learn from them, while they use some of our expertise and really try to learn from us. It is a two way process; not one way from IRC to us.'

**Rory Villaluna, Director,
PCWS Manila, Philippines**

Key strategies for the IRC 2002–2006

- **Developing and sharing knowledge** – IRC provides accessible, high-quality information in a variety of languages and formats, on issues such as hygiene education and community management.
- **Informing & communicating** – IRC has a network of information outlets in developing countries, and publishes and disseminates information using solidarity pricing principles. In 2003, IRC transformed its website into a water portal to enable those seeking information to get the best from the Internet.
- **Resource centres** – IRC supports centres to develop and improve their skills in order to become centres of knowledge in their own countries, capable of outreach, advocacy and information sharing. In 2003, the focus was on the 18-country Resource Centre Development Programme in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and Central Europe.
This report shows how, in 2003, this strategy developed through networks and partnerships across the world. ◆



Bangladeshi girls use a green painted pump, indicating that the water is arsenic free.

Let water information flow!

'The production of information products in itself is not enough, we need a dialogue and we need intermediaries who can entertain this dialogue.'

Jan Teun Visscher,
former IRC Director

'Technology provides the potential of output but, by itself, it cannot generate levels of utilisation that do justice to its potential.'

Dr Jasveen Jairath,
Director of South Asian Consortium for Inter-disciplinary Water Resources Studies (SaciWATERS)

Water and information have a lot in common. They are both essential. They flow from source to user. There can be too much, or too little. They can be transparent and good quality, or cloudy and polluted.

The Sixth Water Information Summit (WIS 6) took place from 9 to 12 September 2003, in Delft, under the title *Breaking the barriers: Let water information flow*. Held for the first time in Europe, WIS 6 focused on strategies to overcome the digital divide between North and South and to share knowledge and information in support of the water and sanitation sectors.

The four-day Summit, which opened on the 35th anniversary of IRC, was organised by IRC and the Water Web Consortium (USA), with assistance from the UNESCO-IHE Institute for Water Education and the International Institute for Communication and Development (IICD). The Summit brought together communication specialists, information managers, website managers, academics, scientists, policy makers, and other water information users, to discuss the use of web-based technologies and partnerships to strengthen regional and global water resources communities and information networks. ♦



Panel discussion on information and communication technologies (ICT) and information management at the WIS 6 conference in Delft in September 2003.

How can we bridge the digital divide to bring vital information to communities?

Information about water and sanitation is not scarce. The collective memory of the sector is full of information, knowledge and experience. The problem is that the sector does not know how to access and share its experience when it is most needed.

For example, most deaths of young children from waterborne and related diseases could be avoided if their parents knew of the importance of breastfeeding and handwashing or had access to simple techniques such as oral rehydration therapy.

WIS 6 provided an opportunity for information specialists from North and South to come together to discuss how technology can be combined with more traditional forms of communication, to deliver vital

information to communities.

The Internet is an invaluable resource for sharing information, but there is a growing gap between the North and the South and within the South.

In the Netherlands, six out of ten people have access to the Internet; in Colombia the figure is less than three in a hundred and in Bangladesh, around one in a thousand. In developing countries, access is high cost and slow speed. In rural areas telephone wires and electricity may be non-existent. Language is often also a barrier.

One key role for Resource Centres is connecting communities to information available on the Internet and connecting the Internet community with the real world. ♦

IRC makes a splash at Kyoto



The audience at the IRC Closing the Digital Divide session at the 3rd World Water Forum in Kyoto.

IRC and partners had a high profile at the 3rd World Water Forum, in Kyoto, March 2003, where it called on governments to invest in knowledge as well as pipes.

IRC joined the Streams of Knowledge Global Coalition of Resource Centres and the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council in hosting a 'Bridging the Knowledge Gap' information booth in the Event Hall at Kyoto.

IRC also addressed the topic at a session on Information and Knowledge Sharing for Safe Water and Sanitation in the Developing World, where partners from Burkina

Faso, Colombia, and the Philippines, and the UNESCO-IHE Institute for Water and Education made presentations.

The directors of five resource centres were present at the Forum and they argued a very strong case for the strategic importance of resource centres to the success of national efforts to achieve Millennium Development Goals. The final Ministerial statement called on "organisations involved in the water sector to work in a transparent and cooperative way" and applauded the proposal to establish a new network of websites to share information and promote cooperation. ♦

Survey finds IRC greatly valued in the South

IRC has a good reputation in the water and sanitation community – more strongly expressed in the South compared to the North – according to a survey of people who are active in the sector. Of respondents from developing countries, 86% said IRC had "a great deal" or "a fair amount" of influence on their thinking or activities. Of respondents in industrialised countries, the proportion was 48%.

These are among the findings from a written survey of 71 participants of the Sixth Water Information Summit (WIS 6) in September 2003 and face-to-face interviews with 17 sector professionals.

IRC had influenced the thinking and activities of two out of three respondents who were interviewed.

Participatory action research, for instance, helped one resource centre to prepare a national policy chapter on community water management. Results of a hygiene behaviour study had percolated into government task

forces, which shared the information and set an agenda for change.

Amongst the most appreciated services from IRC are its website, *Source* newsletter and its training and capacity building.

The interviews showed that IRC is seen as a valued partner, primarily in capacity development. It has helped strengthen partners and networks such as Streams of Knowledge and the Gender and Water Alliance. IRC's partnership methodology is appreciated as based on equality and listening.

There were a number of suggestions for improving IRC's work. The most frequently mentioned were to speed up the Resource Centre Development programme, provide information in more languages, and expand the geographic focus of its work.

IRC was also urged to promote its own role in the sector so that people understand better its key functions. IRC welcomed the suggestions and is incorporating them into its strategic planning. ♦

'We are committed, in the long term, to fortify the capacity of the people and institutions with technical and other assistance from the international community. This must include ...their ability to measure and monitor performance, to share innovative approaches, best practices, information, knowledge and experiences relevant to local conditions.'

3rd World Water Forum Ministerial Declaration, 23 March 2003, Kyoto, Japan

'IRC is a very, very international organisation. It is very much liked, owned and loved by people from the developing world.'

**Gourisankar Ghosh
WSSCC**

Resource centres: NEWAH and

The purpose of resource centres is to improve the efficiency of the local water and sanitation sector by ensuring that everyone working in the community, district government, private sector and NGOs has the information they need and knows how to use it. In 2003 the first organisations to join the Resource Centre Development programme were focusing on knowledge and information sharing. In Nepal, NEWAH and the Integrated Development Society (IDS) – a partner in the resource centre project – brought together people active at community and intermediate level to find out what each needed to know. In Colombia, CINARA argued for ‘information’ to be a key element in a major Governmental water programme. These examples show how attention to information can get the best results from new projects and sustain existing systems.



Nepal: Problems of the hills, problems of the plains



NEWAH staff consult members of a village water committee.

In Nepal, District Offices and NGOs have good communication with local water and sanitation committees. But until NEWAH & IDS invited them to sit down together, they had never asked themselves what these committees need to know.

NEWAH has a long history of working with rural communities in Nepal on water and sanitation, and is a long-standing IRC partner. In 2002, NEWAH and the Integrated Development Society, another Nepalese NGO, agreed to start the resource centre development process.

In January 2003, NEWAH/IDS set about involving water support agencies in an assessment of the information needs of the communities they serve. Two villages were chosen for a pilot, Nepalgunj in the mid Western region and Biratnagar in the Eastern region. Workshops brought together community level water and sanitation committees from mountainous areas and more densely populated plains (the ‘Terai’) with members of District Development Committees, District Water Supply Offices and NGOs. Workshops separated to group together those based in hill areas and those living in the Terai.

All communities faced a number of problems managing and maintaining their water supplies. It emerged that many problems could be addressed through training – in book keeping, motivational skills, conflict management, mobilising resources and in building trust between users and committee members. The workshops identified a need for information about where training is provided for users and support agencies and how to apply for funds.

The workshops showed that information from support agencies needs to be targeted. Problems over upkeep, managing the maintenance fund and spare parts were cited by Terai committees at both workshops, owing to the fact that water in the plains is extracted from a number of individual tube wells. Spare parts were less of a problem for hillside systems, which rely on gravity flow. However conflicts are more likely over equitable use of water sources.

The support agencies, after a bit of prompting, also began to address their own information needs. Discussions revealed poor communication between government departments and NGOs active in their districts. District Development Committees and Water Departments pointed out that it was hard for them to provide support when different NGOs use different approaches and technologies that they were not familiar with. Support agencies wanted to know more about available training and to learn how to motivate community members about proper use of facilities, hygiene issues, and how to manage a maintenance fund.

The findings of these workshops were fed back to support agency head offices in Kathmandu. The results will allow agencies to tailor support to the real life problems with which local water committees struggle, increasing the number of local water systems that function properly. The workshops were an important contribution towards achieving Nepal’s Millennium Development Goals – without installing a single new well or pipeline. 💧

CINARA show the way

CINARA is a water and sanitation research department attached to the Valle University in Colombia. CINARA and IRC have been working together since the 1970s, and developing CINARA's role as a resource centre since February 2002. In 2003, CINARA was asked to join a major water supply project for the Cauca Valley.



