

The challenge to do things differently

IRC in 1997



IRC

International Water and Sanitation Centre

The challenge to do things differently

The account of the activities of the IRC International Water and Sanitation Centre in 1997 reflects the dynamic support IRC provides to help change the water and sanitation sector and the challenge it has taken on to do things differently in house. With over 1.2 billion people without safe water supply and close to 3 billion lacking adequate sanitation, it is essential for the sector to become more efficient and effective and to look at new opportunities.

To position itself in the changing environment a policy framework was developed by the IRC staff following up the recommendations of the external evaluation completed in 1996 and subsequent suggestions of the Governing Board. This framework has now been translated into a business plan and a revised organizational structure. Another welcome development for the organization was the establishment of a Works Council that represents the staff in formal discussions with the Management and the Governing Board.

Under new guidance, an increased workload and periods of uncertainty placed very high demands on staff, both in terms of time and in terms of trust in the organization. With great commitment from all involved, IRC has made it through a turbulent year, and calmer waters are ahead. At the end of the year the Governing Board confirmed the position of Mr. Jan Teun Visscher as the new Director of IRC.

The coming year will see further changes in IRC. Implementation of its new business plan and its revised organizational structure will place new demands on staff. The business plan gives direction to staff, and sets priorities for the coming years. At the same time, it provides sufficient flexibility to react to a changing sector environment. It prioritizes capacity building, electronic information exchange, and strengthening partnerships with organizations in the South and in the North. The revised organizational structure distinguishes three sections in which the staff is organized: the research and development section, the information, training and advice section and the services section. The structure delineates responsibilities at different levels, with a view to enhancing accountability.

The turn of events in 1997 has demonstrated again the strong and lasting commitment of the IRC staff. The two supporting Dutch ministries confirmed their interest in the work of IRC and agreed to provide long-term support to enable it to undertake a number of important tasks. This commitment, together with the dedication of the staff, provide an essential basis for the future of the organization and assure its sustainability. The Governing Board and staff are grateful for the long-term commitment towards IRC undertaken by the ministries of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment, and Foreign Affairs.

J.B. Hoekman
Chairman, IRC Governing Board

IRC in 1997

The problems facing the water and sanitation sector today are not really any different than they were a year ago. It is only a question of magnitude. While the number of improvements in the sector is commendable, major efforts are still needed to keep ahead of the pace of the impending water crisis, demands on resources, urbanization, and mounting sanitation problems. In the past, government funds were channeled to the better-off. The current trend towards decentralization means that the private sector will take over provision of water supply and sanitation, but in view of the return on investments, will also likely channel these activities to the better-off. Governments can now play a complementary role to the private sector, by redirecting their newly liberated funds to basic social services for the urban poor, and the rural poor in particular.

Shifts in focus from time to time are crucial to deal effectively with sector problems. In the past few years it has become apparent that improvements in sanitation are lagging far behind those of water supply. Introducing work on a new vision statement for our sector leading to water and sanitation for all by the year 2015 Richard Jolly, the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council's incoming Chairperson and Adviser to the UNDP Administrator said at the Council's fourth Global Forum in Manila, "Having 1.2 billion people without safe water and 2.7 billion without access to basic sanitation is a scandal which we must put behind us. At the rate we are going we will not reach that goal in 2100; that is unacceptable".

UNICEF and WHO used the Manila Forum to launch the Global Environmental Sanitation Initiative (GESI) to tackle the huge sanitation backlog. IRC actively supports GESI in the role of information hub, alongside its research and development activities focusing on community-based technologies; participation and community management; gender awareness; hygiene promotion; operation and maintenance; monitoring and evaluation; information management; and community water resources management. In 1997, resource centre development was added as an area of focus.

Besides the stronger focus on closing the sanitation gap, the importance of a gender-sensitive approach to water supply and sanitation projects has gained international acceptance, and water resources management is high on the Commission for Sustainable Development's agenda. IRC has been active in these areas in the past, and now anticipates more widespread support for these activities.

This account of IRC's work attempts to give an indication of how the centre has tried to make a difference in 1997. The report contains a selection of activities that represents the types of programmes and projects in which IRC is involved in the geographical areas which it serves. It reflects the centre's major policy objectives as set out in its newly formulated business plan: making optimal use of the wealth of knowledge and information IRC and its partners have accumulated over the years; facilitating processes of change by promoting and enabling environment and by supporting innovation; and strengthening its partnerships with other institutions in both the North and the South.

Better Water and Sanitation for a Healthy Future



Making Optimal Use of Knowledge and Information

In 1997

<http://www.oneworld.org/ircwater/> was accessed from:

Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Barbados, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, Former USSR, France, Germany, Greece, Guyana, Hong Kong, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Malaysia, Mexico, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Singapore, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States, Yemen, and Zambia

The information highway has greatly enhanced information exchange in the sector, and the number of people and organizations with access to the World Wide Web grows daily. As was reported at the fourth Global Forum of the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council in Manila in November, 70-80% of participants were using e-mail, and about 30% used the Internet. These developments will have a lasting impact on the sector, with virtual libraries becoming accessible to many users, the increasing popularity of electronic meetings, and the resulting reduction in the need for travel. Already electronic information exchange has facilitated the cooperation between IRC and its partners in many ways, from simple communications to the interactive development of new publications.

While the positive aspects of electronic information are many, there is also the danger of information overload. IRC has defined a clear role for itself in avoiding this overload, by pre-screening information and making it accessible for potential users. The Documentation Unit has developed an intranet home page which explains library services and provides links to the water-related sites on the Internet including a virtual reading room on sector journals and newsletters. The Unit also developed intranet pages for IRC courses and workshops on hygiene, water resources management and gender. In 1998 part of this information will be uploaded to IRC's Web page at <http://www.oneworld.org/ircwater>. Later in 1998, the Unit's bibliographic database, IRCDoc, will be made accessible via the Internet.

During its first full year of operation, the IRC Website recorded some 42,000 'hits' - an average of 3,500 per month. Visitors to the site came from more than 60 countries, more than half of which were developing countries. Towards the end of the year, work began on redesigning the site to make it more user-friendly and increase the links with other sites.

Electronic information exchange is only one of the means IRC uses to improve the collection and dissemination of information and the exchange of knowledge. Its training programme, publications and documentation unit also continue to serve the sector effectively.

Some 1200 new documents were acquired by the library. The Documentation Unit responded to nearly 300 requests for information from visitors and external users. While the number of library visitors not connected to IRC briefing programmes decreased, the number of requests answered by e-mail grew substantially compared to previous years.

