

Women in Water Diplomacy Network South Caucasus Water Diplomacy Workshop

After Action Report¹

October 20-22, 2024 | Telavi, Georgia | In-person



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Women in Water Diplomacy Network South Caucasus Water Diplomacy Workshop | October 2024 Executive Summary

From October 20-22, 2024, the Women in Water Diplomacy Network in the South Caucasus (WWDN SC) convened a water diplomacy workshop in Telavi, Georgia with the participation of 30+ women, water, and peace experts from Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia. The workshop was organized by the Environmental Law Institute (ELI) with the support of the USAID South Caucasus Regional Water Management Program (SCRWM) in collaboration with global experts Dr. Aaron Wolf, co-Director of the Program in Water Conflict Management and Transformation at Oregon State University, and Dr. Róisín Burke, Assistant Professor of Public International Law at Utrecht University. The workshop served as an opportunity to:

- Take stock of Network developments since the [April 2024 South Caucasus Inception Workshop](#).
- Enable Network members to share their input into the two-year inception and development plan, including identifying thematic areas of shared interest for trainings and seminars, connecting on possible future collaborations between members, and identifying key water policy dialogues/events for Network engagement as well as opportunities for tangible regional cooperative engagements beyond the Network.
- Contribute to a shared understanding of key water diplomacy concepts and approaches.

The workshop commenced with welcome remarks from Elizabeth Koch, Senior Manager, Environmental Law Institute and Process Support Team Lead, Women in Water Diplomacy Network and Dr. Jeanene Mitchell, Senior Transboundary Stakeholder Engagement Advisor for the USAID South Caucasus Regional Water Management Program. Elizabeth provided an overview of the workshop program, reviewed the Network's global strategy, ['A Path Forward for Women, Water, Peace and Security'](#) and oriented participants to the phase of inception and development that the South Caucasus Network is currently undergoing. Participants then got to know each other through an interactive *'speed dating'* exercise. Elizabeth then continued the discussion about the South Caucasus Network's inception and development plan thus far, engaging participants in a discussion of potential next steps and complementary activities.

After lunch, participants engaged in a pilot version of a new Women in Water Diplomacy Network workshop tool, *"The Snakes and Ladders of Water Diplomacy,"* designed for collective reflection on the dynamics of water diplomacy and factors that advance sustainable management or create obstacles through discussion and dialogue. Throughout the exercise participants had a chance to get to know each other more and laugh together while also having thoughtful discussions about how they understand and approach transboundary water issues. Many noted they shared a focus on social dimensions of water issues. For the final session of the day, Dr. Róisín Burke, Assistant Professor of Public International Law at Utrecht University, moderated a panel discussion on the intersection of Women, Peace, and Security and Water, Peace, and Security with leading regional experts. The panelists highlighted the role of women water experts as strongly positioned to support regional water and environment related confidence-building measures and the new South Caucasus Network as an important space to both exchange insights on local and regional water cooperation opportunities and support Women, Peace, and Security priorities.

Following a warm welcome and reflection from Dr. Guy Bonvin, Deputy Head of Mission/Deputy Head of Swiss Regional Cooperation in South Caucasus, Swiss Embassy to the Republic of Azerbaijan and to Turkmenistan, Dr. Aaron Wolf, co-Director of the Program in Water Conflict Management and Transformation at Oregon State University initiated a series of interactive sessions focused on conflict resolution skills and cooperation within water diplomacy, challenging entrenched perceptions about

competition and collaboration. Dr. Wolf introduced four key lessons for transforming conflict into cooperation, highlighting the significance of the negotiation process, the irrational nature of conflict, the importance of addressing deeper needs, and the idea that the issue at hand is rarely the real issue. The day concluded with a cultural excursion led by the USAID South Caucasus Regional Water Management Program Team. The group visited the beautiful gardens of the Tsinandali Estate for a tour, followed by a *khinkali* and *khachapuri* making class and a special dinner.

On the final day of the workshop, Dr. Wolf resumed the session on conflict transformation within water diplomacy, homing in on intrapersonal and interpersonal dynamics in water conflict and cooperation processes. In conjunction with presenting practical examples from transboundary water cooperation and conflict around the globe, Dr. Wolf emphasized the importance of examining one's own biases when approaching an inter-personal interaction. This approach, he explained, enables facilitators and others to act from a place of calm rather than reactivity, helping dialogue participants differentiate between sensory inputs and the stories we create around them. This was explored in practice through a *role-play* exercise, putting focus on the ease of misinterpreting signals and communications. Bringing this to interpersonal conflict, the next exercise demonstrated how conflict feels in the body and how it can hinder active listening, a critical skill for all in negotiations. For the final segment of this session, Dr. Wolf shared examples from his experience in water diplomacy negotiations, highlighting the relevance of skills such as listening for vulnerability, making the problem bigger (or smaller) to find common ground, and recognizing that the process is not rational. To conclude, Dr. Wolf emphasized the importance of elevating the conversation around water negotiations by beginning discussions from a higher place.

As the workshop drew to a close, Elizabeth briefly described next steps for the South Caucasus Network and participants provided key takeaways on their experiences and ideas for the future of the Network. Participants agreed on the value of harmonizing data collection and analysis across countries and stressed that this Network presents an opportunity to share expertise across borders, collaborate on research efforts, and integrate gender-sensitive research into policymaking. In closing, a few participants emphasized the role of the Network in providing a unified platform to elevate these issues and promote a shared regional narrative—a vision that could foster both practical solutions and stronger diplomatic ties across the South Caucasus. The workshop concluded with the awarding of certificates and a group photo. The workshop's post-engagement exit poll was completed by over 90% of the participants. A complete plurality of participant respondents indicated that they either *'strongly agreed'* or *'agreed'* that workshop was relevant and applicable to their professional work and provided sufficient space and opportunity to raise questions and comments. Nearly all participants noted the workshop's role in fostering new professional connections and increasing their professional knowledge. When asked to reflect on the specific components of the workshop program which were most valuable, participants indicated a variety of components and remarked on the balance of formal and informal aspects of the program with frequent references to the value of Dr. Wolf's sessions and the innovative *'Snakes and Ladders of Water Diplomacy'* learning tool. For further evaluation details see Annex 1.



'New knowledge on water conflict management and how to use it for achieving peace and prosperity.'

'The Snakes and Ladders of Water Diplomacy' game gave us the chance to communicate and understand others. It was a great way to learn, listen and speak at the same time.'

'It was a unique experience to see Armenian and Azerbaijani leading female experts in the same room discussing sensitive topics in a constructive way.'

'It's a very constructive and effective meeting and discussion among the three countries, I hope we will continue this conversation in a future.'

Participant reflections, exit poll, October 2024.

Additional information and resources related to this workshop are available here:
<https://www.eli.org/events/women-water-diplomacy-network-south-caucasus-water-diplomacy-workshop>.

October 20, 2024 – Day 1 Session Summary

The workshop was opened by **Elizabeth A. Koch**, Senior Manager, Environmental Law Institute and Process Support Team Lead, Women in Water Diplomacy Network. Referencing the pre-workshop survey results, Elizabeth remarked on the diversity of the room in age and expertise—ranging from foreign policy, culture, sociology, and hydrology—highlighting the wealth and wide range of expertise within the group. Elizabeth provided an overview of the program and guidelines for participation, including the use of the Chatham House Rule to encourage open and free dialogue. She stressed the importance of creating a safe and inclusive space for all voices to be heard and perspectives to be shared. She explained that while participants in the room are part of the growing South Caucasus Network, they are also connected to a global Network movement that began with a 2017 workshop in the Nile Basin.



