

# LET'S TALK ABOUT WATER and MAYORS MAKE MOVIES

## SEPTEMBER 2024 NEWSLETTER

This newsletter is a publication of *Let's Talk About Water* and *Mayors Make Movies* organizations, sponsors of the 2024 Latin American Prize for Short Films about Water and Science

Remember to submit your film by going to Filmfreeway, and compete for awards by accessing: <https://mayorsmakemovies.org/prize-page/>

### In this issue, LET'S TALK ABOUT... WATER COMMUNICATION

Communication is the key to bringing clarity and understanding to the water crisis and its solutions and to promote water and earth science education.



Photo: Paul Skorupskas - Unsplash+

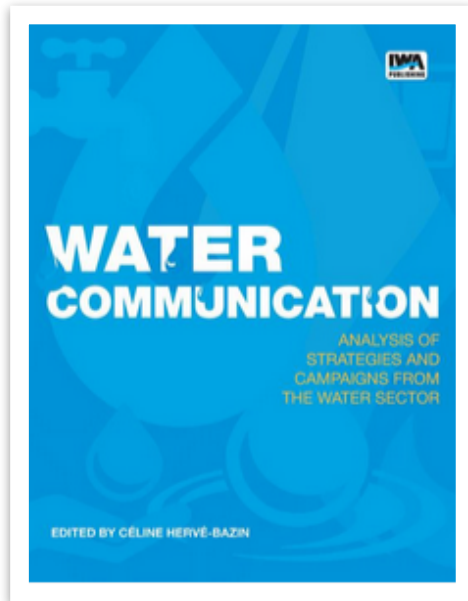
#### THE GREAT COMMUNICATION CHALLENGE

**Communication** is vital when thinking about water. Its role spans from policy makers, utility managers, community leaders, comms professionals involved in water management and students in water sciences and environment. **This is a common challenge in water management around the world. And it's never been more urgent to talk about water...** Communities ask how can we protect our water and keep it safe? City authorities worry not only about water supply and drinking water, but also about lakes, parks and dams and how to keep them healthy, functioning and serving the public. Water utilities ask, how do we communicate the value of the services we provide? How do we keep the trust of our customers? **These questions need answers, these issues need solutions, and we all need to participate in this discussion.**

What about floods, droughts, water rationing and contamination spills prevention? These are key topics for advancing communication among water stakeholders which also involve warnings and alerts, in emergency situations. **A constant flow of information about water is essential to understanding how to deal with the water crisis, mitigation and protection of water resources and why communication is key.**

**Effective Communication for Water Resilient Communities** is a recent study that provides a wide review of various approaches to effective communication. It highlights that *"Communications to promote resilience among consumers need to reach a wide audience, capture audiences' attention, build awareness and motivate water consumers to consume*

water sustainably”. But warns that **“While the media and technology have rapidly evolved and awareness among consumers may have increased, this has not been sufficient to make the communication effective in changing behavior.”** The full article can be found at <https://www.mdpi.com/2073-4441/13/20/2880> . That means more work needs to be done.



So, how do we approach this issue? The **Water Communication** book is a useful tool for understanding what communication on water means, who communicates and on what topics. This book, by recognized specialist in the communication sector on water and sustainable development, **Céline Hervé-Bazin**, facilitates coordination within the water sector and its organizations as water is a wide field of applications where inadequate words and language understanding between its stakeholders is one of the main obstacles today. The book gives a general outlook and a retrospective of the history of the water sector in terms of communication and dives deep into concepts of communication among them, the differences between communication, information, mediation, raising awareness, as well as examples of communication campaigns on water.

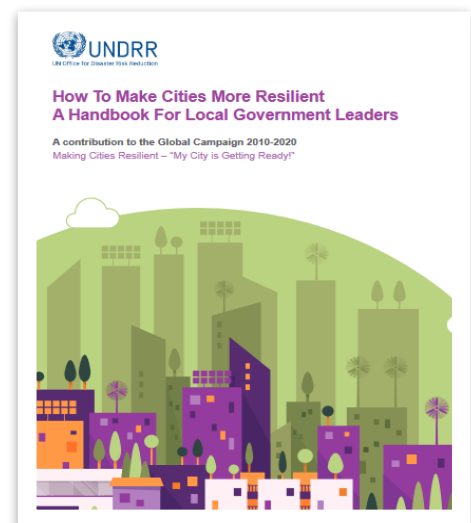
**Water Communication - Analysis of Strategies and Campaigns from the Water Sector** <https://iwaponline.com/ebooks/book/406/Water-Communication-Analysis-of-Strategies-and>