Colombia: blueprint for state water programme

Shortly after President Uribe came to power in Colombia in 2002, the role of CINARA in the Colombian water and sanitation sector was boosted by the new administration.

CINARA became involved in a big rural water supply implementation programme in the department of Valle de Cauca. The new governor of the department chose CINARA to be one of the key implementing partners in the Proyecto de Abastecimiento de Agua Rural (PAAR). CINARA and IRC decided to concentrate on improving information provision in the PAAR programme, using resources from the Resource Centre Development programme. They saw this as an excellent opportunity to improve the implementation and maintenance of water supply services.

One of the challenges in Colombia is that there are no foreign donors and funding for information services has to be supported by the government. Another challenge is that large parts of the rural population in Colombia cannot read and write. Information provision must therefore be creative and innovative. There was also a challenge for CINARA, traditionally a research organisation, to adapt to be able to fulfil a new function of providing effective information services.

CINARA won support for a proactive approach. The partners agreed on a series of information and knowledge sharing initiatives within the PAAR programme, including a regional information network. Each partner acts as a resource centre with defined roles and responsibilities for supplying appropriate information to keep water supply systems in the region working efficiently. IRC is helping them improve their capacity to share knowledge and disseminate information in a variety of ways, including workshops on administration, finance, resolving conflicts, community management and efficient use of water.

The quality and sustainability of the systems being implemented through the PAAR project were boosted by the attention paid to the quality of information. This included ensuring that the contractors carrying out the work had good up to date knowledge from previous experiences elsewhere, and that local communities knew what they should be demanding and were clear about the plans for maintenance and operation of systems being installed in their area. ♦



IRC and CINARA staff meet community members in El Hermiguero.

CINARA's involvement in the PAAR project provides a good example of how resource centres can help governments achieve their Millennium Development Goals.

Lessons of the '90s still valid for 2003

In 2003, seven years after a programme to filter water ended, communities in Colombia were still learning from the experience.

The TRANSCOLK programme introduced Multi Stage Filtration (MSF) in eight regions over seven years from 1989 to 1996. The key lesson learned by CINARA, staff from 86 institutions and 1,500 community leaders, water committee members and operators was that the system needed community participation as well as technology.

This lesson is still being applied in systems currently being built and maintained. The Colombian Economic Development Ministry said that by 2003 more than 100 MSF systems had been installed. ♦

A water portal is born

Sharing and using knowledge is at the heart of IRC's approach



High tech and effective – Ehsan Ul-Haque, Junior Professional Officer from the NGO Forum for Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation, Bangladesh, accesses the Water Portal.

The Internet is ideal for transferring huge quantities of information over very long distances. It is not well-suited for gathering, sharing or disseminating information at local level, especially among the world's poorest and most isolated communities. IRC equips resource centres to put the Internet to use in their localities, often by using traditional media such as posters and pictures. Local information, knowledge and experience can be fed back into the Water Portal, for everyone to share.



Low tech and effective – Following a presentation by NETWAS – a woman in Kenya votes in an envelope next to the picture of the water system of her choice.

Enter the words “water, cost recovery” and Google will offer 992,000 webpage addresses; “water, productive use” nets 559,000 matches, while “hygiene promotion” yields a mere 268,000. With such a volume of data, search engines like Google can overwhelm people searching for information on water and sanitation.

The problem is not a mountain of useless information; rather that good, relevant information is fragmented across thousands of competing websites. In an ambitious attempt to adopt a more cooperative approach, IRC launched a water portal to help searchers find what they need. It aims to serve the needs of policy makers, water specialists and information professionals, and is organised under the general headings of Themes (such as scaling up, financing and cost recovery, school sanitation), Projects, and Products and Services (including *Source* electronic news bulletin, a raft of publications available on or off-line, links to other information sources and a question and answer service).

Visitors can use the portal to find their way to news articles, events and publications, emanating not only from IRC but from other sites and organisations as well.

Cor Dietvorst, an IRC member of staff, acts as a kind of human Google, checking through more than 100 water and sanitation websites every week, to see what is new and what may be of interest to the water and sanitation community. This information may be posted on the *Source* section of the portal, and also flagged up under the relevant Theme, Product or Project.

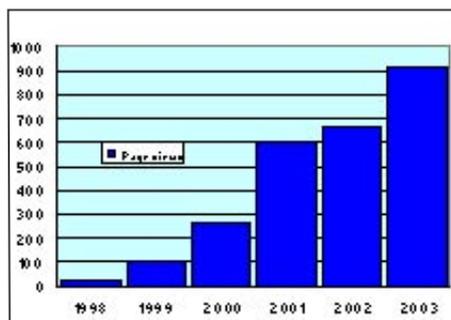
The innovative design enables other



The IRC water portal can be accessed in English, French, Spanish and Portuguese.

organisations to integrate their sites into the portal. The Streams of Knowledge global coalition of resource centres, managed from the Philippines, has already plugged in. It retains its own website with its own address, and posts articles and information on its site as usual. However, as it is part of the IRC portal, those same articles can also be flagged up under the relevant heading of the IRC portal (e.g. Themes: scaling up/news) where anyone browsing that section, or using the portal's search function will come across it. In order to ensure full integration particularly of Spanish and French language sites into the portal, IRC is developing a multilingual thesaurus that will allow the Search function and location of related articles to operate across all languages. In future, readers looking at an article on “handpumps”, for instance, could be directed to related articles that may appear on the CINARA website under the keyword “bomba a mano”.

‘The IRC website is the best information source in the sector.’
Eugene Larbi,
TREND Ghana



In 2003, the IRC website recorded over 900,000 page views – 333 a day. Six years earlier it was 15 a day. IRC will develop the Portal so that visitors can take part in debates as well as find information.

Hot off the press

Water stories drip with inspiration

Something a bit different was needed to mark the 35th anniversary of IRC in 2003 – a book on water and sanitation that was more inspirational than manual.

The result was a volume of more than 40 stories, personal experiences and anecdotes, which underline the importance of water in people's lives, tell community fables and outline lessons that water people have learned.

◆ Misheck Kirimi, from Kenya, travelled miles to fetch clean water. When his donkey refused to cross a river, he learned the meaning of a proverb about “the enemy's rain”.

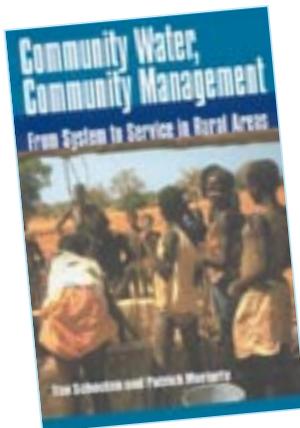
◆ Bunker Roy tells how mountain people close to Kanchanjanga, India, devised and built a rainwater harvesting system, although the engineers said it could not be done. Now 40 systems are fully operational.

◆ The Juruna Indians tell how the children of a chief defied a dangerous bird and brought the Amazon and Xingú rivers to life.

Sascha de Graaf, IRC Publications Officer, who edited *Water Stories*, said: “Telling stories is one way of sharing knowledge and experiences. Stories help us make sense of the world we live in.” ◆



Misheck Kirimi, from NETWAS in Kenya, wrote a story based on his journey to fetch water as a 12-year-old boy.



Jointly published by ITDG and IRC. 192 pages

Community management needs more than sweat

Community Water, Community Management is based on the day to day experiences of 22 communities in Africa, Asia and Latin America, with whom IRC partners worked for many years. The book shows the creativity people bring to solving water problems, but also the stresses that threaten to destroy community management.

Different communities need different solutions. In La Sirena, Colombia, women play a full role in community leadership, although they had to insist on their rights to do so and show the men they were capable. “We did better than them and we were never discouraged,” said Doña Fabiola. In patriarchal areas of Pakistan, the women formed parallel water

committees to the men, the two committees forming a single decision-making structure.

Authors Ton Schouten and Patrick Moriarty argue that the key is for communities to have control over the system rather than just put in the work (“sweat equity”). The red warning thread that runs through the book is the need for external support, not just at the beginning, but continuously, so that new people are trained, and so the community has somewhere to turn for help.

This book has been widely praised for bringing community management issues to life. Jon Lane, former Director of Water Aid, said: “I recommend this book to policy-makers, field staff and students alike.” ◆

Bestseller for 20 years reflects a shift South in the balance of expertise

There cannot be many books in this sector that were popular 20 years ago and are still bestsellers. IRC published *Small Community Water Supplies* in 1981, at the beginning of the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade, as one of the first books to link water supply technology to the needs of small communities.

A great deal has changed since 1981, and the book has too. Community participation, hygiene promotion, NGOs, the pri-

ivate sector and gender-based approaches are all now included.

