



END WATER POVERTY

PROGRESS REPORT

2020 – 2022



CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

2

WHO WE ARE

4

Want to go far? Go together

4

END WATER POVERTY'S IMPACT

6

TEAM END WATER POVERTY

8

FUNDING & INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

12

OUR CAMPAIGNS

14

Claim Your Water Rights

15

Some of our successes

16

Government, Pay Your Water Bills!

24

Country impacts

25

AMPLIFYING, CONNECTING & EXCHANGING

26

BUILDING ALLIANCES

30

ENABLING & STRENGTHENING OUR COALITION

32

GLOBAL SUBMISSIONS, PETITIONS & DECLARATIONS

34

LOOKING AHEAD

36

Claim Your Water Rights 2.0

37

CONCLUSION

38



INTRODUCTION

Everyone has the right to safe water and sanitation – but globally more than two billion people live without safe drinking water and more than four billion people live without safe sanitation. End Water Poverty (EWP) believes that the way to change this stems from an engaged, emboldened and united civil society that actively powers people to claim their rights to water and sanitation. This is why we support community-based organisations, grassroots civil society and social movements to advance accountability, promote social justice, and claim their human rights.

“Citizens now know that they have rights to water and sanitation, and are claiming them. It gives us joy.”

Amaka Nweke, WASH Rights Network



2 billion

people globally live without access to safe drinking water¹

4.2 billion

people globally live without safe sanitation²

Within an often homogenous water and sanitation sector, we continue to offer a fresh approach by emphasising the transformative potential of grassroots organising and rights claiming strategies.

Our flagship global campaign, Claim Your Water Rights, which offers mini-grants of up to GBP 5,000 to our members to employ a range of context-specific, community-led strategies for advancing the rights to water and sanitation, was initially met with opposition and scepticism from some WASH sector actors.³ We were told that human rights were too difficult to communicate, that they didn't produce results. We were warned about trying to hold private companies accountable to the same standards as governments. Some described our approach as 'polemical', 'confrontational' or 'uncollaborative'. Others said the word 'claim' was too provocative.

Our members' achievements over the last two years have belied these concerns.

Claiming water rights has traction; it's demonstrating impact. We've learned that popular rights-based education and information is crucial for duty-bearers and rights-holders alike, and we can see clearly that community mobilisation underpins all this work. As they always have, communities are self-mobilising – but we have seen that an emphasis on grassroots organising and rights claiming strategies has strengthened and emboldened their work.

Ultimately, it's communities who are on the frontline: claiming their rights, engaging politicians, standing up to repressive police and corporate power, defending rivers, lakes and groundwater sources. It is community action, holding the line on human rights standards and principles, that fuels social change.

Our campaigns fortify, inform, mobilise and support. Our member organisations need funding and profile, but our first job is to enable rights-holders to activate laws and policies, to counter regression and repression, and to hold the space for civic action.

Our progress report documents exceptional examples of the ways we and our member organisations have done this between November 2020 and September 2022, the period between our first and second General Assemblies.

We're shifting the needle. This work is transformative. Together with our global and regional allies, and with our members' creatively employing diverse and contextually sensitive strategies, we're operationalising the human rights to safe water and sanitation.

¹ World Health Organisation (WHO) "Drinking-water" (21 March 2022): <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/drinking-water>.

² WHO "Sanitation" (21 March 2022): <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/sanitation>.

³ WASH is an acronym that stands for water, sanitation and hygiene.



WHO WE ARE

Want to go far? Go together

End Water Poverty is a global civil society coalition campaigning for governments and corporations to respect, protect and fulfil people's human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation. We're comprised of over 150 civil society organisations (CSOs) in 80 countries across Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, and North America.

We believe that social change is powered by an active citizenry because without human rights defenders, there are no human rights.

“Collaboration is key. Together you can do things you cannot achieve alone. Don’t be afraid to ask for help.”

Clinton Ezeigwe, Christian Fellowship and Care Foundation (CFCF)



150

member organisations primarily made up of community-based organisations and grassroots civil society, and social movements, trade unions, networks and INGOs

80

countries across the world

5

continents, including Africa, Asia, Europe, South America, and North America

Here’s how we power social change:



We advance context-sensitive, community-led solutions

by providing mini-grants of up to GBP 5,000 directly to our member organisations to enable them to design and deliver diverse, localised, community-led actions under the banner of our global Claim Your Water Rights campaign.



We connect human rights advocates in different parts of the world

through exchanges and events to sharpen strategies and strengthen solidarity.



We amplify the demands of civil society and communities

to influence duty-bearers, and advance accountability, social justice, and human rights.



We mobilise our members to advocate locally, nationally, regionally and globally

for the rights to water, sanitation and a healthy environment to be legally recognised and practically implemented. We support our members in advocating at national level for change in policy, practice, regulation and legislation. We facilitate participation of our members in regional networks and the events and processes of regional bodies. We enable our members to engage with UN bodies and mechanisms, including the Special Rapporteur on the rights to safe drinking water and sanitation and Universal Periodic Review processes.

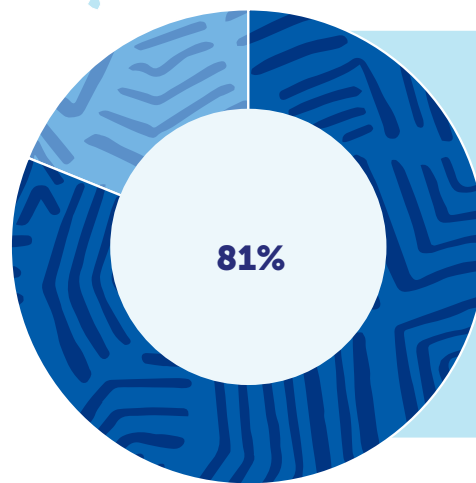
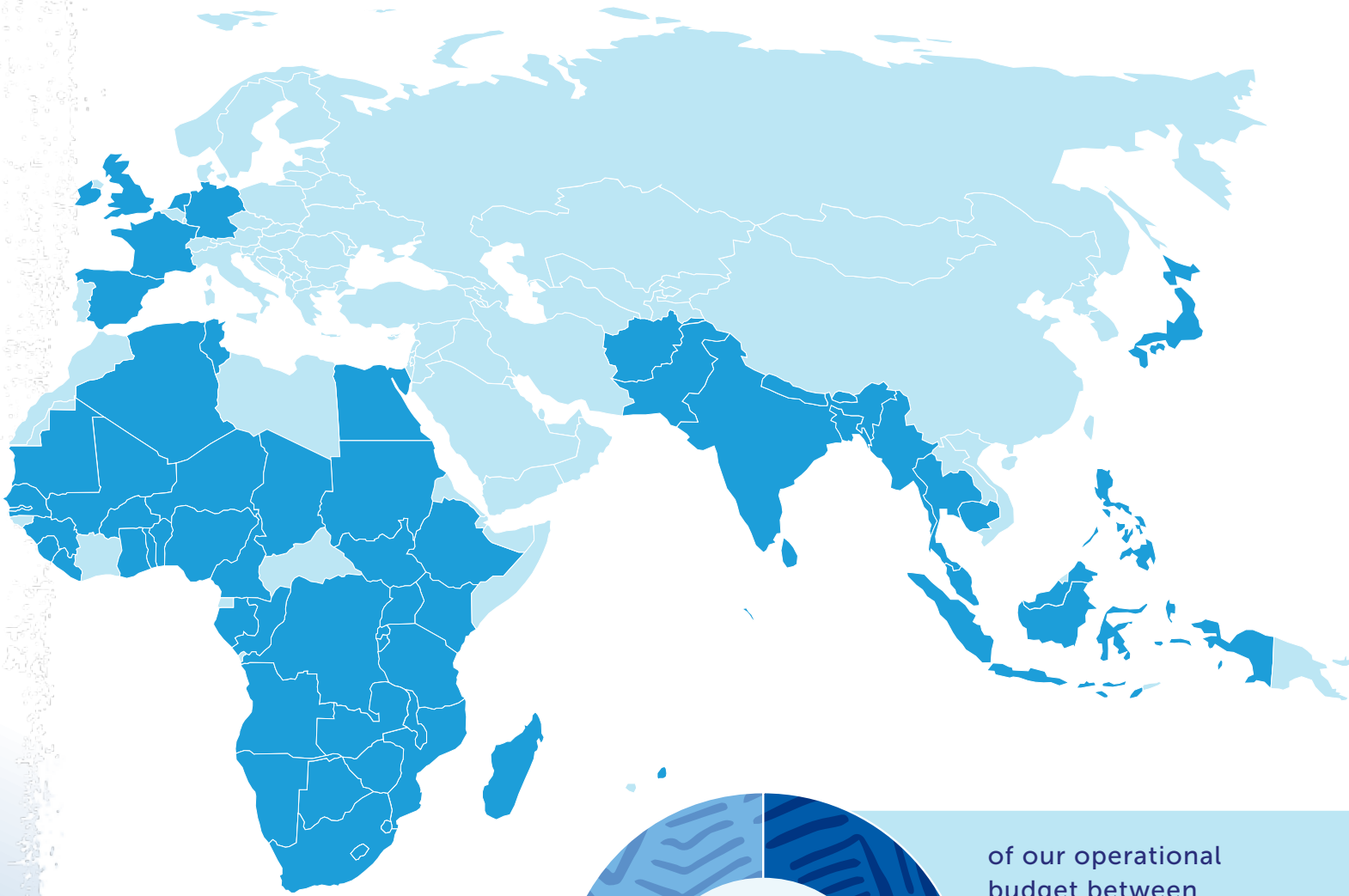