The last issue of Highlights, the IRC current awareness bulletin, was produced in December 1997. In 1998 it will be replaced by a new news service which will be available by e-mail and on IRC's home page on the World Wide Web. Not everyone has access to electronic information services, however, and for that reason, the information provided on IRC's home page will also continue to be offered in hard copy to those without electronic access. This is already the case with the *Water Newsletter*, which was made available via an e-mail list server early in the year. As a result of enhanced collaboration with the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council, 1998 will bring a different, bi-monthly newsletter, bundling the key contents from the new news service, articles on pertinent sector issues, and news from the Collaborative Council, for all those not able to receive this information electronically.

Sharing Knowledge and Experience

Technologies, methodologies and experiences are deeply rooted in the society in which they originate. Sharing them with others requires interaction between trainers and trainees, advisors and clients, service providers and users, to ensure that innovation and learning can take place, and that the technologies and methodologies match the local environment. IRC shares its knowledge and experience through training; information exchange, including its publications; and advisory services.

Training

There is a clear trend towards transferring skills abroad, and preparing IRC partners for taking over IRC courses in their regions. In that context, for the first time the Management for Sustainability course was omitted from the programme in the Netherlands. All the Management for Sustainability courses are now run by partners in the various regions.

In total eight courses were given in Africa, Asia and Latin America, for some 125 participants. The first Hygiene Education and Promotion course in Kenya was organized by IRC's partner NETWAS International and attracted 17 participants from 10 countries. Another step toward taking training outside of the Netherlands was taken when the gender expertise used in briefing programmes at IRC was called on from organizations abroad. For UNESCO's International Hydrological Programme (IHP) gender training workshops were given in Mauritania and South Africa. Technical staff of the French development funding agency Caisse Française de Développement in Paris received a similar training.

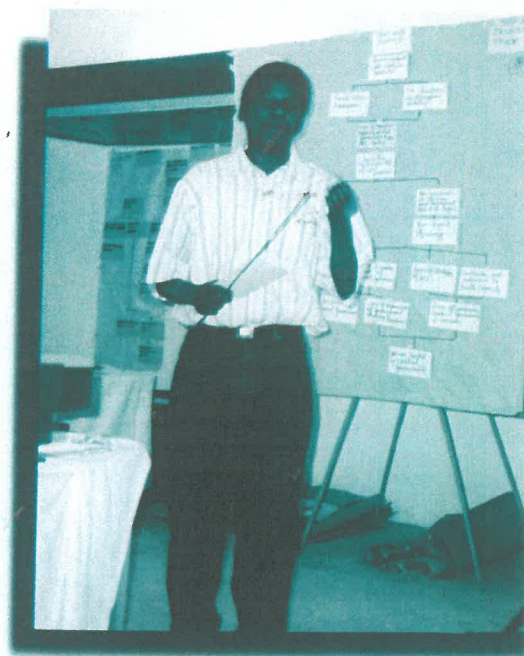
Nearly 50 persons attended briefing programmes and some 80 attended the six short courses at IRC, an increase of 37% from 1996. Among those in the Netherlands for briefing and exposure visits were delegations of planners and decision makers in water resources and environment from China, India, and Sri Lanka.

The seventh annual abstract journal *Woman, Water, Sanitation*, funded by the UNDP-World Bank Water and Sanitation Program and the Government of Norway, was dedicated to training.

Publications

Probably the most recognizable way in which IRC provides information support is through its publications. The collection of over 100 titles grew by some 10% in 1997, with five new titles and four translations.

To improve access to information for Lusophone Africa and South America, an agreement to translate several IRC publications into Portuguese was reached with the Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) Mozambique in 1996. SDC distributed *Working with Women and Men on Water and Sanitation: an African Field Guide*, translated in 1996, together with titles translated in 1997, to the Portuguese-speaking African countries. IRC then distributed the Field Guide to nearly 90 REPIDISCA cooperating centres in Brazil, along with an earlier translation of *Drinking Water Source Protection: a review of environmental factors affecting community water supplies*. These Brazilian REPIDISCA centres, together with the other 305 REPIDISCA centres in the rest of Spanish-speaking Latin America, also received a copy of the Spanish translation of *Organizing local documentation services for the water and sanitation sector: guidelines*.



New publications:

Linking Technology Choice with Operation and Maintenance for Low-Cost Water Supply and Sanitation (LT-E), François Brikké et. al.

Water Supplies Managed by Rural Communities: country reports and case studies from Cameroon, Colombia, Guatemala, Kenya, Nepal and Pakistan (MR5-E), IRC MANAGE Project Simplified Water Quality Assessment for Multi-Stage Filtration (RS11-E), Esther de Lange et. al.

Technology Transfer in the Water Supply and Sanitation Sector: a learning experience from Colombia (TP32-E), Jan Teun Visscher, ed.

Operation and Maintenance of Sanitation Systems in Urban Low-Income Areas in India and Thailand: a report on a joint research programme, 1989-1993 (PR6-E)

Translated and published by SDC in Maputo, Mozambique:

Auto-melhoramento Comunitário no Abastecimento de Água e Saneamento (SF5-P)

Filtração lenta através de areia: manual para os guardas (SF1-P), J.T. Visscher and S. Veenstra

Recarga artificial de água subterrânea para o abastecimento de água a comunidades de tamanho médio nos países em desenvolvimento (DO9-P), E.H. Hofkes and J.T. Visscher

Criando o elo de ligação: orientações para a educação sanitária no abastecimento de água e saneamento de comunidade (DO5-P), Marieke Boot

