



Operators Without Borders Year - AGM 2022 Report of the Chair

While COVID has continued to impact our in-person services in the last year, OWB has continued to expand its reach, services and reputation. It has been a busy and productive year. In the 2021 Report the switch from in person to on-line, virtual training was documented. At that time we were mostly focused on the Caribbean Region. In the last year we have broadened our geographic reach and have projects underway in Asia, Africa and Latin America as well as continuing collaborations in the Caribbean. A further goal was to strengthen existing relationships with other organizations and Associations and build new ones.

Developing Our Organization.

Our Treasurer, Kalpna Solanki, had to resign due to other commitments and we are delighted that Kathy Obad has taken over the position. Kathy is a Certified Human Resource Professional, worked in the banking industry for over 15 years and now runs a consulting firm specializing in bookkeeping and financial planning. She has always maintained that volunteering is a critical component in her life and has volunteered in the position of VP, with the Canadian Cancer Society, Richmond and also with the Nanaimo Community Hospice Society.

Taking over Kalpna's position as the Communication and Marketing Committee and Board member we are delighted that a member of OWB's Advisory Committee agreed to step into the role. Kevin is the Assistant to the Director Broward County Water and Wastewater Services. He is also Co-Chair of the Caribbean Water and Wastewater Committee on Non-Revenue Water.

We have continued populating our committees and this brings both diversity of talents and opinions and takes the full load off the Board members. For all those working on the Governance, Deployment, SOP, Communications and Marketing and Advisory Committees we extend a heartfelt thank you. We are grateful for the time you give.

Fundraising and Grants

We are also particularly grateful to our sponsors and donors. We continue to be supported by WEF, EOCP, Water Professionals International (formerly EOCP), the Western Canada On-Site Wastewater Management Association, Wastewater Education, Canadian Water and Wastewater Association, the Caribbean Desalination Association. Coming on board in various forms this year are AWWA, BCWWA, the International Development Bank (IDB) and the Caribbean Regional Environmental Wastewater (CReW) programme.

The latter two organizations responded positively to grant submissions. IDB is funding \$40,000 Incident Command Systems training starting in May, to three Caribbean countries, Jamaica, Bahamas and Barbados to bring them through Levels 100-300. In conjunction with the Caribbean Water and Sewerage Association, (CAWASA) we obtained \$47,400 from the CReW programme for travel expenses to train operators in Barbados, St Lucia, Belize and Grenada in Level 1/2

Wastewater Treatment and Collection as well as deliver Train the Trainer workshops. This should result in approximately 80 operators taking their Level 1 or 2 certification exams.

Services & Programs.

Caribbean:

We continue to work with CAWASA delivering weekly webinars designed for operators as well as delivering technical training programmes. Following the two exam prep courses we ran last year in Water Treatment and Water Distribution we delivered a successful Wastewater Exam Preparation Level 1-2 workshop.

Haiti:

We continue to work closely with the Haiti HANWASH team and attend three weekly meetings. The goal is to provide potable water to all Haitians by 2030. During the next five years (the "Pilot Phase"), the target is drinking water service coverage for more than 700,000 people living in seven pilot communes: Cavaillon, Croix-des-Bouquets, Ferrier, Leogane, Les Cayes, Pignon, and Terre-Neuve.



Figure 1 Pilot projects ; Haiti

OWB is committed to the capacity building aspects of the initiative. We are getting closer to the time when we can deliver in person training to the operators in the pilot communes. We have already had meetings on how to decrease the Non-Revenue Water including delivering a District Metered Area workshop and look forward to contributing further.

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Ukraine:

Another goal that OWB has for the upcoming year is helping Ukraine. We cannot send people



Figure 2 2; Klara Ramm
Polish Chamber of
Commerce Water
Association

into a war zone but we are meeting with a number of actors and looking at what we can do right now. Our first initiative is to deliver an Incident Command Systems disaster workshop through the Polish Chamber of Commerce Water Association. Participants will come from Polish utilities and perhaps some operators from Ukraine will be able to join us. It will also be open to other operators In the EU who wish to collaborate in helping rebuild Ukraine. We do not know when this might take place but we are gearing up to be ready when the time is right whether it is 2 months, 2 years or longer in the future. In June Chair, Valerie Jenkinson, will meet with the head of UN

Habitat as well as leaders from the Global Water Operators Partners Alliance (GWOPA) in Bonn and with Polish associates in Warsaw to plan our collaboration and strategy.

OWB is also part of the WASH group and attends regular WASH meetings.



Global Wastewater Initiative (GWI):

Chair Valerie Jenkinson sits on the Leadership Committee of GWI and arranged a presentation by Paul Bishop from WPI. The Leadership Committee embraced the Operator Certification concept and now two pilot projects are being set up. The first pilot project for the African continent will take place with the Nakuru Urban Water and Sanitation Company in Kenya. We are working with both the Minister and the Utility's technical Manager to move this forward. For Asia we are collaborating with Dr. Rahinar Ibrahim at the University in Malaysia to pilot test wastewater certification in the community of Sabah.

Latin America:



Greg Solecki delivering ICS training virtually

In collaboration with the Canadian Trade Commission in Buenos Aires, OWB is working on a couple of different projects in Latin America. The first is the delivery of ICS training. Greg Solecki a Level 100 training workshop to utility operators from approximately 10 different Latin American countries. We are in the process of setting up workshops for Level 200.