Welcome and Introductions
Photo: Elene Koridze

Following a brief history of the global Women in Water Diplomacy Network, Elizabeth outlined the Network's mission and the consultation process that led to the development of its Global Strategy, which includes five key pillars: peer-to-peer learning, research cooperation, collective engagement in international events, gender and youth empowerment, and process support. She emphasized the importance of collective engagement in key international events, including UN Water, World Water Week, Africa Water Week, and Cairo Water Week. By mobilizing collectively, the Network aims to amplify its message, reduce individual risk, and strengthen its impact. Elizabeth described that the South Caucasus network is one of three networks currently in the inception or development phase—the others include North America and Southern African Networks. Elizabeth stressed that the process requires input from everyone in the room to build a 2-year direction-setting program that is aligned with the global strategy and that prioritizes the interests in the room and the regional network's ambitions.

Elizabeth's introduction was followed by welcome remarks from **Dr. Jeanene Mitchell**, Senior Transboundary Stakeholder Engagement Advisor for the USAID South Caucasus Regional Water Management Program. Jeanene expressed gratitude and excitement for the energy in the room. She described USAID's five-year program, focused on improving transboundary water cooperation and management across all three South Caucasus countries. A key objective of the program is to foster and support regional networks on water and environmental issues to ensure sustained dialogue, with gender equality and social inclusion as priorities. This is why USAID enthusiastically supports the continued development of the network in the South Caucasus. She described that, while USAID is a key institutional partner in the development of the South Caucasus branch of the Network, it does not intend to be the only partner going forward in order to ensure sustainability and output scope. She explained that USAID's goal is to support a two-year development process, driven by ELI and the process support team, with both in-person and virtual engagement to build community, skills, and capacity, ultimately aiming to increase the meaningful role of women in water decision-making in the South Caucasus. Jeanene also acknowledged Roisin Burke's efforts in bringing about the first inception workshop in April and thanked the SCRWM team for helping organize the event and field trip. Concluding her remarks, Jeanene expressed her appreciation for the creativity and thought that had gone into the workshop program at hand. She commended the effort it took to bring everyone together in the room and thanked participants for their

commitment and sacrifices, including those bringing families along, and closed by wishing everyone a fruitful workshop.

After the introductory remarks, participants and supporters engaged in a lively interactive networking session to get to know fellow participants better. Following the ‘*speed dating*’ exercise, Elizabeth continued the discussion about the South Caucasus Network’s inception and development plan thus far, engaging participants in a discussion of potential next steps and complementary activities. One participant noted that while Georgia has developed river basin management plans, transboundary river systems have yet to be addressed. This presents an opportunity for the Network to share expertise across borders, coordinate research, and possibly replicate feasibility studies done in Georgia. Another participant described case studies on other river basins as a promising avenue for integrating academic research with policymaking. Elizabeth described the idea of creating a roster of specialists on women, water, peace, and security, as well as engaging network members in guest lectures for students, to support knowledge-sharing and the visibility of women’s work in this field.



Workshop participants during 'speed dating' exercise

Photo: Jesse Ferraioli

Another participant highlighted the need to bring academic insights from water diplomacy into policy discussions, noting the impact such contributions could have on advancing regional cooperation. A participant added to this, emphasizing the need to shift public perceptions, to viewing security not only in military terms but as a matter of human security and public welfare—a change that could be instrumental for regional collaborative efforts. The conversation also turned to education, with one participant stressing the importance of the Network elevating local women’s roles in water diplomacy and building awareness on the community level. It was discussed that the South Caucasus branch of the Network could aim to engage local



What is included in the support to the Network’s inception and development plan so far? What is missing? Opportunities for Complementary Activities! Photo: Elene Koridze

community-based actors in coming to workshops in support of more localized engagements and given intersectionality of people’s lived experiences. Finally, climate change adaptation surfaced as a key area where the Network could elevate shared vulnerabilities, including through collaborative research. Participants agreed on the value of harmonizing data collection and analysis across countries, especially in conflict-sensitive areas, and stressed the need for open access to data that can inform and support cross-border decision-making. In closing, a few participants emphasized the role of the Network in providing a unified platform to elevate these issues and promote a shared regional narrative—a vision that could foster both practical solutions and stronger diplomatic ties across the South Caucasus.

Following a group lunch, the Network Process Support Team piloted a new board game entitled *‘Snakes and Ladders’ of Water Diplomacy*, collaboratively developed as a dialogue tool to support collective reflection on the dynamics of water diplomacy and factors that advance sustainable management or create obstacles through discussion and dialogue. In place of ‘moral lessons’ often illustrated on edges of the board in different periods and cultures, the ‘moral lessons’ are framed around factors that support water diplomacy. The seven factors for successful transboundary outcomes illustrated along the outside frame of the board were sourced from Dr. Sharon B. Megdal (2024) Chapter 48 *Factors that Contribute to Successful Diplomatic Outcomes forthcoming in the Routledge Water Diplomacy Handbook* (Taylor & Francis Group). Artwork for the board game was adapted from Radhika Gupta’s cover illustration for the Women in Water Diplomacy Network’s Global Strategy publication [‘A Path Forward for Women, Water, Peace and Security.’](#)



‘Snakes and Ladders’ of Water Diplomacy
Photo: Elene Koridze

Immediate feedback from participants indicated that the game allowed for meaningful conversations, highlighting commonalities and shared experiences in culture, social issues, and water challenges. Several appreciated the chance to laugh together while also having thoughtful discussions about how women approach water issues with a greater focus on social issues and an implicit focus on what unites us rather than divides us. Others noted that the game encouraged open-mindedness and facilitated peer-to-peer learning.



‘Snakes and Ladders’ of Water Diplomacy. Photo: Elene Koridze

For the final session of Day 1, **Dr. Róisín Burke**, Assistant Professor of Public International Law at Utrecht University, moderated a panel discussion on the intersection of Women, Peace, and Security and Water, Peace, and Security, with leading regional experts, **Armine Margaryan**, President & Founder, Women and Global Security Architecture, **Julia Kharashvili**, Chair, Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) Women Association “Consent” and Member, High Level Advisory Group for Global Study on the Impact of UNSC Resolution 1325, and **Shahla Ismayil**, Chairwomen, Women's Association of Rational Development. Róisín began by describing water confidence-building measures (CBMs), providing an example from the Dushanbe process in Central Asia, where cooperation between Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan around water user associations, canal renovations, and regular meetings facilitated trust between communities. She then invited Julia to share insights on women’s experiences along the Administrative Boundary Line (ABL) with South Ossetia in Georgia, specifically regarding cooperation on water infrastructure since 2010 and the role of women in advancing this cooperation as a confidence-building measure.