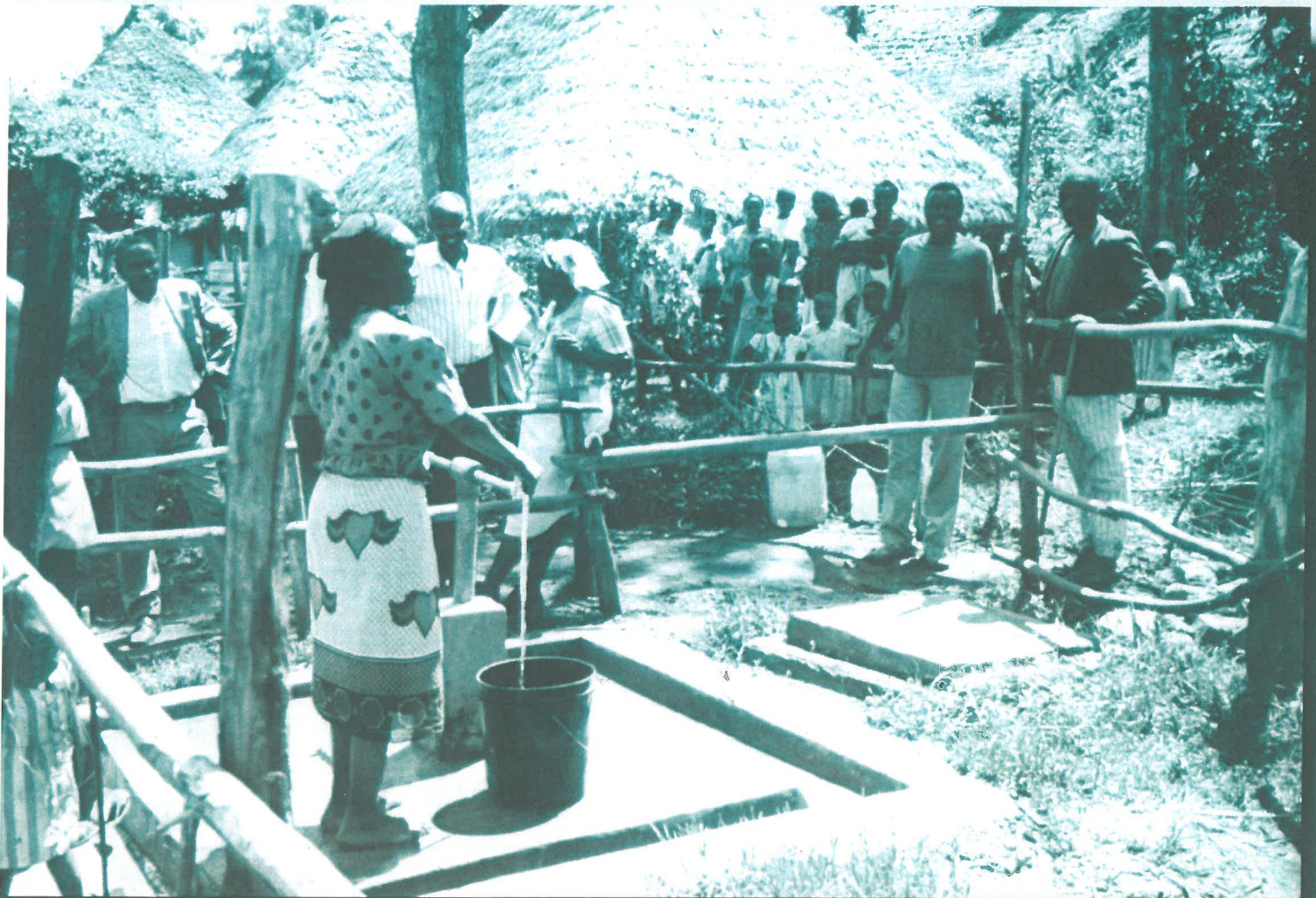
In total over 11,000 copies of IRC publications were distributed world-wide during the course of the year.

Advisory services

Knowledge and experience are also shared during advisory missions, which at the same time serve as an unmissable source of information for IRC's own knowledge base development. Staff expertise is shared upon request with projects and programmes overseas, in the form of monitoring and evaluation, project formulation, workshops and seminars. Over 30 missions dealing with subjects such as hygiene education, resource centre development, operation and maintenance and gender were carried out in 17 countries in 1997. Lessons learned from selected missions can be found in the section on Supporting Innovation.

"This approach is much better than what normally happens with engineers saying, 'don't mess with my standposts, just stay with your questionnaires.' Here we have worked together and shared the information which gave us a much better base to understand the problems."

Virginia Chumacero
participatory evaluation in Bolivia



Facilitating Processes of Change

For IRC, creating an enabling environment for sustainable water and sanitation interventions means helping to close the gap between policy and practice, and supporting innovative approaches to pertinent sector issues.

Promoting an Enabling Environment

Continuing to build on the knowledge and experience of sector actors, IRC joined hands with partners and stakeholders to assess sector problems, set priorities and test new approaches, and expand its number of joint learning projects.

Environmental health in Guinea Bissau

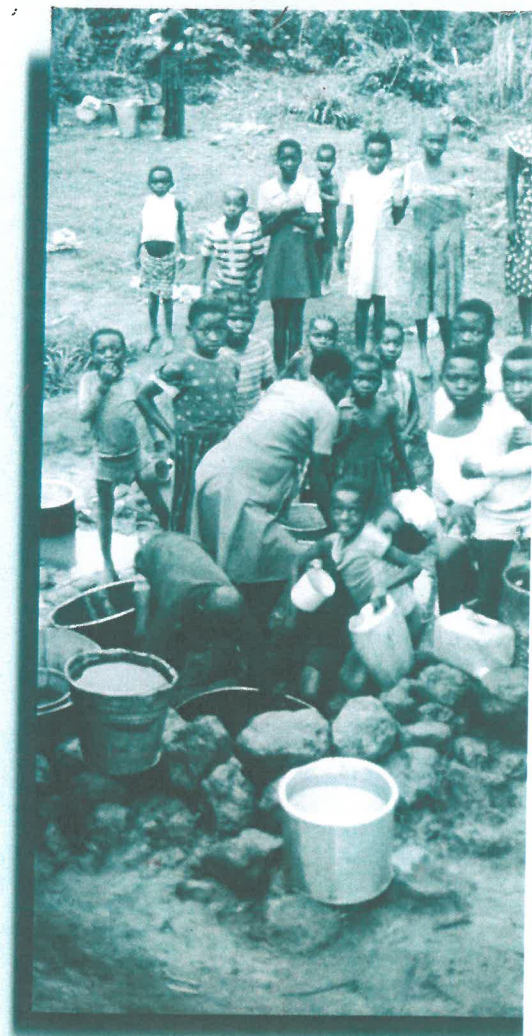
The 'Focusing on Environmental Health - Communication and Training for Water and Environmental Sanitation' (PROCOFAS) project in Guinea Bissau has been operating in the field for less than a year. Its ambitious goals are to make WES programming more effective through changing the way the water sector operates and the way extension services operate in all ministries. That means less top-down planning and more listening, and responding to wishes and needs from the communities. It also involves improving hygiene by taking communication approaches which are appropriate for the various ethnic and socio-economic groups. People involved in the project say it is changing the way people behave in water supply and sanitation programming in ESAs, the government, extension groups and the communities. The approach is a combination of listening, questioning, demonstrating and negotiating and is new for Guinea Bissau.

This year the project, funded by the UNICEF Netherlands Committee, focused on getting its system operating with three different ethnic groups, the Balanta communities in Oio, the Fula communities in Gabu and the Papel communities in Biombo. The local project team, which has no expatriate staff, is currently working in 15 villages totaling about 9000 people. By the end of 1998 field work will have increased to 50 villages representing 20,000 people.

In three missions to Guinea Bissau, IRC staff assisted the team with strategy development, staff training, and support to planning meetings with various partners in the steering committee.

In a recent mission the team noticed that demands for latrines among Balanta and Papel communities are gradually emerging. A small number of latrines have been constructed in the project areas with the communities, and all are being used. The latrines meet with very positive response, and as a result, latrine demand is growing. There have been over 200 applications for latrines, and many enthusiastic households have already dug pits. The emphasis in the programme is not on the number of latrines constructed, however, but rather on hygiene improvements using the latrine as a starting point.

