

# books

## Community Water, Community Management: from system to service in rural areas

Ton Schouten and Patrick Moriarty, 2003, ITDG Publishing, £14.95 ISBN: 1853395641

This is an in-depth assessment of the community management model, its role in promoting sustainable rural water supply and the potential for the model in taking service provision to scale. The work is an important and timely one, contributing as it does to the debates surrounding community management at a time when there is increasing recognition amongst sector professionals that this model has significant, but not insurmountable, limitations. Powerful evidence of both good and bad practice is presented in the form of case studies, giving real voice to communities, government staff and NGOs alike. This material is drawn from a four-year participatory action research project working in 22 communities in six different countries, co-ordinated by the International Water and Sanitation Centre (IRC) in the Netherlands, between 1994 and 1998.

The book successfully takes forward our thinking about community management models in a number of important ways. Firstly, the authors argue that to achieve truly sustainable and equitable provision of water supply, we must move beyond the constraints of a project-based approach towards an indefinite service vision, free from conventional donor funding-cycles and limited geographic project investment areas. To reach this goal of truly sustainable service provision, the book puts forward its second major conceptual argument, which is that communities cannot manage services alone. The authors argue that there will always be the need for some form of external support,

which itself must be built up in parallel with increasing physical infrastructure coverage. They go on to argue that this support should be carried out by permanent entities working at the district or municipal level, and it is often local government that is best placed to fulfil these functions. In this respect the book clearly explains the linkages between community management approaches and the decentralization of service provision. Finally, the book puts forward the case for scaling up the community management model and how this can only be achieved by changes in investment patterns and by shifting the focus to building support capacities at the local level.

This is a comprehensive and well-researched book that will provide an excellent resource for anyone interested in the topic of community management models for rural water supply. Perhaps its only weakness lies in its treatment of the issue of financing. Whilst the authors do include sections on financing, these are not as rigorous as they perhaps could be, especially given the fact that financing is one of the main challenges to establishing and maintaining community management models and the support mechanisms that they so clearly require.

*Harold Lockwood is an international water consultant*

## World Water Actions

World Water Council, 2004

This report provides a comprehensive review of global water issues relating to MDGs as defined at the time of the Kyoto Third World Water Forum. It is divided into three parts, the first looking mainly at

policy-level challenges to integrated water resource management; the second at the changes needed within WEHAB (water and sanitation, energy, health, agriculture and bio-diversity); and the third briefly recording the conclusions from discussions and the country commitments given during the forum. The early parts of the report include a certain amount of repetition with a preface, background and overview, which means that it takes time to reach 'the meat', but this is worth the wait and introduces the structure of the whole. The body of the report is in fact extremely informative and issues are clearly defined and cross-referenced to a database on the accompanying CD. This database describes over 3000 government, NGO and private sector initiatives (Water Actions) being carried out in different parts of the world, plus selected country situation analyses.

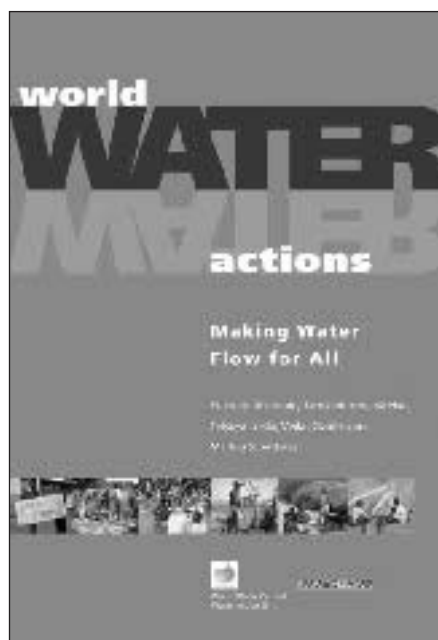
The report details what is going on at present and what gaps remain to be addressed to achieve sustainable development within integrated water resource management. It starts from the key challenges of the lack of value placed on water as a resource for supply, health, energy, bio-diversity and agriculture and of the need not just for greater investment but of parallel sector reforms and institutional strengthening if MDGs are to be sustainably achieved.

Whilst it is the rural poor who are numerically in the greatest need, the report itself tends to concentrate more on macro-developments, urban rather than peri-urban and rural contexts, and on health rather than household food security, but the database also includes many rural examples. Thus the report's emphasis may reflect the perspectives and priorities of global donors rather than grassroots recipients. These contrasting views are also discussed, however, and the document therefore provides a useful reference both for policy makers and those trying to understand the challenges facing integrated water resource management at all levels.

*Sally Sutton, SWL Consultants*

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## Technology innovation and promotion in practice: pumps, channels, and wells

Gert Jan Bom, Ibrahim Hafeezur Rehman, David van Raalten, Rajeshwar Mishra and Frank van Steenbergen, 2002, Tata Energy Research Institute, US\$20, 90pp.

This book is a must for fieldworkers involved in small-scale groundwater source development for farming and potable water provision. The book

presents a 'social' approach to technology development through:

- providing examples of people-centred approaches to technological improvements in well technology, water conveyance, and manually and diesel-operated pump sets
- improved ways of promoting and introducing technology transfer.

The book is divided into eight chapters. After an introductory chapter, chapters two and three discuss ways of improving mechanical and manual pumps to suit consumer needs; chapters four to six outline methods of improving drilling, well and conveyance system design and chapters seven and eight provide concrete examples of how to promote and market human-based technological improvements.