## THE ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND WHERE TO FIND HELP

Launched in May 2010, by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNODD), the Making Cities Resilient: “My city is getting ready!” Campaign addresses local risk governance, urban risk and resilience. The Making Cities Resilient Campaign has continued under Making Cities Resilient 2030 (MCR2030) (<https://mcr2030.undrr.org/>)

This **Handbook for Local Government Leaders** provides mayors, governors, councilors and others with a generic framework for risk reduction and points to good practices and tools that are already being applied in different cities for that purpose. It responds to the following key questions: WHY building disaster resilience is beneficial; WHAT kind of strategies and actions are required; and HOW to go about the task. Download the handbook in English:

<https://www.undrr.org/media/73120/download?startDownload=20240809>



## WHAT ABOUT SOCIAL MEDIA?

Another great tool! Maybe the best? Utilities sponsored studies have shown that social media can be used for customer engagement, crisis communications, and monitoring and surveillance for water quality. As we know, social media is a powerful web of contacts that can be reached and engaged... if the message is well crafted. Some tips are mandatory when dealing with comms in social media: **keep it simple, direct and fun. Bring up meaningful content, educate and engage.** Create campaigns that are important to people either in your area or your continent. Water is everywhere and one can reach vast audiences when dealing with a local problem that may also be happening somewhere else around the world. And these connections can help find solutions with a public alliance and help from local leaders, scientists and politicians. For more tips to help water professionals connect with an online audience through social media, take a look at [Six Ways to Deepen Your Engagement on Social Media](#)

from the **US Water Alliance** and [5 Ways to Use Social Media to Promote the Value of Water](#) from the **Water Environment Federation**.

And, of course, follow us on Instagram: [@water.film.prize](#)

## THE POWER OF FILM TO COMMUNICATE ABOUT WATER



To engender change and awareness around local, regional, and global water issues we face, we need discussion—and what better force for sparking debate than the moving picture? That’s the idea behind the start of **Let’s Talk About Water**, more than 15 years ago.

**Linda Lilienfeld**, the creator and Project Coordinator of **Let’s Talk About Water** and **Mayors Make Movies**, has thirty-five years of film and picture research experience in history and natural science. Both initiatives aim at bridging the paths of communication between scientists, students and the broader public community.

Says **Linda Lilienfeld**: “I believe in the power of film to make people think, feel and understand. I believe in the importance of water. It knits us and the physical world all

together. The efforts and knowledge of water scientists must be made more accessible to a wider public. I believe in the power of film to make this happen. Let’s talk about water!” You can find out all about the **Let’s Talk About Water** project [here](#).

With that in mind, **Mayors Make Movies** was launched in 2022 as an initiative leveraging film as a powerful educational tool in water science and water policy communication. Only sparking dialogue between the scientific and policy communities, local leaders and authorities assures that an informed politician can make better decisions for his or her community.

This collaboration can be witnessed in the short film [“Gulf of Morbihan”](#) where these players are involved in giving this fragile shore of France the best and most sustainable care. We invite you to watch below:



**Communication impacts us in different ways** and is also expressed in many forms. Messages can be embedded in artform, in entertainment, in experience sharing and also in science-based facts that cannot be ignored. This kaleidoscopic approach is well represented in a section of the **Let’s Talk About Water** webpage under [Short Films & Scientific Visualizations About Water](#). We hope it’s inspiring to media creators and water communicators as ways of getting key messages across to a vast array of public audiences and authorities.

With the **2024 Latin American Prize for Short Films about Water and Science** we hope to enhance our open collection of engaging short films that can spark inspiration for local community actions as well as help bridge the gap between scientists and politicians, pursuing our goals:

- Promote water science education using the power of film.
- Encourage storytellers and water experts to join hands and co-create concise, creative, and informative short films.
- Produce content that can reach a wider audience, specifically used to encourage greater participation in water-related issues and solutions.

**Stay tuned for the announcement of the winners of this year's prize to be disclosed October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024!**