The project staff have developed very good relations with the communities. This helped them to produce two videos on cholera and latrines in local languages. The villagers were the actors in the videos, a contributing factor to the enthusiasm expressed when they were screened. The films have also already appeared on national television twice.



"They showed a film (video) in our own language with our people explaining!"

man in Biombo community

Partners for Better Urban Environmental Health Services

CAHBA - Centre Amidou Hampaté Bâ
CERSA / MRC-SA - Centre for Epidemiological Research in Southern Africa / Medical Research Council
CREDESA - Centre Régional pour le Développement et la Santé
CREPA - Centre Régional pour l'Eau Potable et l'Assainissement à Faible Coût
ENDA - RUP - Enda-Relais pour le développement Urbain Participé
IAGU - Institut Africain de Gestion Urbaine
IRC - International Water and Sanitation Centre
LSHTM - London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
SEI - Stockholm Environment Institute
U. Ghana - University of Legon, Accra
URGC - Unité de Recherche Génie - Hydrologie Urbaine, INSA - Lyon

"We found a few households in the community who want to change -- who want to improve and are respected by others. Usually there is someone in the household who has lived for some time in a city or even another country. This person has used latrines and has practiced other hygiene habits, but he/she lapses into old behaviours when back home because of strong social control. However, with the video and with discussions in the household, they become the first acceptors. Then other families want to follow."

staff member of PROCOFAS project

Urbanization, basic services and the health of people

As key actors in managing the urban environment and providing the basic services to safeguard the health of their citizens (water supply, solid waste collection, disposal of waste water) municipal authorities want interventions and investments to be planned right the first time around, and to recover the costs of reliable services that provide equitable coverage within the city. With this in mind, users, planners and politicians must build up a common vision; prioritize areas where improvements will make the most difference; choose the kinds of services for which users are willing to pay; and make sure that existing services are operating efficiently and are effectively used. Such a process is more likely to be successful if low-income community groups can engage municipal authorities in a formal institutional setting to share information and voice their concerns, through, for example, advisory committees, community forums, or task-force groups. Furthermore, if stakeholders share a common understanding of indicators that are used not only as targets but also as triggers for action and to gauge progress over time, chances for success are increased. The most useful indicators are those detailed enough to highlight the differences within a city relating to wealth, health, access to basic services and the quality of the living environment. A research project involving IRC and ten partners from Europe and Africa brings together the findings of researchers and the savoir faire of field practitioners. Their work has focused on the use of a wide range of methods to collect and analyze data, methods to visualize results, as well as approaches to develop indicators with community groups and feed results back into the decision-making process at community level. So far, two workshops were held in Mali in 1997 to prepare case studies, draft plans to organize stakeholder meetings in three cities, and design future project proposals. In 1998, a comparative study and a guide booklet for municipal authorities should be completed. The project is funded by the European Commission DGXXII.

A holistic approach to water treatment in Colombia

Since 1989, IRC has been working closely with CINARA, the Institute for Research and Development in Drinking Water, Basic Sanitation and the Conservation of Water Resources at the University of Valle in Cali, on a technology transfer project. The degree of flexibility granted by the Colombian and Netherlands governments allowed the project to surpass its initial objectives and attract large national, regional and local contributions. What thus began as a development and demonstration project to introduce multi-stage water filtration in eight regions, grew into a holistic joint learning approach to deal with a wide range of problems from construction to protection of water sources and efficient water use.

The joint learning approach sets academic and institutional knowledge, and the community's knowledge and experience side by side, and emphasizes creative capacity building among all involved. It also recognizes the



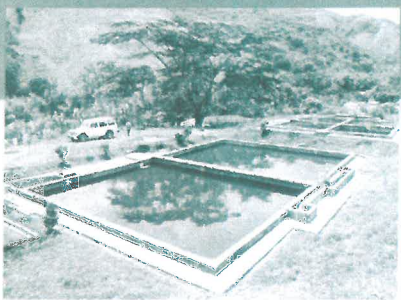
IRC

International Water and Sanitation Centre
WHO Collaborating Centre



CINARA

Technology Transfer in the Water Supply and Sanitation Sector: A Learning Experience from Colombia



32-E

Technical Paper Series

importance of the interaction between technical, socio-economic and environmental aspects involved in a project. Technology transfer through joint learning projects will ultimately permit sector problems to be solved in a holistic way, by creating the opportunity for sector staff to develop their capacities and approaches that fit the local context.

The project experiences are documented in the new publication *Technology Transfer in the Water Supply and Sanitation Sector: A learning experience from Colombia*, in which three main themes emerging from the project are highlighted: an approach to searching for sustainable solutions; a model for technology sharing; and learning projects for capacity building at institutional and community level.

The government of Colombia has already started adopting learning projects as one of the mechanisms to improve the effectiveness of sector interventions, and the governments of Bolivia and Ecuador are considering the same. The positive feedback is stimulating CINARA and IRC to further develop this promising capacity building and technology transfer strategy, which can help to bring sustainable water supply and sanitation services within reach of a larger part of the population. It can also help to enhance the effectiveness of sector agencies and community-based organizations.

Monitoring & Evaluation and Gender Issues: cross-cutting themes

A look across IRC's range of projects will reveal that two cross-cutting themes are evident: monitoring and evaluation, and gender issues.

For the Department of Water Development in Uganda, a community-based monitoring system for the Small Towns Water and Sanitation Projects was developed through a workshop. Issues, suitable indicators, and required actions were jointly identified by project staff and IRC, and advice was given on the requirements to ensure the effectiveness of the proposed system. Three valuable lessons came out of the workshop: with proper tools, monitoring can be planned at the lowest level; people must be strongly involved in the issues they plan to monitor; and monitoring should only be planned in phases, and not far in advance.

The latest developments in monitoring strategies and indicators were shared with others through a training workshop "Monitoring for Effectiveness" for the NGO Forum in Bangladesh and in a three-week short course at IRC with the same title. These activities, too, support a participatory approach, in which the users of the results are closely involved in the development of the system and the indicators. A key message emerging is that monitoring should support management and not be merely an information collection exercise.

Besides the gender components integrated into all of the projects in which IRC is involved in the field, the gender workshops in Mauritania and France mentioned previously enabled IRC to spread the gender message to an even wider audience. IRC also played a leading role in the Gender Issues Working Group of the Water and Sanitation Collaborative Council. In the Council's Global Forum in Manila, IRC staff gave an awareness quiz on gender and water in one of the plenary sessions.

