IRC

WASH Info
Real-time monitoring with
built-in statistical analysis

IRC, together with BeDataDriven and BRAC, have developed
WASH Info in 2014, an open source monitoring system that
provides quantitative and qualitative data to guide decision
making and planning in the BRAC WASH programme in
Bangladesh.

WASH Info is an online / offline monitoring and evaluation tool used by BRAC
Bangladesh to monitor and analyse the successes and challenges of its large scale
WASH Programme. WASH Info is built on an open-source application that makes
complex monitoring systems accessible to field practitioners.

The analysis of large scale surveys and life-cycle costs data requires skilled staff,
time and sophisticated software for proper analysis to take place. WASH Info
carries out the same analysis, obtaining the same results in real time and cost-
effective ways.

WASH Info in brief
A simple, easy-to-use, yet comprehensive monitoring
and evaluation tool making analysis of data available
within the reach of practitioners in the field.

Users
Programme managers and staff working on
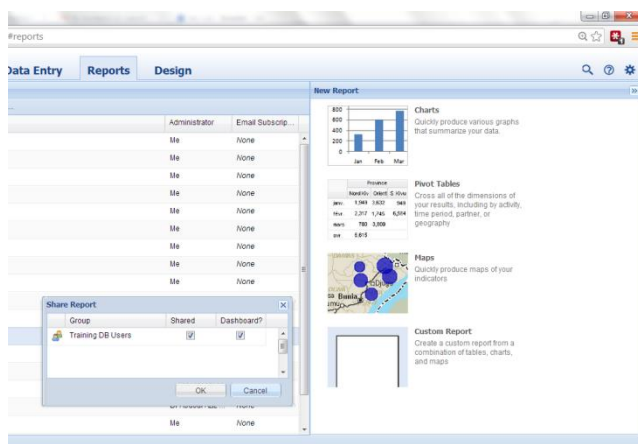monitoring and evaluation.

Indicators
Fully customisable tool, which supports collection of
quantitative and qualitative information, from the
number of functioning water supply connections to
latrine use and quantifiers of emotions towards
services received.

Outputs
Relevant monitoring information management,
sharing of data, as well as analysis in reports, tables,
charts and maps.

Tool format and language
Java, Google AppEngine, GWT, GXT, GIN, Guice, SQL
and MySQL.

Supporting water sanitation
and hygiene services for life

bedatadriven

Fast and sound data analysis for programme improvements

Many organisations face the challenge of reporting outputs and, through fast and sound data analysis, translating these outputs into programme improvements. This same process takes place several times throughout the year and is a recurring activity (quarterly reports).

Current approaches to collect, use and report monitoring data employ multiple systems and formats, which may result in fragmentation and duplication of work. This makes sharing information unnecessarily cumbersome and time-consuming.

As an example, imagine the situation of the BRAC WASH Programme in Bangladesh, which aims to provide toilets to 30.7 million people, but has to make an informed decision on how investments are to be made. One way to discern this is to know if latrines are being used safely by the 'ultra poor', the poor and those who are relatively better-off. ICT tools and statistical packages are available but often too complex or expensive and require dedicated experts with the capacity to make sense of most of the information generated.

The tool offers a platform that provides the following possibilities for monitoring and evaluation:

- Survey design
- Information management
- Database management
- Data collection from a range of sources
- Reports and map development
- Statistical analysis
- Accessibility online and offline.

The tool is built on the open-source application ActivityInfo, which is widely used in humanitarian and relief work to centralise and streamline needs assessments and monitor response.