9

new coalition members
since our previous
general assembly in
November 2020

END WATER POVERTY'S IMPACT

Welcome our new members! Manushya Foundation (Thailand); We Own It (United Kingdom); Global Society for Anti-Corruption (Nigeria); WASH Rights Network (Nigeria); Women and Environmental Media Network (WEMNET) (Uganda); African Water Commons Collective (South Africa); Centre for Applied Legal Studies (CALS) (South Africa); Centre for Peace Without Borders (Nigeria); and Population and Development Initiative (PDI) (Tanzania).



of our operational budget between November 2020 and September 2022 (GBP 129,350) has gone directly to our member organisations through mini-grants to fund grassroots advocacy

30

articles on our members' work, 15 co-written with members from Cameroon, France, India, Lesotho, Pakistan, Thailand, the United Kingdom and Zambia

11

global submissions, petitions and declarations on water and sanitation rights, and political repression of human rights defenders

1,000+

rights-based popular education workshops and trainings across the world

678,400

overall Twitter impressions generated between January 2021 and August 2022

33,920

average Twitter impressions per month

1,138

average Twitter impressions per day

35,900

Twitter followers



TEAM END WATER POVERTY

We're grateful to the dedicated people who keep End Water Poverty running.

Our secretariat

End Water Poverty is coordinated by a two-person secretariat that is hosted and funded by WaterAid.



ALANA POTTER

—
Global Coordinator

WE WELCOMED A NEW GLOBAL COORDINATOR!

During a time that offered many challenges and new opportunities for systems change, End Water Poverty was delighted to welcome Alana Potter as our new global coordinator. With Alana's creativity, insight and decades of research, advocacy, leadership and experience in the water and sanitation sector, we will continue to strengthen our coalition and advance water and sanitation rights across the world.

As we welcome Alana, we would like to thank our former international coordinator, Al-hassan Adam, who provided bold and astute leadership over the last six years. His innovative campaigning positioned End Water Poverty as an alternative voice within the water and sanitation sector, laying the foundation for members across the world to produce life-changing advocacy results.



SAM TAYLOR

—
Senior Engagement Officer

Our steering committee

End Water Poverty's steering committee provides strategic support and guidance to our secretariat and comprises regional representatives from the coalition's geographical constituencies (Africa, Asia, Europe and the Americas), as well as a trade union representative and an additional expert member. As End Water Poverty's institutional host, WaterAid also holds a permanent position on the steering committee.

Our regional representatives are elected respectively from the African Civil Society Network on Water and Sanitation (ANEWS), the Freshwater Action Network South Asia (FANSA), and a combination of Red Mexicana de Acción por el Agua (FANMex) and Freshwater Action Network Central America (FANCA). In the absence of a regional network, the regional representatives from Europe are voted for by national constituencies.

Our steering committee meets four times a year and comprises of the following people:



OJOBO ATULUKU

Chairperson | Independent (Nigeria)



MALESI SHIVAJI

Africa representative | Kenya Water and Sanitation Civil Society Network (KEWASNET) (Kenya)



ROUKIATTOU OUÉDRAOGO

Africa alternate | Speak Up Africa (Burkina Faso)



ZAHIDA FIZZA KABIR

Asia representative | SAJIDA Foundation (Bangladesh)



MASROOR AHMED

Asia alternate | Social Action Bureau for Assistance in Welfare and Organizational Networking (SABAWON) (Pakistan)



HANNAH NEUMEYER

Europe representative | WASH United (Germany)



THORSTEN KEIFER

Europe alternate | WASH United (Germany)



NATHALIE SEGUIN

Latin America representative | Red Mexicana de Acción por el Agua (FANMex) (Mexico)



JORGE MORA PORTUGUEZ

Latin America alternate | Asociación Regional Centroamericana para el Agua y el Ambiente (ARCA) (Costa Rica)



BARBARA SCHREINER

Expert member | Water Integrity Network (WIN) (Germany)



CLAIRE SEAWARD

Host organisation representative | WaterAid (United Kingdom)



MARK BEACON

Trade union representative | UNISON (United Kingdom)

“I’m so excited by the way End Water Poverty brings us together as a coalition in different countries around the world. EWP has created a platform for coalitions to work together nationally and globally. It’s very powerful.”

Mohammed Hammie, Media for Community Empowerment (MECE)



FRESH ENERGY

We were thrilled to welcome three new members to our steering committee. Ojobo Atuluku, the Director of International Development at Christian Aid, was appointed Chairperson of our steering committee in her independent capacity; while Hannah Neumeyer, the Head of Human Rights at WASH United, was elected by European members as our Europe representative, and Barbara Schreiner, Executive Director of the Water Integrity Network (WIN), came on board as an additional expert member. We are grateful to Philip Beetlestone and Catarina Fonseca for their years of dedicated service and valuable contributions over the years.

Our members’ task team

In addition to our steering committee, we convene bi-monthly task team meetings where our coalition members exchange strategies, lessons and solidarity. The members’ task team provides varied perspectives and invaluable guidance to the secretariat on local rights claiming realities, which informs the strategic direction of our campaigns and helps to promote the secretariat’s accountability to our members.