The very concept of expertise has also changed. The 1980s handbook was written by three university professors and a WHO sanitary engineer. By contrast, a total of 29 authors contributed to the new edition: practising water sector professionals, primarily from developing countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. New chapters cover emerging issues like fluoride, arsenic and emergencies and disasters,

and technological advances. An important addition deals with community water supplies in Central and Eastern Europe.

The original book was primarily for an engineering readership; the new version appeals to anyone involved in planning, designing and implementing programmes to improve water supplies for people. *Small Community Water Supplies: Technology, people and partnership*. Edited: Jo Smet and Christine van Wijk. 585 pages, 270 technical illustrations. ◆

Getting to grips with learning, sharing and using

IRC's Resource Centre Development programme aims to develop the ability of local organisations to manage knowledge so they use information more effectively and learn lessons from their own and others' experience.

Knowledge management focuses on how human beings access, share and use information to promote originality, creativity and learning.

It means more than developing individual information and communication skills or keeping a good library. It is a question of developing a culture in which everyone in the organisation or network of organisations values, uses and passes on relevant information – where people ask themselves questions like: *Could referring to the GWA guidelines for gender mainstreaming improve the research I am doing? Could something I read on the Streams of Knowledge resource centre network website be of value to district government officials planning a similar project in my locality?*

In 2003, IRC's Southern partners started finding ways to improve knowledge management in their own organisations. ♦

Southern partners draw up plans to improve the way they manage knowledge and information

At the end of WIS 6, more than 50 people took part in a knowledge management workshop aimed at helping them develop strategies to improve the way their own organisations and networks handle information. The three-day course, from 15 to 17 September 2003, had been organised by IRC in conjunction with International Waters Learning Exchange and Resource Network (IW-LEARN). Among the participants were information officers from nine of the centres in the IRC Resource Centre Development programme, as well as staff from bodies in developing countries that address integrated water resources management, transboundary water resources management, integrated coast and marine management and environmental sanitation.

Most participants had prepared for the workshop by doing an introductory online course. During the workshop, each individual drew up a knowledge management plan for their own organisation, which ranged from developing interactive websites, to promoting dialogue, sharing information between partners and planning how to reach those without Internet access.

The success of efforts to improve knowledge management depends crucially on securing a commitment to this idea at the head of the organisation. The value of the exercise was therefore greatly enhanced by the presence of directors of all nine resource centres, who were able to hear their information officers present their knowledge management plans on the final day of the workshop. ♦

Advising the EU on evaluation

The EU spends an average of 1.4 billion euro a year on water related development aid. In 2003, IRC provided guidance on an evaluation methodology for key aspects of the water and sanitation programmes.

PARTICIP GmbH, consultants for development and environment, commissioned IRC to assist EC staff and local counterparts to implement the EU water policy.

The IRC recommended that an overall shift in thinking was necessary to:

- recognise that all water users have a responsibility,
- apply an integrated approach in which all actors cooperate, for example, in integrating land and water management and preventing water pollution,
- move towards a sustainable water behaviour, dominated by demand rather than supply,
- increase understanding of the value of water,

- price water services to ensure sustainability, with cross subsidies to safeguard the needs of poor and vulnerable groups. ♦

Training in Vietnam

IRC contributed to a two-week management for sustainability and community management course in Vietnam with the COSI Foundation from Sri Lanka.

More than 30 men and women joined the course in Buon Ma Thuot City. Most were advisors of projects in the Central Highlands provinces, supported by the Danish International Development Agency, Danida, or in the Mekong delta, supported by the Australian overseas aid programme, AUSSAID.

National level staff from the Vietnam Centre for Water Supply and Sanitation (CERWASS) and from NGOs also participated. CERWASS expressed an interest in joining the resource centre programme. ♦

'NGOs and CBOs need access to a shared water and sanitation information and knowledge base to find the best way forward and prevent them from making the same mistakes others have made before.'
Caroline Nafula, Communication and Liaison Officer for UWASNET

Championing a culture of collaboration



Partnerships and networking are central to IRC's strategy for developing and sharing knowledge and information.

IRC has built strong relations over many years with Southern partners across the developing world. Many of these worked jointly with IRC, developing crucial insights into the obstacles and possible solutions to sustainable community management, in the seven-country participatory action research programme carried out in the 1990s. More recently, many are working with IRC developing and scaling up School Sanitation and Hygiene Education programmes, piloting environmental sanitation projects or conducting research into how to promote long-term changes in hygiene behaviour. Today, as part

of the 18-country Resource Centre Development programme, IRC is helping Southern partners to carry out many of IRC's core functions in their locality: the sharing of knowledge and supporting the information needs of communities, support agencies and local government.

IRC also works closely with a range of Northern partners. One way it does this is through the thematic groups set up to collaborate in sharing experiences and developing knowledge. The thematic group on Scaling Up, for instance, comprises IRC, WSSCC, WaterAid, Plan, SKAT and WEDC. Another way is through collaborating in specific programmes: UNICEF, for instance, was the main Northern partner in the School Sanitation and Hygiene Education programme, while

the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) are involved in the six-country research into what makes changes in hygiene behaviour last.

In addition to its relations with partners in the North and South, IRC participates in a number of networks designed to improve the flow of information and promote the sharing of knowledge and experience.

Working through partnerships and networks is one way IRC can make a big difference across the world with a limited staff and funding base.

- This page outlines the networks in which IRC is involved.
- The next two pages locate and describe the IRC partners in the South, and list partners in the North. ♪

Gender and Water Alliance (GWA)

The Gender and Water Alliance (GWA) is a network of individuals and organisations committed to integrating gender considerations into all aspects of the water and sanitation work. GWA is funded by the Netherlands and UK Governments.

GWA promotes information and knowledge sharing activities, including electronic conferencing, capacity building and training, pilot projects and advocacy. IRC was a founder member and seconds two members of staff to run the GWA secretariat.



Members of the Gender and Water Alliance put the water sector 'on trial' in Kyoto, accusing it of neglecting a gender perspective.

Streams of Knowledge (SoK)

Streams of Knowledge is a global coalition of water and sanitation resource centres. The network shares information and experiences and helps organisations to develop skills and capacities. SoK raises the profile of resource centres and convinces governments and funders of their

value. IRC is a founder member of SoK. In 2003, the Philippines' resource centre PCWS, took over running the secretariat and funding was secured from the Dutch Government. Information from the SoK network website can also be accessed via the IRC Water Portal.

'One of the best things about linking up with IRC is that you also access all the other networks that IRC is associated with.'

Eugene Larbi, TREND Ghana

WELL Resource Centre Network

The WELL Resource Centre Network is funded by the UK Department for International Development. IRC is one of the three northern partners, with the UK-based Water Engineering and Development Centre (WEDC) and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. WELL provides information on water, sanitation and environmen-

tal health. IRC contributes on the themes of gender, hygiene promotion, school sanitation and hygiene education, knowledge management development, enquiry services and quality assurance. WELL funded some IRC preparatory work for developing resource centres in Kenya, Colombia, Ghana, Zimbabwe, India and Bangladesh.



Members of the WELL Resource Centre Network.

Instituto de Investigación y Desarrollo en Agua Potable Saneamiento Básico y Conservación del Recurso Hídrico (CINARA) Cali, Colombia – <http://www.cinara.org.co/>
Attached to Valle de Cauca University, Colombia, CINARA specialises in water supply and sanitation, community management, a gender approach, and networking. CINARA and IRC have collaborated since the 1970s on participatory action research, technology transfer and integrated knowledge management. CINARA joined the Resource Centre Development programme in 2002 (see p14). In 2003 CINARA launched a Spanish version of *Source*, the IRC/WSSCC newsletter.

