Annual Report 2015

Summary of Activities

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2015 was the first year of the International WaTERS Network. Activities for this initial year including establishing our network infrastructure; creating a web page, listserv, dropbox for sharing files, twitter, and even hosting a competition to design our logo (thanks to Max Goldin for the lovely logo!). The Network hosted its inaugural meeting in Minneapolis, Minnesota, where we held three days of workshops, brainstorming sessions, public forums, and networking dinners focusing on understanding issues such as rural-urban water issues, as well as key concepts such as resilience, and equity and governance challenges. The Network assembled international teams to start work on our online training modules and conducted a needs assessment to better understand how prospective audiences might use the modules to serve particular needs and learning tools. Finally, we conducted a competition and our first graduate fellows who are conducting timely and important field work in our case study sites (Lima, Peru; Bangalore, India and Cape Town, South Africa).

Major Events and Activities

First Network Meeting - University of Minnesota (Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA)
Our first Network meeting brought together more than 25 researchers representing our key institutional partners. Over 3 days, we held workshops, breakout sessions, public forums, and brainstorming events covering topics such as online pedagogical tools to improve student success, guidance to inform the development of our online training modules, an overview of resilience theory and practice, summaries and the key linkages between our case study sites (Lima, Cape Town, and Bangalore), and future Network directions and planning. Importantly, the event served as a networking tool to bring together researchers from around the world to meet each other (many for the first time) and discuss areas of common interest and future collaboration. The minutes are available here.
Online training modules
We conducted a needs assessment which suggested that our audience will most likely be highly trained learners in an educational / academic context. This assessment was conducted via a survey instrument that thought both quantitative and long-form qualitative responses regarding the needs for the training models. Responses were sought from members of the network and further responses were sought by the module team through their professional contacts. There was also strong interest from people in NGO's, government, and private industry who are interested in expanding their education. Our audience would like to see the modules open to a variety of other students, and to contain a range of learning tools mainly focused on academic readings and lectures but also including interactive tools and common language sources. Many respondents suggested they would be willing to complete modules outside their target educational focus and many would find a certification of completion valuable. Summary available in our Dropbox and at this link.

The five training modules and their main points of contact are;

1. Water Access and Equity. Prof. Michelle Kooy and Cecilia Alda (UNESCO-IHE)
2. Rural - Urban Connections and the Peri-Urban. Anamika Baru and Sumit Vij (SaciWaters)
3. Water & Society: Territories, Conflicting Uses. Prof. Rutgerd Boelens and Lena Hommes (Wageningen University)
4. Biophysical Considerations for Water Resilience. Prof. Larry Baker, (University of Minnesota)
5. Collaborative/Participatory Research for Water Justice. Prof. Goldin and Claudia Mukong (University of the Western Cape)

First Year Network Fellows
- Lena Hommes (Wageningen University) - Rural -urban challenges of water management in the watersheds of Lima. (Completed thesis here).
- Anuradha Sajjanhar (University of Minnesota) - Water use, politics, and inequity in Bangalore.
- Lucy Rodina (University of British Columbia) - Challenges to the governance of urban water under changing precipitation patterns, extreme flow events, droughts and freshwater quality concerns in Cape Town.
- Mariel Mendoza Flores (The Pontifical Catholic University of Peru) - Provision of water and sanitation services in urban and rural areas and irrigation organizations in rural communities in Lima.

Policy briefs from Network Fellows
Policy briefs from the other fellows will be forthcoming as the research is completed.

Original fellowship announcement with details on each of the fellows and their projects here.

*International WaTERS Participatory Workshop (University of the Western Cape)*

International WaTERS Network members Professors Goldin (University of the Western Cape) and Kooy (UNESCO-IHE) presented an advanced level workshop in early November on participatory research in the water sector particularly aimed at researchers in the Southern African region. This highly selective group of 20 participants were able to expand their breadth of knowledge beyond their specialization and were challenged to consider social and political dimensions of water sector challenges. The event was co-sponsored by NUFFIC (Netherlands) and aimed to broaden the transferable skill set for all participants to make an immediate impact in their university or professional position. The sessions focused on teaching interdisciplinary skills needed to address water governance from a bottom-up community based approach. Participants were offered a wide-range of innovative and appropriate methodologies, including digital storytelling, mood lines, participatory mapping, and puppetry.

The original program and a list of participants are available here.

**JH regional training**

From 16 – 20 November, the yearly Water Justice Alliance Researchers Meeting (Justicia Hídrica) took place in Cali, Colombia. A group of around 40 researchers and civil society actors from diverse Latin American and European countries and the USA came together to discuss topics around water justice, hydropower development, extractive industries, agro-export and the cultural politics of water. Interesting presentations, also about the International WaTERS case study in Lima, were given, always followed by lively discussions about content, concepts and future research and action agendas. New Justicia Hídrica / Water Justice books were launched, events and actions were shared, and the Water Justice library was opened with numerous publications and studies by the alliance members. One of the highlights of the event was a field trip to local indigenous communities where indigenous justice and indigenous struggle against extending sugar cane production and mining companies were in the center of attention.
Parallel to this meeting, also the 7th International Water Justice Course took place in which 20 young researchers and water professionals from countries like Colombia, Ecuador, Bolivia, Chile, Argentina, Mexico and Peru worked on a case study in urban Cali on matters of water governance, socio-ecological conflicts and social movements. The case study enabled participants to learn about the specific context, conceptual approaches and the practice of participatory action research. The course was completed by a presentation of research results and the launching of the (In)Justicia Hídrica magazine, an inspiring and exciting initiative of former course participants.

More information can be found on the Justicia Hídrica website.

**Key Links**

*Email:* internationalwatersubc@gmail.com  
*Website:* www.international-waters.org  
*Twitter:* @InternatWaTERS  
*Email Announcements and Newsletter:* Send an email to listserv@lists.ubc.ca with the words "subscribe internationalwaters-announce" in the body to be added  
*Academia.edu:* ubc.academia.edu/InternationalWaTERSNetwork