

Merel Laauwen

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Impact-driven water consultant. Strong analytical, communication, and research skills. Passionate about improving access to global water services through systems strengthening. Demonstrated history of international experience: growing up in Shanghai, studying in the UK and the Netherlands, working remotely on projects in Ethiopia, Somalia & MENA.

Education

University of Oxford

MSc Water Science, Policy & Management, 2022

Grade: First Class / Distinction

Awards: Hubert Award for Top

MSc Student & Worshipful

Company of Water Conservators'

Dissertation Prize for:

"Reinforcing feedbacks for sustainable implementation of rural drinking-water treatment technology" (A+)

Amsterdam University College

BSc Environmental Sciences, Law & Policy, 2020

Grade: Summa Cum Laude

Awards: Capstone Thesis Prize for:

"An empirical study into the drivers of adaptive behavior to drought in Kenya" (A+)

Shanghai American School

International Baccalaureate Diploma, 2017

Grade: Summa Cum Laude

Languages (5=advanced, 1=basic)

	Reading	Speaking	Writing
English	5	5	5
Dutch	5	5	5
Spanish	4	3	4
Mandarin	2	3	2

Key skills

- Enthusiastic and proactive team-player
- Excellent report writing and copyediting
- Confident public speaker and communicator
- Highly organized with attention to detail
- Qualitative research skills (interviews, surveys, content analysis)

Professional experience

Independent Consultant

Oct 2022 – now

- **World Health Organization (WHO):** Providing ongoing product development and testing support for the WASH Accounts Production Tool (WAPT)
- **IRCWASH:**
 - Developed tools and prepared workshops for the UNICEF Somalia WASH team to support their undertaking of Sector Wide Sustainability Checks (SWSC) in Puntland, Somalia
 - Provided analytical and report-writing support for the USAID funded program 'Transform WASH' on market-based Sanitation in Ethiopia
 - Supported the 'One for All' Global Landscape Report, including research, data analysis (GLAAS, SWA, OECD), and report-writing
- **WASHWeb:** Co-leading an initiative to make data in the water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) sector discoverable, usable and representative. Responsible for coordinating working groups, establishing partnerships, maintaining communications, and hosting webinars
- **WASHNote Associate:** Supporting ongoing consultancy assignments with day-to-day project management and analytical support
- **WASH Agenda for Change:** Designed a novel Results Framework outlining quantitative and qualitative measures (including outcome harvesting) for monitoring progress against their 2030 Global Strategy
- **Segura Water:** Co-founded Segura to improve global water quality through novel, highly accurate, affordable field water quality testing solutions. Participated in a London-based accelerator program (Planet Positive Lab), which led to pre-seed funding. Now supporting as an advisor
- **International Water Management Institute (IWMI):** Performed a systematic literature review and scoping research on the use of anticipatory action in communities hosting refugees and internally displaced persons
- **Global Canopy:** Research support for baseline reviews of commodity policies and transparency of financial institutions on deforestation and human rights, with a focus on Dutch to English translation

Previous professional experience

Junior Researcher

International Water Management Institute

Feb 2022 – July 2022

- Focused on strengthening evidence-based decision-making to support Anticipatory Action in 'compound crises' for the Fragility, Conflict & Migration initiative
- Conducted literature reviews, developed concept notes, and participated in meetings with the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre, UNHCR, and UNEP

Sustainability Consultant

MJ Hudson ESG & Sustainability (now Holtara)

Aug 2020 – July 2021

- Performed environmental, social and governance (ESG) analyses for private equity firms and family offices
- Kickstarted the optimization of ESG methodologies, leading to the firm's later award-winning ESG assessment platform
- Independently managed projects for private equity clients and was promoted on an advanced timeline

Pro bono

Steering Committee Member – Community of Practice for Decentralized Chlorine Use

EOS International & PATH

Jan 2023 – now

- Established a community of practice for sharing learnings on decentralized chlorine use amongst ~30 academics and practitioners seeking to improve long-term, sustainable implementation of water treatment

Junior Rapporteur World Water Week

Stockholm International Water Institute

Aug 2023 – Sept 2023

- Selected as one of 17 junior rapporteurs from around the world to report on the content and quality of sessions hosted throughout the week
- Encouraged to engage critically with the material, I also contributed to a final report housed on the SIWI website