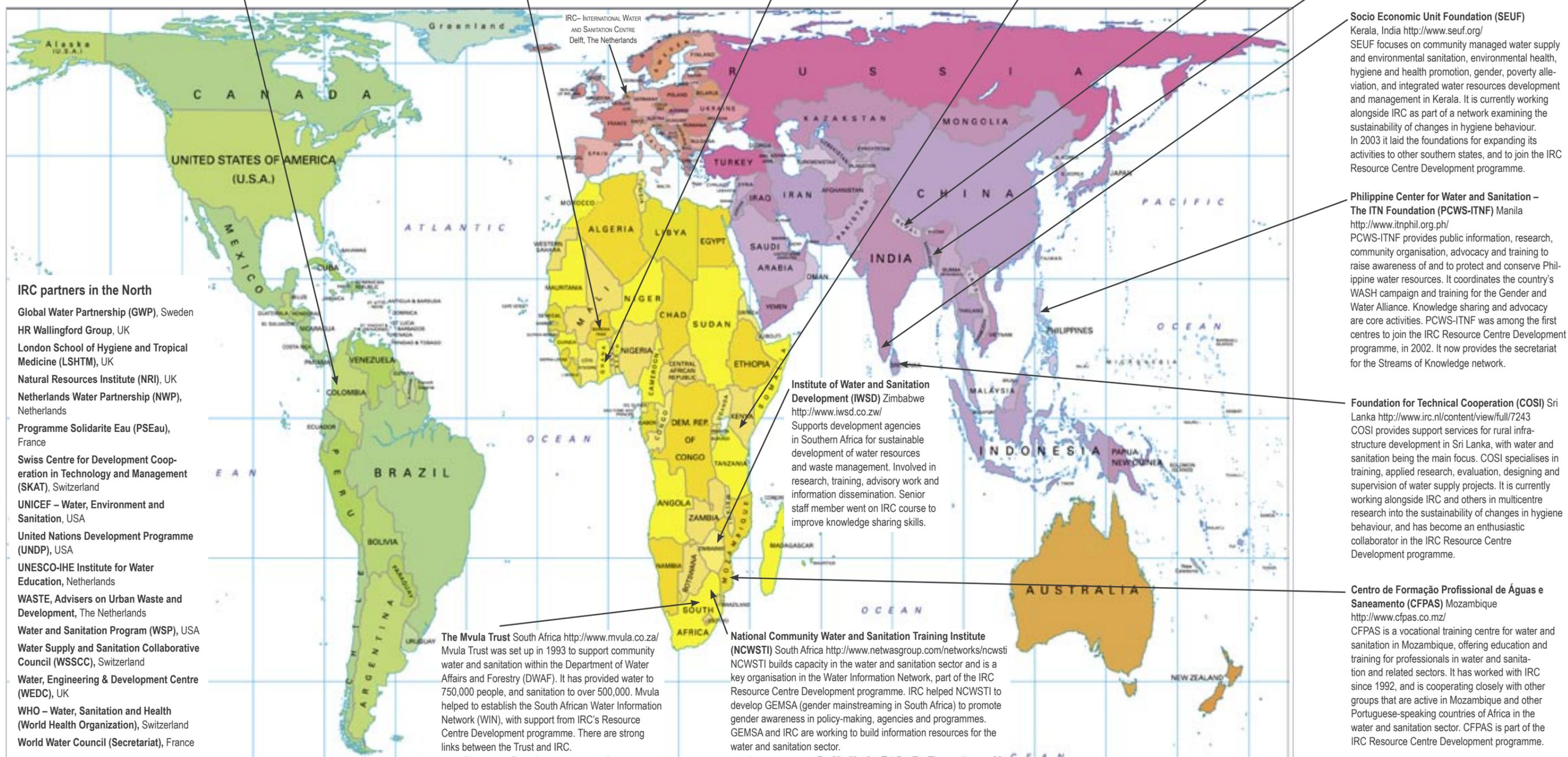
Centre Régional pour l'Eau Potable et l'Assainissement à faible coût (CREPA) Burkina Faso – <http://www.oieau.fr/crepa/>
A regional centre for drinking water and sanitation, offering education in water, hygiene, and environment, with a focus on poor people in rural and peri-urban areas. It has worked with IRC since the late 1980s and is part of the resource centre development programme. CREPA and IRC cooperate in strengthening national resource centres in 13 French-speaking countries in West Africa. CREPA and 14 national affiliates are joining the IRC water portal. In 2003, CREPA launched the French-language edition of *Source*, the IRC WSSCC newsletter.

Training, Research and Networking for Development (TREND) Ghana.
<http://www.irc.nl/content/view/full/6589> Established as a research institute in Ghana in 1989, within the International Training Network for Water and Waste Management (ITN) Programme promoted by the World Bank. TREND has collaborated with IRC since 1997 over monitoring, access and affordability of water supply and sanitation services for low-income urban communities. Part of the IRC Resource Centre Development programme.

Network for Water and Sanitation (NETWAS) Kenya <http://www.netwasgroup.com/>
NETWAS is a capacity building and information network based in Kenya with national centres in Uganda and Tanzania, focusing on water, sanitation and the environment. NETWAS trains professionals, applies research and promotes networking and information sharing. Did joint work on participatory action research to improve rural communities' management of water supply. NETWAS is active in the IRC Resource Centre Development programme.

Nepal Water for Health (NEWAH) <http://www.newah.org.np/> NEWAH aims to improve health and quality of life in rural areas of Nepal through water and sanitation projects and health promotion with communities. In 1994, collaboration with IRC began with action research into community management of rural water supply. NEWAH and IRC are part of a network examining the sustainability of changes in hygiene behaviour. NEWAH joined the Resource Centre Development programme in 2002. NEWAH Staff take part in the Junior Professional Officers programme.

NGO Forum for Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Bangladesh <http://www.irc.nl/content/view/full/8316>
The Forum has been working since 1982 to ensure that the poorest Bangladeshi communities have access to safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene education. The Forum coordinates water and sanitation NGOs and represents them at central government. The Forum started a National Resource Centre and newsletter, and takes part in the IRC Resource Centre Development programme. Under the JPO exchange programme, an IRC staff member and a Forum staff member swapped roles to develop their skills.



Resource Centre Development



Fieldworkers trained by WaterAid in Uganda carry out a survey of people's water use.

What is the Resource Centre Development programme?



How many Resource Centres are now at work?

The 18-country Resource Centre Development (RCD) programme is a unique attempt to promote information sharing within the water sector, particularly at a national level, and to make available the wealth of knowledge, experience and understanding that has been gained over decades in countries and regions.

IRC supports resource centres and their networks in the South. Partnerships emerging from this activity are expected to contribute to achieving Water and Sanitation related Millennium Development Goals through better information sharing and knowledge management.

The function of resource centres is:

- to tap pools of data and information on past experiences
- to record, remember and learn

- to turn past experiences into lessons for the future,
- to make lessons accessible to those who need them most, and
- to enhance the capacity of the organisations to use information effectively.

Resource centres identify knowledge gaps and generate new knowledge.

IRC is committed to developing resource centres in 18 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe over the period of its business plan (2002–2006). The Netherlands Government is providing funding for coordinating the programme.

IRC is a member of the Streams of Knowledge network, which aims to promote and represent resource centres with a view to strengthening their role in capacity building in the water and sanitation sector. ♦

By 2003 the Resource Centre Development programme had already exceeded its 18 country target, approving 19 countries – Burkina Faso, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, South Africa, Uganda, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, The Philippines, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Bolivia, Colombia, Bulgaria and Romania. Preparatory work has started in 17 of these. The Directors of 13 resource centres met at IRC in Delft in September 2003. All these centres have started resource centre activities. A similar meeting is scheduled to coincide with the WASH meeting in 2004, at which the 13 who met in Delft are expected to be joined by directors of centres in Pakistan, Vietnam, Bolivia, Tanzania and Mauritania. ♦

Resource Centres – advocacy and development



The 13 resource centre directors who met in Delft in September 2003 discussed how best to develop the programme in each country and internationally. Most have completed the advocacy and planning phase of development. They and their partners have reached a common understanding on information needs and purpose, they have adopted action plans at national level and developed cooperation programmes with IRC and other partners.

Now in the development phase, they aim to become knowledge brokers, drawing in information from academic and training organisations, state bodies, private firms and NGOs, and helping these bodies to find and use the right information when they need it. Through joint training, research, advocacy, workshops and publications, resource centres build their profile and their links within the sector. In many countries resource centres are formed by two or more organisations working together.

TREND in Ghana, which specialises in training local government departments, is developing its role in partnership with WaterAid, which has great experience working with NGOs and at community level.

In South Africa, the Water Information Network (WIN) acts as the resource centre. The Water Research Commission, National Community Water and Sanitation Training Institute (NCWSTI), the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF) and Mvula Trust draw together relevant organisations.

In Colombia, CINARA initially agreed to take on the role of a resource centre alone. After a positive experience of networking, CINARA began to promote interest among a wider group. Resource centre work is now carried out in loose alliance with other organisations.

The Philippine Centre for Water and Sanitation (PCWS) now hosts the secretariat of the Streams of Knowledge global coalition of water and sanitation resource centres. SoK has coalitions in Asia, East and Southern Africa, West and Central Africa, Latin America and Europe.



Gaining the ear of Government, and staying on the side of the poor



The Directors' meeting in 2003 provided an opportunity to discuss how to balance relations with the political establishment while advocating for poor, politically marginalised communities. It is critical for resource centres to have the ear of local and national government, as these bodies have prime responsibility for achieving Millennium Development Goals.

CREPA organised a two day meeting in Burkina Faso of those active in water and sanitation, including mayors from 33 municipalities and the chairperson of the Association of Municipalities. This resulted in strong recommendations and an action plan, with responsibility for follow-up given to a core group including two mayors.

In South Africa, the government is open to organisations that mobilise at a community level. Innocent Msibi, chairperson of WIN, explained: "With South Africa's history, you will now find people with no experience or formal education running the municipalities, so they need information to conduct their work and provide services to the communities."