Women, Peace, and Security – Water, Peace, and Security: Discussion with leading regional experts. Photo: Elene Koridze

Julia began by acknowledging the challenges in Georgia’s complex landscape, but explained that despite these challenges, the shared use of water resources—such as the power dam on the Abkhazian/Georgian border—highlights both the need and opportunity for social and economic priorities to supersede political



challenges. Julia turned to the intersection of women, water, peace, and security in Georgia, emphasizing that women, especially those displaced by conflict, are the primary users of water for both household and agricultural needs. She described two key legal instruments aimed at bolstering advocacy for Georgian women: 1) the inclusion of a gender equality component in Georgia’s National Action Plan (NAP) under UNSC Resolution 1325, and 2) the integration of gender considerations in the 2023 draft National Human Rights Protection Strategy. Julia noted that a monitoring study of 17 municipalities affected by conflict revealed that local negotiations around water, peace, and security often occur between big businesses and government, excluding local women that bear the brunt of conflict. She identified this as a critical gap that a regional framework could address through regional cooperation and support from initiatives like the South Caucasus Women in Water Diplomacy Network.

Róisín then invited Armine and Shahla to share their insights on the role of women and water diplomacy as tools for confidence-building between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Armine began, noting that, until recently, the idea of women engaging in water diplomacy between the two countries was rarely discussed, yet it is now increasingly acknowledged. She described the need for women in negotiations between the two countries, noting that currently, none are involved in Track 1 diplomacy and few are involved in Track 1.5 and Track 2 diplomacy on either side, though their presence brings attention to overlooked issues as demonstrated in the earlier board game exercise. Armine stressed that women experience water conflicts firsthand, making their participation vital in representing civil society. She shared that the *‘Snakes and Ladders of Water Diplomacy’* exercise revealed commonalities in the local effects of water conflict on women on both sides, and suggested that in parallel to formal negotiations, informal diplomacy platforms like the Women in Water Diplomacy Network is well situated to engage in joint research and proposed solutions to shared concerns.

Shahla described Azerbaijan’s revised National Action Plan (NAP) on Women, Peace, and Security under the UNSC Resolution 1325 framework. While the draft has not yet been adopted Shahla expressed optimism for its formal adoption. Shahla described Azerbaijan’s NAP as including four pillars— participation, protection, prevention, and relief and recovery— and 13 sub-activities under each (which has grown from a total of 35 to 52 in the revised plan). Shahla emphasized the need for greater representation and visibility of women experts, stronger regional coordination, and improved access to information, calling on all who can share water-related data information to do so to enhance collaboration and synergies.

Róisín then opened the discussion to all participants. One common theme in the discussion was the potential of NAPs to create a regionally unified narrative of water, peace, and security. Given that development partners often view the South Caucasus regionally, participants agreed on the value of acting collectively to build a shared narrative to integrate into national plans. They also discussed using water as a gateway to advance gender sensitive conversations in the region. The role of the Network in synergizing such plans and narratives was discussed.

Dr. Aaron Wolf, co-Director of the Program in Water Conflict Management and Transformation at Oregon State University, wrapped up Day 1 by reflecting on the powerful connections forged through shared stories, influences, and a commitment to bridging divides. He opened the floor for participant reflections, and many echoed this shared sentiment, highlighting how each Network meeting brings more warmth and less distance. Exercises like *“Snakes and Ladders,”* one participant observed, help bridge gaps and foster common ground, while another noted the Network’s potential to elevate shared goals to the realm of formal diplomacy.

October 21, 2024 – Day 2 Session Summary

Dr. Guy Bonvin Deputy Head of Mission; Deputy Head of Swiss Regional Cooperation in South Caucasus, Swiss Embassy to the Republic of Azerbaijan and to Turkmenistan, welcomed participants to the second day of the workshop, describing how water serves as a crucial enabler for sustainable economic development and stability. In his introduction, he emphasized that water is at the core of economies and societies, linking social, economic, and technical factors, and that effective water value chain policies must address these interconnected elements, particularly as climate change increasingly impacts the water cycle and heightens natural risks.



Photo: Elene Koridze

Dr. Aaron Wolf, co-Director of the Program in Water Conflict Management and Transformation at Oregon State University then began a series of training sessions on water conflict transformation which would take place over the next two days. Aaron began by engaging participants in a series of exercises on conflict and cooperation during a session focused on “*The Challenge of Shared Waters Stages of Water Conflict Transformation.*” Starting with an exercise that many participants mistook for a competitive arm-wrestling match, Aaron challenged participants to explore their own entrenched ways of thinking common to most of us. Exercising shifting perspectives served as a prelude to the broader focus of the water diplomacy training: how deeply ingrained assumptions about conflict and competition can impede collaborative solutions, especially in transboundary water contexts.



Participants during entrenched thinking exercise. Photo: Elene Koridze

Aaron guided participants through the allocation of scarce resources. By framing the allocation of water resources through a social and humanitarian lens, he illustrated how water, often viewed as a technical or security issue, fundamentally intersects with personal and communal needs, values, and rights. Aaron then described the four key lessons on transforming conflict into cooperation. Firstly, he provided an example of taking two participants phones, without asking in the first instance, and then repeating the exercise with asking prior to completing the action. The purpose was to demonstrate that *the process is everything*: how we engage, communicate, and structure negotiations is just as important as the end goals. He emphasized the importance of understanding the deeper needs and perspectives underlying conflicts, drawing upon insights from diverse spiritual traditions to reveal how active listening and dialogue can transform potential conflicts into cooperation. From here, Aaron introduced a second lesson: *the process is not rational*. Drawing on examples from water conflicts around the world, he described *the critical role of the four worlds* - emotional, spiritual, mental, and physical – in conflict and cooperation. Finally, Aaron emphasized that *the issue is rarely the issue*, thereby encouraging participants to look past the topic of disagreement and consider the underlying personal and spiritual needs and vulnerabilities that people bring into negotiations. When participants encounter an impasse, Aaron encouraged stakeholders to broaden the challenge or narrow the challenge by embracing a further nuanced perspective to look beyond the impasse and find common ground. With these four key lessons, Aaron set the stage for participants to approach water diplomacy negotiations with intention, empathy, and active listening.

The afternoon and evening of Day 2 featured an excursion led by the USAID South Caucasus Regional Water Management Program Team. The group visited the beautiful gardens of the Tsinandali Estate for a tour, followed by a *khinkali* and *khachapuri* making class and a special dinner.



Group excursion. Photos: Elene Koridze

October 22, 2024 – Day 3 Session Summary

On the third day of the workshop, **Dr. Aaron Wolf** resumed the training with focus on intrapersonal and interpersonal dynamics in water conflict and cooperation processes. He began by reshuffling participants into new groups and began with exercises on intrapersonal conflict. Aaron emphasized the importance of figuring out what is happening internally and one's own biases prior to approaching an inter-personal interaction. He invited participants to engage in a guided meditation to practice mindfulness, focused on teaching the skill of stopping, breathing, and truly listening to internal reactions - what Aaron described as learning to “*care-less*” in order to remain open minded. This approach, he explained, enables facilitators and others to act from a place of calm rather than reactivity, helping them differentiate between sensory inputs and the stories we create around them. For instance, a crying baby might be interpreted negatively, but it's our reaction, not the input itself, that causes emotional disruption. This was explored in practice through a *role-play* exercise, putting focus on the ease of misinterpreting signals and communications. Bringing this to interpersonal conflict, the next exercise asked participants to pair up, where one spoke uninterrupted on a topic that the other disagreed strongly with. This exercise demonstrated how conflict feels in the body and how it can hinder active listening, a critical skill for all in negotiations. Aaron connected this to experiences in facilitation, emphasizing that one cannot be both an advocate and a facilitator. If a facilitator has a vested interest in a process, they cannot remain unbiased.