Gender Song from Nepal

First of all sisters should be united
Should move ahead with a similar goal
Gathering of one or two, will make a team
For the developmental work, we are a team

Our village has not developed, dirty are our taps
In absence of development, villager's life is dark

Let's wake up sisters, we have to move ahead
We have to move ahead to do the
developmental works

Males, please give a thought, to the household
works
Provide some opportunity, for females to move
forward

If we could attend the meeting, we will learn
something
With a self-confidence in mind, we can also do
anything

Hurrying to finish the household chore,
let's talk of progress all together
Development needs women's participation,
brothers please help her

If we send daughters also to the school
they will also learn what's right or wrong
By encouraging sisters,
We can make our village an ideal place to live

To bring equality in sex, we have to come out
from unnecessary tradition
Development without female's participation, is
an illusion.

Composed by:
Bhagawati Sapkota, Kavre
Bishnu Dawadi, Nuwakot
Kopila Limachhane, Gorkha
Kaumaya Gurung, Syangja



Media Asia published the IRC article *Bringing Gender into Development Theatre: Five Cases in India*, which describes the importance of including gender messages in development theatre, and at the end of the year an updated version of the best-selling Technical Paper *Participation of Women in Water Supply and Sanitation: Roles and Realities* was on its way to the printer under the new title, *Gender in Water Resources Management, Water Supply and Sanitation: roles and realities revisited*.

Supporting Innovation through Research and Development

Supporting innovation means being in the vanguard of sector developments. With partners, IRC develops emerging sector themes in a way that creates an information feedback loop between its research, training and briefing activities, and documentation services. Priority themes in IRC's current programme include community water resources management; the sanitation gap; community-based services in low-income urban areas; decentralization; and effective and well-used water supply systems.

Water resources management

With an impending water crisis looming on the horizon, water resources management has become a priority issue. Affordable and integrated plans made together with user groups can lead to protected water sources that can continue to serve the population in even the poorest areas of developing countries.

An international workshop was convened late in the year as part of the 'Promising Water Resources Management Approaches in the Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Sector' project. Participants documented a number of positive experiences but also found that there is still a considerable gap between the water resources policies agreed to in the 1992 Dublin meeting and the practices in drinking water supply and sanitation projects today. These findings will be highlighted in a publication in the IRC series. The project is being funded by VROM (Netherlands), DGIS (Netherlands), UNDP, SIDA (Sweden), and SDC (Switzerland).

In Colombia, water demand in San Felipe exceeded the local treatment plant capacity. Inspection of the distribution network showed that over 90% of users had leaks in taps, pipes and sanitation facilities. In partnership with Tolima Health Service which provided technical guidance, and CINARA, the community set a schedule for operation and maintenance and installation of water meters. Consulting with the community, the Water Committee set a tariff for basic supply, rising incrementally as use increased. As a result, 90% of users reduced their water use.

Contributions to two other international workshops on water resources management gave IRC opportunities to share the findings of the project. A paper on promising water resources management approaches, taken from the project experiences, was presented at the International Seminar on Water Scarcity Problems and Water Resources Management, organized by IDPAD (Indo-Dutch Programme on Alternatives in Development) in the Netherlands; and a paper on local water resources management was presented at "Encontra das Aguas", the first Inter-American Conference on Water Resources Management, organized by the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) in Brazil.



Closing the sanitation gap

In November, at the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council's Global Forum in Manila, a Global Environmental Sanitation Initiative (GESI) was launched to tackle the 'shameful' sanitation situation throughout the developing world. Donors, UN agencies, NGOs and developing country professionals have agreed that concerted action is needed to end the health-threatening conditions endured by some three billion people. They are committed to GESI, which is intended to accelerate achievement of the goal of hygienic sanitation for all people as soon as possible in the coming millennium. UNICEF, WHO and IRC were instrumental in launching this Initiative, and IRC has been requested to play a role as information hub in the GESI network.

Zambia is one of the countries where cholera outbreaks occur every year at the onset of the rainy season. The disease has now become endemic. Since 1990 more than 20,000 cases of dysentery have been reported and there is a high incidence and prevalence of diarrhoea. The main factors underlying these diseases are the lack of proper excreta disposal, poor personal and food hygiene and the use of water from unprotected sources. Whereas sanitation coverage in rural areas is presented as 43%, effective coverage of latrines is estimated at only 12%. This clearly shows that providing facilities is not enough.

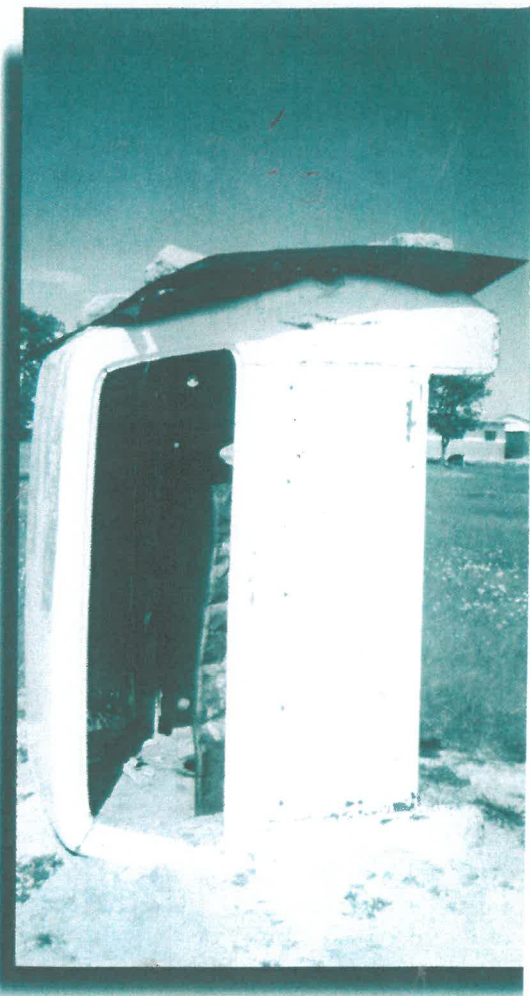
In order to bring sanitation and hygiene promotion more to the forefront of national development, the Programme Coordination Unit (PCU), an inter-ministerial committee which is steering the implementation of sector reforms, established a Working Group on Sanitation in 1997 to develop and reach a consensus on a national strategy for sanitation.

On the request of the UNICEF-supported WASHE programme in Zambia IRC, together with its partner NETWAS International carried out a sanitation and communication situation analysis for peri-urban and rural areas in Zambia. The evaluation team, together with extension staff and local leaders, found problems with technology, and with communication at community and district level.

Hygiene education

The importance of proper hygiene behaviour for impact and sustainability of water and sanitation projects cannot be underrated. Over the past several years, IRC has been involved in the development of several hygiene education programmes in among others Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, and Togo. Common to all of these programmes is a participatory approach, which uses local knowledge and experience, thereby ensuring better integration of the hygiene education component into the often already existing programmes.