SRIWASH, from Sri Lanka, was positive about working with government. Ranjith Wirasinha and Deepthi Sumanasekera said: "The Government know they cannot achieve the Millennium Development Goals alone. They are tremendously supportive of the whole RCD activity to meet information needs."

Many resource centres lack experience in dealing with politicians and civil servants, and would welcome training. They were aware that ties with politicians must not compromise relationships with communities, and had reservations about being closely associated with government. NEWAH, for example, was weighing the benefits of accepting space in government premises against the danger of jeopardising its reputation for independence.

In Colombia, continuity of political support is difficult. However, CINARA believes that resource centres can bring about greater immunity to political change by managing information as a public good.



'I create monthly digests from Source on WaterAid topics and e-mail them to policy and programme staff at HQ and field. I wouldn't know what to do without Source.'

Mary O' Connell,
WaterAid, London,

'I visit your site every Saturday through a Cyber café in Ibadan or elsewhere in Nigeria.'

A.A. Adekunle,
Nigeria Society of Engineers

'Especially recommendable is the Thematic Overview Paper Advocacy for Water, Environmental Sanitation and Hygiene.'

Christine Werner
German Technical Cooperation (GTZ)

Source News Service spreads the word

The *Source Bulletin* is one of the most highly valued news publications about water and sanitation anywhere in the world, providing news online and to those who have no access to the Internet.

Source Bulletin reaches more than 70,000 readers through 15,000 subscribers in over 100 countries, while the web version of *Source* has 100,000 visits a quarter.

The publication has its roots in the *IRC Newsletter*, launched in 1969, which later became the *Current Awareness Bulletin*.

In 1998 the electronic *Source Water and Sanitation Newsservice* was launched by IRC and the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council.

Today, the Council publishes WSSCC news in *Source Bulletin*. IRC and the WSSCC publish the eight-page paper



bulletin in French and Spanish as well as English. Each language version has a regional focus. *Sources Nouvelles*, is published in association with CREPA (Burkina Faso) and with H2O, and carries additional items of relevance to communities in francophone West Africa.

CINARA in Colombia prints and distributes the Spanish *Boletín de Noticias – Agua y Saneamiento* mainly for Latin America.

In 2003, 5,200 paper copies were sent out every two months in English, with 950 a quarter in French and 950 in Spanish. Many reach people who cannot access *Source* online. The electronic *Source* is sent to 2,830 subscribers in English every two weeks, 800 subscribers a month in French and 2,900 subscribers a month in Spanish. ●

Thematic overviews online are the TOPs!

Over the years IRC has (co-)published more than 100 books, pamphlets and papers. An increasing number of new titles are available online, free of charge. As of 2003, these include a series of Thematic Overview Papers (TOPs), which combine recent experience, expert opinion and forecasts with links to informative publications, websites and research information.

Reviewed by experts and continually updated with new case studies and research findings, TOPs are ideal for professionals in the South and the North who need to get up to speed quickly on critical issues related to water, sanitation and health. TOPs meet the

needs of water, sanitation and health professionals and policy makers working for government, NGOs, community-based organisations, resource centres, the private sector or UN and support agencies.

Each TOP includes an overview of the latest thinking, case studies of best practice and links to books, papers, articles, websites, resource centres, information networks and individual experts. The online versions give readers a chance to feedback their own experiences and ask questions. IRC also produces printed copies at intervals. The website contains pdf versions, which individuals can download and print to share with colleagues.

Current titles include:

- Scaling up Community Management of Rural Water Supply
 - Financing And Cost Recovery
 - Sanitation Policies
 - Advocacy for Water, Environmental Sanitation and Hygiene
 - Hygiene Promotion
 - HIV/AIDS and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
 - School Sanitation and Hygiene
 - The Productive Use of Domestic Water Supplies
- Some TOPs are being translated into French and Spanish, including: VIH/SIDA, Eau, Assainissement et Hygiene and Saneamiento Escolar y Education en Higiene

Knowledge is power

IRC's mission is to help poor communities find solutions to accessing water and sanitation services and to help them find ways to improve living standards. The Knowledge Development and Advocacy section of IRC works with partners active in the water and sanitation sector and in wider areas of health and rural development, to develop knowledge around key poverty issues. In 2003 there were seven main areas:

FINANCING AND COST RECOVERY

The challenge is to meet the Millennium Development targets, while making water supply and sanitation services financially sustainable.

SCALING UP COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT

IRC has been working with a group of six NGOs to support community based approaches. IRC helps to build skills and develop knowledge and advocacy.

HYGIENE PROMOTION

Without behaviour change, improved water and sanitation has a limited impact on health and well-being. Since 2000, IRC has been working with partners from Asia, Africa and Europe to gain insights into how men and women make lasting changes in hygiene behaviour. Interesting and challenging

findings are beginning to emerge from this research.

SCHOOL SANITATION AND HYGIENE EDUCATION

Good hygiene practices learned while young are the key to improving community health and increasing demand for safe sanitation. Children change practices at home and are the parents of the future.

ENVIRONMENTAL SANITATION

IRC is working with partners in Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka on a Women, Well-being, Work, Waste and Sanitation research project and in Burkina Faso and Sri Lanka on the UN Habitat Sustainable Cities Project. The aim is to develop environmentally acceptable ways to dispose of solid waste, including the use of the informal private sector

'Knowledge is the key to improving economic and social wellbeing of people.'
Eugene Larbi,
TREND Ghana

in human waste disposal in poor communities.

LIVELIHOODS AND INTEGRATED WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT
Water has a wider importance to poor communities, not only for drinking and cooking, but also for economic projects including growing food and cattle farming. IRC works with partners from natural resources and food sectors. Issues include minimising conflict and promoting negotiations about water use.

PARTICIPATORY MANAGEMENT TOOLS
From its experience, IRC is developing tools that can be used by managers who want to collect data that will allow them to monitor and evaluate projects on water and sanitation. ♦

Research boosts case for hygiene education for adults

The year 2003 saw the conclusion of a three-year research study in six countries to establish whether improvements in hygiene practice – vital for improvements in health – are sustained by families once the initial effort is over.

Full results were not due until 2004, but early indications were positive. Families who adopted good practice did keep it up, especially if they were visited more than once.

The research was carried out by IRC with NEWAH in Nepal, COSI in Sri Lanka,

Hygiene promotion is a worthwhile investment as good practice is sustained

SEUF in India, WaterAid in Uganda, VRCWSA in Ghana and NETWAS in Kenya, and with the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. It was funded by the European Commission and the Dutch Government.

Handwashing, the use and maintenance of latrines and the storage of water were all surveyed just after hygiene education had taken place, and again more than a year later. The Ghana and Kenya

teams looked at hygiene practice in schools.

In April / May 2003, representatives of the research teams discussed some of the early results at a meeting in Entebbe, Uganda.

These suggest that hygiene promotion is a worthwhile investment, as good practice is sustained over time.

However, interventions have to be specific to local conditions, and skills training is needed to turn knowl-

edge into practice. The results were better where there were active community management structures.

Good practice was not related to the supply of water – so pipes alone are not enough. Good toilet habits are however related to the good upkeep of latrines.

The research showed that poor facilities in schools often prevent children acting on their knowledge. It also suggests that there is a need to focus more on hygiene education for women who lack education.

The full study was expected to generate a lot of interest and work in 2004. ♦

Teaching children the health benefits of hygiene

A clean water supply does not always reap the expected health benefits. Drinking water is easily contaminated if the tap, pump and surrounding area are not kept clean. Waterborne diseases spread rapidly without basic hygiene. Water sources can be polluted by poor, failing or non-existent sanitation systems.

School sanitation and hygiene education (SSHE) has become a critical part of IRC's work to change hand washing routines and to install and use hygienic sanitation. Sanitation creates safe condi-

One gramme of faeces contains 10,000,000 viruses, 1,000,000 bacteria, 1,000 parasite cysts and 100 parasite eggs. Water-related diseases cause an estimated 3.4 million deaths a year. Two thirds (2.2 million) are due to diarrhoeal diseases, with another third (1.1 million) caused by malaria.

tions at school and removes a major factor for girls dropping out.

Hygiene education reaches children at an age when they not only change their

practice, but also become agents for change in their families and communities.

Schools need to put hygiene on the curriculum and at the heart of their practice. Latrines need to be installed and teachers have to lead by example.

UNICEF has made school sanitation and hygiene education an integral part of more than 30 country programmes. IRC is working with UNICEF and local partners in two major projects. SSHE programmes are also being implemented in a number of states in India. ♦

Vietnam SSHE reaches out to 300 schools

IRC helped the Department of Education in Vietnam to take a critical decision to scale up school sanitation and hygiene (SSHE) in 300 schools and their associated 'branch' schools.

Vietnam is one of six countries where UNICEF and IRC work with local partners. The SSHE programme started in 2001 in 20 primary schools. In 2002, it expanded to a further 30 schools in 15 rural provinces.

