

Introducing RWSN

the global knowledge network for practical professionalism in rural water supply



RWSN Drilling Supervision Training, Sierra Leone (photo: K. Danert)

What is RWSN?

The Rural Water Supply Network (RWSN) is a vibrant global network of more than 12,000 professionals and more than 80 organisations. Together, we are committed to the vision of a world in which all rural people have access to safe, sustainable and reliable water supplies.

Since 1992, we have been respected for our neutrality, openness, professionalism and emphasis on high quality knowledge exchange. Our focus is helping our members find practical solutions to real world challenges. The network is considered a unique place to meet and discuss a broad spectrum of rural water issues from local to global. We promote South-South dialogue and membership is free and open to all so that cost is not a barrier to learning.

RWSN is run by a Secretariat, an Executive Steering Committee and a virtual team of leading professionals who organise networking and knowledge activities around six themes. Through this network individuals and organisations share, learn, and connect with each other. They can keep up to date with the latest research, technology and real-world operational experiences from across the globe.

Why is RWSN needed?

Many actors are working to address global water challenges, but they cannot be successful alone. SDG 6.1 calls for universal access to safe and affordable drinking water. Given that 8 out of 10 people without such access live in rural areas, RWSN's role is critical for achieving this target.

Our network helps governments, NGOs, development partners and the private sector learn from each other, to jointly develop locally adapted solutions and to scale up successful approaches.

Professionalism is needed to ensure that rural water supply, like any other service, is delivered effectively, efficiently and with integrity.

“ *The RWSN is a highly competent, advanced community-building network which connects people who would likely not have been connected before and disseminates valuable knowledge to its members, which can be applied to practice.* ”

“ *RWSN has been described through interviews with strategic and individual members, to be a ‘unique’ network and the prime (or the only) professional network that supports scale up of rural water supply for practitioners.* ”

Source: [2017 Independent Evaluation of RWSN](#)

What does RWSN do – and where do we want go?

RWSN is a unique place to get advice from peers, to find practical guidance and latest findings from research, and to co-create new projects or knowledge products for rural water supply, (such as *Women’s empowerment through rural water supply activities* (2021)). We do this through various means and are always experimenting and learning. Our vision is that RWSN becomes an even stronger and truly global platform for all professionals working to achieve universal access to safe water in rural areas. *We love collaborating and are open to new partners who want to join us on this journey.*

WHAT WE DO NOW	OUR PLANS FOR THE NEXT 5 YEARS
<p>Online, multilingual exchange between members: e-discussions, webinars, specialist technical groups, young professionals and specific country/language communities.</p>	<p>Expand our active membership: Continue to focus on Africa, but strengthen our network in Asia and Latin America, particularly among small water supply operators, regulators and service authorities.</p>
<p>Young Professional Mentoring: matching young with senior water professionals. Launched in 2019, the mentoring programme has benefited more than 700 young professionals in over 90 countries.</p>	<p>Extend the mentoring to supporting water/WASH professionals of all ages, particularly women. We believe that systematic change will only happen when there is greater gender equality in decision-making at all levels.</p>
<p>Innovation and Knowledge Brokering: working with researchers to help them collaborate and communicate with likely end users of their research.</p>	<p>Convene key stakeholders to support the scaling-up of proven solutions, particularly around solar pumping, drilling procurement and supervision, service digitalisation and household investments in self-supply.</p>
<p>Specialist training (online and face-to-face): drilling supervision; solar pumping, rural water entrepreneur artisans; writing skills for water practitioners; rural water technology uptake.</p>	<p>Establish systematic training and professional development opportunities with education sector partners, both online and face-to-face, rather than the current <i>ad hoc</i> arrangements.</p>
<p>Peer-reviewed publications, with a focus on practical guidelines and documenting real-world experiences. Members can submit manuscripts, which are peer-reviewed by relevant expert members.</p>	<p>Decolonising knowledge: Increase high quality publications from Southern authors and organisations.</p>
<p>RWSN Forum: a unique member-driven conference that is the only global event dedicated to rural water supply. It takes place every five years (last one 2016, Côte d’Ivoire)</p>	<p>Organising an RWSN Forum that may be a hybrid of online and face-to-face. It is an opportunity to find new ways to network globally and locally in a less carbon-intensive way.</p>
<p>A hub within a global system: we balance the depth of our specialism with the breadth of our bridge-building with other global, national water, WASH and international development networks, such as Sanitation and Water for All, and the Sustainable Sanitation Alliance.</p>	<p>On 30th September 2020, RWSN was accepted as a Partner of UN-Water. We aim to use this opportunity to strengthen collaboration with UN partners and to be a voice for rural water in the SDG dialogue.</p>

Who is RWSN?

Chair: Dr Tommy Ka Kit Ngai, WaterAid

Secretariat Director: Sean Furey, Skat Foundation

Executive Steering Committee:

skat foundation

unicef 



 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC

 WaterAid

 IRC

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RWSN is partner of:



Benson Kandeh, a rural water entrepreneur from Sierra Leone, networking with other RWSN Young Water Professionals at SIWI World Water Week 2019

(photo: S. Fürst)