

Centre of Competence on Water for Peace

based at the University of Geneva
and the Geneva Graduate Institute

GENEVA

**WATER
HUB**

**Sharing and Sparing Water
for Peace**

Water for Peace

“Our experience shows that water – when adopted as a central element of the peacebuilding, sustainable development and humanitarian aid agendas – is a powerful driver of peace.”

Water knows no borders and is essential to all sectors of society. Competition for and tensions over water rise as we over-exploit water with inadequate governance in the face of a changing climate. The complexity of the challenge is multiplied by the crisis of multilateralism, resurgence of a multipolar world, and questioning of the foundations of international law.

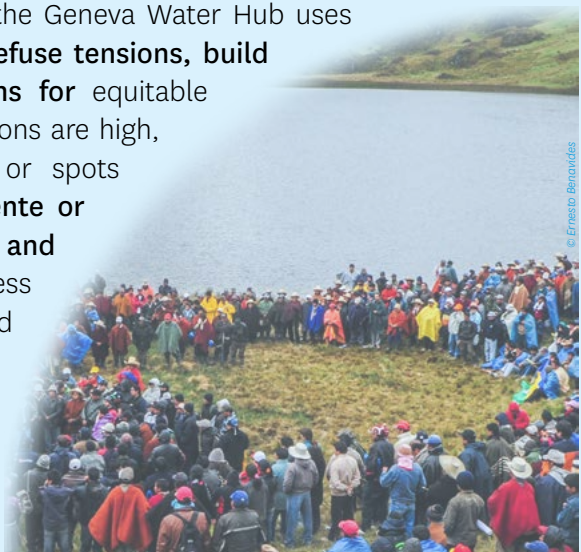
The Geneva Water Hub’s experience around the world has shown that in the current complex and challenging times, water brings people together. Cooperation over the resource itself proves a useful tool to address the challenges – and related grievances. **The Hub knows that when water is shared equitably and spared the ravages of pollution and armed conflict, peace can prevail.** After all, water can build trust among users, keep the door to dialogue open, and dissolve tensions.

1. Building Peace through Water Diplomacy

“The Geneva Water Hub positions water at the heart of peacebuilding efforts between communities and states – as an instrument of sustainable development and conflict transformation.”

While the world’s population has tripled in the last century, freshwater use has increased six fold. Competition for water is driven by an unending need to secure food, energy, public health and ecosystems - and can strain relations severely.

With the utmost confidentiality, the Geneva Water Hub uses water to **initiate processes to defuse tensions, build trust and create the conditions for** equitable water arrangements. Where tensions are high, the Hub guides joint analysis or spots pathways to **use water for détente or rapprochement, both locally and regionally**. Aware of the seamless space between humanitarian and development needs in fragile contexts, the Hub supports local actors to position water in their peacebuilding and development efforts.



2 ● Water in Times of Armed Conflict

“If the SDGs are really to leave no one behind, they must apply to civilians living in fragile contexts and conflict-affected areas. Human dignity is in peril when water systems are damaged by armed conflict and the unintended impact of trade sanctions.”

More than two billion people live in fragile contexts or conflict affected areas, where the destruction and pollution of water systems has serious consequences for the environment and for people’s health. In post-conflict settings, the reconstruction of water systems and the restoration of freshwater ecosystems damaged by war obliges further adoption of peacebuilding measures.

By systemizing the norms of International Humanitarian Law, Human Rights Law, International Water Law and International Environmental Law, related to the protection of water during and after armed conflict, the Geneva Water Hub, develops the [Geneva Principles on the Protection of Water Infrastructure](#).

By investigating the extent to which damages to water resources and water systems affect water quality, human health, and livelihoods, the **Hub advances the evidence base to better protect water from the reverberating effects of armed conflict and the unintended impact of trade sanctions.**



3 • Shaping Policy and Law

“The Geneva Water Hub places the inherent political weight of water at the heart of the multilateral law-building and policy-making agendas.”

The Geneva Water Hub advocates for **progressive, innovative, and inclusive policy and law** everywhere. Based on our analysis of the benefits of transboundary and inter-sectoral cooperation, and the merits of harmonising national and international legal frameworks, the Hub shapes policy and law for the sustainable use and sharing of water.

The Hub supports the **development of good practice through multi-stakeholder and confidential platforms**, and facilitates exchanges with key actors in **the humanitarian, development and peace communities** – all in alignment with the principles of international law.



Be in touch!

Join us in our mission to mainstream “water for peace” in peacebuilding, development programmes and humanitarian relief.



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Hosting the **Platform for International Water Law** (UNIGE), **Global Observatory for Water and Peace** (GOWP) and the **UNESCO Chair in Hydropolitics**.

The impact of the Geneva Water Hub relies on the continued support of:



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC



UNIVERSITÉ
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INSTITUT DE HAUTES
ÉTUDES INTERNATIONALES
ET DU DÉVELOPPEMENT
GRADUATE INSTITUTE
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DEVELOPMENT STUDIES



4 ● Capacity-building

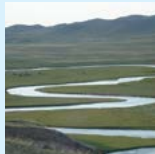
“Demonstrating how water catalyses Peace and inspires the future leaders of this world.”

The Geneva Water Hub provides tailor-made training programmes for civil society, military, and diplomats. We run fully-credited distance-learning courses on International Water Law and the law of Transboundary Aquifers in French and English, and a fully-credited two-week in-situ summer school in water governance through the University of Geneva amongst other trainings.

As part of the Geneva Water Hub’s extensive alumni network, **trained professionals form a community of practitioners to advance water for peace well into the future.**



MOOC on Water
Resources
Management
and Policy



Summer
School in Water
Governance:
Frameworks and
Negotiations



Online Course
on International
Water Law
and the Law of
Transboundary
Aquifers



E-learning
Course
on Water
Diplomacy and
Integration of
Water Norms in
Peacebuilding

genevawaterhub.org/teaching

5 • Setting the Research Agenda

“Research is the backbone of the Geneva Water Hub. It is through the Hub’s research activities that its science-diplomacy heart thrives.”

The Geneva Water Hub knows that **policy must be based on a solid understanding of socio-political processes**, if it is to be credible, legitimate, and salient to political processes. The Hub examines how alternative messages may counter damaging narratives, how joint visions and benefits can counter inequitable arrangements, and the extent to which international norms and law are useful in realpolitik. It avoids oversimplification or the provision of simple “solutions” for convenience, even as it communicates these effectively to non-expert audiences. In doing so, the Hub sets the research agenda for water and peace **critical and useful research**.



“A Matter of Survival”



The Drama of Water in a Time of Global Transformation



Tools for transboundary management of water and water uses in the greater Geneva



“A Critical Approach to International Water Management Trends - Policy and Practice.”