

WOMEN OF WATER

NETWORK LONGEVITY GUIDE

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SHUKALB
WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE ASSOCIATION OF ALBANIA

Women of Water Network

Purpose & Introduction

The purpose of the Women of Water Network is to connect women in the wastewater sector worldwide and provide them a place to develop:

- Mentorship
- Opportunities
- Discussion on women's obstacles in the sector and possible solutions

What do attendees want to get out of the network?

- A space to talk about issues that women face in the sector
- The opportunity to meet other women and create connections
- A chance to learn about women's experiences in other countries and workplaces
- A way to learn about "best cases" of women in the industry, which act as a way to encourage other women
 - Our team created profiles of women with this purpose in mind. These profiles have pictures, audio and video recordings, and follow a narrative of the woman's career relating to the sector
- Opportunities for mentorship
- Opportunities to discuss change or implementation of legislation that prevents gender discrimination

Roles & Network Structure

The network will ideally be communal, with multiple women taking on the responsibility of a few volunteer executive roles (listed below).

- Admins
 - Accept new members into the group
 - Handle postings on the Facebook group and other social media platforms
 - This position will also be shared with SHUKALB, whose Facebook page is linked to the group
- Moderators
 - Generate and post discussion topics
 - Moderate discussions both in the Facebook Group and possible future forum events
- Event Managers
 - Organize and schedule future events for the network similar to the Building Bridges Over Water forum
 - Organize/expand the "Building Bridges Over Water" forum

- Members
 - Post, comment, and interact
 - Invite friends, classmates, and colleagues to join
 - Attend events
 - Contribute ideas to the network

Women of Water - SHUKALB Facebook Group

Purpose: The Women of Water - SHUKALB Facebook group serves to provide members of the network with a way to connect and discuss topics relating to the network or women in wastewater. It also acts as the main platform for mentorship and announcements from SHUKALB or group administrators.

- Possible discussion topics:
 - Networking tips
 - Mentorship
 - Gender inequality manifesting in the sector
 - Obstacles relating to gender inequality and how to address them
 - Improvements on gender diversity that companies are making
 - What have people seen work to improve gender diversity?
 - Job search advice
 - International experience and working/learning abroad
 - What makes people passionate about the sector?
 - New technology, processes, etc.
 - Technological and gender diversity changes for the future
 - Improvements to the sector
 - Maintaining work-life balance
- Potential posts:
 - Weekly discussion thread
 - New opportunities in the wastewater sector
 - Personal experiences/stories
 - Wastewater news/advancements

- Additional:
 - Look more into the mentorship program/option available on FB's platform
 - Connect with other groups or pages that may have similar goals

Events

Purpose: Provide members with opportunities for networking, discussion, and more

- Possible future events:
 - Remote:
 - Discussion forum (similar to the "Building Bridges Over Water" forum held on December 7th, 2020)
 - Smaller-scale discussion rooms on Zoom, Skype, etc.
 - Monthly "open" check-in, where members can meet informally
 - Pairing of members to be "pen pals"
 - Could switch to new pen pals every month, two months, etc.
 - Virtual plant tours
 - Webinar on issues of gender inequality, where speakers can share experiences
 - In-person (when it becomes possible):
 - Round table of women on committees for gender inclusion
 - In-person plant tours, such as for younger members
 - In-person discussion opportunities similar to the discussion forum

Network Expectations

- Professionalism and kindness is expected
- No hate speech, harassment, or bullying
- No promotions, solicitation, or irrelevant advertisements
- Political discussion is allowed; however, no personal political viewpoints are to be projected

"Building Bridges Over Water" Discussion Forum

Overview:

This event served as a launch of the network, an opportunity to meet wastewater professionals from around the world, and a platform for conversations surrounding opportunities, successes, and obstacles in the sector.

Who was invited?

Women and men from international wastewater sectors. This included both contacts of SHUKALB and our interviewees.

Format:

After introductions by SHUKALB and the Women and Water Team, the forum cycled from speaker to breakout rooms to full group discussions three times.

- Speakers
 - Four speakers from Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, and the United States were asked prior to the forum to speak about how discussion prompts relate to their personal experiences and were given 3-7 minutes each
 - Speakers were translated
- Breakout Rooms
 - Attendees were encouraged to go into breakout rooms to have individualized conversations with each other over the discussion prompts
 - Breakout rooms were separated by languages, had 4-7 attendees each, and were 10 minutes each
- Full Group Discussions
 - Attendees were encouraged to share with the group what they spoke about in their breakout room
 - Full group discussions were translated

Discussion Prompts:

- What opportunities have you taken advantage of through networks and other professional organizations?
- What do you hope to gain from this network of women and what will make it successful?
- What changes have you seen regarding gender inequality that have been successful and unsuccessful?
- What changes would you like to see (i.e. from companies, legislation)?
- Have you had a mentor or other positive influence? How did they affect your career?
- How do you see mentorship opportunities being developed through this network?

Setting up a forum event

Planning for an event with a large number of attendees began 4-6 weeks in advance.

- Allot ample time to contact speakers and attendees
- Create materials for the event (such as a flyer)
 - Send a flyer (we created one on Canva.com) AT LEAST 2 weeks in advance
- Determine the event agenda
- Promotion: utilize SHUKALB's contacts
- Registration: SHUKALB can send a registration form for the event, giving attendees a direct method to sign up and capture email addresses
- Send an agenda of the event with prompts to attendees a few days prior to the forum
 - Determine prompts with SHUKALB, speakers for the event, and other experts or interested parties

Challenges and Successes

- Many attendees greatly enjoyed the event
- Some attendees didn't talk or had technical issues that prevented them from talking
 - Use the chat feature to invite people to talk
 - Have a moderator (occasionally) read the messages in the chat
- Inviting women from international wastewater sectors allowed participants to hear a wide range of views and experiences
- Attendees wanted more time to discuss certain topics
- Speakers were a great way to introduce topics
- Translation made most of the event accessible
 - Breakout rooms were not translated
- Breakout rooms were more effective for discussion than the large group discussion format

Suggestions for future

- Host events dedicated to one specific topic or theme
- Distribute prompts and topics 2 days - 1 week prior to the event so attendees can prepare
- Promote profiles on SHUKALB's page and Facebook Group
- Create more profiles of model women in the wastewater sector