

HR₂W

December 2023

Our Newsletter

After completing more than three years of operation, HR₂W is proud to announce that we are continuing to expand our research base into the human rights to water and sanitation, embracing also the human right to clean, healthy and sustainable environment. This more holistic approach to the whole water cycle enables us to consider the risks to water supplies impacted by climate change, extreme climate events, pollution, and over-extraction.

We continue to build expertise on stakeholder engagement based on the human rights-based approach (HRBA). The HRBA emphasises community engagement in programmes that can further the human right to water through citizen science, monitoring of human rights indicators, and encouraging the development of water infrastructure that put vulnerable people first in our communities. We are glad to highlight a few of our activities from the second half of this year in this newsletter.

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A Message from a Founding Board Member



Figure 1 Mariet Verhoef-Cohen, Board Member

As a founding Board Member of HR2W, I am qualified to say a few words about the organisation, which marked its third anniversary this May. Its mission is close to my heart as it works on water and sanitation governance solutions for the people that are being left behind. Women are a central part of resolving the challenges and finding solutions for access to water and toilets, especially in less developed countries and areas of deprivation, where they take on the traditional roles of housemakers, carer, and provider of drinking water.

It has also been my pleasure to work more closely with the HR2W team this year on a capacity building project in Kenya, and I can attest to the integrity and professionalism of the team. We produced a valuable and replicable workshop for local water forums on behalf of WWQA/UNEP and provided guidelines which can be used by grassroots organisations. I look forward to further engagement.

Mariet Verhoef-Cohen

Legal Research

All of our programmes are founded on legal and policy research into the human rights to water and sanitation, and more recently, also including the right to clean, safe and sustainable environment.

We are fortunate to attract a wide range of in-kind legal research from White and Case, Amazon’s legal department, and many of our members. The Expert Committee, chaired by Prof. Martha Davis, from Northeastern University, from Northeastern University, provides a sounding board for new ideas and areas for new exploration, and a set of experts from whom to seek advice for the Board.

Recent programmes include a listing of all countries that include the HRWS in their constitution; a judicial review of cases that recognise the human rights to water and sanitation under other human rights; and an on-going list of country legal mapping studies, that now include the Framework Principles of the Healthy Environment.

New publications can be found under the [Country Legal Mapping](#) page on www.humanright2water.org, and also under the [Publications](#) and [Policy Brief](#) pages. Research conducted by our members is also shared on the [Our Partners Research](#) page. All of our research is open data.

Policies for inclusive Decision-Making in a Climate Adaptive World

We launched [this publication](#) at Stockholm World Water Week together with partners IDB, WRC, Veolia and Nestle. The publication was based on a study completed in 16 countries whereby we have integrated the water relevant principles of the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment into our signature Country Legal Mapping methodology.

Our events highlighted the urgency of being inclusive for decisions about climate adaptation policies, emphasizing the holistic view required for sustainable water resource management, and the impact on vulnerable communities. For a brief review of the methodology, you may review our Policy Brief comparing the framework principles of the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, with the principles of the human rights to water and sanitation.



Figure 2 Policies for Inclusive Decision-Making in a Climate Adaptive World Publication

Supporting Local Water Forums

HR2W developed and facilitated a workshop in Nairobi, in partnership with the Women for Water Partnership, alongside the World Water Quality Alliance Conference this September. This ‘train-the-trainer’ course is aimed at supporting the establishment of Local Water Forums to set up water quality monitoring using citizen science.

The workshop focused on supporting participants to use local stakeholder engagement to attract technical, funding and community support. The workshop highlighted the importance of inclusive, participatory approaches in ensuring access to clean and safe drinking water and advancing the broader goals of water quality and the human right to water.

Stakeholder Engagement and the HRBA

HR2W works with UNECE and the PPPs for SDGs programme to improve stakeholder engagement by integrating the HRBA into their evaluation tools. This year, we have been involved in the annual PPP Forum, the 7th Working Session of the UNECE Working Party on PPPs, and heading up the Water Chapter of the World Association of PPPs (WAPPP).

Our goal here is to use meaningful public participation to increase the value of PPPs through wider social, cultural, environmental and economic benefits. The Water Chapter in WAPPP, is a think tank for solutions to attract more investment into water infrastructure.

Digitalization and Data Management

Each year, AGUASAN supports the Swiss Community of Practice through technical workshops and an e-learning journey. HR2W has been involved in the process as part of the steering committee, and through the facilitation of two online webinars and a one-week in-person workshop in Martigny. The programme has allowed HR2W to share its network of experts and knowledge on the subjects of citizen science for water quality monitoring, and also in digital water governance.

Participants in the workshop joined from 15 different countries, and exchanged knowledge and best practices on the general topic of digitalisation and data management in the water sector. The Aguasan Workshop is a long-standing Swiss institution that charts progress towards actionable strategies and partnerships by fostering collaboration and understanding.



Figure 3 AGUASAN In-person Workshop in Martigny, River Excursion.

World Toilet Day

We celebrate World Toilet Day each year to bring attention to the need for safer access to sanitation. As partners and members of the communications task force of UN-Water, we join the annual Toilet Day campaign, and we also run complementary activities, such as the social media interview with one of our Board Members from the Toilet Board Coalition. Alex Knezovich highlighted ways that individual people can contribute to the human right to sanitation. She explains how even a simple act such as paying for a public toilet can help to make a sanitation business viable, and improve access to sanitation around the world.

Listen to our interview [here](#).

2023 Events

Jun 14	Annual Global Meeting
Jun 29	Citizen Science Webinar
Jul 13	Data for Water-Related Disaster Risk Reduction Webinar
Aug 20-24	World Water Week
Sep 11-13	Science and Peace workshop, IPU
Sep 18-21	WWQA Conference and Workshop
Oct 9-13	AGUASAN Meeting and Workshop
Nov 19	World Toilet Day
Nov 30	UNECE PPP Working Party Meeting
Dec 10	Human Rights Day