

Water for All Workshop

This 2 hour workshop is designed for 10-20 people and aims to engage participants in a discussion on the global forces that shape unequal access to clean water for consumption and growing food, in our world today. This workshop borrows ideas and concepts from United for a Fair Economy's Income Inequality Chair exercise.

This workshop will address the following questions:

- ↪ Why do over a billion people lack access to an abundant, life-giving and vital resource such as water?
- ↪ What are the global forces and policies that shape unequal access to water in our world today?
- ↪ What are communities around the world doing to defend their right to water?
- ↪ How can people living in the U.S. support social movements and communities engaged in struggles for water rights?

Introductions



Time

5-15 minutes depending on number of participants



Facilitator Instructions

1. Introduce yourself and what brings you or the organization you are representing to this work.
2. Thank people for coming and tell them that you will be doing introductions before reviewing the workshop agenda. Ask participants to: *Briefly share their name and what brought them to this workshop. Ask: What inspired you to come here on this (Sunday morning, Wednesday evening)?* Alternative prompt: *What would you like to get out of this workshop today?*

Water Chairs

Time

1 hour and 30 minutes

? **Objective:** To illustrate inequalities around access to water worldwide and to look at some of the global policies and forces that shape unequal access to this vital resource.

Materials needed

- One liter of tap water in a portable container, 6 plastic/paper cups (1 cup should be a little larger and able to hold 650 ml)
- Cardboard signs, scissors, glue, markers
- Several sheets of large butcher paper, tape and markers

Preparation

- Post 2 sheets of butcher paper in a central part of the room
- Place 6 chairs in a line in the front of the room facing the audience
- Prepare the 6 Water profiles. Write (#1) Agro-business owner, (#2) CEO of Coal Company, (#3) U.S. city resident, (#4) Small farmer, (#5) Displaced Rural Worker, (#6) Refugee Camp resident in large legible letters on six pieces of cardboard.
- Make 5+ copies of each of the Water profile sheets. Make 25+ copies of the Water Profile Handouts.

Facilitator Instructions

1. Start by asking participants: "What did you use water for today?" After soliciting a few answers ask people: "What have you seen water used for today on your way to work, school etc...?" After soliciting a few answers ask: "Do you feel that access to water is a human right? Why or why not?"
2. Acknowledge people's answers and that we use water or see water being used on a daily basis for vital functions in our lives, but that over a billion people are denied the right to water every day. Explain that we will be discussing the forces and policies that shape unequal access to clean water for consumption and for growing food worldwide. To help illustrate inequalities around access

to water ask for 6 volunteers. Ask them to take a seat in one of the six chairs you have set up. Explain that these six people represent the world's population.

3. Give each volunteer a plastic cup (Person 1 should receive the big cup). Present your container filled with water to the audience by saying: "75% of our earth is covered with water but only 1% is usable freshwater represented here in this bottle. A mere 12% of the world's population uses 85% of the world's water while 15% of the world's population has no access to safe drinking water." Distribute the "world's water" in each of their cups : (#1) 65%, (#2) 25%, (#3) 4%, (#4) 3%, (#5) 2%, (#6) 1%. The last two receive a few drops each. You can choose to put some dirt in the last person's cup to illustrate the fact that over 1 billion people don't have access to clean water. (Source: The Battle for Water by Tony Clarke and Maude Barlow YES! Magazine Winter 2004 and WHO statistics)
4. Ask participants: "What might explain this unequal distribution?" Then add "The World Health Organization estimates that by 2025 persons 5 and 6 will have no access to safe water. What global forces do you think might explain this pattern?" People may say: Privatization, Pollution, Industrial agriculture, Industry etc.... Feel free to add a category or two if they are not mentioned.
5. Distribute the profiles to each volunteer and ask them not to reveal their identity until later on. Tell participants: "The six people sitting here have been given profiles of consumers or consumption sectors around the world." Ask the audience "Who do you think # 1 might be: What sector might be consuming 65% of our fresh water resources?...etc." After they have guessed, ask #1 to introduce herself/himself to us. Then ask: "Why do you think this person sits here?" And continue on to the last person.
6. Thank the volunteers for their help. Break up the group in to 6 groups and have each of the groups look at the profile of one of the six people or sectors represented. Handout the appropriate Water profile sheet to each participant.
7. Explain to the groups that their first task is to identify factors and macro forces that have shaped their unequal access to water (i.e., displacement, dams, World Bank loans etc...). Give the groups about 5 minutes for this part.
8. Their second task is to come up with a post-script. Given what they know of the person's profile what might he or she do to regain control over and access to adequate water or in the case of the CEO and the Agro-business owner what might the community do to hold them accountable. Encourage people to be creative and give them about 7-10 minutes each. Tell them that each group will be presenting a brief skit or debrief of their post-script to the rest of the group. Explain that they will be given 3 minutes each per presentation.
9. Support people during the small group sessions by making yourself available and checking in with each group to answer questions or clarify instructions.