■ Syed Shah Nasir Khisro

*Integrated Regional Support Programme (IRSP)
(Pakistan)*

■ P.C. Misra

*Indian Institute of Youth and Development (IIYD)
(India)*

■ Mary Gill

Center for Law and Justice (CLJ) (Pakistan)

■ Amaka Nweke

WASH Rights Network (Nigeria)

■ Clinton Ezeigwe

*Christian Fellowship of Care Foundation (CFCF)
(Nigeria)*

■ Bubala Muyowwe

Zambian NGO WASH Forum (Zambia)

■ Jackson Mwenya

Vision Africa Regional Network (VAREN) (Zambia)

■ Kassimou Issotina

Institute for Cultural Affairs (ICA) (Benin)

■ MacDonald Munyoro

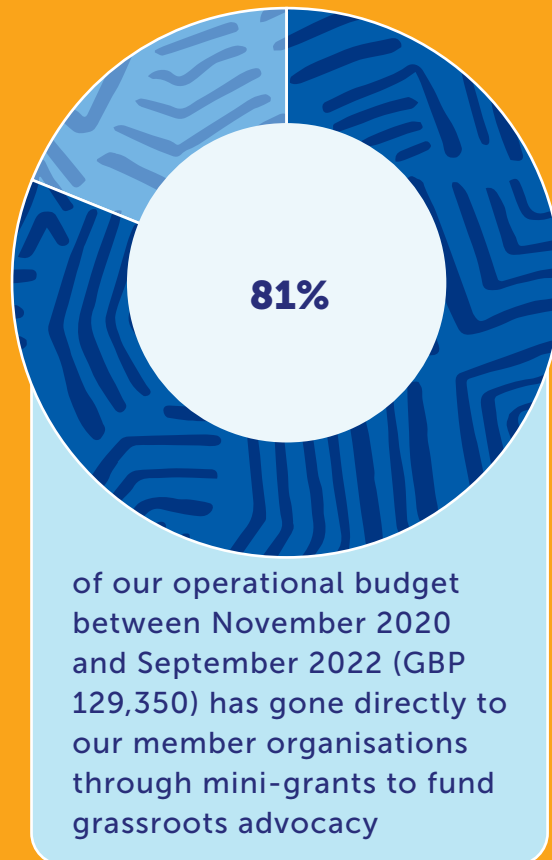
*National Association of Youth Organisations
(NAYO) (Zimbabwe)*

■ Edith Guiochon

Coalition Eau (France)



FUNDING & INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT



End Water Poverty is legally and financially hosted by WaterAid. An independent external review undertaken by Ajabu Advisors on behalf of WaterAid in April 2022 revealed, through close analysis and dozens of interviews, complementary strategic alignment between WaterAid and End Water Poverty and concluded that the relationship was highly effective in changing policy and practice, and in strengthening civil society advocacy.⁴ According to the report: “EWP has extended WaterAid’s effectiveness in advocacy, especially at national and subnational level, and to a wider set of countries than WaterAid can reach on its own”. The review suggested that “for its current investment, it would be very difficult for WaterAid to achieve these objectives, as widely and sustainably, without the reach, skills, and credibility of EWP. While they are aligned, the strategies of the two organisations are not the same, but complement each other to achieve common goals”.

We depend on donor funding and we’re grateful to WaterAid for their stalwart support and partnership, and to the Postcode Lottery, which supported our members’ climate justice work.

We are also appreciative of an individual benefactor who came on board in October 2022 to fund research support, which will expand and build the evidence base for our members’ advocacy.

⁴ The review was funded by WaterAid and conducted by Ajabu Advisors LLC. The evaluation team was Chris Allan, Violet Matiru, and Atalie Pestalozzi.

A close-up photograph of a woman's hands pouring clear water from a transparent plastic bucket into a yellow jerrycan. The woman is wearing a colorful patterned top. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with a blue sky and some structures. The text 'OUR CAMPAIGNS' is overlaid in white on a blue horizontal bar across the middle of the image.

OUR CAMPAIGNS

“Claim Your Water Rights encourages people to adapt the campaign to their local context, to be creative and autonomous. It gave us space to be more proactive in our work and think outside the box. It’s not the same as other global campaigns which provide stringent conditions. We could design our messages and strategy to fit our local context.”

Clinton Ezeigwe, Christian Fellowship and Care Foundation (CFCF)



CLAIM YOUR WATER RIGHTS

Claim Your Water Rights is a global public pressure campaign that supports civil society to employ a range of contextually sensitive, community-led strategies to hold governments accountable for the realisation of people’s rights to safe drinking water and sanitation.

Through our mini-grants, we fund member organisations directly (with grants of up to GBP 5,000) against clear and publicised [criteria](#), to design, develop and deliver advocacy campaigns that are uniquely adapted to their local or national contexts. This enables our member organisations to develop powerful community-led campaigns to challenge the water rights violations that most affect the grassroots communities they work with, while working in global solidarity under the Claim Your Water Rights banner.

Since its launch in December 2019, Claim Your Water Rights has become our flagship campaign and central to our advocacy initiatives.



26

mini-grants of up to GBP 5,000 to directly fund community-led advocacy campaigns in communities affected by lack of access to water and sanitation between November 2020 and September 2022

14

countries where we’ve funded member-led advocacy campaigns between November 2020 and September 2022, making Claim Your Water Rights a truly global campaign

DIVERSE, LOCALISED STRATEGIES

The flexibility of the campaign allows members to employ a wide range of rights claiming strategies, including community mobilisation, coalition building, media influencing, direct government engagement, policy and social research, data documentation, investigative research, protest, litigation and more.

SEIZING THE MOMENT

Claim Your Water Rights allows members flexibility to respond rapidly to increased public and political scrutiny on water and sanitation issues. Members utilise newsworthy national and international stories – such as acute water shortages, pollution incidences, disease outbreaks, mass disconnections and the COVID-19 pandemic – to escalate the campaign. Members also plan for national events like elections, Voluntary National Reviews, national budget reviews, or changes in ownership or management of water and sanitation service providers, and for international policy advocacy opportunities presented by High Level Political Forums as well as global and regional calls, declarations and commitments.

Some of our successes

The diverse approaches pursued by our members have consistently secured impressive results: From achieving legal and policy reform in countries like Pakistan and Nigeria, to meaningfully influencing governments' responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, and securing real-world infrastructure improvements in hundreds of communities across the globe. Claim Your Water Rights is shifting the needle by helping communities to successfully claim their rights to water and sanitation. Ajabu Advisors' independent external review team found dozens of tangible advocacy outcomes, particularly at national and sub-national levels.

A few of the highlights are set out below; this is by no means a comprehensive list.⁵

“Bring people together, brief them and give direction about how they can claim their rights to water and sanitation. You can hold government accountable – you can write to them and pressure them through social media... There are many success stories where people spoke out and it was effective.”

Syed Shah Nasir Khisro, Integrated Regional Support Programme (IRSP)



⁵ For a comprehensive report of members' successes, EWP will publish country factsheets on World Water Day 2023.

Reforming laws and policies

LOBBYING LEADS TO LEGAL RECOGNITION OF RIGHT TO WATER

In Enugu State, Nigeria, a team of 23 civil society organisations led by Hope Spring united under the Claim Your Water Rights campaign to advocate for legal and policy changes and real-world improvements to water infrastructure through direct engagement with government. After their state-wide assessment of water rights found that most water supply facilities were either working at severely limited capacity or had been abandoned entirely, the team successfully lobbied Enugu Governor Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi to [declare a water emergency](#) and secured a series of far-reaching commitments.



WASH Rights Network after meeting with Enugu State government officials in October 2021.

These included the expedition of funds to rehabilitate the 9th Mile Water Scheme, a water supply scheme of boreholes with the capacity to service one million people in Enugu's capital that had been abandoned by the state for decades. The team's work paid off, with the water scheme officially being integrated to the water system in November 2022. The facility now contributes over 19 million litres of water to the state daily.⁶

The team also obtained a commitment from the Enugu Governor to develop a new law recognising water and sanitation as human rights. In July 2021, after a year of persistent lobbying and media advocacy, the Enugu State House of Assembly passed a new Water Bill that expressly recognises people's right to water. The law also establishes an independent regulator, with enforcement powers, and a new agency to supply water to small towns. Both the regulator and agency have since been established.

“It should be people demanding their water rights – not an organisation speaking on their behalf... People will make their demands in their own language, they will not mince their words.”