Role-play exercise on interpersonal and intrapersonal conflict. Photo: Elene Koridze

For the final segment of this session, Aaron shared examples from his experience in water diplomacy negotiations, highlighting the relevance of skills such as listening for vulnerability, making the problem bigger to find common ground, and recognizing that the process is not rational.

To conclude, Aaron emphasized the importance of elevating the conversation around water negotiations by beginning discussions from a higher place. He noted that value of water and river festivals and provided the example of The Nile Project, where musicians from each of the eleven countries along the river came together to show how music and water both can unite diverse communities. Aaron also noted the value of including spiritual leaders who can highlight the spiritual dimensions of water and initiate conversations that transcend traditional frameworks. Aaron closed with providing an example of elevating the conversation around water in New Zealand. The indigenous Māori of New Zealand embody the belief that all elements of the natural world have a spiritual dimension that deserves respect. This perspective has been incorporated into New Zealand's National Policy Statement, which emphasizes the need to honor spiritual integrity in water management.

Following the conclusion of the formal training component of the workshop, participants shared their key takeaways. Several shared their experiences with learning to listen and how the skill allows them to appreciate diverse viewpoints and foster strong relationships in conflict resolution.



Awarding of certificates. Photo: Elene Koridze

Others echoed the importance of bringing in a spiritual dialogue about water and the importance of festivals and traditions that celebrate water. As the workshop drew to a close, Elizabeth briefly described next steps for the South Caucasus Network, which include introducing the Network in the Women in Water Diplomacy Network’s December Year-in-Review, determining topics for upcoming quarterly water diplomacy seminars, and continuing to mobilize resources. Several participants expressed enthusiasm about the idea of elevating water dialogue on a regional scale through a festival or celebration that the Network could pioneer. To wrap up the workshop, the organizing team thanked everyone in attendance and awarded certificates to all participants.

Annex 1: Workshop Participation Evaluation Results

Monitoring and evaluation are critical aspects of all Women in Water Diplomacy Network engagements and Network engagement After Action Reports often feature a full run-out of anonymous participant reflections. The inclusion of this extensive information serves to encourage co-creation of Network engagements and spotlight the expert participant reflections *in their own words*. We greatly encourage workshop participants and interested partners to read the included anonymous participant responses in full as an opportunity to *listen* to women water diplomats. Please note that a small number of open responses were redacted to ensure anonymity of respondents or edited for English language clarity.

The workshop was attended by 36 participants including 6 co-convening partner representatives, 27 individuals provided input as part of the post-workshop evaluation provided to workshop participants at the close of the workshop. The evaluation was completed using an online Microsoft Office ‘Form’ using the participants personal phones to access the evaluation via a QR code. The Form was enabled for multilingual responses. All respondents were made aware that aggregate response data as well as individual statements may be quoted *anonymously* in external communications and activity reports such as this After-Action Report. Responses received were well distributed reflecting inputs from Armenian, Azerbaijani and Georgian participants.

A complete plurality of participant respondents indicated that they either ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ that workshop was relevant and applicable to their professional work and provided sufficient space and opportunity to raise questions and comments (Figures 1 and 2). Nearly all participants noted the workshop’s role in fostering new professional connections and increasing their professional knowledge. When asked to reflect on the specific components of the workshop program which were most valuable, participants indicated a variety of components and remarked on the balance of formal and informal aspects of the program (Figure 3).

Figure 1: The workshop was relevant and applicable to my professional work:

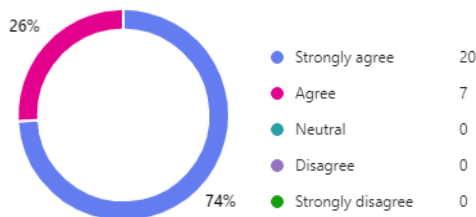


Figure 2: The workshop provided sufficient space and opportunity to raise questions and comment on the sessions’ content:

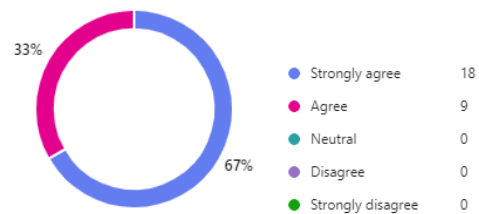


Figure 3: Which aspects of the program were most valuable to you?



When asked to reflect on the best/most appreciated/most enjoyed aspect of the workshop, participants shared:

- *'The snakes and ladders helped to listen, learn, and find common bases. Aaron's workshop motivated to get in deeper conversation and thinking, play at full and provoke interest towards new discussions.'*
- *'New knowledge on water conflict management and how to use it for achieving peace and prosperity.'*
- *'Snakes and Ladders' was one of the most interesting parts of the workshop.'*
- *'Experts invited and facilitator (Elizabeth)'*
- *'Creating relaxing environment and members' efforts to make it work for all.'*
- *'Games, communication, networking.'*
- *'Engaging activities.'*
- *'Very new ways of thinking. I got many new ideas for future work.'*
- *'It's a very constructive and effective meeting and discussion of three countries, I hope we will continue this conversation in the future.'*
- *'I really enjoyed the course of Professor Aaron. This is motivation for me to continue my work in science.'*
- *'This time the discussions and attitudes of the participants were more constructive, and participants were more into listening to each other.'*
- *'It was so empowering to meet the group of talented, brilliant women!'*
- *'Participating in the classes of Professor Aaron Wolf, a highly knowledgeable and experienced educator with a unique teaching methodology, was a different experience for me. Thank you :)'*
- *'Expanding the network - side discussions beyond water - viewing common challenges.'*
- *'The Snakes and Ladders of Water Diplomacy' game gave us the chance to communicate and understand others. It was a great way to learn, listen and speak at the same time.'*
- *'Opportunity to speak openly and possibility to be engaged in the discussion, very good organization of the workshop and the possibility to discuss outside of the venue.'*
- *'The possibility to freely communicate and engage with all these wonderful women and gain new insights and connections.'*
- *'Learning diplomatic negotiation skills to foster cooperation over the field.'*
- *'It was very well arranged, in all aspects including time management. There was no discrimination, it was a safe space for me. The organisers were very attentive, no one was out of the discussions.'*
- *'Opportunity for networking and collaboration with women professionals.'*
- *'It was very valuable for me to meet ladies from different countries.'*

- *'The organization was perfect. All participants were positive and smiling.'*
- *'It was a unique experience to see Armenian and Azerbaijani leading female experts in the same room discussing sensitive topics in a constructive way.'*
- *'Good combination of capacity-building and networking.'*

Asked to identify areas for improvement, participants encouraged:

- *'More time to get know more people at deeper level. It is not about improvement, the process goes well, and next time having more opportunity to get familiar with more people will be all right.'*
- *'If venue was near airport it would be better.'*
- *'Maybe, we could meet in Tbilisi next time?'*
- *'Please make the first day of workshop not so overwhelming especially after long travel at night.'*
- *'The workshop was really well organized.'*
- *'Have some more leisure time or start at 10 am but not 9. We are all working professionals and it was exhausting to travel long ways and then be fully engaged in activities.'*
- *'For me everything worked perfectly.'*
- *'Everything is very important, I think meeting and talking face to face very effective.'*
- *'As we were representing region it will be great to have opportunity together develop research projects or other activities.'*
- *'Bring more Professor Aaron :)'*
- *'Maybe invite somebody from state bodies?'*
- *'In the first Women role in Water Diplomacy workshop, we felt relatively more tired because we received a lot of information. However, organizing an excursion this time was much better; it allowed us to relax our minds and gain a different experience.'*
- *'More proactive mixing of groups (although some activities did). More knowledge on the actual challenge in the transboundary water/environment sector.'*
- *'Panel discussions.'*
- *'Involve people from other branches of the Women for Water Diplomacy network and men.'*
- *'Having the last day of the workshop shorter was a good idea and this format can be kept for the following events.'*
- *'I would like to have a translation, but except from this everything was perfect.'*
- *'Next time, I suggest spending it in a different country.'*
- *'A better place and location can be chosen. The food selection and variety of the hotel could be better. There was nowhere near where we could walk.'*
- *'Invite additional policy makers and practitioners (negotiators) on water diplomacy.'*
- *'When choosing a hotel, pay attention to its location in the city center.'*
- *'I would suggest including male participants in the workshop.'*
- *'It would be great to organize the workshop in various cities. Istanbul could be a great option. But if in Georgia, please, in Tbilisi as the way to distant locations is very exhausting.'*

Given the opportunity to elevate any additional inputs to the organizing team, participants shared:

- *'Thank you, great job!'*
- *'Keep doing a great job!'*
- *'Aaron Wolf presentation, his skills in this branch was beneficial for me. I would like to have more courses from him in our next workshops. Thank you for giving me opportunities to be part of this workshop!'*



- *'I like it all.'*
- *'More warming up exercises and icebreakers.'*
- *'Many thanks for great workshop. It was very well organized with very professional inputs, great participants and a wonderful facilitator.'*
- *'Thank you for your support and organizing in a very interesting place.'*
- *'Thank you so much for organizing. Please, the next time have young volunteers who will help with organizing venues and transportation.'*
- *'Thank you for all the great work you have done and looking forward to the next gathering!'*
- *'Elizabeth is an excellent organizer. She had planned a wonderful program. I hope there will be more workshops like this in the future.'*
- *'Thank you for organizing it - it needs a long breath. Source of inspiration might be Central Asia (similar political system and challenges). Reference also to traditional way of managing water (e.g. qanat, mihrab) and religious values (we have a good mix in the region...).'*
- *'Everything was great. Many thanks to the organizers. The spirit of the event was wonderful.'*
- *'Appreciations for professionalism and excellent organizational skills.'*
- *'This event was absolutely wonderful, and I have been sharing all the amazing memories with my friends since I got back.'*
- *'Thank you very much for everything. it was very interesting.'*
- *'Hope you can host the next meeting in US or Europe! Thank you!'*
- *'Everything was perfect.'*
- *'The training was organised in such way to contribute to people-to-people contacts. Please, continue putting an emphasis on that component.'*
- *'Thank you!!!'*

Annex 2: Workshop Program

Women in Water Diplomacy Network South Caucasus Water Diplomacy Workshop

Logistical Guidance and Program
Telavi, Georgia | October 20-22, 2024

UTC+4	Sunday, October 20, 2024 Workshop Day 1
7:30 - 8:30	Breakfast
9:00 - 9:30	Registration <i>All participants are invited to sign-in, collect your name tag, and greet your fellow participants!</i>
9:30 - 11:00	Part 1: Welcome and Introductions <i>Objectives and workshop program overview</i> Elizabeth A. Koch , Senior Manager, Environmental Law Institute and Process Support Team Lead, Women in Water Diplomacy Network Welcome remarks from partners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dr. Jeanene Mitchell, Senior Transboundary Stakeholder Engagement Advisor for the USAID South Caucasus Regional Water Management Program Round of Participant Introductions
11:00 - 11:15	Coffee Break
11:15 - 12:45	Part 2: What is included in the support to the Network’s inception and development plan so far? What is missing? Opportunities for Complementary Activities! <i>Introduction and discussion opportunity for participants to provide input and brainstorm complementary engagements.</i> Elizabeth A. Koch , Process Support Team Lead, Women in Water Diplomacy Network
12:45 - 14:15	Group Lunch at hotel
14:15 – 15:45	Part 3: ‘Snakes and Ladders’ of Water Diplomacy <i>A classic game with many names and an incredible history will support us to identify barriers and support we might encounter as we start to develop a regional branch of the Women in Water Diplomacy Network in the South Caucasus.</i> Facilitated by Network Process Support Team
15:45 - 16:00	Coffee Break
16:00 – 17:15	Part 4: Women, Peace, and Security – Water, Peace, and Security: Discussion with leading regional experts including:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Armine Margaryan, President & Founder, Women and Global Security Architecture (Armenia), • Julia Kharashvili, Chair, IDP Women Association “Consent” and Member, High Level Advisory Group for Global Study on the Impact of UNSC Resolution 1325 (Georgia), and • Shahla Ismayil, Chairwomen, Women's Association of Rational Development (Azerbaijan) <p>Facilitated by Dr. Róisín Burke, Assistant Professor of Public International Law at Utrecht University</p>
17:15 – 17:30	<p>Wrap Up and Closing Participant Reflections Facilitated by Dr. Aaron Wolf, co-Director of the Program in Water Conflict Management and Transformation at Oregon State University</p>
18:30 – 21:00	Dinner at hotel

UTC +4	
Monday, October 21, 2024 Workshop Day 2 & Excursion	
7:30 - 8:30	Breakfast
9:15 - 9:30	<p>Morning Welcome and Participant Reflections Dr. Guy Bonvin Deputy Head of Mission; Deputy Head of Swiss Regional Cooperation in South Caucasus, Swiss Embassy to the Republic of Azerbaijan and to Turkmenistan</p>
9:30 - 11:30	<p>Part 5: General Setting: Introduction to Hydropolitics Conflict and Cooperation: The Challenge of Shared Waters Stages of Water Conflict Transformation Basic Definitions Exercises & Discussion Dr. Aaron Wolf, co-Director of the Program in Water Conflict Management and Transformation at Oregon State University</p>
11:30 - 11:50	Coffee Break
11:50 - 12:30	<p>Part 6: Use of Data in Water Negotiations – Short Exercise Dr. Aaron Wolf, co-Director of the Program in Water Conflict Management and Transformation at Oregon State University</p>
12:30 - 14:00	Group Lunch at the hotel.
14:00 – 19:00	<p>Excursion! Led by the USAID South Caucasus Regional Water Management Program Team <i>Participants are advised to dress comfortably for the short bus ride and group activities.</i></p>