10. Ask each group to provide a brief summary of who they are and the global policies or forces that have shaped their access or lack of access to water. Then give each group 3 minutes each to present their post-scripts.
11. After each debrief provide some context and tell people what happened. At the end, give people a handout of all the profiles with the “What happened next” real life postscripts (included as water profiles handout below).

Water Profiles:

Agro-business Owner

My name is Blairo Maggi. I am the Governor of Mato Grosso and the owner of Grupo Maggi (BR) Brazil's and probably the world's largest soybean producer. We use a sophisticated irrigation system drawing water from a nearby river for efficient, mechanized soybean production. We produce our own soy but also purchase soy from other farmers and transport it to export markets. We currently process over 3,000 tons of soybeans a day. Mad cow disease increased the demand for soybeans as livestock feed, so we sell about 90% of our products to livestock farmers in Europe and Japan. We now have 240,000 hectares of farming land under our control and employ over 3000 workers during the planting and harvest season. Our profit margins have increased dramatically since we received loans from the World Bank and the International Finance Corporation (IFC) to improve our storage facilities and to cut transport costs. Last year our sales reached a whopping \$600 million. The Brazilian government has also boosted our export capacity by lowering the taxes we have to pay on our soy. Environmental activists claim that our soybean farms have caused a 40 percent increase in deforestation of the Amazon. "I am not concerned about that and I don't feel the slightest guilt over what we are doing here. We are talking about an area larger than Europe that has barely been touched, so there is nothing at all to get worried about." Besides, we seem to be complying with the IFC's social and environmental ratings and to the conditionalities attached to the loan. (Source: Corpwatch, Common Dreams and Grupo Maggi)

CEO of Coal Company

My name is Gregory H. Boyce and I am the CEO of Peabody Energy, the world's largest coal company. We are an innovative, growing, low-cost energy provider, with 2004 sales of 227.2 million tons and \$3.6 billion in revenues. Our products fuel more than 10% of all U.S. electricity and 3% of worldwide electricity. To transport coal safely and efficiently, we mix it with water producing something called coal slurry (coal dust is highly explosive). Black Mesa Trust—an organization of Hopi farmers and elders concerned about their aquifer—claims that we have been drying up their sacred springs and streams and endangering people's livelihoods by pumping groundwater in northeastern Arizona. To transport our coal safely to the Mohave Generating Station in Nevada which is 273 miles away, we have been using about 3 million gallons of water a day for the past 30 years, but our research shows that this has had no significant impact on the environment or on people's lives. In the meantime, we have been able to lift water from the Colorado River to California and to provide the growing urban populations of Southern California, Arizona and New Mexico with power. (Source: Water Allies Network, Black Mesa Trust and Peabody Energy)

U.S. City Resident

My name is Roberta Sanders. I am a retired nurse living in Atlanta and I have been having trouble with my water. In 1998, Atlanta signed a 20 year contract worth \$420 million with the corporation United Water (UW) (A subsidiary of the French company Suez) becoming one of 12 U.S. cities to privatize its water systems in order to save money and improve water services and quality to all its residents. Ever since, my water and sewer bills have been rising along with boil advisory alerts, and I am having to get used to brown water coming out of my tap. When my faucet broke two years ago it took 10 days for UW to respond, which forced me to move in with my sister for a while. On top of all that, my landlord is starting to charge me for water (for the first time in 35 years) and I keep hearing of people's water being cut off who are behind on their payments. We're not just dealing with this as consumers. My nephew lost his job too after the takeover because the Water company cut its employees from 700 down to 300 to try to save costs which is why they aren't taking care of business and responding to repair calls like they used to. (Source: Public Citizens and Canadian Broadcasting Company)