Following a review at a National Workshop in Hanoi, it was recommended in 2003 to extend the programme to 300 schools by 2005, and to include a further 265

'branch' (feeder) schools in smaller villages. Vietnam has 15,000 primary schools, 45,000 branch schools and 10,000 pre-schools. Many lack sanitary facilities and appropriate teaching on sanitation, hygiene and health.

The SSHE programme fits into the national programme for health education, which has been part of the school curriculum for more than ten years. Hygiene, sanitation and water supply form part of Social and Natural Sciences, covering the human body, personal hygiene, hygiene in homes, schools and communities, and environmental sanitation. Over the past ten years, the programme has installed 11,000 school latrines.

The strategy to scale up the programme followed a brain storming session between the Ministry of Education and Training, an IRC mission team, UNICEF and local partners. Consideration had to be given to the support needed to make SSHE programmes effective and sustainable on a larger scale without the concentrated levels of external support available in the pilot project. Strategic recommendations from the National Workshop were:

- SSHE in Vietnam should be scaled up using a demand-responsive, participatory strategy for improving sanitation, hygiene and water supply in schools and communities, with a focus on poor areas.
- The strategy should be placed in the context of sustainable development.
- Donors and the private sector should be invited to contribute to a rolling programme of expansion.

Schools and local authorities can request a five-day hands-on training workshop on child-friendly education, which covers technologies for hygiene and sanitation. Schools and community members plan, implement and finance their scheme, with assistance from the programme. They also organise the workshops and take care of food and lodging for the trainers. ♦



Teachers in Vietnam learn how to teach environmental hygiene.

In January 2003, IRC published *School sanitation and hygiene education – India, a handbook and a resource book for teachers*. These two volumes contain activity sheets to help managers, trainers and teachers involved in SSHE.

From pilots to populations

The past 20 years has seen thousands of water supply projects implemented in isolation, by NGOs who bypassed local government and gave little thought either to long-term support to help communities keep systems functioning, or to how such projects could be scaled up to cover entire populations.

These key areas must be addressed to achieve Millennium Development Goals for water and sanitation. IRC works with six other NGOs in a thematic group on scaling up. In 2002 the group organised an e-conference to pool its knowledge. In 2003 it began to focus on dissemination.

IRC put together advocacy packages, and published a Thematic Overview Paper addressing the key issues, and made presentations on scaling up at international conferences, including the 3rd World Water Forum in Kyoto.

The thematic group published case studies on WaterAid work in Mozambique, India, Bangladesh and Tanzania. Other case studies looked at the use of community-based organisations as service providers in South Africa, at the sector reform programme in India and at problems in Colombia created by decentralising without building local government capacity.

IRC and partners organised a workshop in Sri Lanka where participants from Ghana, Uganda, Sri Lanka, India, Thailand, Vietnam, East Timor, Papua New Guinea and Bangladesh shared problems and experiences on scaling up.

Failure to offer long-term support can damage the whole concept of community management. Yet, it has enormous potential, particularly for poorer communities and in isolated rural areas. Indeed, a number of countries, including South Africa, Tanzania, Ghana, India and Uganda, now base their national strategies on community management. ♦

Giving the community back the means of control

Experiences exchanged at the e-conference (see above) revealed a number of reasons why communities cannot manage water supply systems unaided. The focus is now on creating support structures and a political, legal and economic environment to enable communities to overcome obstacles, and to extend systems to wider populations.

Keep it simple

One answer is to keep it simple. Manufacture, spare parts and repair of the standard-use rope pump in Nicaragua are done locally by the private sector. The technology is cheap and simple enough to be owned by individual families. This approach is also adopted in parts of Zimbabwe, where the Upgraded Family Well, fitted with a steel windlass, has been installed for 45,000 families, serving 900,000 people.

Separation of management and control

Simple solutions are not always available. In Ethiopia tens of thousands of people receive water from vast gravity-fed systems through hundreds of kilometres of piping. Day to day operation and maintenance is in the hands of a paid management. Control remains with the community via an elected board of representatives, who receive long-term external support.

Local government support

When schemes are too big to be managed by families but not big enough to support paid management, support, with local government at its heart, seems to offer a solution.

In Zambia, local government is charged with training handpump repairers and supplying them with tools and spare parts. The system appears effective and there is a high demand for their services.

In Nicaragua, operation and management promoters were appointed to rescue failing systems installed in the 1990s; they now cover 55% of these systems. In India, training is a major element of the rural water supply sector reform programme, implemented by local government with NGO and other support.

Legal and political context

Operating a water supply system and keeping it in good repair is probably the most complex financial operation a community undertakes collectively. Without legal instruments, quality assurance and some form of safe banking, people may fear that contributions will be misused. If people stop paying, the fund dries up, and the system falls into disrepair. Local government has a clear role here. In South Africa, a model contract for use by municipalities sets out the responsibilities of community-based water service providers. In Zimbabwe, elected ward councillors were crucial in winning local trust and commitment to a large-scale scheme.

These examples show that NGOs can help countries to achieve Millennium Development Goals if they stop planning isolated projects, and focus on building the capacity of local government and support systems to provide the necessary support to build and sustain local solutions. Resource centres play an important role in this process. ♦

‘Operating a water supply system and keeping it in good repair is probably the most complex financial operation a community undertakes collectively.’



Christine van Wijk and a teacher in a school canteen in Vietnam. Christine is Senior Programme Officer specialising in knowledge development and advocacy. With 25 years experience of policy development, community participation and community management, Christine helps partner organisations to develop socio-economic and hygiene programmes, and has written extensively on the topic. She has worked in India, Thailand, China, Bangladesh, Jordan, Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi, Niger, Zambia, Jamaica and Colombia. Christine speaks Dutch, English, French,

‘There are organisations that just impose information on you. With the IRC we have a genuine partnership. They develop information with you.’

Jabu Masondo, The Mvula Trust

For an organisation that contributes on so many fronts on a worldwide basis, IRC has a remarkably modest staff base. However, the 43 IRC staff represent a wealth of experience, accumulated in the field from South America to Africa, the Middle East and South East and East Asia.

Staff come to IRC through a variety of career paths, often after working for large development organisations or private sector companies.

Despite Dutch legal and fiscal policies that are making it ever harder to employ staff from abroad, IRC believes in the value of a truly international staff base that reflects the

organisation’s commitment to international collaboration. Around 40% of its employees originate from outside the Netherlands, coming from a total of 12 different countries, including Bolivia, Bangladesh, Finland and the UK.

IRC staff specialise in information science, information and communication technology, engineering, geography,

urban and rural planning, knowledge management, sociology, anthropology, economics, and journalism.

In addition to their own specialisms, on average each staff member speaks three or four languages. Swahili, Bahasa, Cantonese, Tamil, Nepali, Thai, Portuguese, and Spanish are all represented, with Dutch, French and English almost universal.

Although individual credentials are impressive, the real impact comes from the collective way in which IRC staff carry out their work.

Developing and communicating knowledge, and advocacy, whether about scaling up, envi-

ronmental sanitation, or sustaining changes in hygiene behaviour, is seen as a collective process. It is carried out through networking, forming thematic groups with experts from other research groups and NGOs, and above all working in genuine partnership with Southern organisations well rooted in their communities. ♦

‘IRC is more interactive, takes ideas and accepts our proposals. The style is different...’

Restructuring brings a year of change, development and growth

As part of the move towards greater autonomy from the Dutch funding ministries, a number of new procedures were adopted in 2003 to ensure a more effective use of staff and greater transparency and accountability.

Central to this was a system of competency management, which involved constructing function profiles for every job, and drawing up personal development plans for every member of staff. Employees were asked to make a self-assessment of their performance against the relevant job competencies as specified in the function profile for their job. They then used this assessment, together with an assessment made by their manager, to draw up a personal development plan aimed at combining career development with personal growth.

The new function profiles were also used as a basis for establishing externally verified salary scales. All functions were weighted

according to objective standards by external consultants. The information was used to determine salary scales for all functions, with salary levels being adjusted where appropriate.

To support the introduction of the competency management system, staff received extra training where their self-assessment indicated it would help them do their job more effectively. Training in more universal skills, like communications and time management, was provided on a corporate basis, while the larger than usual staff budget made it possible to meet most individual training needs as well.

Restructuring IRC’s work around the priorities of the 2002–2006 Business Plan led to an unusually high turnover of staff over the year. The net result was an increase in staff numbers to 43, representing a 5% growth measured by full time equivalence (fte), from 36.6 fte in 2002 to 38.5 fte in 2003. ♦

IRC is committed to helping a new generation develop their skills and experience.

One important contribution is the Junior Professional Officer exchange scheme, under which young Dutch members of IRC's staff exchange positions with their counterparts at one of the southern resource centres.

Dutch JPOs learn to work in a developing country, confronted with daily water and sanitation sector realities. JPOs from resource centres learn to work in the multi-disciplinary environment of international sector professionals, and bring back to the resource centres communication and knowledge management skills.

These young professionals gain personal experience and play an important role in strengthening the relationships between resource centres and the IRC.



