



Family on the Mekong River, by Pianporn Deetes (International Rivers)

# International Rivers

## ANNUAL REPORT 2011

Dear Friend of International Rivers,

I hope you are inspired by our 2011 Annual Report and revel in our collective impacts and victories, knowing that your contributions and partnership are crucial to our success. In 2011, we embraced exciting transitions, including adopting a new five-year Strategic Plan, hiring Jason Rainey as International Rivers' new Executive Director, and celebrating Aviva Imhof for her superb leadership as Interim Executive Director during these changes.



We are all extremely energized by our new Strategic Plan, organized around three core strategies: engaging in flagship campaigns to stop destructive dams in major river basins under threat, influencing the investments of key dam builders and financiers especially among emerging powers such as China and Brazil, and promoting sustainable and just energy solutions. To support these new strategies, we are growing our staff on the ground in key dam-building countries in Latin America, South and Southeast Asia, and Africa.

International Rivers is about people as much as we are about rivers. Our progress this year is a result of the tremendous contributions from our incredibly talented staff and a diverse network of supporters: grassroots partners who created 112 actions in 36 countries on the annual Day of Action for Rivers in March 2011; passionate volunteers who advance policy and climate research, coordinate events, and reach out to the public; generous donors who support our campaigns and programs; and Board members who lend their expertise, talents, and contacts to our cause. We thrive on our connections with each of you – like-minded believers in healthy rivers and sustainable communities.

We are a water planet. We are one river, one people.

And on behalf of the Board of Directors, I **thank you** for being part of International Rivers, a truly unique and effective organization dedicated to protecting vital rivers and the rights of communities that depend on them. People. Water. Life.

Forward paddle!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Deborah".

Deborah Moore  
Chair, Board of Directors



To our dedicated community of river advocates:

In the middle of 2011, I joined International Rivers at a pivotal time in the organization's history. The hydropower industry had launched a fresh wave of proposals to dam the world's last great rivers, threatening to sever the incalculable services rivers provide to people, livelihoods and the natural world. By our count, there are more than 100 dams planned or under construction in the Amazon Basin and nearly 500 dams planned for the Ganges River watershed. A dozen dams are proposed for the mainstream of the Mekong River, and the Grand Inga scheme for the Congo River is one of many mega-dams planned for Africa. Further, China is now the biggest global financier of dams, and is considering support for more than 280 large dams planned or under construction outside its own borders.

Drawing from the perspectives of our global network of partners, our deeply experienced staff, and our dedicated and talented Board members, International Rivers articulated a vision and crafted a plan to respond to these turbulent threats. Our new Strategic Plan – Roadmap for Rivers and Rights – outlines our core program strategies for the next five years, including putting an end to destructive dam projects, improving river basin management, and advocating for policies that encourage investments in truly sustainable energy and water solutions. To be successful, we know we must continue to strengthen the capacity of our global network, engage and expand our base of supporters through effective communications, and maintain our reputation for credible research and expertise.

By campaigning with our courageous partners on the frontlines, applying our expertise toward advocacy in international policy forums, and leveraging financial and in-kind support from the people and institutions acknowledged in this Annual Report, we won several victories in 2011, including:

- Providing legal and advocacy support to Burmese activists who successfully reversed the government's plan to dam the Irrawaddy River.
- Convened dam-affected communities, indigenous groups, and local allies to successfully scuttle plans for mega-dams in the Peruvian Amazon and, together with our partners *Movimento Xingu Vivo Para Sempre* and Amazon Watch, we supported indigenous groups occupying dam construction sites in Brazil.
- Influencing the world's largest dam-builder, China's Sinohydro, to adopt policies and guidelines that bring them up to international standards on environmental and social safeguards, which will effectively deter the most destructive dam projects.

These three accomplishments alone have spared endangered rivers – and the biological and cultural diversity that they harbor – from the irreversible damage that accompanies large dam schemes. You can read about our many other accomplishments throughout the world in the pages of this report.

International Rivers concluded 2011 well-positioned to advance our vision and build an stronger network of global partners in the movement for healthy rivers and human rights. We look forward to building deeper relationships with you, our fellow movement-makers, dedicated action-takers, and financial supporters, to leverage and grow our accomplishments. It is through your support that we are able to champion river-dependent communities, amplify their voices, and strengthen the global movement that is challenging short-sighted investments in large dams and advancing solutions for rivers, people and life.

