

Conclusion

The case study demonstrates the critical role of NGO TA providers in the US water system. They are able to help local organizations decide on action, advocate and acquire resources for improved water services. They also provide training for implementation and management of the water system once in place. They often also play the role of intermediary to secure funding on the one hand and technical/ engineering support on the other. The organizational system that has led to the scaling up of water systems in the USA is certainly attributable to the availability of resources, but those resources are more effectively directed to communities that need them through NGO intermediaries between government and local communities, who lay the ground work for improving quality of life in the rural USA.

References

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- 3 See, RCAP, forthcoming, *Still Living without the Basics in the 21st Century*, Washington, DC: Rural Community Assistance Partnership.
- 4 Warner, Dennis and Jaris S. Dajani (1975) *Water and Sewer Development in Rural America: A study of community impacts*, Lexington, MA: Lexington Books
- 5 See, for instance, information on the Rural Community Assistance Partnership (RCAP), <http://www.rcap.org>, and the National Rural Water Association (NRWA) <http://www.nrwa.org>, accessed 6 July, 2004.
- 6 For more information visit <http://www.ndwc.wvu.edu>

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waterpoints

Corruption: draining the water sector

Each year, participants of the World Water Week in Stockholm debate current water issues. This year the Stockholm Water Prize was awarded to Professors Sven Erik Jørgensen, Denmark, and William J. Mitsch, USA, for work on understanding how lakes and wetlands function.

Jørgensen and his co-workers developed modelling software for the United Nations Environment Programme to support planning and decision making for the management of lakes and wetlands in developing countries. The software provides an easy-to-use tool that allows for a better understanding of eutrophication, as well as preventive and remedial measures. For the last nine years Jørgensen has been responsible for a project in Tanzania using wetlands for buffering and water purification. Professor Mitsch was the inspiration behind the Olentangy River Wetland Research Park at The Ohio State University, a world-class wetland research and education facility. There, among other focus areas, research on the ecological restoration of the Mississippi-Ohio-Missouri Basin is being spearheaded.

Corruption in the water sector was one of the issues tackled at the event (16–20 August 2004, www.siwi.org). Conditions of scarcity and monopoly present ideal opportunities for corruption in the water business, said Hansjörg Elshorst, of Transparency International. An audience kept on their toes by BBC World presenter Nik Gowing, heard how corruption stifles development. Martha Karua (Minister of Water Resources Management and Development, Kenya) claimed that 40 per cent of government expenditure went on corruption before the new Kenyan administration came to power, and had greatly undermined the country's ability to provide water and sanitation services.

In the lively panel debate, some major causes of corruption were identified: big capital-intensive projects; the vested interests in large projects of con-

tractors, government and donors who encourage or ignore bribery; and low wages in the public sector that encourage civil servants to seek extra sources of income. Some myths were also dispelled. Although the private sector is often pilloried, the public sector was identified as a major transgressor, and NGOs can be corrupt and lack accountability. Not all corruption is kickbacks paid to insiders on big projects. Examples of corruption at the local level include consumers paying meter readers to falsify readings, bribes and coercion to site waterpoints close to the households of community leaders, and protection money paid by the unregulated emptiers of pit latrines in Kibera, Kenya.

Multi-pronged solutions are needed, it was concluded: to fight the culture of impunity, to raise public sector wages, to establish better business practices, and to 'decentralize corruption' to levels where there is more scrutiny and accountability. Piers Cross (Water and Sanitation Program, World Bank) said there is less corruption when communities are involved in management and smaller projects should be preferred. The Swedish contractors Skanska have adopted new business practices to steer clear of corruption, reported Axel Wenblad, avoiding certain high-risk projects. However they would like to see more incentives for good private sector practice: they don't often get asked for their anti-corruption credentials.

Several members of the audience stood up at the end of the debate to confess examples of corruption in which they had been involved. For them, there should be a Stockholm Bravery Award.

*John Butterworth
Natural Resources Institute*

Delhi: increase in groundwater level in rainwater harvesting sites

Rainwater harvesting can recharge the declining groundwater levels in cities.

