

World Student Christian Federation's Water Justice Campaign

Let justice roll down like a river, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.
-Amos 5: 24

As stewards of creation, water reminds us to connect to most basic elemental level. We recognize that water is a real, universal need and that connects all of God's world. As Christians, we know that water is a powerful symbol of our thirst for justice, of the power of the Holy Spirit, and of the Wellspring of life in Jesus Christ. As student activists, we see that due to human action, water scarcity, water pollution and water commercialisation and privatisation are serious threats to our fellow people of Earth – the poor, the oppressed, and the marginalized, with whom we are called to walk in solidarity.

The *World Water Day* slated on **22 March 2011** is our official worldwide launch of the campaign, which this year will also mark the Universal Day of Prayer for Students (UDPS). The *World Water Day* which is also declared by the United Nations, can be maximized and can be taken to herald the issue of water deprivation and raise awareness among our students, movements and communities. This we hope can be sustained in years of advocacy as our students look deeper into water justice issues and its impact on our local communities and in-contexts and connections with survival, sustainability, equality and justice.

How can we launch the Water Justice Campaign on the World Water Day?

Here are some suggestions:

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- Use UDPS liturgy on Water Justice, to be published this year by the WSCF in partnership with the Ecumenical Water Network that will be sent to your SCM.
- Encourage SCMs across the Federation to stage a “flash mob freeze” on their local campuses to highlight the issue of water justice, and encourage other creative symbolic actions.
- We ask that students come together at a place that highlights local or global water issues with signs/slogans on water as a human right, water scarcity, water privatization and control, conflict and for one minute freeze in place, to call attention to these important issues.

Sample slogans we can use:

1. WATER is a Human Right (to highlight water as fundamental need and human right)
2. We Thirst for JUSTICE! Water is a Right! (to stress scarcity of water/privatization)
3. Giant DAMs = Environment DAMage (to connect on dam/water privatization, environment degradation and displacement of people)
4. Peoples/Public Control NOT Corporate Control on Water!

Mozaik 27, *Climate Justice Now!*, “Water Justice Campaign”, 2011.

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- Hold a forum, discussion on the issues of Water Justice to raise awareness and create concern among students, ecumenical youth network, and local communities.

Although this is a global campaign to highlight that the water crisis is also a only a local issue as the media and political/business elites often portray, but a world-wide problem, students are encouraged to make this campaign relevant to their local contexts.

We encourage students partaking in this action to take pictures and videos and share them with the rest of the Federation through WSCF Connection and with the Interregional Office in Geneva. The campaign will aim to trigger conversations and reflections on how the water crisis is affecting local realities, indigenous people, marginalized communities and need for governments to genuinely respond to it.

Sustaining the Water Justice Campaign.

In order to respond in a sustained way, the federation has organized a Water Justice Task Force which will help in guiding our campaign and advocacy on this issue.

- Water Task Force also challenges SCMs across the Federation to collect “water testimonies”, stories of local water issues, struggles and campaigns. The Water Task Force will collect these stories into a book of testimonies to be published at the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation in Kingston, Jamaica in May 2011. These testimonies will showcase how the fight for water justice is both global and local, both unique and universal. Through these stories we can see and work toward a world where all may truly be one.
- It would be important for local SCMs to partner with groups and alliances already working on water issues to become part of advocacy groups putting pressure on water corporations and governments on water as a human right.
- Suggestion for students to start a local campaign to pressure their local municipality (or join a group that is already advocating this) to approve a water justice declaration and/or work on keeping/reverting their privatized water system to be public.
- Encourage students to inquire with their universities what they have done to conserve water and whether it would be feasible to make the campus a bottle water free zone (obviously if the sanitary conditions of the local context allow for it).
- The WSCF also exhort local and national SCMs and WSCF region to plan water pilgrimages to educate students on water issue, visit communities affected by water shortage and reflect theologically on water abundance/scarcity.

This two-year campaign will intertwine with the 2011 and 2012 WSCF advocacy themes of Overcoming Violence and Economic Justice, as we recognize that water is inextricably linked to these issues of mining justice, gender justice, land justice and indigenous rights. We invite SCMs to explore the interconnections between these themes, and to use these themes as they incorporate the Water Justice campaign to their local context.

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The Water Justice Taskforce is open to volunteers, please contact:
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Please contact Water Task Force or the WSCF Interregional Office with any questions!

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