

books

IFRC Water and Sanitation Mission Assistant – update

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies To receive a copy of this CD-ROM, contact Uli Jaspers (email: uli.jaspers@ifrc.org) at the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (Water and Sanitation Department) PO Box 372, CH-1211 Geneva 19, Switzerland.

The *Water and Sanitation Mission Assistant* is an interactive CD-ROM resource directory produced by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). The information it contains is orientated towards the needs of engineers, technicians, and health practitioners working on water and sanitation projects in relief and emergency situations.

The resource directory is primarily aimed at providing guidance to IFRC delegates; the contents of the CD are therefore specific to their needs and the mission assistant aims to provide a comprehensive source of information that is accessible using a personal computer with a CD drive.

The CD contains a wide range of information for planning and designing water supply and excreta disposal systems, including technical data sheets and standard specifications for equipment ranging from pumps, disinfection units and water-quality testing. As well as the technical information, this latest version of the mission assistant, which is updated yearly, includes advice on health issues, such as improved sanitation and a set of PHAST documents for promoting improved hygiene behaviour.

The range of information is extensive and the practical guidance will prove to be extremely useful for many water and sanitation engineers. The CD also contains specific information about IFRC strategy, policies, guidelines, project planning and management toolkits to assist delegates on their assignments, as well as guidance on health in emergency situations, social welfare, managing stress and rules of conduct for personnel on assignment.

Although the examples and photos included give the impression that the mission assistant is orientated more towards relief work in the African continent, the technical information is applicable in other parts of the world. It will prove to be an invaluable source of information for those working on relief projects who

require a quick and easy reference for planning, implementing and managing water supply and sanitation projects in emergency situations.

*Jonathan Parkinson,
Civil and Environmental Engineer,
Independent Consultant.*

Blue Gold – the battle against corporate theft of the world's water

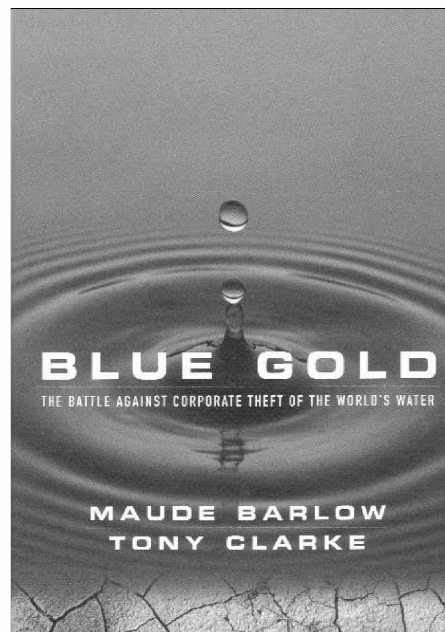
Maude Barlow and Tony Clarke, 2002, Earthscan, London, 278pp, hardback ISBN 185383937X, £20.00; paperback ISBN 1844070247, £12.95 (10% discount available online).

Maude Barlow, chairperson of the Council of Canadians, and Tony Clarke, director of the Polaris Institute of Canada, have jointly authored this campaigning book to promote water as a basic human right and to oppose the sale of water for profit. The dust cover informs the reader that *Blue Gold* tells the frightening story of the commodification of water and its consequences.

The book opens with the text of a proposed international treaty to share and protect the global water commons and ends with ten principles for a global water security agenda. The authors survey the world's growing water crisis. They analyse the politics of international water policy development and the growth of an international water cartel that, they consider, has undue leverage on international finance agencies, some NGOs and professional associations. They highlight the risk to domestic regulatory controls and environmental protection from the GATT, which defines water as a tradable commodity. Proposed new GATT rules could force the export or import of water despite national environmental legislation.

The language and style adopted by the authors is that of a political campaign, which for this reader hindered the transmission of the message they wish to promote. Their sloppy use of measurements and frequent superlatives may jar with a technical readership. The information the book provides about privatization experiences and the growth of the specialist transnational companies will be of interest to those working in water and sanitation services. However, with the rapid changes over recent years, some of the information presented is now a little dated.

Private companies, so keen in the early 1990s to enter the water market in developing countries, have found that managing water and sanitation in services in such economies is not as easy as they expected. They are now more reluctant to enter new markets. In 2001, the number



of new water and sanitation projects with private participation in developing countries was less than half that in 1999.¹ The World Bank has observed that the capacity of the private sector to invest in difficult markets has been greatly overestimated and that there is now wholesale withdrawal of the private sector.² Public services, which still manage 90 per cent of water systems, continue to have an important role in meeting the Millennium Development Goals for water and sanitation. Yet for many of the rural poor, the informal private sector is the only source of water for survival.

Blue Gold provides an alternative viewpoint to that presented by many international institutions. The book is a must for campaigners against privatization of water services and makes interesting reading for anyone working in water and sanitation services.