Small Farmer

My name is Jaime Gonzales and I own a small farm in the Chinantla Alta of Oaxaca. My family and I farm corn on our small plot but are having a hard time making ends meet. We live in a community with no running water or electricity and we rely on rainwater for irrigation. Our drinking water is mostly rain and spring water, which we gather in cisterns that often accumulate dirt. Life is becoming harder and harder for us because our markets are being flooded with subsidized corn from the U.S. and we just can't compete. The price of corn has decreased by 70% over the past few years forcing my eldest son to move up to Los Angeles where he works as a day laborer and manages to send us some money each month. People are beginning to organize themselves to find access to new markets and help each other in improving growing techniques and production to better compete. (Source: Oxfam America)

Displaced rural worker

My name is Gabriela dos Santos and my family and I belong to the 70,000 families that were displaced by the Itaparica hydroelectric dam, which was built on the Sao Francisco River in Brazil. We used to farm a small plot of very fertile land in Bahia not far from the river. We grew beans, manioc, pumpkin and rice. When they displaced us in 1988 they promised to compensate us with land, small-scale irrigation schemes, money, wells etc...To this day we haven't seen a penny. We live far away from the river now in a very dry area. The nearest well is one mile away and we often rely on gathering rainwater in cisterns to get drinking water. All of us work our small plot of land and grow manioc, coconut and a variety of vegetables but we don't have enough land or water to grow the food we need to feed our children. My husband sometimes takes constructions jobs and we earn very little, but we are still fighting. (Source: World Bank and 50 years is Enough)

Refugee camp resident

My name is Hasan Ashour and I am a teenager living in the Arroub Refugee Camp in the Gaza Strip, Palestine. Our family of 10 is originally from Haifa where we used to own a large olive tree orchard. Now we are living in a two room concrete shelter built by a UN agency in the 1950s. We have no running water in the camp and rely on water from a well that we hand dug. Recently though, the well's water has been making people sick. My uncle says its because the Israelis destroyed the camp's sewage system during a recent bomb attack, and that the sewage is contaminating our water. My father is disabled and has severe kidney problems so not having safe drinking water is a big problem for him. We could buy water from the Israeli water company but they charge us three times as much as the Israeli settlers and a family like ours would need to pay \$100 to cover our monthly bill. We can barely survive on the \$300 my uncle and cousin bring in as construction workers. So we boil our well water and gather rainwater on our roof. (Source: Palestinian Hydrology Group)

Facilitator context:

You may choose to add any of the following context during the presentation sessions.

Profile 1: Context: Today industrial soybean production is eating up larger and larger chunks of the Amazon, nearly 10,000 square miles. In addition, aerial pesticide spraying is polluting water resources. The WHO estimates that 200,000+ people around the world die annually due to pesticide contamination and 3 million are poisoned every year. In Brazil 28% of farmers in Santa Catarina have been poisoned, and 7800 were poisoned in Parana between 1982 and 1992 due to pesticide contamination. Large-scale soy producers claim that the soy boom has created needed jobs and development in Brazil but during the soy boom over the past 10 years Brazil's percentage of people who experience hunger went from 30-60%. (Source: World Health Organization and the Landless Movement of Brazil)

Profile 3: Context: On average U.S. consumers, use 500 liters of water a day in comparison to 8 liters in Mali, 4.5 in the Gambia and 200 in Great Britain. It takes 50-100 liters of water to take a shower, 15 to flush the toilet etc.... The recommended usage is 50 liters a day per person. Interesting fact: 12 years ago, there were private operations in the drinking water field in 12 countries. They are now in 56 countries. (Source: World Health Organization and Canadian Broadcasting Company)

Profile 4: Context: The US pays its large-scale industrial corn farmers \$10 billion a year in subsidies, which encourages them to produce a surplus that is then dumped onto world markets at artificially low prices. US corn is dumped in Mexico at around \$120 million a year less than the cost of production. In the meantime, the price of Mexican corn has fallen more than 70% since NAFTA took effect. This has severely reduced the incomes of the 15 million Mexicans who depend on corn for their livelihood while

basic food prices have risen by 250%. (Source: Oxfam America Report “Dumping without Borders”)

Profile 5: According to the International Rivers Network. Large dams have forced some 40–80 million people from their lands in the past six decades.

Profile 6: According to the World Commission on Water, river pollution is displacing over 25 million people a year outnumbering war refugees.

