

For nationally recruited researchers like myself, doing research at IWMI gives good exposure to new sources of thinking, talent and scientific perspectives that are only be found in an international research environment.



**Dr. Upali Amerasinghe,**  
*Irrigation and Water Resources Program (Sri Lanka)*

An important role of my work, and the work of the Institute, is to 'get people thinking' about certain important issues. Our paper about water scarcity in Sri Lanka is a good example. It shows that even a perceived water-plentiful country can experience severe water scarcity in agricultural pockets, if it continues to manage its water resources in the current way.

The results of this and other work I have done on global and regional water supply/demand, have put statistics at the service of applied research. It is satisfying to see that these studies have helped open the view of agricultural researchers and policy makers to a new perspective of their situation—seen through hydrological, economic and sociological facts.

IWMI is well known internationally as an institute that does multidisciplinary research, with varied international contacts and unique opportunities for comparative research. For long, water management to reduce poverty and to achieve more gender equity has been an important aim of IWMI.



**Dr. Barbara van Koppen** (on right)  
*Poverty Gender and Water project (The Netherlands)*

Good research is important. For example, one cannot generalize about the role of women in agriculture as it varies due to many factors. Based on research findings, IWMI formulates policies and recommendations, which are beneficial not only to the countries where work is being done but also to others. IWMI will, I feel, continue to be in the strong position that it holds today. It should further expand during the five years ahead.



**Eric Sunhail Benjamin**  
*Administrative Services/Travel, (Pakistan)*

I am particularly proud of my work at IWMI. I see my main function in the Institute as serving as the 'central communication center' for

## People Behind

IWMI Pakistan. Being able to satisfy the demand of my colleagues on a daily basis is an interesting challenge. The Institute is a good place to work. I have enjoyed it and will do so in the future, as IWMI continues to grow.



**Nilmini Matthysz**  
*Communications and Donor Relations Office (Sri Lanka)*

I have been at IWMI for 8 years and during this time have seen



**Asim R. Kahn**  
*Performance and Impact Assessment Program, Indus Basin (Pakistan)*

As I come from a large public-sector organization, working in IWMI three days a week provides a breath of fresh air. During the past three years of my association with IWMI, I have found the work environment here very conducive to research on water-related issues. For

myself, I would like to know more about how Remote Sensing/GIS and hydrologic modeling could help better manage large river basins for irrigation, hydropower, and flood management. This should make IWMI an ideal place for people like myself to work at.

IWMI is a place where you listen to and get to work with people from different backgrounds such as social scientists, economists, agriculture researchers, etc. As an engineer, I find this enjoyable. It gives me an opportunity to learn about many new concepts and ideas, and so to accept differences of opinion. Most people I have the privilege of working with here at IWMI are nice and cooperative and they, bailing me out from difficult situations and reciprocating my feelings.



**Y.K.G. Costa**  
*Transport Office (Sri Lanka)*

I have been at IWMI for well over a decade and feel that the Institute is in a good position and has a good work environment. Initially I worked at the regional office in Colombo when the head office was near Kandy. Being a driver, I have accompanied many researchers on field trips and helped them in their work, by helping with their instruments and collecting data, translating their questions to local people, etc. So I feel I have some contact with the research that we are doing.



**Chanchala Kariyawasam**  
*Accounts Department (Sri Lanka)*

IWMI, I feel, has played a major role not merely in its host country Sri Lanka but also in other countries where it does research. It is encouraging to hear that the Institute is well known and recognized both locally and globally. Having been with IWMI almost from its inception I feel that becoming part of the CGIAR was a turning point for the Institute.

# IWMI's Research

many changes in the institute, starting with our name change from IIMI, irrigation management to IWMI, water management. The research done by us, I feel, could reach a larger audience and there could be more research done in the host country Sri Lanka. I have benefited by working at the Institute, learned to work as part of a team and worked with people from different nationalities and cultures.