Stef Smits (third right) and a community development facilitator from the Mvula Trust, South Africa, discuss the Ngedlengedle water supply project with the village water committee.

JPOs: Changing places

In July 2003, Jabu Masondo started a 17-month placement at IRC's Delft offices as part of the second wave of the JPO programme. Jabu comes from the Mvula Trust, a dynamic water and sanitation NGO in South Africa specialising in community management and community-based water services and supporting local authorities to achieve sustainability.

In South Africa, Jabu ensures that the needs and concerns of local communities are heard within the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF). He finds ways to get information from Mvula and DWAF out to the people, taking into account many dialects and low levels of literacy. In Delft, Jabu is developing ideas about how Mvula can improve other channels of communication. "Our field workers, for instance, hardly ever talk to one another. We need to find ways they can share experiences among themselves."

Working in Delft gives Jabu a chance to get to grips with software used for the IRC water portal, which could improve communication between Mvula, other organisations in the South African



Jabu Masondo from Mvula Trust at WIS 6 in Delft.

Water Information Network and the Streams of Knowledge global network.

"We can connect with other organisations not just nationally but internationally. We can look at ourselves and say: what do we need strategically? I just upload the information. You do not need to be a web master."

Stef:
translating
abstract
concepts
of
'poverty'
and
'gender'
into
concrete
action

Jabu:
sharing
stories
from
South
African
villages,
nationally
and
across the
globe

Stef Smits has changed places with Jabu at Mvula. He spent the first half of his JPO exchange at CINARA, IRC's partner in Colombia.

In Colombia and South Africa the fundamental issues are the same, but the environment, cultures and priorities are very different. HIV/AIDS is putting a heavy burden on communities in South Africa. Stef has been supporting research in the Limpopo that demonstrates the crucial importance of uncontaminated water, effective sanitation and high standards of hygiene for people whose immune systems have been damaged.

"Seeing and understanding the reality of the people in communities is a prerequisite for working in the development sector," says Stef. "You have to be able to translate abstract concepts such as 'poverty' and 'gender' into concrete activities. Then you begin to realise that it is all not as easy as the international discourse might suggest."

Stef is also working with the people of Ngedlengedle village in the uThukela municipality of KwaZulu Natal to organise water both for drinking and to irrigate a community garden.

Stef says that these experiences will be of value. "I hope I will be able to translate these practical experiences into lessons that can be passed on. That is the challenge that IRC and partners face. The JPO programme contributes to meeting that challenge."

IRC Financial report

Income

A lean and mean organisation: efficient, solid and reliable

In 2003, IRC saw a significant growth in income to around 4 million euro. This rise of almost 20%, compared with 2002, was largely due to a carry over of unallocated core funds of about 493,000 euro from 2002. However, even taking a longer view, there has been a surge in income levels over the past four years. This is related to the rise in core funding provided by the Ministries of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Netherlands. Within the financial framework of the current Business Plan 2002–2006, core funding will account for about 70% of total income.

External income in 2003, that is income generated by externally funded projects, remained below expectations. This was due to the need to focus extra attention on the process of organisational change that IRC has undergone. Major clients for external projects in 2003 were the British Department for International Development (DFID) – especially for the WELL programme – the EU, the Finnish Department for International Development Cooperation (Finnida), the Danish International Development Agency (Danida), the Netherlands Directorate General for International Cooperation (DGIS), the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC) and other bilateral and multilateral donors and NGOs. In 2004, we expect this external income to rise again.

IRC Income 1999–2003 (000s of euro)

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Core funding	1176	1055	1044	1998	2883
External income	1013	1086	1296	1194	1008
Other income	87	103	102	92	107
Total	2276	2244	2442	3284	3998

Expenditure

The organisational processes described above also had some effects on the pattern of major expenditures in 2003. Due to the relatively high staff turnover, in combination with the planned human resources programmes, the personnel costs ended up above the level of planned expenditure. Expenditure on core funded projects was below expectations. In many long-term institutional programmes with partner organisations, delays in the progress of the programme affected spending on related activities. About 50% of this expenditure is borne directly by our Southern partners. We expect in 2004 that expenditure on these programmes will come into balance.

An extraordinary but significant loss occurred in 2003 on our US Dollar accounts, caused by the depreciation of the dollar against the euro.

The overall profit in 2003 of 39,000 euro – amounting to 2% of our capital – was added to our general reserves as part of our long-term financial policy.

IRC Expenditure 1999–2003 (000s of euro)

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Personnel	1588	1744	1740	1883	2231
Core funded projects	84	123	144	891	1150
Overheads	455	445	447	462	504
Total	2128	2312	2331	3236	3884
Extraordinary items	-65	-80	-62	+9	+74
Final total	2063	2232	2269	3245	3958
Surplus of income over expenditure	214	12	172	39	39

The financial accounts for 2003 have been audited by PriceWaterhouseCoopers. Based on their reports, the IRC Board, at its meeting on 6 May 2004, approved the financial statements that are summarised here.

Breakdown of IRC income and expenditure

Figure 1: IRC income 2003 by source

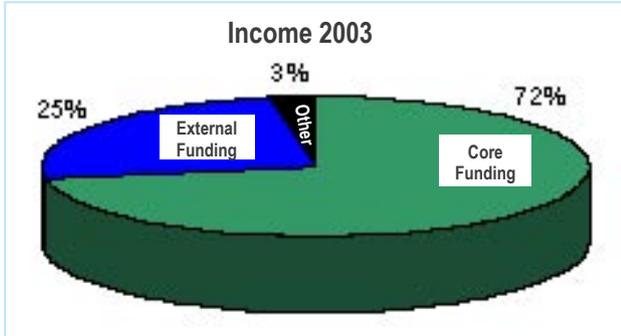


Figure 1 shows that almost three quarters of IRC funding in 2003 came from core funding. A quarter came from external sources for collaborative projects. There were three major sources for external funds in 2003.

- ◆ The Netherlands Directorate General for International Cooperation (DGIS) gave 877,000 euro for reorganisation and for programmes outside the core funding.
- ◆ The British Department for International Development DFID gave 455,000 euro towards IRC's input into the WELL programme.
- ◆ The United Nations Children's Fund, UNICEF gave 168,000 euro for a number of School Sanitation and Health Education (SSHE) programmes.

Figure 2: IRC expenditure 2003

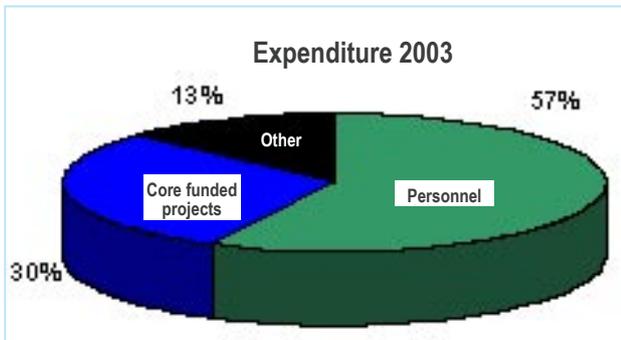


Figure 2 shows that more than half of IRC spending in 2003 was on staff costs. Almost a third was on core funded projects, of which about 50% was implemented by IRC partners. Other expenditures, mainly overheads, accounted for only 13% of total expenditures.

Figure 3: IRC expenditure 1999–2003 (000s of euro)

Showing breakdown of expenditure before extraordinary items
Also showing (red line) increase in full-time equivalent staff

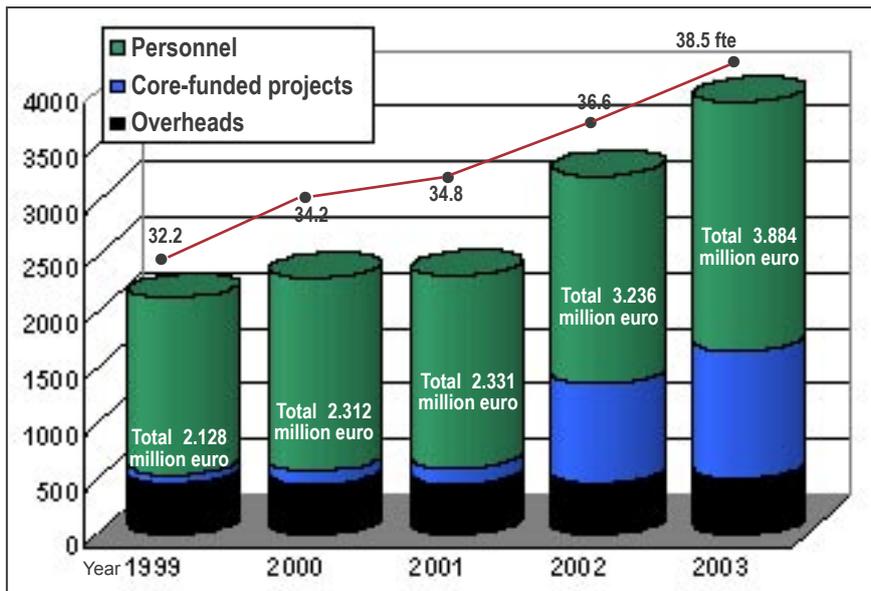


Figure 3 shows an 83% rise in IRC expenditure from 2.128 million euro in 1999 to 3.893 million euro in 2003, illustrating a significant rise in the volume of operations.

