

PROPOSED TOPIC PAPER FOR THEME 6, TOPIC 6.3 (#22)

Theme	6. EDUCATION, KNOWLEDGE AND CAPACITY BUILDING
Topic	6.3 or 22 USING PROFESSIONAL NETWORKS AND ASSOCIATIONS TO STRENGTHEN THE WATER SECTOR
Main Question	In a majority of high income countries, professional networks and associations are recognized as key to the success of the water and sanitation sector; being fundamental to the protection of public health, the environment and the development of well functioning water and sanitation services. Given this success, what functional role/s should networks and associations play in low and middle income countries, and how can these roles be enhanced and optimized?
Related sub-questions	<p><i>Question 1: What should networks and associations do to support the development of the wider water sector nationally and internationally?</i></p> <p><i>Question 2: What have been the constraints to networks and professional associations playing a strategic role in water-related capacity development?</i></p>
<u>General introduction</u>	<p>More than ever before, the water sector faces a host of challenges from a variety of different sources: amongst others increasing water scarcity, heightened frequency of climate change and disaster related events, rapid urbanization and the operational implications of decentralization.</p> <p>Throughout the twentieth century, rapid population growth coupled with increasing urbanization and expanding human activities led to an unprecedented level of demand for water and sanitation services. This trend is expected to continue into the foreseeable future. The period over the next twenty years will prove to be key: population growth will probably add another 2.5 billion people to the world's population. The generation of consumers to be born in that period will be concentrated in already densely populated areas in developing countries, and within these towns and cities, predominantly in informal urban settlements.</p> <p>These changes place additional stress on the already over-stretched capacities of professionals, people and institutions with responsibility for water. Furthermore, they imply new ways of working, different skills sets and attitudes for which traditional (and formal) forms of education and training are inadequate.</p> <p>Ironically, at international events such as the World Water Forum, the lack of progress in capacity development has been identified as a recurring issue that compromises the achievement of targets set in the Millennium Development Goals. Yet, despite this, education, training and capacity development have frequently been side-lined and treated as add-ons to development programmes; in particular, local capacity development institutions, such as professional networks and associations have been largely ignored or overlooked.</p> <p>In developed societies, professional networks and associations have played a long, relevant and authoritative role in supporting the wider development of policy, practice and regulation of the water sector. In emerging countries, the 'divide' to be bridged is to identify the ways and means that these networks and associations can add value to the array of sector stakeholders already in place.</p> <p><i>Resulting Question 1: What should networks and associations do to support the development of the wider water sector nationally?</i></p> <p>-----</p> <p>Stottmann (2006) identifies seven typical roles that associations play in sector development, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising the profile of the sector in the national community; • Providing a vehicle for the continuous updating of sector professionals'

	<p>knowledge and skills (leadership development);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play a role in defining national sector policies and realistic targets and standards; • Advocate reforms in sector governance and policies; • Act as a link between sector agencies and the private sector: including consultants, manufacturers, contractors and operators; • Promote national and international exchanges; • Contribute to research and cooperation in training, research, capacity building, technology and standardization. <p>Reiter (2006) further suggests that in countries with an emerging water and sanitation sector that these roles change over time, as the needs and wants of the sector change. First, Associations are involved in pooling expertise and connecting people/organizations to solve basic problems (essentially to find out what works); second, to codify knowledge and experience into best practices and formal standards (to ensure that professional are not reinventing the wheel) and third, to engage in teaching, training and certification of the professional cadre (both institutionally and individually). At the more developed end of this spectrum of responsibilities, there will undoubtedly be additional roles that networks and associations play, such as regulatory compliance, process optimization, rehabilitation strategies, development of professional identity and pride.</p> <p><i>Resulting Question 2: What have been the constraints to networks and professional associations playing a strategic role in water-related capacity development?</i></p> <p>-----</p> <p>Whilst recognizing that networks and associations have a significant role to play in sector development, the degree of engagement of these organizations, and the practical traction that they have had nationally has been, in some cases, compromised by a variety of operating constraints. These encompass:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A recognition that the water sector is generally overcrowded with organizations, leading to difficulties in identifying role and niche; • A perception that some networks and associations are disconnected from the ground realities of service provision in developing countries; • A mismatch between professional associations (who seek to connect locally based service providers in a self help network) and nationally run water authorities, who seek to internalize these association functions; • Significant segments of the development community have no first hand experience with utilities or professional associations serving them. <p>The potential to drive change and reform in the water sector through networks and associations is significant, as the history of water and sanitation development in many developed countries testifies. To 'bridge the divide' in developing nations requires a thorough analysis of the optimal role that networks and associations can play, over time, in the evolution of the water sector.</p>
(Types of) Organizations to be involved in topic consultations	<p>International Agencies: World Bank Institute, Water and Sanitation Program</p> <p>Local governments: UCLG, ICLEI</p> <p>Professional Associations: IWALC, IWA, AquaFed, EUREAU, ADERASA</p> <p>Research Institutions: to be defined</p> <p>Multilateral donors: World Bank, AFDB, ADB</p> <p>Related national organisations, NGOs and Local civil society:</p>