It is clear that the participatory approach has led to sustainable changes in hygiene behaviour. In Mali, for example, considerable changes in water use were found to have taken place over the four-year period recently evaluated by IRC. An overview of the results in the different programmes to date reveals several common elements that have contributed to the success of the hygiene interventions. Parties at all levels must be involved in planning the hygiene education interventions to ensure consistent messages which are realistic and culturally and socially appropriate. It has been found that good visual materials for education and training, which are aimed at behavioural change rather than information delivery, are very effective. Hygiene education must be integrated into all phases of the project cycle, and from the beginning, hygiene promotion should be used to raise awareness about the importance of



Often sanitation solutions are clever, but many need improvement.

National Seminar on Sanitation and Hygiene in Niger

With the Ministry of Hydraulics and the Environment, IRC conducted a national seminar on sanitation and hygiene. The seminar resulted in an appeal to the government and its development partner to give higher priority to the sector, and to sanitation in particular. Recommendations concerned the integration of hygiene and sanitation in existing and future water programmes; participatory methods and approaches for sustainable impact; partnership in the sector; and effectiveness and efficiency of integrated programmes.

improved water supply and sanitation. Finally, periodic participatory monitoring should be carried out to allow problems and opportunities to be discussed. This way the community can boost their enthusiasm about their water supply and learn how to further improve their hygiene habits and thus their health.

Low-income urban areas

In the realm of basic infrastructure services for residents in low-income urban areas, IRC has been involved in a number of initiatives to promote research activities in this field in 1997. Foremost has been the collaboration with the Water Utilities Partnership (WUP), a joint programme between the Union of Water Suppliers and two African ITN centres, TREND in Ghana and CREPA in Burkina Faso. IRC has been instrumental in assisting in the development of a research proposal for one of the WUP activities aimed at the improvement of access and affordability of water supply and sanitation services for low-income urban communities in Africa. The project will be executed by utilities who will be assisted by a number of partners: IRC as overall coordinator, World Bank Regional Water Supply and Sanitation Group for Western and Central Africa and for Eastern and Southern Africa as sub-regional coordinators, and ITN centres and NGOs at country level. Among the objectives of the project are the strengthening of capacity of utilities and other service providers to develop sustainable and environmentally sound water supply and sanitation services and the improvement of collaboration between public utilities and other service providers (private (in)formal sector, NGOs, community-based groups and micro-enterprises). Case studies will be carried out according to a general framework for analysis in ongoing programmes of utilities in low-income areas. The methodology for the case studies will be participatory, with all stakeholders involved to ensure that views of all concerned will be incorporated in the studies. The case studies will form the basis of a best practices document and practical guidelines, tools and methods which can be used in other areas and which will be tested in the final phase of the project. While the primary audience for the output of this project is the utilities, the focus of the project is on replicability, going to scale and partnerships.

IRC was also involved in an assessment of options for the management of public latrines in Nairobi, Kenya. Often public latrines are the only possible sanitation solution for informal settlements in Nairobi, given the high densities, the high proportion of tenants and the very low incomes. Activities were carried out with a local NGO, KWAHO, and culminated not only in advice to local women's groups who were interested in the construction of public latrines, but also in an article on the subject published in *Environment and Urbanization*.

In the urban slums of Nairobi, there are basically two types of public latrines. In the first type, the public latrine cubicles are more or less divided among the residents who each have a key to their shared cubicle which they have to clean in turn. The users also have to contribute to the maintenance of the latrine when needed. This system works provided there is a clearly defined user group and consistent supervision. However, it breaks down when people do not feel responsible, and the level of social pressure to clean the cubicles in turn decreases. Tenants are then far less committed to maintaining 'their' cubicle and are probably even less committed when it comes to contributing to maintenance costs. The other system is the more 'public' pay-and-use system (but still for residential use), where users have access to all cubicles and do not bear any

responsibility apart from regular payment of fees. Where latrines are the result of a community effort, both in planning and implementation, this may work as the latrine operators tend to be residents from the area. To ensure that the operators keep the facility clean and the user group well defined and known, a minimum level of social control is essential.

In urban Lima, Peru, residents often visit community centres with communal kitchens, to enjoy an inexpensive meal in a social environment. Improvement of the water and sanitation conditions in these centres was the aim of a joint project between IRC and IDEAS (Centro Investigación, Documentación, Educación, Asesoría y Servicios). The project has produced the Spanish publication *Estrategias Comunitarias de Agua y Saneamiento en Locales Comunes y Comedores Populares (Participatory Strategies for Water and Sanitation in Community Centres and Communal Kitchens)*.

Effectiveness and use of existing systems

In the IRC-supported project on action research effects of training the communities are clear:

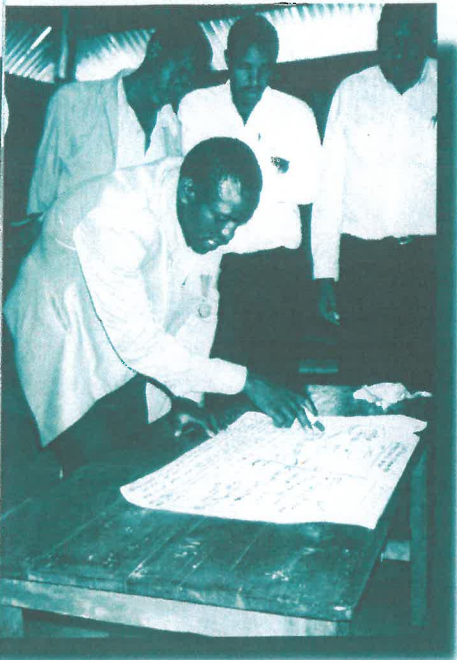
Mr. Rameswor Lamichane, from the village of Lele in Nepal can now keep his financial records up to date. He commented, "This bookkeeping system is an achievement of the training."

In Gajedi, another project village, Ram Bahadur Thapa has been elected as secretary of the water committee in a community meeting. This was the result of a decision to reform the committee. At the same time, a woman was elected as treasurer. In the words of Mr. Shiv Paudel, who had been both chairperson and secretary of the committee for a long time, "the women are more loyal and honest than the men". Mr. Paudel relinquished his position after training opened his eyes to the importance of leadership development and work division.

Aiming to assist local communities and agencies to achieve self-reliant management of improved rural water supply systems is what a four-year participatory action research project funded by the Netherlands Government is all about. Local agencies in six countries (Cameroon, Colombia, Guatemala, Kenya, Nepal and Pakistan) are working with IRC to develop approaches, methods and tools to enhance the capacity of four local communities in each country. Based on earlier work done with communities on identification of their problems with their water systems, the project's third year was marked by development of problem-solving strategies by the communities, and subsequent experimentation and field testing of these strategies, and methods and tools.