UTC +4	Tuesday, October 22, 2024 Workshop Day 3 & Evening departures
7:30 - 8:30	Breakfast
9:15 - 9:30	Morning Welcome and Participant Reflections Jesse Ferraioli, Environmental Law Institute, WWDN Process Support Team
9:30-11:00	Part 7: Initial State – Basins and Boundaries General Setting Intra- and Interpersonal Conflict Conflicts Within & Without Exercises & Discussion Dr. Aaron Wolf, co-Director of the Program in Water Conflict Management and Transformation at Oregon State University
11:00-11:15	Coffee Break
11:15-12:45	Part 8: Enhancing and Sharing Benefits General Setting: The Integrative Stage of Dialogue Designing Group Processes Facilitating and Participating Exercises & Discussion Dr. Aaron Wolf, co-Director of the Program in Water Conflict Management and Transformation at Oregon State University
12:45 - 14:00	Group Lunch at hotel
14:00 – 15:00	Part 9: Putting Borders Back on the Map Institutions & Change Negotiation Dynamics Process Techniques Exercises & Discussion Take Home Messages Dr. Aaron Wolf, co-Director of the Program in Water Conflict Management and Transformation at Oregon State University
15:00 – 15:15	Coffee Break
15:15 - 16:15	Next Steps? Elizabeth A. Koch, Process Support Team Lead, Women in Water Diplomacy Network Dr. Róisín Burke, Assistant Professor of Public International Law at Utrecht University
16:15 - 16:45	Monitoring and Evaluation <i>Your inputs are essential to the continuing development of the Network! All participants are required to submit an evaluation form before departing!</i>
16:45 - 17:15	Awarding of Network Membership Certificates
17:15 - 17:30	Closing Reflections

Annex 3: Participant Short Biographies

Women in Water Diplomacy Network South Caucasus Water Diplomacy Workshop October 2024

Collected Participant Bios

In alphabetical order by first name

Dr. Aaron T. Wolf is a water resources geographer at Oregon State University and a trained mediator/facilitator. He co-directs the Program in Water Conflict Management and Transformation, through which he has offered workshops, facilitations, and mediations around the world. He is the author of *The Spirit of Dialogue: Lessons from Faith Traditions in Transforming Conflict* (Island Press, 2017), that he uses to bring facilitation and capacity-building to a variety of conflict settings, notably between entities who share water resources, and also in faith and interfaith communities, and within and between government agencies. He has an appointment as a Professor of Water Diplomacy at IHE-Delft Institute for Water Education in The Netherlands and is a partner at Four Worlds Partners.



Alvard Zakaryan was born in Stepanakert. She obtained her bachelor's degree from Artsakh State University, where her research focused on "Hydro-geopolitics as one of the most important trends of geopolitics and its influence on modern geopolitical processes." Subsequently, she pursued her master's degree at Yerevan State University, with her research topic revolving around "The factor of water resources in political conflicts, with a focus on the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Azerbaijani-Karabakh conflicts." Alvard then embarked on her Ph.D. journey, delving into "The role of water resources in creating a platform for dialogue in the Nagorno Karabakh conflict case." She actively participated in numerous international programs and conferences, where she represented her ideas and concepts on how water can serve as a tool for cooperation. For five years, Alvard coordinated the German-based Berghof Foundation project titled "Memory and history as a basis for social reconciliation of Armenians and Azerbaijanis." Currently, she serves as a research analyst and operation manager at the Yerevan-based Institute for Security Analysis.



Ani Harutyunyan is a Program Manager at the "Community Center for Development" Territorial Cooperation NGO (CCD). She and more than 15 years of experience in the civil society sector, having successfully managed a diverse array of local and international programs in Tavush region and participated in numerous international training opportunities both locally and abroad. Beyond her work on various socio-economic projects, she is dedicated to implementing initiatives that empower women and youth, advocate for their rights, and strengthen community resilience. She also prioritizes environmental protection and support for communities in crisis situations and is deeply committed to promoting sustainable development and addressing pressing social challenges. Ani holds a BA in English Philology.



Armine G. Margaryan is a military – political expert, the President and Founder of Yerevan-based Women & Global Security Architecture - WGSA “Think tank.” She served as Advisor to the Secretary of the Security Council of Armenia and later as Chief of Staff. She was an Expert of the Department of Arms Control and International Security and Desk Officer of the CIS Department in Armenia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Armine graduated from the Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. She holds a master's degree in International Relations from Hrachia Acharian University (Armenia) and took non-degree programs from the Geneva Center for Security Policy (GCSP), George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies, NATO school, Center for International Trade & Security of The University of Georgia, Clingendael Institute, etc. As a Military-Political Expert, Armine provides thematic interviews and consultancy, publishes articles, delivers lectures, and conducts public diplomacy activities. She co-authored such research papers as “The Green Paper on the Reforms in the Armed Forces of Armenia” (2021), “Limitations of the Security System of the Republic of Armenia and the Possibilities of Overcoming Them” (2022) and “Small, Non-aligned State” (2023). Armine is a National consultant to the CoE's Human Rights of members of the armed forces within the framework of the Project “Fostering Human Rights in the Armed Forces of Armenia.”



Elena Koridze currently works at USAID South Caucasus Regional Water Management Program as an Operations Assistant. She is a graduate of University of Vienna pursuing her master's degree in Journalism and Communications studies. Elene did internships at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and USAID REAP Project, as well as worked as a sales representative at Rompetrol Georgia. After finishing her master's degree Elene has worked as a Program Officer at Joint Vienna Institute.



Elizabeth A. Koch serves as the Senior Manager for International Programs at the Environmental Law Institute (ELI) and leads the Women in Water Diplomacy Network's Process Support Team, supporting the Network's development since inception. Elizabeth has over 15 years of experience supporting water diplomacy engagements in conflict sensitive basins on behalf of ELI, SIWI's Shared Waters Partnership programme, the UNESCO Category II International Centre for Water Cooperation, and EcoPeace Middle East. Elizabeth holds a MA in Government, Diplomacy and Strategy and BA in International Relations.



Emma Anakhasyan holds an MD degree from Yerevan State Medical University, graduated in 1990, and an MPH degree from the American University of Armenia, completed in 2005. With a background in epidemiology and public health, she has extensive experience in water and sanitation policy, project implementation, and monitoring. Prior to joining Armenian Women for Health and Healthy Environment NGO (AWHHE) in 2003 as the Head of the Environmental Health Department, Emma served as an epidemiologist and later as the Head of the Epidemiological Department at the Sanitary-Epidemiological Surveillance Center of Kotayk province in Armenia from 1990 to 2003. Throughout her career, Emma has collaborated with various international organizations such as WHO, FAO, WB, UNECE, UNDP, WRI, ARCADIS Belgium and SEI, among others, on projects related to water issues. Her expertise and contributions have earned her the role of an International Expert on Water and Sanitation. Additionally, Emma Anakhasyan serves as the Honorary Secretary of the Women for Water Partnership, based in the Netherlands, further demonstrating her commitment to advancing water-related initiatives on a global scale.



Gulnar Aliyeva is coordinator of UNECE supported project, named “Identification of Alternative Water Sources to Increase Resilience of Communities of Regions of Azerbaijan to Climate Change.” She has graduated the Azerbaijan Melioration and Construction University, Melioration and Water farm engineer faculty. She is studying at the Master's level of the Faculty of Project Management and Industrial Management at the same University. She has about 10 years of experience in the field of management of water resources and environment protection. Main work was about natural resources management related capacity building and awareness rising, stakeholder coordination in this sphere within different EU, UNDP, OECD, UNECE, UBA(Austria), EaU (France), WB and other donor supported projects. Then cooperated with EU EPIRB and EUWI+ projects as a communication assistant for stakeholder coordination strategy development for pilot RBMPs in Kura upstream of Mingachevir reservoir basin district. She provided assistance to different level of discussions on application of basin approach in Azerbaijan according to EU WFD within the EU4Environment project.