Data from 11 rainwater harvesting projects spread across Delhi show an increase of 5 to 10 metres in the groundwater levels over two years. These are the results of a survey from May 2002 to May 2004 on the level of groundwater in rainwater harvesting sites, carried out by the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE).

Deliberate policy and action at the city level is needed to ensure a sustained, long-term impact on the capital's groundwater situation. CSE recommendations include the following: increase the harvesting of rainwater at the city level by protecting and regenerating tanks and ponds; promote individual rainwater harvesting projects at the colony and household level; and ensure that all commercial users are required by law to harvest rainwater.

Web address: CSE Rainwater Harvesting,

www.rainwaterharvesting.org/

See also: CSE RWH Model Projects, www.rainwaterharvesting.org/Urban/Model-Projects.htm

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Charging to enter the water shop?

Initial results from a new DFID-funded research programme called 'Charging to enter the water shop? Determining the charges and costs of water connections for the urban poor' suggest highest connection fees of US\$321 in Asia, \$595 in Africa and \$462 in Latin America with lowest connection fees of \$24, \$23 and \$15 respectively. The research programme is undertaking detailed fieldwork in Ghana, Uganda, India and Philippines through country-based researchers working with recently connected lower-income households to determine their actual costs of connecting to the mains water.

The reason that the UK-based Institute of Water and Environment, Cranfield University is undertaking this research is the concern that the common approach to subsidizing volumetric charges for water consumption

may be failing to meet the public policy goals of improving public health and poverty alleviation if the poor cannot afford to connect to the formal piped supply.

Results will be posted on the research website (www.silsoe.cranfield.ac.uk/iwe/projects/connection/first_results.html) as soon as available. The researchers have also circulated a postal survey to utilities around the world to determine the official costs of connecting. The site also allows for on-line submission of information by utilities.

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Suicides by Indian farmers

Nearly 3000 farmers are thought to have taken their lives in Andhra Pradesh over the past six years. The unprecedented rate of suicide has been driven by a series of droughts and local moneylenders charging exorbitant rates for farmers to borrow money. Desperate to find water, many borrowed money to drill new wells, only to find they dried up as well, leaving the farmer with no way to repay the debt. Many decided the only way out was suicide.

In an acknowledgement that the suicides have reached crisis level, India's Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, announced a federal compensation package of R50 000 (\$1080) for every family in which a farmer had committed suicide.

Source: *Independent, 2 July 2004*

The Handpump Technology Network (HTN) restructures

Over the last 10 years, many lessons have been learned concerning the most effective ways to improve access to water supply services for the world's poor. HTN has recently responded to these changes by adjusting its focus and identity to suit. The Rural Water Supply Network (RWSN) is now its new name.

Whilst it continues to build upon valuable experience in a very clearly

defined area of need, community-based handpumps, the network has formally broadened its mandate to embrace wider issues affecting groundwater technologies for the poor, such as low-cost drilling, viable supply chains and self-supply for households and small communities. In addition, the network has taken the strategic decision to commit its global resources to the resolution of African problems.

For more information concerning RWSN's mission, focus and activities (which include a discussion forum hosted by Jiscmail called RWSN forum), or to contact the RWSN secretariat directly, please visit the website: www.rwsn.ch

Unexpected growth of Asian water markets in 2003 and 2004

Increasing water problems in Asia are leading to high growth rates of the markets and government investments in 15 Asian countries. The growth was US\$31.9 billion in 2003 and will be US\$41.7 billion in 2004, reports Helmut Kaiser Consultancy (Beijing and Tuebingen) in a recent market study. Several Asian countries like China, Japan, Taiwan, Korea and Vietnam increased investments in drinking water, wastewater and water treatment dramatically over the past 18 months.

Less than 8 per cent of wastewater is treated today. The Asian market will increase to US\$61.8 billion in 2008 and US\$117.3 billion in 2015, says the company. But even with this money, by that time still less than 30 per cent of the wastewater will be treated.

Source: *Helmut Kaiser Consultancy, 30 Jul 2004, www.hkc22.com/asiawater.html*