Clear from the project is that one of the main management skills to be strengthened is effective monitoring of both the research process, as well as system performance. Close, continuous monitoring facilitates adjustments of the strategies, methods and tools based on local findings and requirements. The monitoring approach is being developed with the partner organizations and the communities to ensure that it provides for the best possible learning opportunity for everyone.





The testing or experimenting in all cases has been a collective action, for the main idea behind the project is to build up more democratic forms of organization and management. Consensus at the level of the community has been sought about the cause and effect relationship of problems in their water supply system management, and about what possible solutions are to be tested. The goal is to solve practical problems and develop new or improved knowledge and theory. In that way research becomes a process of getting to know and interpret social reality, with the aim of gathering sufficient knowledge to allow for the reproduction, transformation and induction of new processes in society.

The country research teams continue to play a supporting role: helping to strengthen local capacity in areas such as skills development, group building, confidence building for women and men, and in forging links with other communities or organizations. They also contribute to the improvement of maintenance, payment systems, and water source protection; a small budget allows funding of some technical improvements to the community water supply system itself.

An overview of the water supply and sanitation situation in each of the six countries at the beginning of the project was published this year in the Project and Programme Paper series, under the title *Water Supplies Managed by Rural Communities: country reports and case studies from Cameroon, Colombia, Guatemala, Kenya, Nepal and Pakistan*.

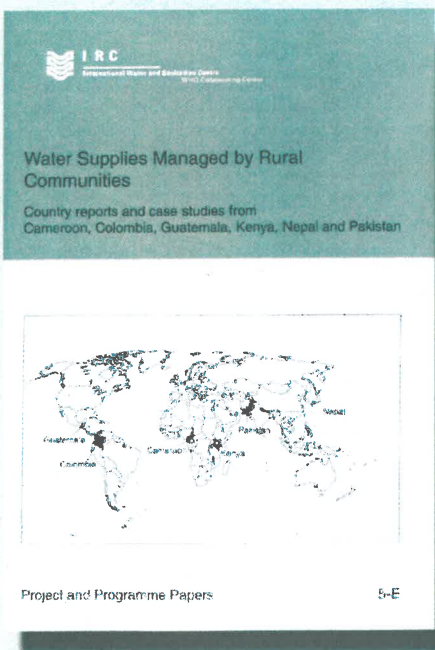
With additional funding from the Netherlands Government, the project has entered a new four-year period during which it will focus on enhancing capacity building in community management, and disseminate its findings.

The importance of the community's role in systems management was also identified as a key issue in an interactive training course for operation and maintenance managers facilitated by IRC on request of WHO in Vietnam. The course was a response to the growing need of Vietnam to address the issue of sustainable operation and maintenance of rural water supply and sanitation services. The experiences of this course were then used to review and adjust the WHO Resource Training Package on Operation and Maintenance according to specific needs and constraints in Vietnam. Furthermore, IRC provided technical guidance; collaborated in the assessment of the status of O&M services in rural areas of Vietnam; and helped to determine training needs.

The mission confirmed the importance of O&M and the community's role therein and the need for capacity building. Recommendations for the immediate future included similar workshops in 1998 to consolidate training capacity; development of a participatory evaluation of existing piped systems; development of guidelines at provincial level on how to carry out an environmental assessment; and attention to demand-driven approaches and community empowerment.

"Working in communities with existing water supply systems allowed determination of problems, and strategies to solve them. We should now also try to use Participatory Action Research for identification and documenting 'warning signs', signs we can act upon to prevent problems in new projects."

Director, WaterAid,
about the project in Nepal



Strengthening Partnerships

Developing and maintaining partnerships in both the North and the South is an efficient and effective way to share knowledge and experience, and as such lays the groundwork for sustainable, long-term sector development.

Developing Operational Partnerships

With the recognition that professional sector support services at national level are a key factor in the success of sector development, a comprehensive programme has been initiated by IRC, in which capacity building of sector agencies is at the forefront. As part of this programme, a study of resources and management (STREAM) has begun, with the aim of gaining insight into the processes and experiences around the development and functioning of water supply and sanitation resource centres in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America.

Resource centres focus on the collection and dissemination of relevant national and international knowledge and experiences that can be of use for and contribute to strengthening of capacities in the sector. Commonly, a resource centre may provide various kinds of support services, e.g. documentation and referral services, training programmes, advice from sector specialists, research on and collection of local field practices and experiences, and organizational support.

The project, funded by DGIS, covers a two-year period. Case study research will be carried out by organizations from each of the four regions. Subsequently, one global and four open regional meetings will be held to share knowledge and experiences and consolidate the lessons learned, recommendations, and possible follow-up activities.

Partners in the South

Two long-standing IRC partners in the South are CINARA in Colombia (since 1985) and NETWAS International in Kenya (since 1989). Both have evolved into successful sector resource centres, and offer support services such as training programmes and documentation services, with outreach in their respective regions. Through joint research projects, innovative short courses, joint publications and information exchange, IRC continues to strengthen its ties with CINARA and NETWAS International. The latter has also, together with IRC, established a new centre in Uganda, which offers joint training courses and advisory services.

Training courses have proven to be a solid basis for further cooperation with other centres in the South. With CREPA in Burkina Faso, joint training courses led to a framework for collaboration for establishment of a documentation and information centre, in which ETSHER and EIER are also involved. With PAID/Cameroon and IPD/AOS (Burkina Faso), where joint training courses have been given since 1991, community management research has been added as an area of collaboration. In Asia, the Nashik Research and Training Centre in India and Sarvodaya Rural Technical Services in Sri Lanka are strong partners in training. In Kerala, India, discussions are underway regarding incorporation of a sector resource centre function into the structure of the Socio-Economic Units Foundation.



IRC is active in the following Council activities:

Networks:

Gender
Advocacy and Communication
Operation and Maintenance

Working Groups:

Environmental Sanitation
Community Management and Partnerships
with Civil Society

Other activities:

INTERWATER, the home page for water
and sanitation on the Internet
Lusophone Initiative

Operation and Maintenance course in Mozambique

On behalf of the O&M Working Group
and Lusophone Initiative of the
Collaborative Council IRC inputs were
given in Mozambique in a three-week
training workshop with 18 participants.

Advocacy and Communication Tools

In a workshop in May the Advocacy and
Communication Strategies group prepared
a number of new tools which were also
distributed in Manila, including the paper
Resources on Participatory Approaches and
Communication for Water and Sanitation
Programming and a discussion paper on
demand-responsive programming and
equity.

Sanitation Promotion Kit

On the request of WHO, inputs were given
in a review and editing workshop which
helped shape the Sanitation Promotion Kit
of the Working Group on Sanitation
Promotion of the WSSCC. The kit was
officially presented at the Manila meeting
of the Council in November.