With gratitude for today and fortitude for tomorrow,

Jason

Jason Rainey  
Executive Director



# Mission and Vision

## OUR MISSION

International Rivers protects rivers and defends the rights of communities that depend on them.

We work to stop destructive dams and promote water and energy solutions for a just and sustainable world.

## OUR VISION

Rivers are vital to sustaining all life on earth. We seek a world where healthy rivers and the rights of local communities are valued and protected.

We envision a world where water and energy needs are met without degrading nature or increasing poverty, and where people have the right to participate in decisions that affect their lives.

## OUR VALUES

We are guided by the following values:

**COLLABORATION:** We see ourselves as a part of a global movement to protect river ecosystems, and our colleagues as partners with whom we collaborate and consult to strengthen our collective efforts.

**INTEGRITY:** We conduct our work honestly, keep our commitments, and expect others to do the same.

**ACCOUNTABILITY:** We hold ourselves accountable to affected communities, partner organizations, funders, and the public at large, to act in accordance with our mission.

**INCLUSIVENESS:** We promote open dialogue and decision-making that is transparent, inclusive and consultative.

**COURAGE:** We recognize and accept the responsibility to act on our mission even under difficult circumstances, and to confront our adversaries openly, while also protecting the safety of our staff and partners.

**ACCURACY:** We are committed to rigorous research and analysis, providing accurate information, and basing our work on the best available evidence.

**CREATIVITY:** We seek new, imaginative ways to inspire and maximize our effectiveness, both internally and externally.

**SUSTAINABILITY:** We seek to maintain an organization that is dynamic, strong, just and sustainable in its finances, programs, practices, leadership and administration.



# How We Work

International Rivers works to protect rivers and rights, and promote real solutions for meeting water, energy and flood management needs. We believe in the power of people to make change happen – and to do this, we are constantly working toward:

## **BUILDING THE MOVEMENT AND EMPOWERING CIVIL SOCIETY**

We have played a central role in building the global river protection movement and continually work to broaden and strengthen its reach. We foster grassroots organizations in more than 60 countries and promote the leadership of our regional partners by providing technical and strategic advice and bringing them together at international meetings.

## **CHANGING THE TERMS OF THE DEBATE**

We work to reform the top-down and opaque decision-making processes that have traditionally accompanied large infrastructure projects. We make sure that important social and environmental issues don't get swept under the rug, and that communities meaningfully participate in decisions that affect their lives. We provide critical analysis for dam opponents and bring the concerns of local communities to the attention of dam funders as part of our efforts to reform their policies and practices.

We seek to block the hydropower industry's efforts to exploit concerns over climate change. We also

raise awareness of greenhouse gas emissions from dam reservoirs and the impact of climate change on the performance and safety of dams.