Water profiles handout:

Agro-business Owner

My name is Blairo Maggi. I am the Governor of Mato Grosso and the owner of Grupo Maggi (BR), Brazil’s and probably the world’s largest soybean producer. We use a sophisticated irrigation system drawing water from a nearby river for efficient, mechanized soybean production. We produce our own soy but also purchase soy from other farmers and transport it to export markets. We currently process over 3,000 tons of soybeans a day. Mad cow disease increased the demand for soybeans as livestock feed, so we sell about 90% of our products to livestock farmers in Europe and Japan. We now have 240,000 hectares of farming land under our control and employ over 3000 workers during the planting and harvest season. Our profit margins have increased dramatically since we received loans from the World Bank and the International Finance Corporation (IFC) to improve our storage facilities and to cut transport costs. Last year our sales reached a whopping \$600 million. The Brazilian government has also boosted our export capacity by lowering the taxes we have to pay on our soy. Environmental activists claim that our soybean farms have caused a 40 percent increase in deforestation of the Amazon. “I am not concerned about that. It doesn’t mean anything at all, and I don’t feel the slightest guilt over what we are doing here. We are talking about an area larger than Europe that has barely been touched, so there is nothing at all to get worried about.” Besides, we seem to be complying with the IFC’s social and environmental ratings and to the conditionalities attached to the loan. **What is happening?:** Under pressure from environmental and social justice organizations in Brazil and abroad, World Bank president James Wolfensohn has called for an audit of Maggi’s loan by the IFC to review the social and environmental impact Maggi’s soybean and infrastructure expansion is having on the environment and on people living in the region. (Source: Corpwatch, Common Dreams and Grupo Maggi)

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U.S. city resident

My name is Roberta Sanders. I am a retired nurse living in Atlanta and I have been having trouble with my water. In 1998, Atlanta signed a 20 year contract worth \$420 million with the corporation United Water (UW) (which is a subsidiary of the French company Suez) becoming one of 12 U.S. cities to privatize its water systems in order to save money and improve water services and quality to all its residents. Ever since, my water and sewer bills have been rising along with boil advisory alerts, and I am having to get used to brown water coming out of my tap. When my faucet broke two years ago it took 10 days for UW to respond, which forced me to move in with my sister for a while. On top of all that, my landlord is starting to charge me for water (for the first time in 35 years) and I keep hearing of people's water being cut off who are behind on their payments. We're not just dealing with this as consumers. My nephew for example lost his job too after the takeover because the water company cut its employees from 700 down to 300 to try to save costs which is why they aren't taking care of business and responding to repair calls like they used to. **What happened?** In 2003, through a grassroots organizing effort and following numerous hearings and complaints by Atlanta's residents, the Mayor of Atlanta, Shirley Franklin, terminated the contract with UW and the water system is now back in public hands. This means there is more accountability and transparency because public utilities are controlled by elected officials and each time Atlanta residents flush their toilet or turn on their taps the profits are coming back to Atlanta and not going off to France or England, where most private water corporations are based. (Source: Public Citizens and Canadian Broadcasting Company).

Small farmer

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Displaced rural worker

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Refugee camp resident

My name is Hasan Ashour and I am a teenager living in the Arroub Refugee Camp in the Gaza Strip, Palestine. Our family of 10 is originally from Haifa where we used to own a large olive tree orchard, Now we are living in a two room concrete shelter built by a UN agency in the 1950s. We have no running water in the camp and rely on water from a well that we hand dug. Recently though the well's water has been making people sick. My uncle says its because the Israelis destroyed the camps sewage system during a recent bomb attack, and that the sewage is contaminating our water. My father is disabled and has severe kidney problems so not having safe drinking water is a big problem for him. We could buy water from the Israeli water company but they charge us three times as much as the Israeli settlers and a family like ours would need to pay \$100 to cover our monthly bill. We can barely survive on the \$300 my uncle and cousin bring in as construction workers. So we boil our well water and gather rainwater on our roof. What is happening now?: Through the Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committees (PARC) Hassan's mother is being trained to maintain a small garden behind their house and recently she has been teaching the family how to recycle water from washing dishes etc... to use for the garden. PARC also teaches the Ashour's how to better preserve and filter the little water they have. (Source: Palestinian Hydrology Group)

Wrap-up



Time

5-10 minutes



Preparation

- Write the sentences (to be completed) below on the back of one of your sheets of butcher paper ahead of time.



Facilitator Instructions

1. Thank people again for coming and for inviting you! Tell participants that you would like everyone to share something about their experience in this workshop

Option (Follow-up exercise): Ask people to complete one of following sentences....

After this workshop I hope to...

I want to find out more about...

I am inspired to ...

I was struck by...

2. After you have gone around the room tell people that you would be happy to schedule a follow-up workshop to discuss options for how people can get involved in advocacy to support the work of our partner organizations struggling for their rights to land and water.

3. Write your contact information on the board/butcher paper and offer people to stay in touch with you.