Partnerships have also lead to fruitful research activities, as has been the case with the community management research done with the Aga Khan Health Service in Pakistan, Agua del Pueblo in Guatemala, CINARA in Colombia, PAID in Cameroon, Nepal Water for Health (NEWAH), and NETWAS International in Kenya. A more recent partner is TREND, in Ghana, with whom joint projects on monitoring systems development have been initiated, and research activities related to capacity building in low-income urban areas are being formulated.

Others with whom new partnerships are being forged are IWSD in Zimbabwe, and NCWSTI in South Africa. These two institutes, as well as TREND, are all ITN Africa centres. At the ITN Africa Conference in Pretoria, a paper was presented entitled *Partnerships in Local Capacity Building*, emphasizing the collaborative role IRC and local partners can play in addressing this challenge.

International Partners

IRC has a long-standing relationship with the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council. The Council provides an important platform in the sector, which brings together NGOs, donor agencies, professional institutes and others. IRC actively participates in the working groups, networks and task forces of the Council. These activities provide IRC an opportunity to strengthen its ties with the various organizations involved, as well as contributing to its research and development work.

With the Secretariat of the WSSCC discussions were started on IRC support to the Council's home page, and the linked INTERWATER and GESI home pages, as well as a news service on the Internet. The Council has also requested IRC support in setting up a documentation system for the Council and its regional chapters.

With its other partners, which are represented on IRC's Governing Board, discussions have been initiated to jointly develop new initiatives. With UNICEF headquarters longer-term collaboration was agreed late in the year, on the Global Environmental Sanitation Initiative and on school sanitation promotion. A manual on school sanitation and hygiene education was developed and discussions are underway to embark on a project that emphasizes improving school sanitation and hygiene education in schools in six countries. The project aims to produce guidelines in three languages, newsletters, a web page on school sanitation, an interactive CD-ROM, low-cost teaching aids, and low-cost technology options for school sanitation and hygiene education.

With WHO discussions continue on operation and maintenance activities at country level, and with the UNDP-World Bank Water and Sanitation Program, with whom IRC produces the Annual Abstract Journal *Woman, Water, Sanitation*, work has begun on a gender initiative.

Partners Close to Home

For Netherlands-based institutions, IRC has always played a role in information exchange, through its Documentation Unit, its training programmes and guest lectures. The Netherlands Development Organization (SNV) in the Hague is an important source of participants in IRC's briefing programmes. Other close contacts are the Royal Tropical Institute (KIT) in Amsterdam, the Institute for Housing Studies in Rotterdam, and the Institute for Social Studies (ISS) in the Hague, all of which receive training inputs, lectures and guidance for students.

With the Institute for Infrastructural, Hydraulic and Environmental Engineering (IHE) in Delft, IRC has been cooperating in the training sphere for several years. Areas of current collaboration include post-graduate courses in Delft and in Cali, Colombia; input to IHE's course on rural water management; and assistance to MsC and PhD students at IHE. Bundling the complementary skills of each institute could allow IHE and IRC to respond even more effectively to the needs of the water and sanitation sector, so in 1997 a formal agreement was reached with a view to more intensive collaboration during the coming five years. Promoting capacity building; enhancing education and training activities; improving access to sector information; and lending support to institutions in developing countries are the main objectives of the relationship. In 1998, IHE will provide inputs to IRC activities related to low-income urban areas and water resources management, and IRC will contribute a segment on community-oriented management in a two-week Operations and Project Management course, part of a one-year Sector and Utilities Management course. Development of a joint training course exploring the interfaces between utility and community management is also planned in the near future.



General Information

Finance

IRC is an independent, non-profit organization supported by and linked with the Netherlands Government, UNDP, UNICEF, WHO, the World Bank and the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council. The Netherlands Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs provide a core budget approximating US\$ 1.2 million*, which is supplemented with fees for services and programmes requested by national governments, multilateral and bilateral donors, UN agencies, international development banks and NGOs. These sources accounted for some US\$ 1.1 million income in 1997, and for another US\$ 500,000 which was passed through IRC to partner organizations in the South. This amount is substantially lower than in 1996 because some larger projects came to an end, and because other, new projects are in the preliminary stages of development. More important, perhaps, is that more and more of IRC's partners receive funding directly for activities they carry out together with IRC. This can be estimated at another US\$ 1 million. In 1997 IRC's subsidy was guaranteed by the ministries for the coming five-year period, and additional financial assistance is being provided for the organizational transition currently under way.

Staff

The activities described in this annual report have been carried out jointly between IRC's partners and its own staff of 40. Some of the disciplines represented at IRC are engineering, anthropology, economy, law, sociology, journalism and psychology. More than half of the staff are women, and over 25% hail from outside the Netherlands. The role of staff is primarily that of facilitator, guiding processes in which partners work together to come to grips with sector problems, and jointly identify and test solutions. IRC also draws on staff from partner institutions in the North and the South who have complementary skills to optimize the results of its activities.

IRC Staff in 1997

Teun Bastemeijer (from February)
Eveline Bolt
Maria-Lúcia Borba
François Brikké
Loekie Broersma
Nigel Browne
Peter Bury
Irene van Dieten
Cor Dietvorst
Norah Espejo (until August)
Jennifer Francis
Sascha de Graaf
Anneke Groenendal
Ineke van Hooff
Lauren Houttuin
Dick de Jong
Marc Lammerink
Esther de Lange
Michel van der Leest
Hans Nederlof (from September)
Theodora Olsthoorn (from February)
Stephen Parker
David Saunders
Kathleen Shordt
Jo Smet
Ellen Swaders (until September)
Carmen Tjon kon Joe
Marc Vézina
Jan Teun Visscher
Hülda de Vries
Cornélie van Waegeningh
Lia Wahab
Madeleen Wegelin-Schuringa
Bettie Westerhof
Heikki Wihuri
Nicolette Wildeboer
Izabella Wimmers (until November)
Rob Winkel
Christine van Wijk-Sijbesma
Janine IJssel de Schepper
Eca Zepeda

* US\$ 1.00 = NLF 2.00

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Former Ambassador

Secretary

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Head Water Supply and Waste Water Department
Directorate-General for Environmental Protection
Netherlands Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment

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Assistant Director-General for International Environmental Protection
Directorate-General for Environmental Protection
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Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs
(until June)

Mr. J.A. Boer
Director, Agriculture, Rural and Urban Development
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Mr. F. Hartvelt
Senior Water Policy Adviser
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United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

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Chief, Water and Environmental Sanitation Section
United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

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Sanitation
World Health Organization (WHO)

Mr. B. Grover
Manager, UNDP-World Bank Water and Sanitation Program

Mr. R. Wirasinha
Executive Secretary
Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council



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