Science is not useful unless it changes the lives of the people for the better. For our work, even cutting-edge science can be useless if it does not reach those who can make change. To succeed in our research on water resources, we must ask the right questions and ensure that our conclusions and observations reach the right people at the policy and operational levels.

For example, why place all the emphasis on targeting water allocation managers to better manage a country's water resources? We must also give policy-level people in developing countries enough practical information on the results of our research, that allow them to shape effective policies.

In my current research I am working with colleagues to precisely document the extent of informal small-scale irrigation in southern and western Africa—at the family and community levels. People know that these practices exist, but there is no clear picture of the precise economic input and water consumption that they bring.

**Dr. Mutsa Masiyandima**  
*Irrigation and Water Resources Program (Zimbabwe)*



**Zaghaim Habib**  
*Performance and Impact Assessment Program, Indus Basin (Pakistan)*

I see IWMI's evolution over the past years as moving from the position of jack-of-all-trades to that of master of a few! My journey with the Institute has passed through different phases and I have worked with people belonging to different cultures and concepts toward life and professional accomplishments. I have learned much from the multidisciplinary and multicultural nature of the Institute.

My current work addresses water distribution and hydraulic performance of irrigation canals using decision support systems for hydraulic/design evaluation and capacity building. The goal of our research is to achieve improved performance of irrigation systems and sustainability of irrigated agriculture, in the context of the competition for water.

The main output of our work is to present the irrigation system as it actually exists and understand the drift from the original planning. Understanding this drift gives us a better knowledge of the system and helps identify rational targets for better management of water resources.

The end result of this work will be to revisit the original authorized benchmarks, convert the new datasets into knowledge, and to integrate these pieces, which are individually managed by different institutes and disciplines, into a whole.

Our research on water looks at many important questions related to water use in poor countries that, outside the context of an international group such as IWMI, would not otherwise be addressed. We have the opportunity to look at a variety of difficult problems that developing countries face, and a variety of solutions. Some of these topics are quite complex, others seem very simple—perhaps this is why they have been not been examined by the research community.



**Dr. David Molden**  
*Irrigation and Water Resources Program (USA)*

For me, the research goal of an Institute such as ours must be to sustain a high level of research thinking, and to concentrate on identifying and addressing strategic questions that others have not adequately examined elsewhere. For example: *How can the productivity of water in agriculture be increased to help solve problems of water scarcity?* or *How can highly productive groundwater use be more sustainable in areas of severe overdraft?*

My personal motivation for getting involved in this type of research is the hope that our research will help improve the lives of poor people.



**Dr. Madar Samad** (on right)  
*Policy Institutions and Management Program*  
*(Sri Lanka)*



**David Van Eyck**  
*Travel and Conferences*  
*(Sri Lanka)*

After completing my studies in the UK, my professional background was that of a researcher in a Sri Lankan NARS.

The most striking fact that dawned on me when after I joined IWMI was the ease of access to information and contacts with the international scientific community. This transnational and multidisciplinary approach brings an entirely new perspective to my research thinking.

At IWMI, I have experienced the importance of teamwork and interdisciplinary science—that looks at water issues from the agricultural, health, economic, environmental and social perspectives.

What would I do if I returned to work in a NARS one day? Bring with me this international spirit. I would open more collaboration with other countries and find a way to connect national researchers with colleagues and information in other countries.

I have seen the Institute go through many changes, including a new research focus and increased collaborative work here in Sri Lanka. I am particularly happy about the latter because it gives us more identity here. They say that ‘travel broadens the mind’ and the same can be said about working with people of different nationalities. It is heartening when you realize that scientists and researchers have much the same interests as the rest of us! The big question is always, how much does this work help the man in the field, so an improvement would be to see not just research for publication, but research for practice.

IWMI has grown over the years, entered the CGIAR and gained international repute. The seed for attaining greater heights has been sown and we must keep growing and further establishing ourselves, in other countries and locally.



**Daya Samaraweera**  
*Administrative Services*  
*(Sri Lanka)*