The example of BRAC WASH Info

BRAC and IRC believe that WASH activities - and the WASH sector in general - could benefit from being more data-driven. Collaboration with BeDataDriven enabled the development of a comprehensive platform – WASH Info – for the collection, storage, management, and analysis of data from a range of sources, to support decision making within BRAC's WASH Programme.
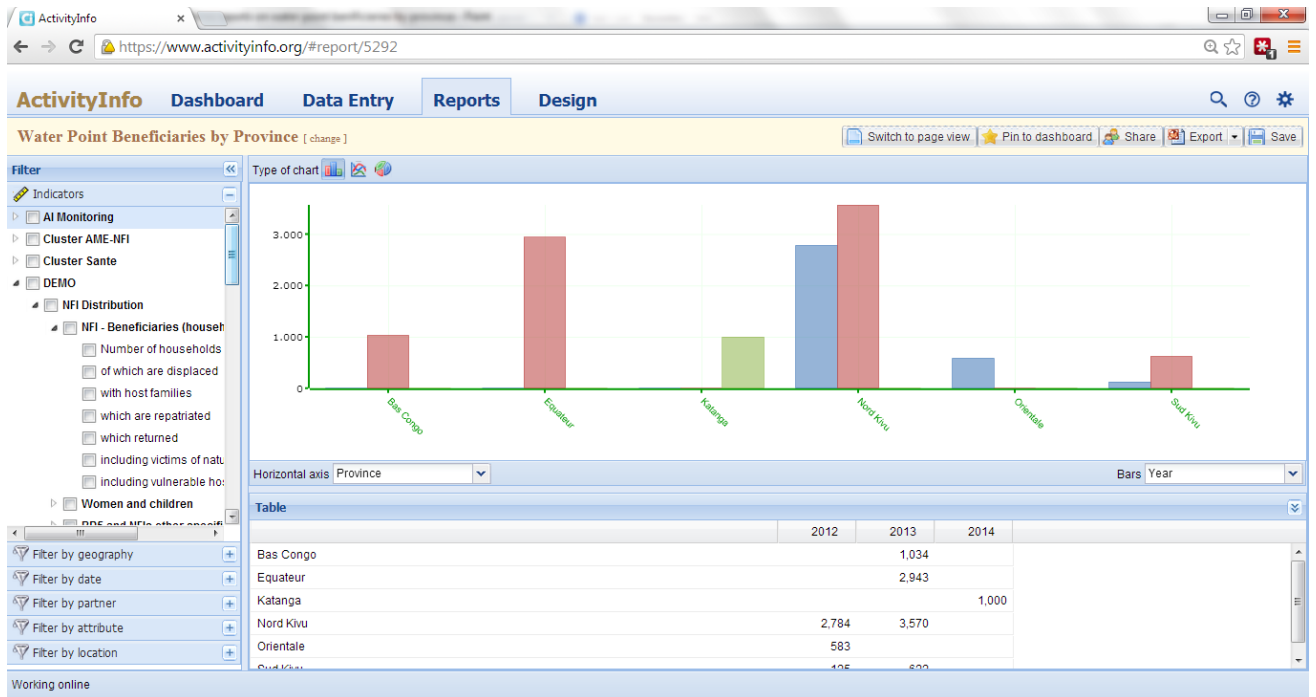
WASH Info offers the possibility for real-time information sharing with partners and funding agencies, and records survey data over time to build institutional memory.

In the BRAC WASH programme, WASH Info incorporates a survey analysis module developed for IRC to support BRAC WASH's Qualitative Information System – responsible for the annual collection of data from 8,000 households and 2,600 institutions (e.g., schools and rural sanitation centres) on service delivery and behaviour change. It will also enable access to the data and its analysis to a much wider group of WASH practitioners, particularly those closest to the areas of intervention.

