

News from the MUS group #6

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This newsletter provides information on the provision of multiple use water services. It focuses on how these may be made to work for poverty reduction by supporting people to get access to water for both domestic and productive activities. The productive focus is on small-scale activities like backyard gardening, livestock keeping and micro-enterprises. These all play a crucial role in people's livelihoods but are often neglected in water supply. The newsletter is produced by the MUS (multiple use water services) group that was previously known as the PRODWAT thematic group. Currently the coordinating partners of the group are the IRC International Water and Sanitation Centre, the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), PumpAid, the Water Engineering and Development Centre (WEDC), the International Water Management Institute (IWMI), the Natural Resources Institute (NRI), Plan International, Winrock International and Cinara. You can find more details, join or become a coordinating partner at www.musgroup.net

1) Introduction to the issue: new group name and broader focus!

As agreed at recent meetings in Stockholm and Loughborough, the PRODWAT group has been renamed as the Multiple Use water Services (MUS) group to reflect the inclusion of organizations from both the domestic and irrigation sectors. While the previous name emphasized a focus on productive uses of domestic water, many members are also working on multiple uses of water in irrigation areas. Domestic and small-scale productive uses of water within irrigation schemes make important contributions to livelihoods, alongside field-scale irrigation. We look forward to addressing these broader issues in future events and publications.

This newsletter includes links to a report from the session in Stockholm, a reminder about the 2006 case study award (worth €1000 for the lucky winner to tell their story), and news from partners and a projects. A number of these items respond to an important need that was emphasised in Stockholm and at earlier events: to document and advocate about MUS on the basis of much better financial and economic data. There remain very few rigorous stories that capture the costs and benefits in different contexts, although new research reported on here in Vietnam and Ethiopia may be starting to address that need.

John Butterworth, IRC International Water and Sanitation Centre (butterworth@irc.nl)

2) Case study AWARD: Submit your case study by 31 October 2006

The MUS Case Study Award is open to researchers, practitioners and students working in any development-related context: including, but not restricted to, Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa, Asia or Eastern Europe. Papers, or any innovative media to tell your story, may be submitted by joint or single authors. Case studies should focus on the multiple use of water services at the local scale: emphasising the negative or positive role of productive uses of water at the household/village/local level alongside traditionally recognised domestic uses and vice versa. Possible topics might include the role of household water supplies in gardening and urban agriculture, for livestock, and for micro-enterprises or the mixed use of water in irrigation areas. Case studies may emphasise technical, social, political, economic or institutional issues in water development and management for multiple uses at the local scale. We are particularly interested in case studies where a rigorous analytical framework, preferably including economic costs and benefits, has been used. There is also a lack of existing cases that document links between multiple uses of water and environmental sanitation.

You can submit at any time before 31 October 2006 and the winning case study will be announced in December. The winner will receive an award of €1000 towards further documentation of your story relating to multiple uses of water. You will also be invited to present the results at a MUS group meeting.

Find out how to apply for the case study award at www.musgroup.net/page/287 You can read the report prepared by the winner in 2005 at www.musgroup.net/page/645

3) Sharing news: Wanted, your spicy statements on multiple use systems

The Challenge Program on Water and Food (CPWF) is holding the International Forum on Water and Food in Vientiane, Lao PDR from 12-17 November 2006. At the forum, Eline Boelee from the International Water Management Institute will be hosting a session on multiple use water systems.

Eline says "You may have already seen the official announcement and call for abstracts. Unfortunately there were hardly any contributions from our network yet even though I think you have a lot to offer to the discussions. So here is a new chance! Especially for you we have created a shortcut that will not take much time but may have high impact. What I would like you to do is to write a short statement (preferably one sentence) that is as provocative as possible, on multiple use of water. This can be something from your experience, a research result, but could also be a wish or a doubt. For example, as Ede Jorge Ijiasz (WSP) said in Mexico: "We cannot do rural water supply projects without considering productive uses", which some farmers in eastern Ethiopia have put even stronger to me: "We do not want any more single purpose water systems".

Your suggestions may also be critical: "multiple use services can never be up-scaled because of sectoral barriers", or "benefits of multiple use water services are too marginal and investments in water for poverty reduction are better spent on large-scale irrigation". You are most welcome to play the devil's advocate if you think this will help our discussion. While most of us probably truly believe that multiple use water services are the best way forward, we cannot generate new insights by looking at MUS from an idealistic viewpoint only. We have to be aware of the difficulties in getting there, not just convincing people, but also making MUS work in practice and bringing it to scale. Please send your statement at your earliest convenience, preferably before 1st October, so we can select the most antagonistic ones for elaboration of a 1-2 page briefing note, to be distributed at the forum."

Send your ideas to Eline Boelee (e.boelee@cgiar.org). Find links to the forum website at www.musgroup.net/page/664

4) Publications: Forthcoming paper on the importance of water in income-generating activities, Vietnam

A recent Stockholm Environment Institute research project has looked at the patterns of domestic water use in rural and peri-urban areas in Vietnam, with a particular focus on micro enterprises undertaken in and around the household using domestic water supplies. The study took place in 7 provinces across Vietnam and involved over 100 households. The overall approach was based on conventional participatory rapid appraisal techniques, and included the use of interviews with key informants and households, focus group discussions, field observations and documentary analysis. The study found that water had a significant role in productive activity in and around the home, both in production for household consumption and for income generation. The majority of households surveyed had a vegetable garden and/or were raising some type of livestock, usually pigs. Some of this food production was clearly for household consumption, thus increasing households' food security, but some household crops were being cultivated exclusively for sale in the village market. Most families with more than 2 pigs were also selling pork.