In addition volunteers Ian Mcilwham and Janine DeBoer has been working with a large Latin American utility to find a solution to a water pollution problem they have been experiencing.

SOP Project

Chair of the SOP Committee, Marcel Misuraca, has put together a Committee which is just completing reviewing and formatting approximately 200 SOPs that will be made available free of charge to utilities in developing countries. This is a major OWB initiative and we hope will be invaluable to utilities.

In addition to the regular SOPs the Committee is tasked with the development of a set of Disaster SOPs at the behest of Ton Vlugman one of our Advisory Committee members who recently retired from the Pan American Health Organization. In collaboration with CAWASA, OWB volunteers led two virtual workshops with utility representatives attending from throughout the Caribbean. Patricia Aquing from our Advisory Committee has submitted a grant application to IWeCo to fund an in-person workshop to drive this initiative forward.

Caribbean Water and Sewerage Association (CAWASA)

We continue to work in partnership with the Caribbean Water and Sewerage (CAWASA). We express our thanks to Ignatius Jean their Executive Director and a long- time friend from St Lucia for working so closely with us. In conjunction with CAWASA we have, since May 2020, put on many webinars and training sessions that have all been very well received.



Other Partnerships and Associations

Western Canada Onsite Wastewater Management Association (WCOWMA)

The Western Canada Onsite Wastewater Management Association again welcomed us as a participant to their BC conference. Greg Solecki delivered the keynote address and Valerie, Ian : *Greg Solecki delivering ICS training to water operators* Mcilwham and Jason Mank delivered an update on OWB's activities.

EOCP:

Thanks again to the EOCP for their continued support. They provided OWB an opportunity to speak at their conference, continue to support with our website and have offered to sponsor up to three operators expenses to travel to the next disaster.

Water Action Network

The Chair met with Piers Clark from Isle Utilities while in the UK in January. Piers has been instrumental in introducing OWD to some influential players in the sector and is committed to helping efforts in Ukraine

CARIBDA

CaribDA has been generous in their support of OWB and has offered a free exhibit spot and a chance to speak to their delegates at their upcoming conference in June.

South Florida Utilities -Workplace- Caribbean

OWB has been invited to take part in a discussion and panel at the upcoming meeting between South Florida and the Caribbean.

Wastewater Education Org:

Executive Director Dendra Best has been a great supporter. She made available their professional education platform for Zoom as well as putting our name forward to for participation in the 2023 Water & Wastewater Equipment, Treatment & Transport (WWETT) Show. We have since been offered a 60-minute speaking spot and a free exhibit table.

WEFTEC :

A big thank you to Paul Bishop and ABC who not only donated a further \$5000 and committed to funding Professional Operators (PO) status volunteers but who donated a room at WEFTEC and invited Valerie to the PO pinning ceremony where staff and Board members from both AWWA and WEF were in attendance. Valerie had an opportunity to meet with both groups to see how they might support OWB. She also met with a couple of suppliers and presented sponsorship



opportunities to them. Both Paul and Jackie Jarrell in their presentations gave kudos to the work done by OWB. Two great new volunteers came from the meetings as well as an invitation to present at the WEF Water Operators meeting in January.

Ian Mcilwham and Jason Mank joined the Chair to present a talk to the WEF Plant Operator and Maintenance Committee (POMC). This was well received and two new members signed up. Stacy the Chair of the Committee subsequently has given two presentations – one of WEF and one on Pumps for the CAWASA Wednesday webinars. They have expressed interest in furthering the relationship with OWB.

CWWA: OWB was given a chance to not only present at the CWWA conference in October but was also given a platform to address the High-Level Forum attended by Ministers with responsibility for water throughout the Caribbean Region. OWB was mentioned numerous times by many speakers.

GWOPA:

OWB was able to deliver a panel discussion at the GWOPA conference. This is a conference over 11 days attended by delegates around the world although little known in North America. The opening plenary saw addresses by members of the Royal Family in several countries who recognize the importance of water. Thank you to Greg, Ian and Jason for being panelists.

World Toilet Day:

Global Wastewater Initiative which is an arm of UNEP held a World Toilet Day Symposium on November 17/18th with delegates around the world. The OWB Chair moderated Day 2 and also presented on behalf of OWB. Greg Solecki and Ian Mcilwham were two of the panelists along with Chris Corbin an old friend and colleague of the Chair from UNEP in the Caribbean.

We continue to receive an increasing number of requests for both speaking at conferences and/or to provide training or advice from utilities and Associations world-wide as awareness of OWB's grows alongside the reputation we have established

Recognition

We wish to thank all our volunteers and those who signed up as members this year. You are making a difference. To all the volunteers we owe our gratitude. We can always find a place for additional volunteers. Even if you can only spare one or two hours a month your contribution is sought and valued.

At the AGM the first volunteer of The Year award will be presented. The awardee will be announced at the AGM.

To our talented Advisory Committee thank you for your guidance and expertise. To all our partners mentioned in this report we appreciate the support you continue to give us. Most of all gratitude is extended to OWBs wonderful Board of Directors without whom none of this would have happened. To Madeleine Butschler, Robert Haller and Carl Yates, Jason Mank, Kathy Obad and Kevin Carter a heartfelt thank you.



Valerie Jenkinson
Chair

For more information, to sign up as a member or volunteer or donate go to our website
<https://operatorswithoutborders.org/>