Asif Aqeel, Center for Law and Justice (CLJ)



⁶ Lawrence Njoku “Enugu’s 9th Mile Water Scheme now delivers 19 million litres daily 40 years after abandonment” *The Guardian* (8 November 2022).

Shifting perceptions and changing hearts and minds

“It’s all about changing mindsets and giving people access to information. Water is not something people have to beg for – it is their right.”

Attah Benson, Community Emergency Response Initiative (CERI)



MEDIA ADVOCACY COMPELS TANZANIAN AUTHORITIES TO DRILL WELLS AND BOREHOLES, COMMIT FUNDS TO IMPROVE SERVICES

Media for Community Empowerment (MECE), a civil society organisation in Tanzania that uses a variety of media tools to amplify the concerns of marginalised communities and hold government accountable, developed an innovative series of community radio programmes in which they interviewed rural communities who live without access to safe water.

Despite working under John Magufuli’s premiership, during which censorship restricted people’s ability to openly criticise government, MECE’s ‘Sauti Yangu’ (‘Your Voice’) programme reached over six million people and led directly to several local authorities drilling wells and boreholes, as well as committing funds to improving services. For example, just one month after MECE’s radio show on Mtehani FM, the local Mkuranga government successfully drilled a well in response to residents airing complaints about the village’s decade-long water crisis. Three days after MECE’s broadcast from Kikwawila village in Ifakara, the local government drilled a borehole after residents raised concerns about their lack of water with their village chairperson.

“You don’t have to keep quiet when there is no water in your area. You can speak out at community meetings, you can participate in water projects. You don’t have to wait for donors to fix the problem. People can take action. It is your right.”

Mohammed Hammie, Media for Community Empowerment (MECE)



Exposing water rights violations through investigative research

REVEALING POOR WATER QUALITY IN GHANA

The Coalition of NGOs in Water and Sanitation (CONIWAS) developed a thoughtful evidence-based campaign that incorporated investigative research, policy advocacy and community mobilisation to expose water rights violations in Ghana.

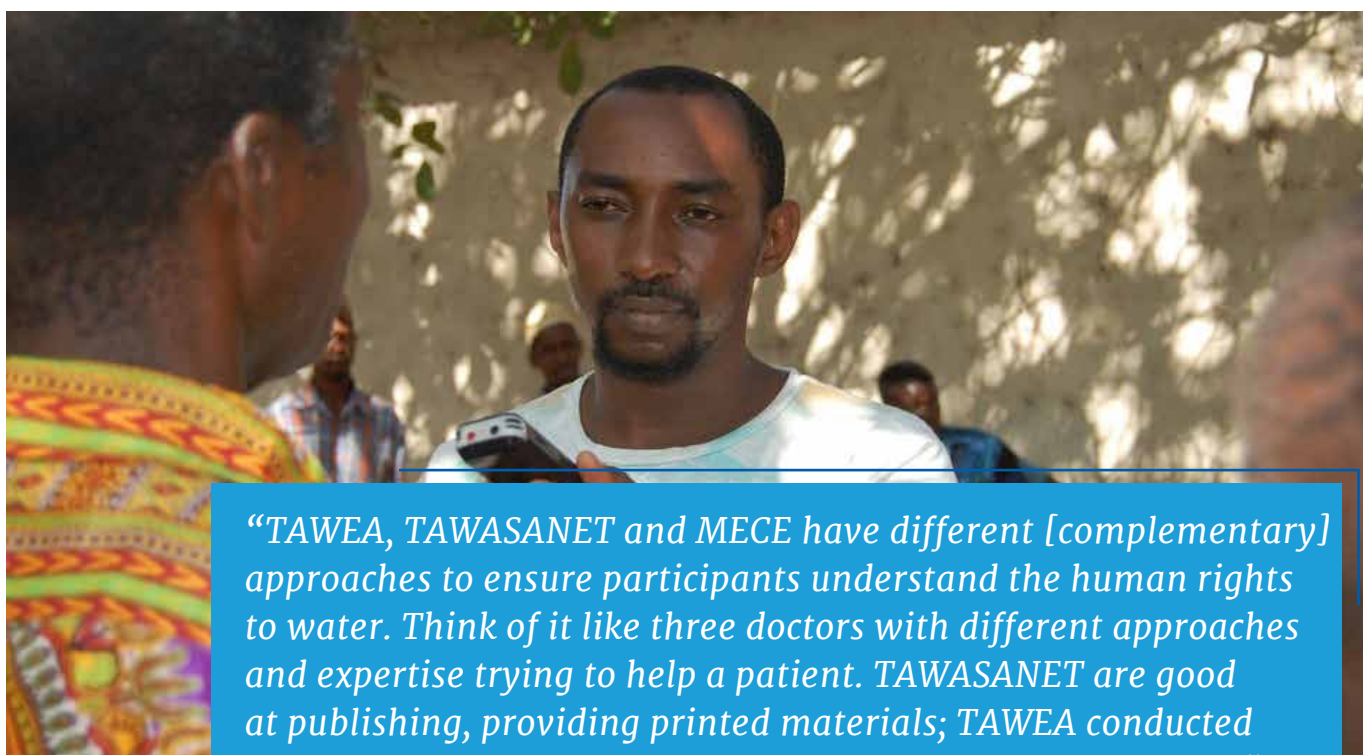
CONIWAS documented the impact of agriculture, fishing, logging and mining on people's access to water in the Wassa East District, where communities are reliant on the Pra river for survival, through interviews with residents, community dialogues and engagements with the Ghanaian Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ). Crucially, CONIWAS collected hundreds of water samples, which were randomly tested. The results were glaring: 80% of water sources did not meet international human rights standards due to high pH and e-coli levels. CONIWAS published their findings in a policy brief in May 2022, which was widely reported on by various national media outlets. The brief recommended that the Ghana Water Company introduce community water quality testing to ensure human rights standards are met.

Government officials responded to the policy brief by acknowledging their failures and making public commitments to improve water services, while the Ghana Water Company pledged to include Wassa East communities in their plans for service extension.

WORKING TOGETHER TO EXPOSE THE POLLUTION OF TANZANIAN GOLDMINING COMMUNITIES' WATER WITH MERCURY AND CYANIDE

In 2021, three of our member organisations in Tanzania - the Tanzania Wote Equality Alliance (TAWEA), Tanzania's Water and Sanitation Civil Society Network (TAWASANET) and Media for Community Empowerment (MECE), joined forces to expose how the water sources of mining communities in Geita have been contaminated by high rates of mercury and cyanide when mining companies in the area processed gold.

In August, TAWEA held a three-day human rights workshop with small-scale miners and mining communities in Nyarugusu



“TAWEA, TAWASANET and MECE have different [complementary] approaches to ensure participants understand the human rights to water. Think of it like three doctors with different approaches and expertise trying to help a patient. TAWASANET are good at publishing, providing printed materials; TAWEA conducted human rights training; we amplified the work as journalists.”



Small scale artisanal gold miners in Geita, Tanzania.

and Lwamgasa. During the workshop, TAWEA provided communities with a critical understanding of their rights and provided skills training to ten “agents of change” to represent the community in advocating for their rights. During the workshops, MECE interviewed 53 community members, collecting their stories and amplifying their voices through a series of six radio shows broadcast on Rubondo FM, while TAWASANET produced and disseminated 550 educational brochures and posters.

After the workshop, the agents of change used community scorecards to collect data on water sources and services that would form the basis of a social accountability monitoring report that documented the contamination of water sources. Through a series of engagements with government institutions, water services providers and the district council (at both local and national level), the affected communities secured commitments to ensure the safety of water and improved water and sanitation services. In particular, the Rural Water and Sanitation Agency (RUWASA) committed to properly manage water and sanitation services, ensuring that communities’ water supply is free from mercury, and providing educational sessions on user rights and water price setting.