Water was also crucial to other home-based income-generating-activities (IGAs), particularly those undertaken by female members of the household. The most common household IGA observed was the production of food products, and these enterprises were generally run primarily – and often entirely – by the women. In many cases, the male head of household and older sons worked outside the household area, either farming or as wage labourers; working on their own, the women were able to produce food items for sale while having sufficient time to raise children and take care of the household domestic needs. This pattern held true in both rural and peri-urban areas and means that these activities are of great significance in gender as well as livelihoods terms. Service-based businesses also offered specific benefits to female household members. A motorbike washing business in a peri-urban area of Thai Binh illustrated the advantages of this type of micro enterprise, both in terms of how it meshed with child-rearing and other household demands and with respect to the low level of investment and skills required. The female owner of the business washed five motorbikes in a typical day, noting it was something she did in her spare time; for start-up, all she had needed was a pump (for drawing water from the river), soap and an air pressure hose (for drying the bikes). The woman estimated her daily profit at VND10,000-15,000 (US\$0.62-0.94): a significant sum of money to her, and earned from only an hour or two of work a day.

While many of these IGAs were not seen as sources of prosperity for rural households (in contrast, for example, to farming shrimp and fish, working in the city, or having equipment and machinery to run larger businesses), people did believe the additional income was essential to household security. There were also instances in which IGAs had been used to generate sufficient investment capital for households to move into more lucrative businesses.

One family in Thai Binh, for example, had used profits from raising pork and producing rice wine to save enough money to join with two other families in buying a car for a taxi service. This family's experience thus illustrates how water-dependent small-scale enterprise can serve as a ladder out of poverty.

From: 'Productive uses of domestic water: a household-level study from Vietnam' by Stacey Noel, John Soussan and Nguyen Phuong Thao. To be published in 'Sustainable Development of Water Resources, Water Supply and Environmental Sanitation: Proceedings of the 32nd WEDC Conference', November 2006. Contact Stacey Noel (stacey.noel@sei.se) at the Stockholm Environment Institute for more information.

5) MUS images: An online exhibition

Another image from our online exhibition illustrating multiple uses of water at the household level from rural, peri-urban and urban areas across Africa, Asia and Latin America. This image shows a woman in Kenya washing clothes, often a major part of household water consumption. The photograph by Tom Slaymaker illustrates the difficulty that many people, usually women and girls, face in finding water and space to wash clothes. You can download and use all these photos in your work.

See the photo exhibition at www.musgroup.net/page/599 You can send any photos, cartoons or images you would like published here to butterworth@irc.nl



6) Sharing news: USAID tender call for water and sanitation in Kenya highlights multiple uses of water

A current call for proposals from USAID to support water and sanitation service delivery in arid and semi-arid parts of Kenya, highlights the role of multiple uses of rural water supply systems. It says that: "...rural water supply in Kenya is rarely used exclusively for domestic purposes, and most systems (surface or groundwater) provide water not only for drinking, cooking, washing and other household uses, but also for small-scale agriculture, livestock, and other economic enterprises. New rural water provision schemes often do not build in measures that take a diversity of needs and uses into account, and miss opportunities to meet more than one objective through cost-effective multiple-use systems. Well conceived multiple-use water systems can in fact contribute greatly to long-term system sustainability by increasing revenue generated from water use and raising incomes to permit long-term maintenance of the system, and ensuring ecological sustainability that takes into account all demands on the community water source."

Read more and find links to further information at www.musgroup.net/page/666 The closing date for proposals is 9 February 2007.

7) Sharing news: New research in Ethiopia and the Nile Region includes multiple uses component

The UK Department for International Development (DFID) is providing EUR 5.65 million for a new 5-year research programme known as RIPPLE (standing for Research-inspired Policy and Practice Learning in Ethiopia and the Nile Region). This programme will advance evidence based learning on water supply and sanitation (WSS) financing, delivery and sustainability to improve equity of access for the poor. It aims to contribute to MDG objectives by providing new knowledge and skills at all levels to enhance sector financing approaches, improve targeting mechanisms and identify more effective governance arrangements and sustainable technologies. It will include a longitudinal study focusing on how people use water supplies for multiple purposes and the related contributions to livelihoods and growth. The project is lead by the Overseas Development Institute with the IRC International Water and Sanitation Centre, WaterAid Ethiopia, Institute of Development Research, Addis Ababa University and other partners.

For more information see www.musgroup.net/page/661 or contact Alan Nicol (a.nicol@odi.org.uk)

8) Sharing news: ZimWASH to address the water and sanitation needs of the rural poor in the context of HIV/AIDS in Zimbabwe

The ZimWASH project aims to strengthen the capacities of civil society organisations and local government in Zimbabwe in providing Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) services targeting the needs of the rural poor. It is one of the projects selected recently for funding by the European Union Water Facility (EU-WF), and is co-financed by UNICEF Zimbabwe. The project, which will run for five years, will be implemented by UNICEF Zimbabwe together with the Mvuramanzi Trust, the Institute of Water and Sanitation Development (IWSD) and IRC International Water and Sanitation Centre. A start-up workshop was held in Harare, Zimbabwe in September 2006.