Although the 'Robert Chambers' approach to development of putting people first is a recognized philosophy, it is often poorly applied in water technology transfer projects. This book discusses generic examples of where this philosophy is incorporated into technological design. The examples are taken mainly from India: for instance, treadle pumps were abandoned in the Terai region of Northern Bengal, India, because people believe that water touched by one's feet must not be offered to one's social superiors. Also in this region, farmers hesitated to remove an outlet nozzle on the delivery pipe because, although it reduced the discharge, it increased the velocity of the emerging water, which in turn impressed the neighbours and ultimately improved the prestige of the farmer.

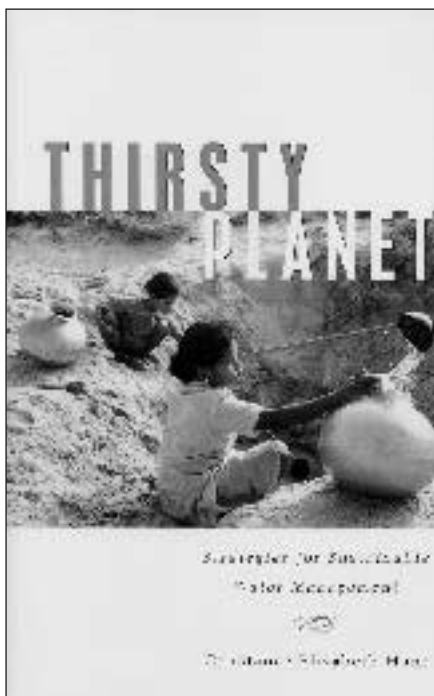
Overall, the book presents thoroughly researched practical solutions to specific social issues affecting pump, well and water conveyance design and it builds upon Fraenkel's (1997) earlier work *Water pumping devices – a handbook for users and choosers* (ITDG Publishing).

*Sam Godfrey is a Chartered Water and Environmental Manager with Water, Engineering and Development Centre (WEDC)*

### Thirsty Planet: strategies for sustainable water management

Constance Elizabeth Hunt  
2004, Zed Books, London & New York, hb £49.95, ISBN: 1 84277 242 2; pb £15.95, ISBN 1 84277 243 0, 302pp

This book provides an overview of the worldwide pressures on freshwater ecosystems from water use (or abuse) and from global warming. It gives a holistic insight into the technical, social and institutional factors that planners and politi-



cians should consider to ensure sustainable water use.

Hunt sets the scene by describing the water cycle as a complex ecosystem used by the world's population in many ways. She analyses the predictions of a water crisis in the near future and concludes that, even allowing for continued population growth, there is sufficient water to provide basic services for all the world's citizens. However, market forces and the unbalanced relationships between the needs and availability of water are potentially harmful to vulnerable communities and ecosystems.

In subsequent chapters, the book considers the impact of agriculture, water supply and sanitation, flood alleviation, and inland waterway navigation on the water ecosystems; as well as how society could adapt in response to water restrictions. It then looks at the impacts of climate change. Whilst recognizing that existing models are generally too clumsy to predict the impact of climate changes in specific drainage basins, the book reviews the potential impact on water availability of the present energy consumption trends. It proposes more efficient energy use and increased generation by non-hydropower renewable sources.

The final chapters look at what has already been done to restore natural water-based ecosystems, providing lessons for planners contemplating infrastructure investments, and gives a rare overview of the international institutions related to water policy-making. She concludes that the potential water crisis is not due to the lack of sustainable technologies but to the weakness of political will for their adoption.

The book provides a holistic view of water management and its relationship with other socio-economic factors such as energy strategy, climate change and food production. It is not a technical manual, but provides a well-argued analysis of options for future water resource management, with many practical and quantified examples. Planners from water and other sectors will find the book a useful review of alternative scenarios and of additional factors to be included when studying water availability. Students of both technical and socio-economic disciplines will find it an accessible book that gives an overall view of sustainable strategies for water management.

*Stephen Hugman is an international water consultant*

### Books received

#### Guidelines on municipal wastewater management – Version 3

UNEP; WHO; UN-HABITAT and WSSCC (2004) The Hague, The Netherlands, UNEP GPA, 92 pp. available free at:

[http://www.gpa.unep.org/documents/wastewater/Guidelines\\_Municipal\\_Wastewater\\_Mgmt%20version3.pdf](http://www.gpa.unep.org/documents/wastewater/Guidelines_Municipal_Wastewater_Mgmt%20version3.pdf)

These guidelines provide practical guidance on how to plan appropriate and environmentally sound municipal wastewater management systems. They are meant for decision makers, operational professionals in government institutions and, in the private sector, development banks and related organizations. The guidelines focus on four elements: approaches and policies, institutional arrangements, technological choices and financing options. Each element is supported by a practical checklist.

The guidelines stress the need to link water supply and the provision of household sanitation, wastewater collection, treatment and re-use, cost-recovery and re-allocation to the natural environment.

Local participation is advocated and a stepwise approach to technology and financing, starting at modest levels, expanding if and when more resources become available. The guidelines are summarized in 11 keys for action covering: political commitment; action at national and local level; going beyond taps and toilets; integrated management; long-term perspectives with step-by-step approaches; time-bound targets and indicators; appropriate technology; demand-driven approaches; stakeholder involvement; transparency; and financial stability and sustainability.