Other examples

Originally developed for UNICEF's emergency programme in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) to track two large multi-partner programmes (Programme of Expanded Assistance to Returns -PEAR - and Rapid Response to Population Movements - RRMP), ActivityInfo has evolved over the last five years and has been sustained by a growing number of contributing organisations.
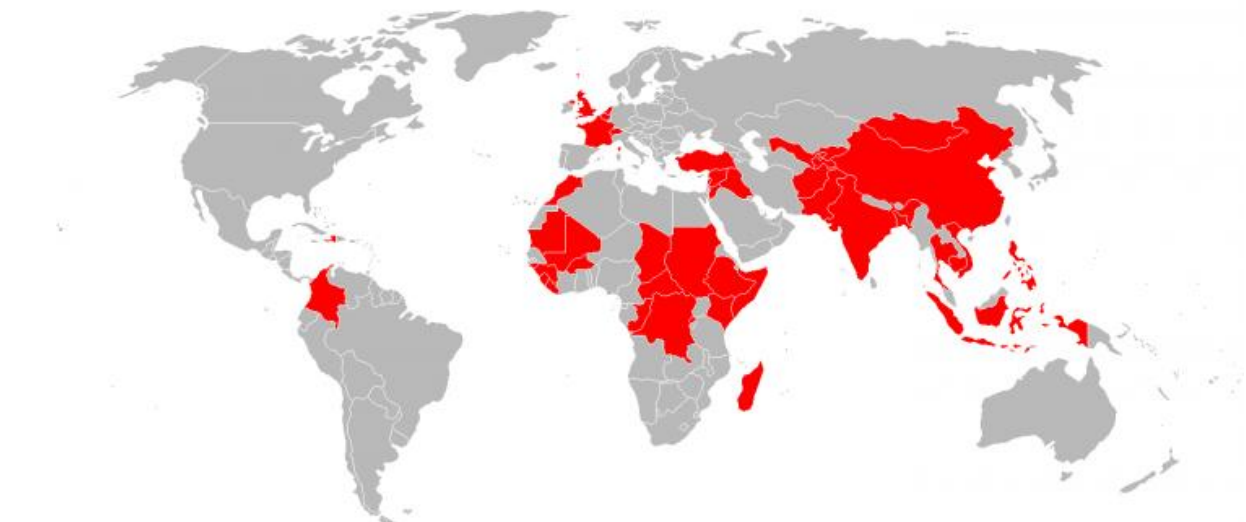
The system has been deployed in both small organisations (in for example Somalia) and across entire countries such as Madagascar or in regional responses such as the Syria response (serving over one million refugees) by UNHCR with over 600 organisations in Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq reporting daily in ActivityInfo.

Screenshot: real time report on water points generated by WASH Info. Example from UNICEF DRC

Combined efforts of UN organisations, NGOs, IRC and BRAC have provided a tool which has been tested and developed to work in complex environments and in regions with low or no internet connectivity as well as limited computer literacy or IT skills.

Incorporating data and technology into decision making is dependent on behavioural and organizational changes which are linked with management systems.

Countries where Activity Info is used

Strengths and limitations of the tool

When to use	When not to use
When working with multiple reporting indicators, which are required to be shared and analysed, with multiple partners, users and organisations	Do not use if you are expecting a fully automated dashboard - human sense making will still be important
When there is a need for simplified repetitive reporting, data analysis, data collection and data sharing	When there is no opportunity to be occasionally online
When combining data found in different datasets	

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FURTHER INFORMATION

- Getting timely information in the format you want. Blog post by Ingeborg Krukkert on http://www.ircwash.org/blog/getting-timely-information-format-you-want

- Visit the website http://www.activityinfo.org/

- Barnhoorn, C.M. (2014) "Spreading across the Globe: ActivityInfo". ENN Field Exchange (47) p:51-52. Article available at http://www.ennonline.net/pool/files/fex/fx-47-web.pdf

About IRC

IRC is an international think-and-do tank that works with governments, NGOs, entrepreneurs and people around the world to find long-term solutions to the global crisis in water, sanitation and hygiene services. At the heart of its mission is the aim to move from short-term interventions to sustainable water, sanitation and hygiene services.

With over 45 years of experience, IRC runs projects in more than 25 countries and large-scale programmes in seven focus countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. It is supported by a team of over 100 staff across the world.

www.ircwash.org