INVESTIGATIVE RESEARCH, MEDIA ADVOCACY AND COLLABORATION WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT ENDS BREWING COMPANIES’ IMPUNITY

In 2021, the Vision Africa Regional Network (VAREN) used investigative research and a shift in local politics, brought about by a recent election, to expose two Chinese brewing companies’ pollution of the Kakomwe river in Mansa, Zambia. VAREN conducted physical inspections to assess the companies’ adherence to environmental regulations before engaging community leaders to understand how the companies’ brewing operations affected people’s water rights.

After gathering extensive evidence, VAREN visited the companies’ offices with local government authorities to present

“Effective advocacy demands evidence-based information to convince government and stakeholders.”

Jackson Mwenya, Vision Africa Regional Network (VAREN)



their findings and shared videos on social media documenting the river's pollution. According to Jackson Mwenya, VAREN's Executive Director, the two companies had previously been able to act with impunity because of cosy relations with local government officials. However, recent elections had shifted the political terrain at local government level, offering VAREN an opportunity to work closely with newly elected officials. After one of the brewing companies rejected VAREN's findings, government inspectors penalised it with sanctions and suspended its operations.

Ultimately, VAREN's investigative research, advocacy and collaboration with local government compelled the brewing companies to admit their pollution and sign business and human rights commitments to respect people's water rights and protect the environment in the presence of Mansa's Mayor and Permanent Secretary. The commitments stipulate that companies who violate human rights obligations must engage in grievance mechanisms.

Using complaints mechanisms to make rights real

"We've learnt how important the community's voice is: getting the community to speak for itself is a way of catalysing action."

Khumbulani Maphosa, Matabeleland Institute for Human Rights (MIHR)



SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES TO DEMAND THEIR RIGHTS IN INDIA

In 2021, the Indian Institute for Youth and Development (IIYD) embarked on a series of rights-based training workshops aimed at raising awareness of human rights and capacitating communities to "make representations" (a framing that was more palatable to authorities than "lodging complaints") to various state institutions about their access to water and sanitation. IIYD ran a total of 21 training workshops for 650 participants, including marginalised groups from tribal and rural areas. Through these trainings, IIYD assisted ten different communities to make representation to a range of different government institutions.

Many of these representations led to tangible and transformative results for the affected communities. For example, IIYD provided rights awareness training to an Adivasi community in Koraput. Following the training, the community filed a complaint to the National Scheduled Tribes Commission concerning a lack of toilets. A subsequent report showed that the money allocated for toilets had been spent despite no construction work taking place – the government simply assumed that the Adivasi community would not complain. When the commission received the complaint, the government immediately started constructing toilets.

The representations also led to the collection of 2,000 families' solid waste, increased budget allocations potentially extending services to an additional 10,000 people; the renovation of 84 ponds; the construction of 12 wheelchair-friendly ramps to improve water access; the supply of piped water to one district; the introduction of water quality testing; the repair of a defunct tube well; and the supply of drinking water to two tribal panchayats. In an exciting turn of events, IIYD has seen evidence of a "multiplier effect", with communities in neighbouring districts beginning to adopt similar strategies to claim their water and sanitation rights.

“The youth are interested in protecting water sources. They bring a fresh voice. They bring a fresh face to the story.”

Bubala Mumba, Zambia NGO WASH Forum



LEVERAGING AND STRENGTHENING NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS INSTITUTIONS (NHRIS) IN NIGERIA

In Imo State, Nigeria, the Christian Fellowship and Care Foundation (CFCF) invested considerable time and resources into strengthening the Imo State Human Rights Commission and gaining the support of Nigeria’s National Human Rights Commission. CFCF supported the Okigwe community, made up of ten villages, to lodge a complaint about contaminated water - Nigeria’s first human rights complaint relating to a water rights violation. The complaint bolstered the capacity and legitimacy of the Imo State Human Rights Commission. The commission sent a letter of recommendation to the Imo State Water and Sewerage Corporation, who in turn committed to rectifying the situation. CFCF and the commission subsequently created a service charter with Imo State Water and Sewerage Corporation outlining their duties and how water users can hold them accountable by lodging complaints.

Making water and sanitation rights political

USING ELECTIONS TO PROMOTE THE RIGHTS TO WATER AND SANITATION

“We must remind people to use their vote as a weapon. Their vote is their right – they don’t have to sell their vote.”

Attah Benson, Community Emergency Response Initiative (CERI)



In November and December 2021, the Center for Law and Justice (CLJ) conducted a Vote for Water campaign in Bahar Colony, a Christian neighbourhood of Lahore, Pakistan. Prior to the campaign CLJ surveyed 200 residents, who reported that almost every street received unsafe tap water – with rusted pipelines forcing people to buy contaminated water at a costly price from local filtration plants. CLJ held a series of small-scale community meeting with groups of 15-30 residents to inform them of their water rights, before hosting a convention between local political candidates from all the political parties and over 100 residents. The convention offered residents the opportunity to share their grievances and demand that candidates prioritise quality water and sanitation services.

The Integrated Regional Support Programme (IRSP) complemented CLJ’s elections advocacy by amplifying calls to Vote for Water during a two-hour community radio programme, which was broadcast to a combined audience of 3.5 million people living in remote rural communities in five districts. The programme prompted lively engagement, with 700 people submitting questions online.

During the Vote for Water campaign CLJ leveraged support from John Morris of the United Kingdom’s All-Party Parliamentary Group to lobby Punjab’s governor to provide new filtration plants to several minority Christian neighbourhoods, including Bahar Colony. CLJ’s most significant achievement, however, was to start politicising water and sanitation, enfranchising a marginalised Christian community to actively demand their rights to water and sanitation from the state.



IRSP complemented CLJ's elections advocacy with a media campaign using community radio.

“Rights are demanded and claimed from governments. So, by default, we are operating in a political arena.”

Asif Aqeel, Center for Law and Justice (CLJ)



Promoting government and corporate accountability through litigation

SUPPORTING THE PHICHIT COMMUNITY'S FIGHT AGAINST CORPORATE IMPUNITY

In Thailand, the Manushya Foundation has supported a rural community of around 6,000 villagers in Phichit to launch a class action lawsuit against Akara Resources, a subsidiary of the Australian mining company Kingsgate, whose Chatree Goldmining Complex resulted in devastating water shortages and contamination of water sources that destroyed the livelihoods and health of many villagers. Over the years, the Phichit community have made numerous attempts to hold Akara and the Thai government accountable for loss and damage caused. In response Akara and the Thai government have weaponised Thailand's criminal defamation legislation against the villagers, particularly community leader Preamsinee Sintontammatuch, who has repeatedly faced strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPP). Several villagers were also arrested and detained for legitimate peaceful protests and had to pay large sums of money to be granted bail.

Though the government closed the mine in 2017, villagers received no remedy or compensation. In October 2019, the Ratchada Civil Court in Bangkok accepted a class-action lawsuit filed by 362 villagers demanding adequate compensation as well as the restoration of their environment. Despite Akara and the Thai government delaying court hearings for over six years, the Phichit community's first hearing was finally heard on 18 November 2021, with the first witness testimonies scheduled for January 2023.

As part of Claim Your Water Rights, Manushya Foundation is using delayed legal proceedings to raise public awareness of the [#JusticeForPhichit campaign](#) in Thailand and internationally. They embarked on a digital campaign on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to mobilise their young, progressive following to act by donating to the community's legal fund and signing petitions.



“The Thai government misuses the COVID-19 Emergency Decree to restrict our civic space.”