IRC overheads rose slightly from 455,000 euro in 1999 to 504,000 euro in 2003. This represented a decline from 21.4% to 12.9% of expenditure over the same period.

The biggest spending increase was on core funded projects, from 84,000 euro in 1999 to 1.15 million euro in 2003. This reflects substantial support from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the IRC five year business plan.

Staff numbers rose from 32.2 to 38.5 full time equivalents over the same period as illustrated in Figure 3 by the red line. Staff costs increased from 1.588 million euro in 1999 to 2.239 million euro in 2003.

Income kept pace with expenditure. After extraordinary items (see facing page) a modest surplus in each year was added to reserves.

NB: Income and expenditure on these pages relates to IRC staff, IRC administration and IRC core activities. Figures do not include funds for, or income from, third parties, even where such funds passed through IRC accounts.

The Board of IRC, anticipating the formal changes in governance, have already started working in the spirit of a stronger 'supervisory' role, delegating more of its operational management and control tasks to the Director.

Moving towards greater autonomy

In 2003, IRC progressed significantly further down the road to greater autonomy from its governmental funding bodies. The IRC Foundation was established by act of parliament in 1980 under the Dutch Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Housing and Spatial Planning. As the work of the Foundation evolved, the Ministries decided it would be better for IRC to be given greater statutory autonomy, and in 1997 the "enhanced autonomy process" was initiated.

This process is designed to decouple the funding and supervisory role of the Ministries, in order to give IRC greater flexibility to operate professionally in the international water sector while preserving the Ministries' funding role. The extra operational autonomy will be balanced by strengthening IRC's transparency and accountability to its funding bodies.

The process needs to be given legal status through a lengthy and detailed parliamentary procedure, which is set to reach its conclusion in 2005.

Moving towards enhanced autonomy requires many decisions to be taken on changes to IRC's statutes and its related governing structure. In 2003, the Board and the IRC Works Council started jointly exploring appropriate governing models, with an eye to the long-term position of IRC and also the mid-term review of the IRC's Business Plan, due in 2004. The role and position of the present International Advisory Board will be part of this exploration. The Board of IRC, anticipating the formal changes in governance, have already started working in the spirit of a stronger 'supervisory' role, delegating more of its operational management and control tasks to the Director. One extra factor to be incorporated into the new governing framework in 2005 will be elements of the 'Tabaksblat Code'. This business code of conduct was recently launched in the Netherlands with a focus on listed private companies, but it is also expected to be adapted for non-profit organisations, including IRC.

In the past year, IRC collaboration with our closest partners was revitalised and re-aligned in light of the enhanced autonomy process. Discussions about greater structural cooperation were resumed with UNESCO-IHE, after having been put on the back burner for more than a year while IHE went through structural changes of its own. The year also saw a steady increase in joint work between IRC and UNESCO-IHE. In addition, new initiatives were agreed with other international institutes and networks – including the Streams of Knowledge global coalition of resource centres, the WHO, the Global Water Partnership and the World Water Council – for which official endorsement is expected in 2004.

IRC Board of Governors

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Consultant, Former Managing Director, NE-DECO, Netherlands Engineering Consultants

❖ 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.

**In April 2003, A. Leusink*

and W. A. Segeren

were re-elected to

the Board of Governors

for a further four-year term.

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UNDP-World Bank
Water and Sanitation Program

❖ V. Tobin

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and Sanitation Section,
Program Division,
UNICEF

Bridging the Knowledge Gap

‘IRC’s ambition is to build on its past achievements to become a more effective organisation, focused on knowledge dissemination and capacity building. We do this in a changing world where the volume of digital information is growing fast, but the knowledge gap between North and South and even within the South itself is growing. It is this gap that, with our partners, we aim to bridge.’

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Photos: Front Cover picture: Children wash at a new water pump in Zambia. Giacomo Pirozzi, (Panos Pictures)

Page 3: NGO Forum DWSS, Bangladesh,

Pages 1, 2, 4, 5, 8 (top), 9, 11 (bottom), 14 (main picture) 18, 20, 21 (bottom), back cover: IRC

Page 6: NEWAH, Nepal

Page 7: CINARA, Colombia

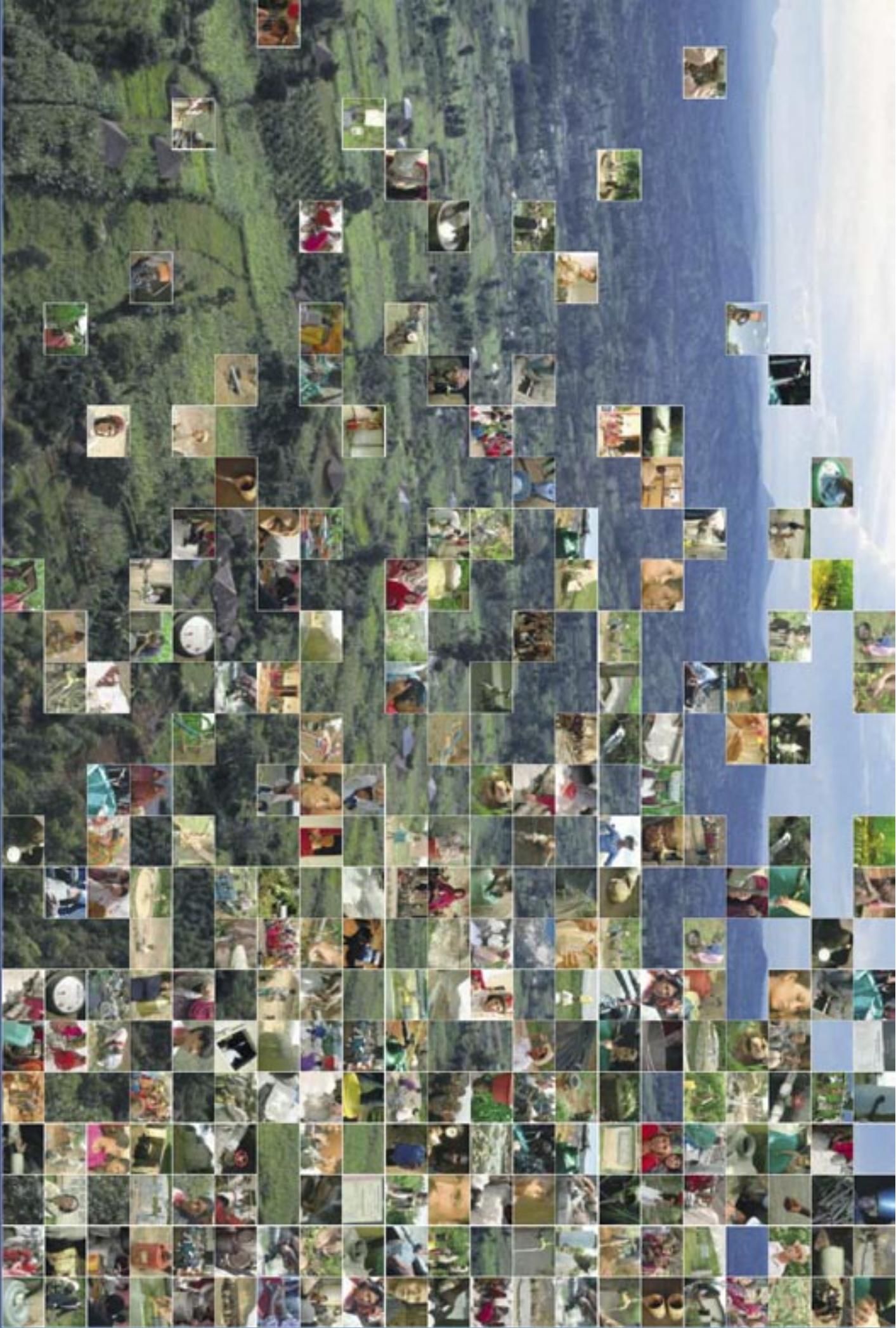
Page 11 (top): Gender and Water Alliance

Pages 12& 13: Peters Map © Akademische Verlagsanstalt

Page 16: Peter McIntyre

Page 21: Stef Smits (top)

Scaling Up Community Management of Rural Water Supply



This is a reduced size reproduction of the poster jointly produced by IRC and its partners in a thematic group for scaling up community management of rural water supply. The poster was displayed at the 3rd World Water Forum in Kyoto in March 2003. Partners with IRC in the thematic group are the Water, Engineering & Development Centre (WEDC), the Swiss Centre for Development Cooperation in Technology and Management (SKAT), the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC), WaterAid, Plan, and the Environmental Health Project (EHP).

