



theflowpartnership

A GLOBAL WATER SCHOOL

“When a drought or flood comes, it doesn't look at whether you are rich or poor. Eventually, it will take everyone in its grip.”

Rajendra Singh, World Water Prize Winner, 2015

CONTEXT

We all know that future access to clean water is a key global priority for environmental and human health on our planet.

Globally, millions of small, local communities are suffering untold damage from floods, droughts and degraded landscapes no longer able to support a prosperous life. Water is beginning to vanish in the bread baskets of the world – and as a result global food security is being threatened.

Helping communities take action themselves to rejuvenate their landscapes, often through learning from other successful projects, can be a sustainable and resilient way to change this situation. The Flow Partnership receives countless requests for help from people all over the world facing floods and droughts. Hence we are creating a Global Water School which will enable communities to access resources through a combination of personal and online mentoring. Empowering communities to take action themselves, is a more long lasting solution.

The Global Water School will:

- Make proven, local wisdom to resolve floods and droughts available for communities to take action in their regions.
- Provide a scientific understanding of the long term impact of natural catchment measures for their regions.
- Provide step by step guidance on raising awareness, galvanising their communities and implementing necessary measures to protect and rejuvenate local catchments.



WHY?

The **inherent knowledge** that communities possessed to help them protect the health of their landscapes is **vanishing** and many don't know what to do any more. Many traditional water management features that communities built in the past, have fallen into disrepair and the local wisdom around these structures has faded away. Additionally, despite natural solutions being available for floods and droughts in many areas, often a lack of funds and adequate supporting information to implement the basics of landscape management is missing as governments concentrate resources on hard engineering solutions.

For millennia, **Natural Catchment Restoration (NCR)** features have helped slow surface run-off water, allowing it to filter and store, minimising erosion, recharging aquifers, creating wildlife habitat and regulating localised weather patterns. Today, man-made NCR measures in the right places can help rejuvenate degraded landscapes, bring back wildlife, and support agriculture and the economy.

Interestingly ***they can go further still*** - as the vegetation returns, the small water cycle also returns to the area which plays a key role in climate regulation. **Re-greening arid areas is a vital part of mitigating the effects of climate change.**

Our task is to amplify and share these NCR methods around the world for communities to implement for themselves. Governments are only able to do so much in combating droughts and floods, but ultimately, with the increasing frequency of such events, it is down to communities to care for their own river landscapes. ***Communities can do this work when they have the necessary will, skills, capacity and knowledge.***

After much deliberation, we realised that a **Water School**, with a strong online component, is the **much needed first step** to provide the **simple, low, cost, community based strategies and tools that people are seeking** to improve their situations no matter which part of the world they are in.

EXAMPLES OF NATURAL CATCHMENT RESTORATION MEASURES AND THEIR IMPACT



Slovakia – wooden mesh intervention slows flood waters upstream



Medium sized JOHAD (check dam) Rajasthan, India, recharges dry underground aquifers



Offline Pond – Belford, UK, stores excess water away from flood paths reducing flooding downstream

India Drought



River Before interventions



River After Interventions

Interventions



WATER SCHOOL COMPONENTS

- **An interactive web platform** bringing together communities with people and organisations who have technical and financial know-how to restore a balanced flow of water to the landscape. A lot of information is available on the web but as yet there is no single platform for communities to locate others in their regions who are implementing local solutions, or to share ideas, questions and experiences with. This platform will help create a growing global community of successful local water projects that can cross-fertilise techniques and methods.
- **Experienced practitioners, scientists and hydrologists** to be physically available where needed to advise and assist projects globally.
- **Opportunities for internships** a) to enable successful methods to find their way into mainstream education b) for cross-fertilisation and experiential learning with successful communities.



An iconic 'bund' to stop flooding, Belford, UK

- **Films** detailing the key elements of successful projects, techniques and **step by step guidance**. They will combine studies, local know how and different methods for different conditions or geographical regions.
- A program of **River Walks** along local catchments, suffering water stress. Past water walks have proved invaluable in raising awareness of these methods for managing floods and droughts.
- A rich **archive of traditional wisdom** around water management from across the planet will be housed in the water school as a free resource for present and future generations.
- **Open Source papers**, reports and other materials required by communities to begin their work at once.

THE IMPACT

Some of the world's leading authorities are members of the Flow Partnership, co-designing and running the Water School. Their wisdom and techniques will be shared freely and widely.

- ♦ Communities with degraded landscapes will have access to the tools and knowledge to become healthy again
- ♦ Long term solutions to droughts and floods, will be in the hands of the communities, aiding government efforts
- ♦ Traditional wisdom of a region will be revived and available for future generations
- ♦ Prosperity and peace can return to regions facing water stress
- ♦ Migration from villages will lessen if people can live rich and fulfilling lives in their own regions
- ♦ The restoration of the small water cycle will start to reverse the effects of climate change
- ♦ A global feeling of solidarity and support will replace the feeling of isolated desperation for those enduring the complex problems of water scarcity
- ♦ Communities everywhere will have access to the tools and knowledge for wise stewardship of their landscapes.

Communities can achieve this when they have the necessary will, skills, capacity and knowledge.

GLOBAL WATER SCHOOL

WHO WE ARE

We are a UK based registered charity, the Flow Partnership (a project of Earthlinks UK), composed of a growing global community of water professionals, scientists, universities, civil society organisations, grass-roots champions across 5 continents and countless volunteers.

The Flow Partnership is the connecting voice, amplifying and broadcasting the positive impact of small scale, NCR measures globally. It also makes available the tools, support, knowledge and wisdom to communities to enable them to manage their own catchments and ensure access to clean flowing water for themselves, their landscapes and their livelihoods.

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India

Rajendra Singh (2015, World Water Prize winner) who has been working with local communities in Rajasthan, India for 30 years. He has **successfully revived 7 rivers using the power of community effort to build simple, low cost dams at strategic places in the landscape.**

UK

Newcastle University and the **James Hutton Institute**, Aberdeen, who have built similar community interventions to stop flooding and are now piloting them on bigger catchments.

Slovakia

Michal Kravcik (1999, Goldman Environment Prize) who has worked with communities to build strategically placed small dams and natural interventions to stop flooding on his local rivers in Slovakia. These are a more cost-effective, efficient, and environmentally beneficial solution to flooding of rivers than mega-projects utilising large dams and diversions that communities oppose.

GLOBAL
WATER
SCHOOL

COLLABORATE

Water stress affects us all - whether we experience it visibly or not. This brief is an invitation to collaborate with us in shaping the Water School.

We welcome your backing and participation.

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