Emilie Pradichit, Manushya Foundation



In addition to petitioning the Thai government, Manushya Foundation is undertaking advocacy through the UN Special Procedures. In March 2022, Manushya Foundation developed a complaint and submitted it to the Working Group on Business and Human Rights, as well as the Special Rapporteurs on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation, on human rights and the environment, and on freedom of expression and opinion.

The remainder of the budget provided through the Claim Your Water Rights campaign was allocated to the villagers’ legal fund to cover travel to Bangkok and court fees.

GOVERNMENT, PAY YOUR WATER BILLS!



We partnered with the Water Integrity Network (WIN) to lead a global evidence-based advocacy campaign called [Government, Pay Your Water Bills!](#) (GPYWB).

In 2020, we, along with WIN and Solutions for Water Integrity and Management (SWIM), published a [study](#) that found that the ability of water and sanitation utilities to operate and serve everyone is often at risk due to non-payment by government institutions – who often account for between 20-30% of utilities’ billing. Evidence from wide-ranging interviews with water utilities in 18 countries, showed that many governments do not pay their water bills or pay with crippling delays. In fact, collection rates were consistently lower for government customers. Governments thus do not always adhere to the same rules that they expect household water users to follow, and their non-payment threatens water and sanitation utilities’ financial stability and directly affects underserved communities’ water rights.

Government, Pay Your Water Bills! aimed to expose the accumulation of arrears among public institutions, raise this issue with policy-makers, and improve public institutions’ rate – and punctuality – of payment. The campaign was implemented in Ghana, Kenya, Mexico, Nepal and Zambia with members adopting different approaches based on their specific circumstances.

Country impacts

- In Ghana, the Water Citizens Network's successful public interventions, which included a series of video interviews with financial experts on the impact of government's non-payment of water bills and an innovative partnership with the Fiscal Justice Network, compelled Ghana's Finance Ministry and Community Water Sanitation Agency to pay small-town water service providers as part of the government's directive to deliver free water during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The Kenya Water and Sanitation Civil Society Network (KEWASNET) developed an evidence-based advocacy campaign by conducting a survey to collect evidence on overdue bills and their consequences.
- In Mexico, the Freshwater Action Network Mexico (FANMex) adapted the campaign to advocate for better water quality and transparency in access to information, launching the [Calidad del Agua en las Escuelas](#) interactive platform to identify human rights violations and mobilise communities to act.
- Zambia NGO WASH Forum used a variety of tactics to increase public pressure on the Zambian authorities to pay their water bills. They used a series of radio discussions to raise public awareness of government noncompliance, met with government officials including the Minister of Water Jonas Chanda to discuss sector financing and debt in unpaid water bills owed by public institutions, and presented a public response to the Zambian Auditor's report on commercial water utilities to the Zambian Parliament. These multi-pronged strategies worked: the National Water Supply and Sanitation Council later credited the campaign for partially contributing to the government clearing public institutions' debt in 2020.





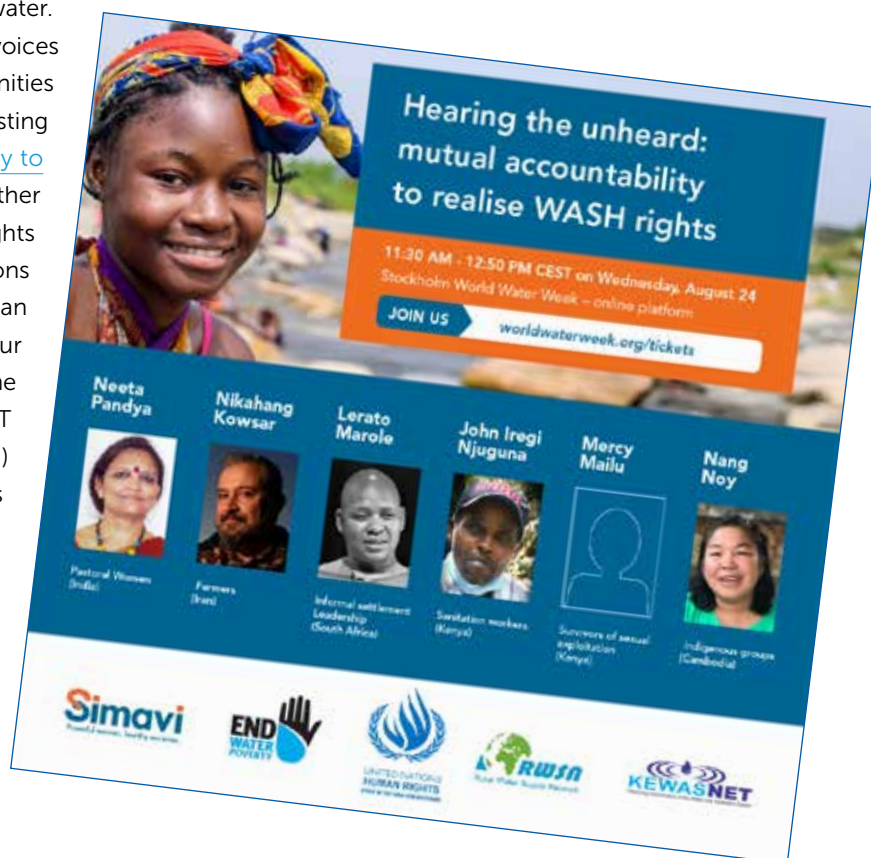
AMPLIFYING, CONNECTING & EXCHANGING

During the last two years, we've supported the remarkable work of our member organisations through events and exchanges, and by amplifying their work through a range of media. By sharing their work and successes, we hope to create awareness, inspire action and build global solidarity.

Here are some of the ways we've connected our members to each other, created platforms to exchange ideas and strategies, and amplified our coalition's work:

GLOBAL EVENTS AND EXCHANGES

- Report of good practices for National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs):** We partnered with Human Right 2 Water to publish a [Compilation of Good Practices for National Human Rights Institutions and Water Governance](#), which was launched during an interactive webinar with water rights advocates and NHRIs from various countries. The webinar explored how civil society can work with NHRIs to support people to claim their rights to safe water and sanitation.
- How to make WASH a vote winner:** We facilitated members' participation in WaterAid's webinar on using elections for advocacy. We specifically invited our member organisations the Centre for Law & Justice (CLJ) and the Nigerian Society of Water and Sanitation (NEWSAN) to offer insights into their strategic use of elections to advance the human rights to water and sanitation.
- Water and climate change campaign:** We contributed to WaterAid's water and climate change campaign by sharing members' Claim Your Water Rights actions on *Climate Change, Water and Me*, an [interactive platform](#) documenting the inspiring ways that individuals and communities are holding their leaders accountable in their struggles for climate justice and access to water.
- Hearing the Unheard:** We amplified the voices of civil society and marginalised communities at Stockholm World Water Week by co-hosting '[Hearing the Unheard: Mutual Accountability to Realise WASH Rights](#)', which brought together marginalised groups fighting for their rights to water and sanitation, the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights (OHCHR), and the Special Rapporteur on the rights to safe water and sanitation. The event was co-hosted by Simavi, KEWASNET and the Rural Water Supply Network (RWSN) and, with the Socio-Economic Rights Institute's (SERI) support, we facilitated the participation of an informal settlement leader in South Africa and, with Oxfam's support, an Indigenous rights expert in Cambodia.
- Unlocking accountability:** We also co-hosted '[Unlocking Accountability: The Unseen Enabler of Essential Water Services](#)' at Stockholm World Water Week with Water Witness International, WaterAid and KEWASNET to show how accountability and active citizenry are vital in transforming water and sanitation services.



