

News from the MUS group #11



April 2008

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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 programmes. The newsletter is produced by the MUS (multiple use water services) Group. More information about the Group, and how to join, can be found at www.musgroup.net

1) Introduction to the issue: revisiting multiple uses of water 5 years on

"Multiple-use services are all about changing perspectives. First, we would see someone irrigating some tomatoes, and we would say that he is wasting water. Now, we see the same situation, but from the perspective of the user, and we say that he is making a good and economic use of water". (Johny Hernández, water technician, Honduras)

Five years ago, in January 2003 an international symposium held in Johannesburg, South Africa (see www.musgroup.net/page/425) led to the formation of the MUS Group and a number of other initiatives including research and pilot implementation projects. At that meeting, practitioners, researchers and policy makers from 14 countries shared papers and experiences about the positive and negative aspects of multiple uses of water systems. Five years on it is time to revisit these issues and discuss progress in influencing policies, promoting implementation, testing technologies and evaluating the impacts of multiple use water series. This event will be the main activity of the MUS Group in 2008, and the next item (item 2) discusses the preparations for this symposium to be held later this year in Ethiopia. You still have time to submit an abstract (until 15 May 2008). The symposium will also be a preparatory event for the 5th World Water Forum to be held in March 2009 in Istanbul, where multiple use services have been identified as a main topic. You can also read here about the preparations for the forum (item 6). We look forward to your participation in these upcoming events and to discussing your experiences in supporting the provision of better water services. Do you agree with Johny from Honduras?

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

2) Next meeting: symposium on multiple use services, 4-6 November 2008, Ethiopia

From 4-6 November 2008, the MUS group international symposium on multiple-use services will be held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The objective of this symposium is to share and consolidate experiences and lessons learnt around multiple-use water services, and to discuss implications for taking the approach forward. The symposium is organised by the MUS Group, together with the RiPPLE (Research-inspired Policy and Practice Learning in Ethiopia and the Nile Region) project. The call for papers for the symposium has already been made and you now have until 15 May 2008 to submit an abstract. Full papers are required by 15 August. You can choose to submit one of two types of papers: research-papers are longer and should synthesise recent research on multiple-use services; practice papers are shorter and will document innovative implementation experiences. There is also the option to submit a photo essay instead of a written paper.

The symposium announcement with further details and call for abstracts can be found at www.musgroup.net/page/746 Enquiries should be sent to symposium@musgroup.net

3) Sharing news: sharing MUS Group work within the Dutch water sector

Over recent months, several organisations from the Dutch water sector have expressed an interest in the topic of multiple-uses. Two events were organised involving Dutch members of the Group to share ideas and experiences with these organisations. On the 5th of February, Plan Netherlands and IRC (two of the Group's coordinating partners) presented the Group's work to representatives from DGIS (the Dutch agency for development cooperation), the Dutch Ministry of Waterways and Transport and the Netherlands Water Partnership (NWP). The participants expressed their interest in the topic particularly given the need to find approaches that support

sustainability (including financial sustainability of systems) and called for further efforts particularly in advocacy. The meeting concluded that if the messages from the Group are to reach new audiences such as donors and large implementing organisations, more effort needs to be put into disseminating the results of all the studies done in the past, with particular emphasis on the cost and benefits of multiple-use services, and impacts on sustainability of services. In a follow-up meeting with the NWP, it was agreed to organise a good-practice seminar on the topic for all Dutch organisations involved in WASH development programmes, including NGOs, water companies, and the private sector.

For more information about this planned meeting in the Netherlands please contact Stef Smits (smits@irc.nl)

4) New publication: new report by Winrock International on potential of multiple use water services

Winrock International has published a report of a study on the costs and benefits of multiple-use services carried out with partners for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF). The study involved a broad scoping on the costs and benefits of multiple-use services in Africa and South Asia and amongst others, using results from case studies by members of the MUS Group. Even though that data are scarce, the study indicates that the incremental benefits of providing multiple-use services easily outweigh the incremental costs. It has also provided a first quantification of the potential number of people who can be served with such services in those two areas. Key Findings were: 1) Multiple-use services cost more than single-use services but generate greater income and poverty impacts; 2) For domestic+, the intermediate multiple-use service level optimizes benefits (including non-financial poverty benefits) relative to costs for new services and most upgrades. Once basic domestic needs are met (approximately 20 liters per capita per day), each additional liter per capita per day (lpcd) generates an estimated \$.5-\$1 per year of income. Improving water services from 20 lpcd to 100 lpcd has the potential to generate \$40-\$80 per capita per year (e.g. for a family of five this would mean an additional \$200-\$400 per year); For irrigation+, upgrading from the basic irrigation to the basic multiple-use service level optimizes financial benefits relative to costs, but upgrading to the intermediate multiple-use service level optimizes poverty impacts, including substantial health benefits in areas without domestic water services, and 4) Income generated by multiple-use services can enable repayment of initial and ongoing costs for most service levels and technology options, making multiple-use services more likely to be sustained. The publication of the report coincided with the start of an online discussion forum.

For more information, contact Mary Renwick (mrenwick@winrock.org) or visit www.winrockwater.org to download the report 'Multiple Use Water Services for the Poor: Assessing the State of Knowledge' and to find a link to the discussion forum.

5) Honduras: study started on multiple-use and sustainability of services provision

The Red de Agua y Saneamiento de Honduras (RAS-HON – the main water and sanitation network in Honduras) and IRC have started a study to understand the impact of *de-facto* multiple-use services on sustainability of water supply services provision in Honduras. A series of case studies in 12 rural communities in 5 Departments in the country will document experiences. The study is expected to generate recommendations for sector agencies on how they can better support communities in managing their services, and take account multiple-uses. Insights are expected on the implications of multiple-uses for the design and rehabilitation of water systems.

For more information contact Stef Smits at IRC (smits@irc.nl) or Tupac Mejía at RAS-HON (tmejia@fhis.hn).

6) Sharing news: multiple use services at the 5th World Water Forum

"Multiple Uses and Functions of Water Services" has been selected as one major topic (out of a total 22 topics) for the 5th World Water Forum to be held in Istanbul March 2009. This will be a part of the UN-WATER led THEME 2 on Advancing Human Development and MDGs. From 7-8 February a preparatory meeting in Istanbul was attended by 25 participants for the MUS sessions. Discussions were based on a scoping paper (downloadable at the WWF5 site). The sessions planned at the forum will be a good opportunity to gather in a consistent frame recent outputs from several initiatives and streams of work on multiples uses and multiple functions of water in rural areas by networks and initiatives such as the MUS group, INWEPF in Asia or through irrigation management modernization programs such as the one run by FAO. Two sessions have been proposed: 1) Multiple uses and functions of water services to accelerate achievement of MDGs: How Multiple Use Services can be conceptualized and characterized? What benefits for what users? 2) Governance and support to multiple-use services: outcomes of current experience and how barriers can be removed? After the inputs made to the two previous forums (in Kyoto and Mexico) this high profile on MUS in Istanbul is a clear recognition of its importance in water management. It is an opportunity to make known to the world the values of MUS in addressing several MDGs at a reasonable cost and the organisers encourage you to participate to the preparatory phase as well as in the forum sessions.

For more information about the MUS topic at the 5th World Water Forum please contact Daniel Renault (FAO) at daniel.renault@fao.org who is coordinating preparations. The general forum site is at www.worldwaterforum5.org and the MUS scoping paper can be found at (look for topic 2.4 Multiple Uses of Water) www.worldwaterforum5.org/index.php?id=2096&L=0target%25253D_blank%2522%2520onfocus%253D%2522b