## **STOPPING DESTRUCTIVE PROJECTS AND ADDRESSING LEGACIES**

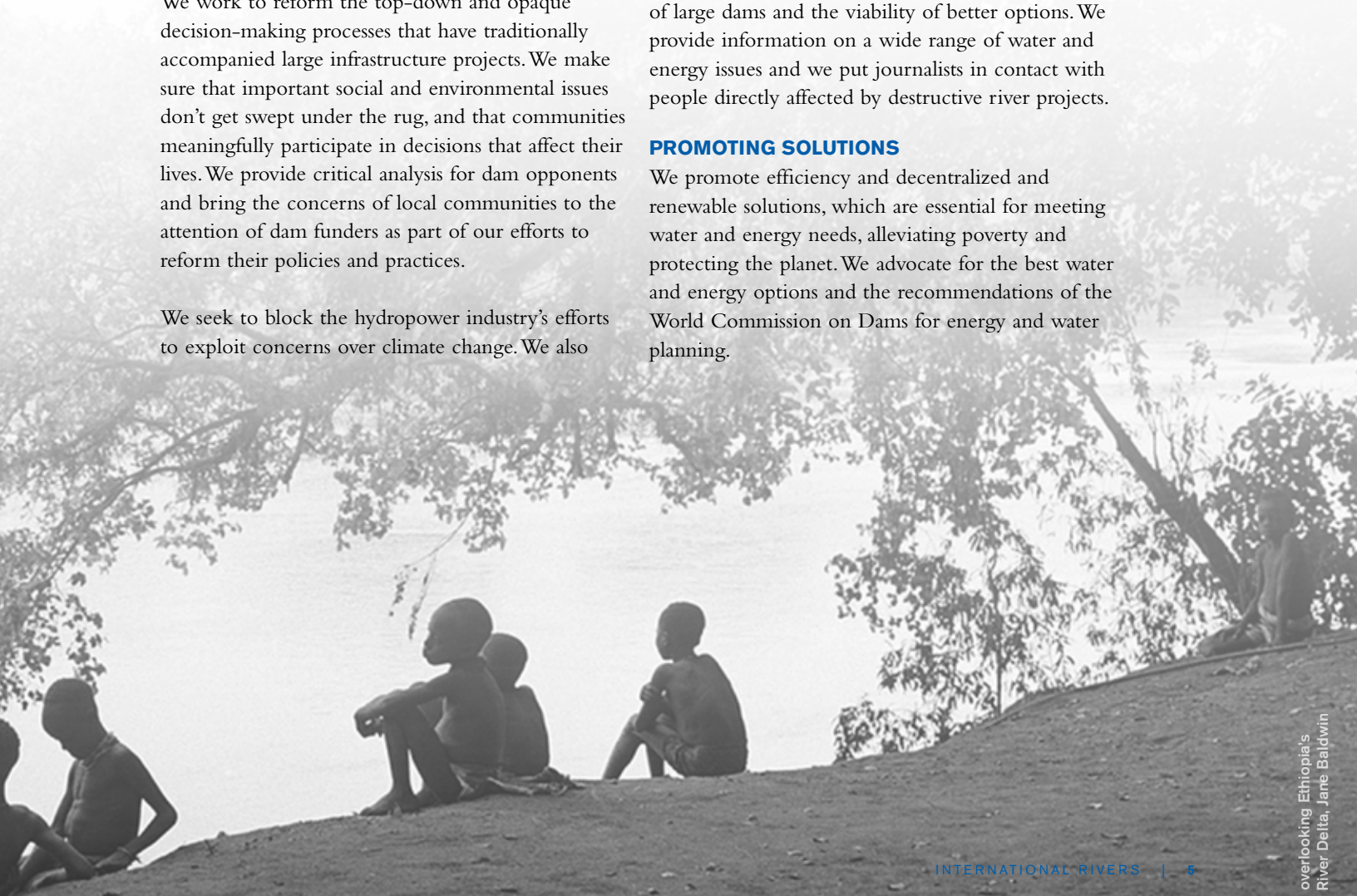
We coordinate international campaigns to discourage financial, government and industry support of harmful river projects. We hold responsible parties accountable for the damages caused by dams by advocating for social reparations, ecological restoration and decommissioning of existing dams.

## **RAISING AWARENESS**

Through publications, presentations and media outreach, we raise the visibility of the deplorable environmental, economic and human rights impacts of large dams and the viability of better options. We provide information on a wide range of water and energy issues and we put journalists in contact with people directly affected by destructive river projects.

## **PROMOTING SOLUTIONS**

We promote efficiency and decentralized and renewable solutions, which are essential for meeting water and energy needs, alleviating poverty and protecting the planet. We advocate for the best water and energy options and the recommendations of the World Commission on Dams for energy and water planning.



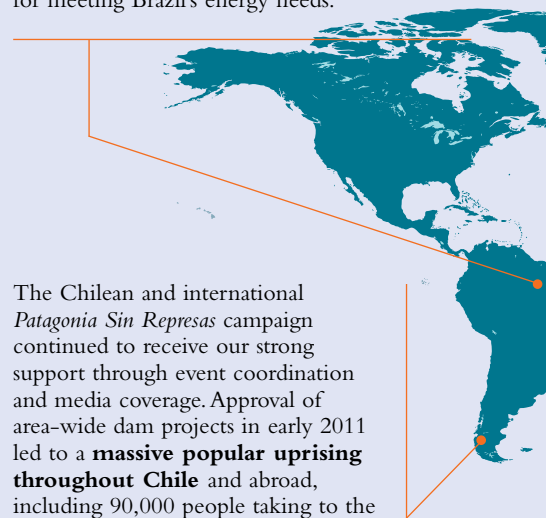
# 2011 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS



## Policy

In mid-June 2011, the dam industry launched the new Hydropower Sustainability Assessment Protocol (HSAP) in Brazil, after a laborious 3-year process. The HSAP risks undermining the World Commission on Dams' recommendations and is being used by dam builders as a mechanism to greenwash the sustainability of their projects. International Rivers was the industry event, where we mobilized activists to stage a protest, and worked with the media to get the true story out. This marked the start of our HSAP monitoring process, **holding dam-builders accountable** to the highest social and environmental safeguards.

In response to the Belo Monte mega-dam project, we worked closely with the coalition of social movements and NGOs known as the *Movimento Xingu Vivo Para Sempre* (Xingu Forever Alive) to raise public awareness and pressure for accountability and respect for the rule of law among public institutions and corporate actors. This campaign contributed to growing awareness and momentum in Brazil regarding the risks of developing hydropower projects in the Amazon Basin, and we believe it will have longer-term implications for **stopping the Brazilian Amazon hydro-juggernaut** and proposing better options for meeting Brazil's energy needs.



The Chilean and international *Patagonia Sin Represas* campaign continued to receive our strong support through event coordination and media coverage. Approval of area-wide dam projects in early 2011 led to a **massive popular uprising throughout Chile** and abroad, including 90,000 people taking to the streets of Santiago. With an estimated cost of US \$7-10 billion, the plans consist of five controversial dams on the Baker and Pascua rivers in southern Chile and a 1,912-km-long transmission line – the stakes have never been so high to preserve our natural heritage in Patagonia.



# PEOPLE





We created an awareness building campaign focused on climate risks to rivers and dams, featuring African case studies. These materials have been critical to raising awareness on this issue amongst our African partners and decision-makers. A main feature of this package is our Google Earth video, *The Wrong Climate for Damming Rivers*, launched at the COP17 climate negotiations in Durban, South Africa. We used the video and corresponding fact sheet as key components at a number of public speaking engagements in Africa to foster robust public discussion.

In 2011, the top management of the world's largest dam builder – China's state-owned **Sinohydro Corporation** – adopted a **state-of-the-art environmental policy** that International Rivers has pushed for since 2010. This adoption was in part due to the strong support the Chinese media gave to International Rivers' suggested changes. Beyond this critical policy work, we continued to provide substantial support to communities affected by Chinese dam-builders both domestically and abroad, including Burma's Myitsone Dam, which was suspended by the new Burmese President in September.

With the Save the Mekong Coalition, we pressured Mekong regional decision-makers to protect the Lower Mekong River's mainstream from hydropower development. By raising concern over the trans-boundary impacts of the Xayaburi Dam in Laos through high-profile media coverage and other means, the governments of Cambodia, Vietnam and Thailand requested further study and public consultation, thereby **halting the forward momentum of the project**.

In India we brought into focus the importance of river basin planning as well as the assessment of the cumulative impacts of dams through a regional workshop. As a result, India's Ministry of Environment and Forests **commissioned river basin studies on the impacts of dams** for key rivers. Our steadfast campaigners continue to push for changes to the dam sanctioning process and, as part of these efforts, the Indian government now prescribes more natural seasonal flows from dams – and has accepted many of our suggestions with respect to rivers and dams.



Day of Action for Rivers celebration on the Teesta River, India, by International Rivers;  
The Salween River in Yunnan, China, by Green Watershed; Fishing on the Mekong,  
by Suthep Kritsanavarin. Inset of dam: Cahora Bassa dam on the Zambezi River, by Richard Beilfuss

## International Rivers thanks all of our supporters who contributed to our work in 2011 and especially the generosity of:

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International Rivers depends on the generosity of foundations and individuals. We are a registered 501(c)(3) organization and donations made in support of our work are tax-deductible as allowed by law.

\*Indicates that the supporter is a Monthly Sustaining member, an individual who has made a commitment to making a monthly or quarterly donation.