Director & Strategy Consultant

The Young Consultant / De Kleine Consultant

Sept 2019 – Aug 2020

- Non-profit student consultancy where I managed a team of ~25 consultants alongside three other directors
- Led weekly meetings, organized trainings, and recruited new consultants
- Initiated a more inclusive recruitment process to facilitate improved diversity in the organization

Climate Conference Organizer

Local Conference of Youth The Netherlands

Jan 2019 – Jan 2020

- Organized a weekend-long climate conference as part of the Conference of Parties within the UNFCCC
- As hosts, our aim was to increase awareness and to empower the 150+ youth attendees to take effective action against climate change
- Responsible for managing 6 working groups of ~30 team members: Programme, Promotion & Media, Finance, People & Diversity, Logistics, and Network & Output

Publications & writing samples

- Laauwen, M.**, & Nowicki, S. (2024, February 9 submitted). Reinforcing feedbacks for sustainable implementation of rural drinking-water treatment technology. *Environmental Science & Technology: Water*.
- Osterwalder, L., Ebrahim, M., Gebeyehu, B., Mebrate, E., Dickinson, N., & **Laauwen, M.** (2024). Reaching Universal Access with Market-Based Sanitation. Addis Ababa: USAID Transform WASH.
- Schindler, A., Singh, R., Adam-Bradford, A., **Laauwen, M.**, & Ruckstuhl, S. (2023). Anticipatory action in communities hosting refugees and internally displaced persons: an assessment of current approaches. Colombo, Sri Lanka: International Water Management Institute (IWMI). (IWMI Working Paper 212). doi: <https://doi.org/10.5337/2024.200>
- Ruckstuhl, S., & **Laauwen, M.** (2023). Before Disaster Strikes: Preparing for Complex Emergencies with Anticipatory Action. International Water Management Institute (IWMI). Retrieved from <https://www.iwmi.cgiar.org/2023/10/before-disaster-strikes-preparing-for-complex-emergencies-with-anticipatory-action/>
- Miles, R., Cuthbert, Z., Lam, S., **Laauwen, M.**, Chakraborty, M., & Gribanenkova, I. (2023). Final Report World Water Week 2023. Stockholm, Sweden: Stockholm International Water Institute.
- Laauwen, M.** (2023). The Power of Outcome Harvesting: A Paradigm Shift in Monitoring & Evaluation?. WASHNote. Retrieved from <https://washnote.com/2023/09/13/the-power-of-outcome-harvesting-a-paradigm-shift-in-monitoring-evaluation/>
- Laauwen, M.** (2023). Tracking global progress on water, sanitation, and hygiene in 'One for All' Focus Countries – a collaboration between WASHNote, IRCWash and Water for People. WASHNote. Retrieved from <https://washnote.com/2023/04/04/tracking-global-progress-on-water-sanitation-and-hygiene-in-destination-2030-focus-countries-a-collaboration-between-washnote-ircwash-and-water-for-people/>
- Smits, S., Dickinson, N., & **Laauwen, M.** (2023). The global landscape for water, sanitation, and hygiene: the 2022 status update report. The Hague, The Netherlands: IRC WASH.
- Laauwen, M.** (2022). Rural Water Treatment Barriers and Opportunities: An Implementation Science Analysis of Chlorine and UV-C LED Disinfection in Small Water Supplies. MSc First Class Honors Thesis & Thesis Award Winner, University of Oxford. (unpublished)
- Laauwen, M.** (2020). Building resilient communities: An empirical study into the drivers of adaptive behavior of farmers in drought-prone Kitui County, Kenya. BSc Honors Thesis, Amsterdam University College. (unpublished)

Presentations

- Laauwen, M.**, & Castro, J. (2023, September 21). Investment Pitch for Segura Water. Presentation at Planet Positive Lab Demo Day, London, United Kingdom. Video recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=luhBb6haN5g&t=66s>. News article: <https://www.wadham.ox.ac.uk/news/planet-positive-lab-demo-day>
- Laauwen, M.** (2022, October 28). Rural Water Treatment Barriers and Opportunities: An Implementation Science Analysis of Chlorine and UV Disinfection in Small Water Supplies. Presentation at the UNC Water & Health Conference, Chapel Hill, NC. Video recording: <https://youtu.be/xFiTKR-X-5Q>
- Laauwen, M.** (2022, September 26–27). Rural Water Treatment Barriers and Opportunities: An Implementation Science Analysis of Chlorine and UV Disinfection in Small Water Supplies. Poster Presentation at the IUVA Americas Conference, Cincinnati, OH. [Invitation]