REGIONAL EVENTS AND EXCHANGES

- People's World Water Forum:** In March 2022, we sponsored a delegation of End Water Poverty member organisations from Cameroon, Ghana, Nigeria, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe to participate in the [Alternative World Water Forum \(FAME\)](#) in Dakar, Senegal, organised by grassroots civil society as an alternative to the World Water Council's World Water Forum.
- Claim Your Water Rights workshop in Pakistan:** On World Water Day 2022, we sponsored a workshop for local community groups, journalists and members of the Freshwater Action Network of South Asia (FANSA) on rights claiming strategies.
- Defending human rights defenders:** In March 2022, we held a hybrid session at FAME, '[Expanding Civic Space: State Repression of Water Rights Claiming](#)', in which activists from various countries and continents delivered first-hand accounts of defending human rights. National Association of Youth Organisations (NAYO) spoke about upholding political space in an increasingly militarised police state in Zimbabwe, while Manushya Foundation shared their experience of fighting corporate impunity and Thailand's corrupt military government. End Water Poverty co-convoked the session with the African Water Commons Collective (AWCC), Western Cape Water Caucus, Environmental Monitoring Group, the Anti-Repression Collective and Water Action Committees. The session was broadcast live from Dakar, and EWP sponsored a parallel in-person event at Salt River Community House in Cape Town, South Africa.
- Financing Accountability webinar:** In November 2021, as part of Africa Water Week, we partnered with Water Witness to co-convene an interactive [session](#) exploring the role of duty-bearers to budget for accountability structures to maximise accountability for water and sanitation rights. Panellists included our members the Kenya Water and Sanitation Civil Society Network (KEWASNET), the Zambia NGO WASH Forum, and Christian Fellowship and Care Foundation (CFCF). End Water Poverty's global coordinator closed the session emphasising that water services provision and accountability to consumers are inseparable.
- Webinar on the human rights and integrity in informal settlements:** In November 2021, we co-hosted a [session](#) at Africa Water Week and AfricaSan with Water Integrity Network (WIN), ICLEI Africa, 1:1 Agency for Engagement, and Asivikelane, which foregrounded the [interface between human rights and water integrity](#) in supporting, rather than delegitimising, the agency and participation of informal settlement communities to strengthen access to dignified services and livelihoods.

SHARING MEMBER STRATEGIES, TACTICS AND VICTORIES

- End Water Poverty Progress Report 2019-2020:** In April 2021, we published our [2019-20 progress report](#), documenting members' work and achievements from the first year of Claim Your Water Rights.
- Spotlight on water rights claiming strategies and legal activism:** In November 2021, we partnered with Make Rights Real by joining two episodes of their MRR Talks podcasts that discussed [water rights claiming](#) and [legal activism](#). Both episodes emphasised the importance of embracing a variety of tactics, by referring to diverse examples of community mobilisation documented in the Socio-Economic Rights Institute of South Africa (SERI)'s [Claiming Water Rights](#) series and our [advocacy toolkit](#). The interview on rights claiming strategies was later published as an [article](#).





- **Documenting the lessons from our Claim Your Water Rights campaign:** We contributed a Claim Your Water Rights case study, documenting some of the lessons from the campaign, to WaterAid's new Advocacy Handbook (forthcoming in 2023).
- **Study brief on using a human rights-based approach in the water and sanitation sector:** Coalition Eau featured End Water Poverty's Claim Your Water Rights campaign in their [study brief](#) on how a human rights-based approach can improve accountability, address structural inequalities and realise marginalised communities' rights to water and sanitation.
- **End Water Poverty published over 30 articles and blogposts** on our members' work, 15 of which were co-written with members from Cameroon, France, India, Lesotho, Pakistan, Thailand, the United Kingdom and Zambia. Some examples include a [blogpost](#) on the struggle for democratic ownership of water and sanitation services in Cameroon, which was written by the African Center for Advocacy (ACA); and an in-depth [blogpost](#) on the innovative, multi-pronged work of the Manushya Foundation in their support for the [Justice for Phichit](#) campaign.
- **Claim Your Water Rights Twitter mega-thread:** We celebrated two years of Claim Your Water Rights on International Human Rights Day 2021 by gathering members' campaign highlights into a [Twitter mega-thread](#). The mega-thread earned over 10,500 impressions in a single day, with an engagement rate of 4.7%.
- **World Toilet Day 2021:** We used World Toilet Day 2021 to reflect members' national realities and advocacy demands by publishing videos and statements of our member organisations in Liberia and Zambia.
- **#HearingTheUnheardHRWS social media campaign:** We will continue to platform groups who are often excluded from global events through the #HearingTheUnheardHRWS campaign, encouraging members to follow the campaign on social media and contribute by submitting three one-minute videos with willing representatives of marginalised communities.
- **Using social media to reach new audiences:** In addition to the social media campaigns mentioned above, we have consistently used our social media presence on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) to promote the work of our member organisations, garner support for their struggles and increase the visibility of our coalition's work. For example, to increase accessibility of our work, we have shared webinars online and regularly live-tweeted events.
- **Connecting grassroots civil society with funding opportunities:** We shared funding opportunities for grassroots groups and climate campaigners through the [Fund for Global Human Rights](#) and [International Climate Initiative](#).



BUILDING ALLIANCES

“Don’t work in isolation... Our mandate is to benefit people; it’s a combined effort.”

Syed Shah Nasir Khisro, Integrated Regional Support Programme (IRSP)



HIGH-LEVEL PARTNERSHIP BUILDING

- **Joining established human rights networks:** End Water Poverty became a member of the [International Network for Economic, Social & Cultural Rights \(ESCR-Net\)](#) - a network of 280 grassroots groups, social movements, NGOs, academics and activists - to harness their collective power and connect with advocates working on other economic, social and cultural rights. Since then, we’ve become an active member of their environmental rights working group, which campaigns to hold governments and corporations accountable for human rights infringements.
- **Partners and allies in human rights and accountability** include Coalition Eau, Make Rights Real, Water Integrity Network (WIN), Accountability for Water (A4W), WaterAid, Human Right 2 Water (HR2W), and Sanitation and Water for All (SWA).
- **Global advisory groups:** End Water Poverty’s global coordinator is a member of the African Water Justice Network’s interim steering committee established at FAME in Dakar, Senegal;⁷ of the Water Integrity Network’s General Assembly and of its Water Integrity Global Outlook 2022 advisory group; a member of Sanitation and Water for All’s Grants Committee; of Accountability for Water’s global advisory group and of Asivikelane’s advisory group.
- **Towards a shared civil society learning agenda for Sustainable Development Goal 6:** We worked with IRC and the organisations who produced the [Global Review of National Accountability Mechanisms for SDG 6](#) to create a shared civil society learning agenda.
- **Partnership with CIVICUS:** CIVICUS, a global alliance of 15,000 members dedicated to citizen action and civil society around the world, joined End Water Poverty’s General Assembly to share knowledge of the global state of civic space and equip human rights defenders with tools to mitigate the risks of working in repressive states. End Water Poverty members discussed different water rights claiming strategies through the lens of CIVICUS’ civic space categories. We were subsequently invited to join CIVICUS’ digital fair to exchange experiences and expertise on rights claiming and expanding civic space, and look forward to a water rights exchange between End Water Poverty, SWA and CIVICUS members in 2023.

STRENGTHENING OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UN SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR AND OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER ON HUMAN RIGHTS (OHCHR)

- **Supporting the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the right to safe drinking water and sanitation:** In meetings with the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the rights to safe drinking water and sanitation, Pedro Arrojo-Agudo, we agreed to support the [Special Rapporteur’s mandate](#), including by co-organising an [online event](#) with ONGAWA in October 2022 to promote his [report](#) on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation of people living in impoverished rural areas to the 77th session of the United Nations General Assembly.
- **Strengthening civil society participation at the UN 2023 Water Conference:** We met with Butterfly Effect, European Pact for Water, ONGAWA and the Special Rapporteur of the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation to discuss meaningful civil society participation at the UN 2023 Water Conference in New York. We agreed to join partners in joint civil society and youth advocacy. We also engaged the Government of the Netherlands who are co-hosting the conference with the Government of Tajikistan to set up regular engagements with civil society networks to share information and coordinate plans ahead of the Conference.



