Promoting self-reliance in handpump technology

Thousands of people in the developing world die each day for lack of access to clean water and proper sanitation. Women and children spend hours and waste energy each day in back-breaking labour, bringing home water that is often contaminated.

A Handle on Health shows how this burden can be lifted by actively involving the community in a new approach to the delivery of safe water. The projects featured in the film — in Ethiopia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Thailand — demonstrate how simple, durable handpumps can be designed, tested, and manufactured in developing countries with low-cost materials, providing employment opportunities and saving scarce foreign exchange. The film also shows how women, the Third World's primary drawers of water, are helping to ensure a safe, uninterrupted supply by taking control of water delivery and are maintaining and even manufacturing their own handpumps.

The 27-minute film, produced by IDRC's Communications Division, is available in English and French. As listed below, 16-mm prints may be borrowed or purchased. Video cassettes in NTSC, PAL, or SECAM signal systems may be purchased in U-matic, VHS, or Betamax formats.