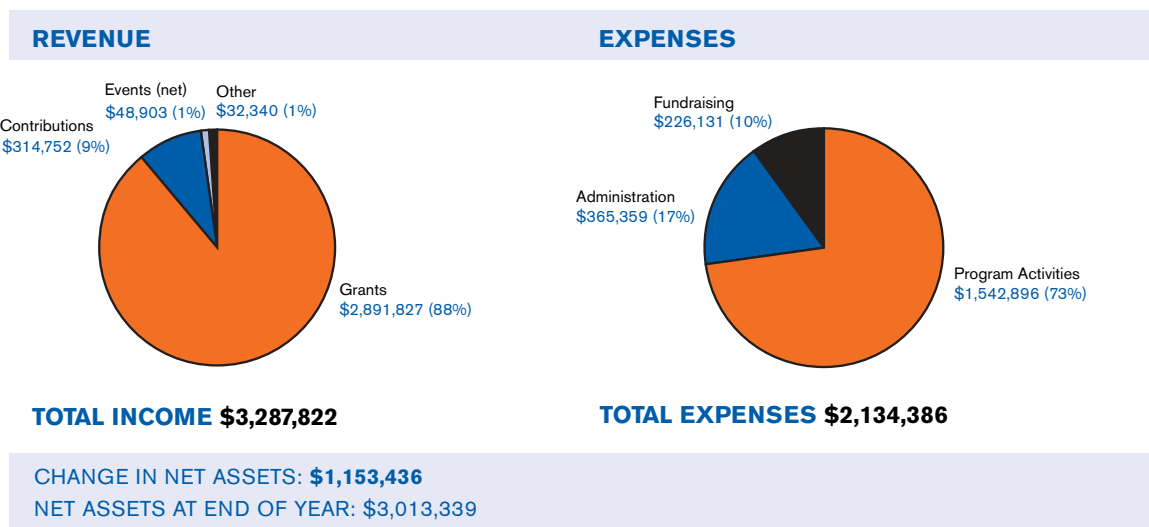
## Thank you to the supporters and members of the movement for healthy rivers and human rights.

All of the names below play a critical part of movement we've been building over the past quarter century – a movement of River People who are standing their ground to protect livelihoods, oppose destructive dams, and advance energy and water alternatives that work for people, not for the profits of energy corporations and governments.

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# Financial Report

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITY – JANUARY 1 TO DECEMBER 31, 2011



To obtain a copy of International Rivers' most recent audited financial statement or IRS 990 form, please contact [membership@internationalrivers.org](mailto:membership@internationalrivers.org)

## PLANNED GIVING

### THE LUNA B. LEOPOLD LEGACY SOCIETY A LEGACY FOR LIVING RIVERS

You can make a lasting contribution that will impact the shape of our rivers and land for future generations by including International Rivers in your estate plans. Supporters and members who have taken this deep commitment to ensuring our rivers remain healthy are part of International Rivers' Luna B. Leopold Legacy Society.

The Leopold Legacy Society was established to strengthen International Rivers' long-term financial health and to support efforts to protect rivers and rights around the world. Luna B. Leopold was a scientist, writer, and educator. His studies of rivers and their flows and movements provided enduring

insights into how rivers shape themselves and shape the land.

International Rivers is able to accept the following legacy gifts:

- Bequests
- Charitable Lead Trusts
- Charitable Remainder Trusts
- Deferred Employee Benefits
- Insurance Policies
- Retirement Assets

Please consult with your financial advisor to discuss your charitable giving options.

## BUSINESS FOR RIVERS CIRCLE

Momentum for corporate social responsibility has never been greater. One in three customers say that a company's giving record is a factor in their purchasing decisions. And one out of every four shareholders say that corporate generosity affects where they invest.

**Join the Business for Rivers Circle** and align your company with one of the most important environmental and social justice causes of the century.

The circle of life depends on all of us. International Rivers invites you to make a difference in the future of our planet.

For more information, contact our Development Team at: +1 510.848.1155 x301 or [vbelle@internationalrivers.org](mailto:vbelle@internationalrivers.org).



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**International Rivers is guided by skilled teams of international and domestic leaders. The support that these individuals provide as experts and philanthropic leaders for our organization continues to inspire us. Thank you.**

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