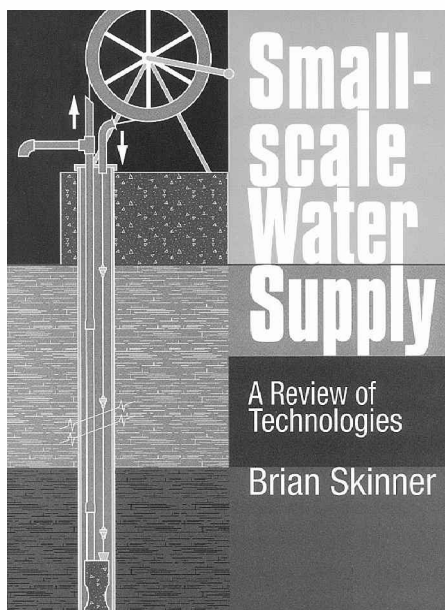
Stephen Hugman, water supply and sanitation consultant, Gardo, Somalia

- 1 *The Economist*, 'Survey of water', 19 July 2003.
- 2 *Water21*, June 2003, International Water Association.

Small-Scale Water Supply – a review of technologies

Brian Skinner, 2003, ITDG Publishing, 128pp, ISBN 1853395404, £12.95

In 1978, when the Ross Institute first published a little booklet on small water supplies by Richard Feachem and myself, we never thought that it would still be in demand 25 years later, or that it would be reborn as an authoritative book with a professional publisher. This book is the



around the world had taken the initiative of building their own water supplies when these were lacking. Long may they continue to do so. They will find this book an invaluable guide in their efforts.

*Sandy Cairncross
Professor of Environmental Health,
London School of Hygiene
& Tropical Medicine*

Water and Sanitation in the World's Cities – local action for global goals

Earthscan, published in association with United Nations Human Settlement Programme, 2003, normal published price £25.00 (on-line discounted price £22.50, or download free from www.unhabitat.org) 304pp, ISBN 1844070042

This publication produced by the United Nations Human Settlement Programme responds to targets related to water and sanitation provision set by the Millennium Development Goals. The first important finding in the book relates to the scale of problems which may be far greater than those documented by official statistics, due to the fact that many services are poorly operated and maintained. However, the book also suggests that the scale of external funding required to overcome these problems may be overstated because investments made by local stakeholders and the initiatives of service providers in the informal sector are generally not taken into consideration. The book argues that greater efforts should be made to support these activities and locally based organizations working towards improved water and sanitation provision.

The book stresses that the operational and management systems of public agencies and institutions act as a bottleneck to the provision of reliable, equitable and cost-effective services. These, and the ability of government to develop appropriate policies for the sector, are probably as important, if not more so, than overall deficiencies in funding. The book also suggests that in situations where local government demonstrates an inability to operate an effective public utility, the same ineptitude is often shown in its capacity to regulate the private sector. Various examples documented in the book suggest that the benefits of involving the private sector in service provision are notably apparent at the community level where local entrepreneurs are seen to be more responsive to community needs than larger companies.

For reference, the book provides a comprehensive assessment of the state of

urban water and sanitation from a global perspective, whilst maintaining a very strong focus on the situation at the local level. However, the real merits of the publication lie in the analysis of the socio-economic and political factors that shape the effectiveness of organizations at all levels to improve infrastructure coverage and service provision.

In conclusion, this book is highly recommended and an essential read for anyone with an interest in water supply and sanitation issues in urban areas, particularly those with a concern for the plight of the urban poor and those who aspire to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals.

*Jonathan Parkinson, Civil and
Environmental Engineer,
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worthy successor, however, which surpasses the original. It is authoritative and detailed, but concise and very readable, offering clear guidance to lay and specialist readers alike.

This book is in fact the heir to a long line of manuals on the subject, going back for the best part of a century. When a book takes on a life of its own, as this has done, it clearly meets a need. And that need will continue as long as many millions of people in developing countries lack adequate access to safe water for drinking and domestic hygiene. The need is greatest in rural areas, but the water supplies described here can also be useful in urban and peri-urban low-income communities, many of which are poorly served. For example, one-third of the population of Calcutta is served by simple handpumps on tubewells, provided on street corners.

When the World Health Organization and Unicef conducted their Global Assessment of Water and Sanitation for the year 2000, they found that coverage at the dawn of the new century was higher than previously thought, because households, communities and voluntary organizations

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Urban Hydrology, Hydraulics, and Stormwater Quality: Engineering applications and computer modelling

A. Osman Akan, Robert J. Houghtalen, 2003, Wiley Europe, ISBN 0471431583, 392pp, hardback, \$120.00

This book offers an integrated engineering approach to controlling and managing the water resources of cities and urban communities. By addressing hydrologic analysis in the urban environment, using physically based methods and focusing on stormwater quality, this interdisciplinary approach presents all aspects of urban hydrology more closely aligned to real-world practice than traditional hydrology books.

With an emphasis on application, this cutting-edge guide thoroughly covers urban watershed management, urban drainage-system design, and stormwater-quality management, complete with logic-driven questions reinforcing the fundamental, qualitative, quantitative and extended application concepts discussed in each chapter. Relying heavily on numerical techniques addressed throughout the book, two of the most widely used computer modelling programs in the industry are presented:

- The Corps of Engineers HEC-HMS model
- The Environmental Protection Agency SWMM model.

This textbook is aimed at students in civil and environmental engineering, as well as professional civil engineers, hydrologists, urban planners and environmental engineers.