Dramatically increasing your own core capacity is the key to the future. We believe the future is bright, but it requires a massive change in the way we talk about water and peace. The Geneva Water Hub is an organization that is dedicated to understanding and implementing this change. The Hub focuses on the role of water in conflict and peacebuilding, and on the development of tools and strategies to support these processes. The Hub is based at the University of Geneva and the Geneva Graduate Institute, and it collaborates with a wide range of partners, including the World Meteorological Organization, UNESCO, and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.

The Geneva Water Hub is committed to building a strong network of professionals who are dedicated to the cause of water for peace. The Hub offers a range of training and development opportunities, including distance-learning courses, in-situ summer schools, and online courses. The Hub also provides a platform for researchers and practitioners to share their knowledge and experiences.

The impact of the Geneva Water Hub relies on the continued support of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, the University of Geneva, and the Geneva Graduate Institute.
Building Peace through Water Diplomacy

“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.

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. Water is a powerful driver of peace.

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, 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 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.

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.
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By systematizing the norms of International Humanitarian Law, Human Rights Law, 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.

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Sharing and Sparing Water for Peace

Centre of Competence on Water for Peace based at the University of Geneva and the Geneva Graduate Institute

"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.

"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.

The impact of the Geneva Water Hub relies on the continued support of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDF) and the University of Geneva.

Hosting: Platform for International Water Law (UNIGE), Global Observatory for Water and Peace (GOWP), UNESCO Chair in Hydropolitics, World Meteorological Organization (WMO)
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Be in touch!

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

4. Capacity-building

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