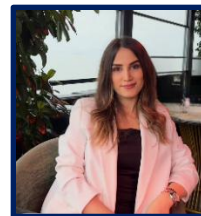
Gunay Abbasova is a hydroecologist and currently serves as the Head of the Department of Strategy, Application of Scientific Work, and Innovation at the Water and Amelioration Scientific Research Institute, which operates under the Azerbaijan State Water Resources Agency. Ms. Abbasova earned her Bachelor's degree in Ecology, Environmental Protection, and Efficient Use of Natural Resources from Baku State University, followed by a Master's degree in Geographical Ecology from the same institution. She is presently working on her dissertation titled "Transformation of the Landscapes of the Azerbaijani Coast of the Caspian Sea and their Geoecological Evaluation." Throughout her career, she has been actively involved in essential working groups and has collaborated with various local, regional, and international organizations, contributing to several significant national and international projects and initiatives. Additionally, Ms. Abbasova teaches Sustainable Development Management at Baku State University, furthering her commitment to educating the next generation of environmental scientists. Her research interests include the impact of climate change on Azerbaijan's water resources, the application of innovative technologies in the water sector, and the integration of modern methodologies, including artificial intelligence, in water management.



Gunay Hasanova is a seasoned professional with over 15 years of experience and expertise in climate change, water resources management, sustainability, and energy generation from water resources. She has held key roles in various esteemed organizations, showcasing her expertise and commitment to driving impactful change. With a background in hydrology and climatology from Baku State University, Gunay's academic journey laid a robust foundation for her career. Gunay's professional journey encompasses significant contributions across diverse sectors. From her tenure at Azerenergy Joint Stock Company, where she played a pivotal role in ensuring the efficient operation of Azerbaijan's electricity system, to her work with the Ministry of Ecology, where she contributed to shaping environmental policies and initiatives. During her time at the University of California, Davis, as a Hubert H. Humphrey fellow, Gunay focused on sustainable water resource management. She served as an Expert in Sustainability at the Azerbaijan Tourism Board leveraging her expertise to promote eco-friendly practices within the tourism industry, contributing to the country's broader sustainability goals. This experience further enriched her understanding of global environmental challenges and solutions. Her involvement in projects such as the UNDP GEF Kura Project underscores her dedication to environmental advocacy on both national and international levels.



Guntakin Mammadova is a Water Supply Engineer with over seven years of experience, currently employed as a project engineer at “Water and Amelioration Complex Design Institute.” In this role, she focuses on designing water management systems. Her primary responsibilities include designing, planning, and implementing water supply systems, particularly for water and sewage lines across various districts and villages. She plays a vital role in ensuring access to clean water and proper sanitation facilities for the communities she serves. Her dedication to her field significantly contributes to improving infrastructure and the quality of life in various regions.



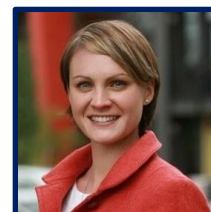
Dr. Guy Bonvin was appointed Deputy Head of Mission and Deputy Head of Regional Cooperation in Azerbaijan in July 2024. His current assignment is focused on economic cooperation and bilateral relations, as well as on COP29. Dr. Guy Bonvin previously supported the Swiss-Ukraine Cooperation since October 2022, including one year as Deputy Head of Cooperation in Kyiv and a subsequent senior program manager position in Berne. His working areas included sustainable urban development and mobility, health, and culture in the very challenging Ukrainian context. Prior to that he served as the Swiss Special Envoy for Water in Central Asia. In this diplomatic position, Blue Peace Central Asia, the Swiss water diplomacy initiative, was at the heart of his mandate, contributing to address the challenge posed by the complex water-energy-food-environment nexus in a transboundary context. With his experience in the industrial, diplomatic, and humanitarian fields, Dr. Bonvin has built a broad vision of the water-energy-food nexus, of its stakeholders, of economic and strategic challenges on the path of sustainable economic development and stability. His assignments included operations in Central and Eastern Europe, Middle East, Caucasus, Central Asia, Africa, and Latin America.



Hajar Huseynova is the Senior Research Fellow at the Institute for Development and Diplomacy (IDD) of ADA University. Her major functions include leading the production of high-quality research reports and publications, as well as teaching and conducting trainings in the field of green energy, environmental policy and management, sustainable development, and water resources management. Hajar has worked with various international institutions such as UNDP, GEF, GIZ, Konrad-Adenauer Stiftung, NUI in the capacity of researcher and project manager. She is the author of monthly analytical papers and reports on water, energy, renewable energy, and environmental policy gaps in the country. She graduated with an MA in Diplomacy and International Affairs from ADA University.



Dr. Jeanene Mitchell is a Senior Transboundary Stakeholder Engagement Advisor for the USAID South Caucasus Regional Water Management Program (SCRWM). She has over 20 years of experience in the South Caucasus and Türkiye on water, energy, gender, and sustainable development topics. Previously, Jeanene directed stakeholder engagement for a UNDP-Global Environment Facility transboundary water management project in the Kura River Basin. She has also worked in research at the Columbia University Center for Energy, Marine Transportation and Public Policy. Jeanene holds a PhD in Near and Middle Eastern Studies and a Certificate in International Development from the University of Washington, an MA in International Affairs from Columbia University, and a BSFS in International Politics from Georgetown University.



Jesse Ferraioli is a Research Associate at the Environmental Law Institute (ELI). She holds a BA in Environmental Studies and Philosophy from Dartmouth College. At ELI, she assists Elizabeth with the Women in Water Diplomacy Network and has worked on projects spanning from the use of natural infrastructure in hazard mitigation to the evaluation of California's Tribal consultation policies. For her senior thesis, Jesse researched the role of the U.S. Forest Service in safeguarding groundwater and cultural resources from uranium contamination in northern Arizona.



Jeyhuna Mammadova is an experienced hydrologist and water resources management professional with over a decade of experience in the field. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Hydrology from Baku State University and a Master's degree from Baku Engineering University. Throughout her career, Jeyhuna has worked in various capacities, including as an engineer at the Navy's Navigation and Oceanography Service, where she conducted water quality assessments and environmental impact assessments. She later moved to Azersu OJSC, where she focused on strategic research and freshwater supply planning. She is currently a senior consultant at the Water and Amelioration Complex Design Institute, specialising in strategy and project management. She has also volunteered with the NGO Nature Friends, contributing to environmental awareness and youth development projects. Jeyhuna has actively participated in international projects with organisations such as UNDP, EUWI+ and the European Union, demonstrating her expertise in this field. With a PhD focused on hydro-ecological issues, Jeyhuna continues to contribute to the advancement of sustainable water management practices.