⁷ Members of the interim steering committee of the Africa Water Justice Network include End Water Poverty, Corporate Accountability and Public Participation Africa (CAPPA), African Water Commons Collective (AWCC), African Ecofeminist Collective, Africans Rising, Water Citizens Network, Blue Planet Project (BPP), PSI Africa and the Ecumenical Water Network Africa.



ENABLING & STRENGTHENING OUR COALITION

INCLUSIVE COMMUNICATION

- Across the coalition, monthly newsletters were shared to member organisations in English, French and Spanish.
- End Water Poverty engaged The Ethical Agency to refresh and update [our website](#), social media templates and online tools to strengthen our support to member organisations.

SETTING UP MINI-GRANT STRUCTURES

- We've set up and refined our systems to ensure that that our member organisations can easily apply for mini-grants of up to GBP 5,000 as part of Claim Your Water Rights. This includes publishing updated [granting guidelines](#) for member funding, and developing standardised application and reporting forms for members who receive mini-grants.
- We opened calls for Claim Your Water Rights mini-grants via [our newsletter](#) while updating our [campaign FAQs](#) to guide members' proposals.

BUILDING CAPACITY

- We secured funds to support an End Water Poverty research consultant to provide research support to the coalition and member organisations and to buttress our member organisations' rights claiming strategies.



“Be resolute.”

Amaka Nweke, WASH Rights Network





GLOBAL SUBMISSIONS, PETITIONS & DECLARATIONS

We have supported a number of high-profile submissions, petitions and declarations over the last two years. We actively contributed to most of these calls with our partners and allies, and signed others led by our partners and allies across the world.

The submissions cross all regions and over 100 countries in the world.

- **International declaration condemning the financialisation and commodification of water:** Ahead of World Water Day 2021, End Water Poverty coordinated and contributed to an [international declaration](#) with Coalition Eau and Foundation Danielle Mitterrand condemning the commodification of water after its listing on the California stock exchange. Over 550 civil society representatives signed the declaration.
- **Blueprint on how to finance safe, sustainable water and sanitation services:** We partnered with WaterAid to published a [report](#) offering a blueprint to governments and donors on how to finance safe, sustainable water and sanitation services. The report proposes various measures, including debt cancellation; an end to fossil fuel subsidies; increased tax revenues; and international investments in the form of grants - not loans.
- **Open letter calling on the United Kingdom to reverse aid cuts:** End Water Poverty signed an [open letter](#) with WaterAid, Water Witness and the UK WASH Network calling for the UK government to reverse savage financial cuts to international water and sanitation projects.
- **Our Water, Our Right position paper:** In solidarity with a number of African members, End Water Poverty endorsed the Our Water, Our Right coalition's [position paper](#) on water privatisation.
- **Affirming water as a human right and public good:** We endorsed the African Water Justice Network's [public statement](#) affirming water as a human right and a public good, increase public expenditure, and combat corruption.
- **Justice for sanitation workers in Pakistan:** On World Toilet Day 2021, End Water Poverty joined Sweepers Are Superheroes in [demanding legal justice for Nadeem and Faisal Masih](#), two sanitation workers who died after being forced to enter a toxic sewer without protective equipment in Sargodha, Pakistan, by publishing Asif Aqeel's superb [report](#) documenting their families' fight for justice.
- **Joint submission to the Special Rapporteur on the water rights of indigenous peoples and people living in rural areas:** End Water Poverty, Survivors of Lesotho Dams (SOLD), the Centre for Applied legal Studies (CALs), Oxfam South Africa and the Freshwater Action Network Mexico (FANMex) made a [joint submission](#) to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to safe drinking water and sanitation in response to his call for inputs on the on the water rights of indigenous peoples and people living in rural areas. The submissions were used to inform the Special Rapporteur's report on the human rights challenges facing these groups that was presented to the United Nations General Assembly and the Human Rights Council.
- **Protection and promotion of human rights in the context of migration, adaptation and financial actions to address climate change:** We contributed to ESCR-Net's [collective submission](#) to the Special Rapporteur for human rights and climate change on the 'promotion and protection of human rights in the context of mitigation, adaptation, and financial actions to address climate change, with particular emphasis on loss and damage'.
- **Defending human rights defenders:** We promoted and publicised Redes Del Agua's international press conference and [statement](#) exposing state violence against human rights defenders resisting the privatisation of water services in Mexico. We also endorsed the Socio-Economic Rights Institute's [call](#) for urgent intervention after the political assassinations of three human rights defenders from the shackdwellers social movement Abahlali baseMjondolo in South Africa.





LOOKING AHEAD

Claim Your Water Rights 2.0

During the [second phase of the Claim Your Water Rights campaign](#), we will deepen and broaden our reach by diversifying our grantees and sharpening our strategies. The short-term efficacy and long-term impacts of different strategies depends on local, national and regional contexts. Now that we have lessons and experiences to draw on from 26 different members in 14 countries, we will jointly assess what has worked, where and why.

PEER-TO-PEER EXCHANGES

The next phase of the campaign will put far greater emphasis on peer-to-peer exchanges to foreground the experience and expertise of grassroots human rights advocates. In 2022-23 we will co-design, facilitate and promote three to four learning exchanges with members on: water, climate justice and extractive industries; using the media; and collaborating with national human rights institutions. There will be further exchanges in 2023-24 on a range of different topics.

BUILDING AN INTERSECTIONAL COALITION

We will also build coalitions working on interrelated human rights, fostering a culture of learning and solidarity that will deepen our understanding of the different ways in which civil society confront systemic injustices, power imbalances and rights violations. While it's important to connect with health, gender, environmental and social justice activists, we will also engage civil and political rights advocates to build a broad movement of water rights defenders. This intersectional approach enables members to better understand the complexity and specificity of the injustices different marginalised groups experience. For example, in the second phase of Claim Your Water Rights we will equip members with information and tools to mitigate the risks and improve their effectiveness in increasingly closed societies by partnering with CIVICUS.

FUNDRAISING TO DEEPEN AND EXPAND IMPACT

Since 2019, we have funded more than 26 different members in 14 different countries. In the coming years End Water Poverty will prioritise fundraising so that we can raise additional financial resources to consolidate campaign gains, expand the secretariat and provide larger mini-grants to more members.

For more information about what we have planned, read our [Claim Your Water Rights 2022-2024 strategy](#).

The background of the page features silhouettes of several raised fists against a bright, hazy sky, symbolizing solidarity and activism. The word 'CONCLUSION' is overlaid on this image.

CONCLUSION

It's been an immensely difficult few years. Many of us are still grappling with systemic injustice and competing crises. Many have lost colleagues and loved ones. Despite this, we remain resilient and resolute in our determination to hold governments accountable and support communities to claim their rights.

The successes from our global campaigns, Claim Your Water Rights and Government, Pay Your Water Bills!, stem from the creativity, versatility, determination and resilience of our members.

End Water Poverty's work continues to centre people's agency and dignity. It is people who drive change, people who hold governments accountable, people who mobilise, people who organise, and people who unify. We have a choice to either stand with people as they claim their rightful share of development or continue business as usual, fuelling a cycle of poverty.

End Water Poverty remains dedicated to scaling up effective advocacy strategies, deepening learning from members' innovations, tackling stigma and discrimination, and expanding our direct support to civil society members to employ geographically diverse and context-specific advocacy campaigns.





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