

about the author

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national newspapers printed headlines such as 'Breaking male bastion brick by brick'.

In 1996, with support from the Women in Development section of the Dutch Embassy, JEEWOMS ventured into machine-operated hollow-block production, which developed their skills and boosted their earnings. Nine women can now operate the power machines, and are supplying hollow blocks for latrines in the Kadappuram *panchayat*.

Twelve masons completed one-month training courses in house construction; they immediately won a contract to build 12 houses for a charitable society.

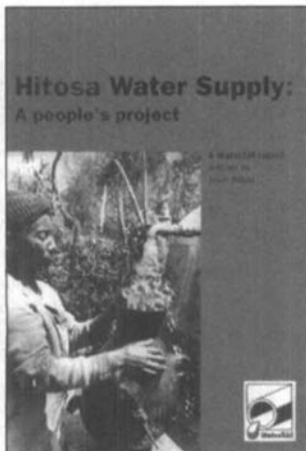
And the trainees soon became trainers

themselves. At the moment, two of the women are instructing 50 trainees at Alleppey District, on a Unicef-supported programme, while a further two are training male masons in the two-pit technology, which they demonstrate with model latrines at Trivandrum.

Now the idea is catching on — more of Kerala's district *panchayats* are training women in masonry as a main plank of their women's-empowerment initiatives.

JEEWOMS is now Thrissur's official agency for training women masons, and is well on the way to establishing a training centre. Society members are rapidly acquiring further skills in other low-cost technologies.

books



Beyond Big Dams: A new approach to energy sector and watershed planning
Edited by Juliette Majot
International Rivers Network, Berkeley, 1998. 126pp. Pbk. US\$20 (plus shipping and handling).

This 126-page report sets out to consider a world in which new large-scale hydropower is not a preferred option for electricity generation. It describes the world energy situation, current planning processes, and why they favour projects like large dams; how to improve energy-planning priorities; and alternatives to large-scale dams. 'With an estimated 78 per cent of the earth's hydropower potential yet untapped, proponents continue to promote hydro as an important source of electricity, even as the days of vastly expensive and environmentally devastating large-scale dams come to a close,' Juliette Majot writes.

Adding to the urgency is slow growth in 'non-hydro' renewables, and a global push to rely less on fossil fuels: a potent combination that could lead to a call for more large dams. Thus, the need to explore the use of rivers to generate power in a more sustainable way, specifically small-scale hydropower, is a key focus of *Beyond Big Dams*. Small-scale hydro (that is, anything less than 10 megawatts) offers a less destructive energy option to meet growing energy demand, though it has its own set of potential problems.

The report explores the pros and cons of this approach, in part through valuable case studies from countries that have experience with small-scale hydro, including Norway, Nepal, China, Sri Lanka, and Peru. Majot

writes that the crucial element in a sustainable energy future is in creating energy planning approaches 'that consider the social, environmental and political economies of appropriate energy' and involve communities in the process. An entire chapter examines thoroughly how to create such a planning process. Available from IRN, 1847 Berkeley Way, Berkeley, CA 94703, USA. Fax: +1 510 848 1008.

Hitosa Water Supply — A people's project
Trish Silkin
WaterAid, London, 1998. 26pp. Pbk. FREE. ISBN 0 9513 4663 6.

For a copy, contact: Julie Jarman, Advocacy Manager, WaterAid, Prince Consort House, 27-9 Albert Embankment, London SE1 7UB, UK. Fax: +44 171 793 4545. E-mail: wateraid@compuserve.com

This, the second in a series of reports analysing WaterAid's experience in integrated water, sanitation, and hygiene-education projects, assesses a community-managed gravity scheme in Ethiopia which provides water to more than 60 000 people living in 31 communities. The water runs through 140km of pipeline to 122 distribution points — how has such a large-scale scheme been managed successfully?

WaterAid contends that the report 'challenges the orthodoxy that large-scale necessarily equates to complexity. Hitosa demonstrates that gravity water-supply schemes, even one as extensive as this, are technically simple and can be operated, maintained and managed by people without specialized skills.'

The IT Bookshop

Unless stated otherwise, all priced publications reviewed here — and those listed in the resources guide on pages 27-28 — can be ordered direct from the IT Bookshop, Europe's leading specialist stockist of development titles. 103-105 Southampton Row, London WC1B 4HH, UK. Fax: +44 171 436 2013. E-mail: orders@itpubs.org.uk