Julia Kharashvili Chair, IDP Women Association “Consent” and Member, High Level Advisory Group for Global Study on the Impact of UNSC Resolution 1325 is a civil society activist. She has spent 28 years working on protection of rights of IDP and conflict-affected women in Georgia and throughout the South Caucasus region. Since 2013, Ms. Kharashvili has been an expert member on the UN Women High Level Advisory group for the implementation of the UNSCR 1325, which is actively working on localization of WPS agenda in Georgia. Since 2020, she also serves as a member of Global Action Network of Women in Forced Displacement. Julia is also a member of High-Level Advisory Group to OSCE WIN project, and a member of Planning Committee for the Regional platform of Women for Peace Dialogue, which supports efforts of women – peace builders and civic activists in the region of the Former Soviet Union. For her work, Julia has received several international and Georgian awards. Currently, she represents Georgia in the NATO Civil Society Advisory Panel on WPS. Prior to her work in this area, Julia was a researcher in field of immunodeficiency viruses of monkeys (in Abkhazia). Julia is married and has two sons and two grandchildren.



Khalisa Shahverdiyeva is Senior Gender Expert / Social and Environmental Development Specialist based in Azerbaijan. She has more than 14 years of working experience in promoting gender equality and social-economical inclusion in different fields, such as environment, climate change, land use, digital, energy, transport, water, wastewater and solid waste, agriculture. As the Hubert H. Humphrey Fellow (2021-2022), Khalisa studied Public Policy and Public Administration at the Maxwell School of Syracuse University, focused on gender policies, gender-responsive climate policies, public-private partnerships for sustainable development and digital inclusion. Currently, Khalisa Shahverdiyeva works as a senior Social Development Consultant at the World Bank's Social Sustainability and Inclusion unit, conducting research, facilitating consultations with stakeholders ensuring inclusion in the Digital and Green Development in Rural Azerbaijan Programs.



Lilit Baghdasaryan is a projects management specialist at Country Water Partnership (CWP). She is deeply committed to harnessing the power of women's leadership in resolving water-related conflicts and fostering sustainable water management practices globally. With a background in Psychology and a passion for gender equality, she has dedicated her career to addressing the intricate nexus of water scarcity, environmental degradation, and socio-political tensions. Drawing on her expertise in conflict resolution and mediation, Lilit has pioneered innovative approaches that integrate gender perspectives into water governance frameworks, thereby fostering inclusive and equitable solutions. Through her work, she has had the privilege of collaborating with diverse stakeholders, including government agencies, non-profit organizations, and grassroots communities, to develop tailored strategies that address the unique challenges faced by women and men having health issues. Whether facilitating capacity-building workshops for female water entrepreneurs or advocating for gender-sensitive policies at the highest levels of government, she has remained steadfast in her commitment to advancing the principles of women's empowerment and sustainable development.



Lilit Ananyan serves as a Capacity Development Expert at the “Community Center for Development” Territorial Cooperation NGO (CCD). She holds a Master's in International Relations from the International Scientific-Educational Center of NAS RA (2016-2018) and a Bachelor's in English Philology from Yerevan State University (2012-2016). Prior to joining CCD, she served as Manager of the Economics and Law Centre from 2017 to 2018; a specialist at the Public Relations and Information Center SNCO, operating under the Office of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia from 2018 to 2021; and held an internship at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia. Currently, as a Capacity Development Expert at the Community Center for Development, she contributes to initiatives focused on environmental protection, assisting communities facing emergency situations, promoting sustainable development, and addressing critical social challenges.



Dr. Lusine Hambaryan is an Associate Professor at Yerevan State University and Head of Hydroecology laboratory at the SC of Zoology and Hydroecology, Institute of Hydroecology and Ichthyology NAS RA. Dr. Hambaryan Lusine has many years of experience researching freshwater phytoplankton, cyanobacterial blooming and ecological conditions in water ecosystems of the Republic of Armenia.



Mary Kate Ugrekhelidze is a Georgia Water Governance Specialist for the USAID South Caucasus Regional Water Management Program (SCRWM). She holds master's degrees in Environmental Management from Kiel University (Germany) and Natural Resources Management from Ilia State University (Georgia). With ten years of experience in teaching, research, and program development, Mary Kate has worked across governmental and non-governmental sectors in environmental and project management. Throughout her career, she has contributed to a wide array of national, regional, and international development, cooperation, and research projects, serving as an assistant, consultant, expert, researcher, and coordinator. Furthermore, as a Ph.D. student and junior researcher at the Center for Development Research (ZEF), University of Bonn, she is studying the complex socio-ecological dynamics within the Three Alazani Rivers Biosphere Reserve. Her research focuses on understanding the diverse, often conflicting, perspectives, interests, and needs of stakeholders to reveal actual patterns of land and resource access, use, governance, and management.



Maya Barkhudaryan has extensive experience in dialogue-building, project management, and evaluation. She has been involved in research on metal mining and its impact, conducted an assessment of the Joghaz water reservoir, and evaluated the situation in Tavush's border villages during times of conflict. Additionally, she has worked on strengthening human rights protections and democratic institutions. Maya has served as a project manager, evaluation specialist, and consultant for local, foreign, and international organizations.



Medina Hajiyeva is an expert in environmental management and water resource optimization, with a strong focus on driving efficiency and sustainability initiatives. She holds a master's degree in Environmental Engineering from University College London, specializing in water treatment technologies. Currently serving as the Head of the Environmental Management Division at SOCAR HQ, she leads efforts to enhance water usage efficiency, demonstrating a commitment to environmental stewardship and resource conservation. Previously, she served as a Senior Project Manager at the Israeli National Water Company, Mekorot, where she played a pivotal role in preparing the Azerbaijan Water Masterplan in collaboration with the Azerbaijan State Water Agency. Additionally, she conducted a feasibility study for the construction of a major desalination plant on the Caspian Sea, aimed at addressing the potable water needs of the population. As the Delivery Manager for the Electro-chlorination Plant project at SUEZ, she ensured the quality and safety of potable water disinfection systems at major water treatment and pumping stations in Azerbaijan. Medina also served as the Project Manager for the Boyukshor Lake Rehabilitation Project, where she coordinated the preparation of detailed designs. She continues to contribute significantly to water management and conservation efforts as a national consultant for both UNDP and FAO.



Moreta Bobokhidze is a consultant engaged in programmes related to Women Peace and Security (WPS), Gender Sensitive Leadership, and Conflict Resolution. Moreta has 20 years' experience working in the criminal justice sector with significant focus on human rights, corrections, gender equality, and anti-discrimination. In 2019-2022 Moreta was a Torture Prevention Expert of the National Prevention Mechanism under the Ombudsman of Georgia. Moreta is an experienced election observer, amongst other countries, she observed presidential elections in United States in 2020. Ms. Bobokhidze works as a Gender Expert, develops policies, recommendations on gender mainstreaming, evaluates budgets with gender lenses and conducts training on various aspects of gender equality. Moreta is the co-author of manuals for prison and probation system and has published articles on women's economic empowerment.



Nazrin Baghirova is ADA University Faculty and a Researcher. She is a former Research Associate for the Federal Statistics Office at the American Institutes for Research, Washington D.C, Chief Policy Adviser to the Ministry of Education of Azerbaijan, and Head of Unit in the Department for Education and Training Policy of the Ministry of Agriculture of Azerbaijan. She is a former advisor to the rector on Strategic Planning and International Partnership at the Azerbaijan State Agricultural University. Nazrin Baghirova is publishing policy research nexus on education, agriculture, and water diplomacy (regulations) with the focus on the Caspian Sea Basin.



Nino Rostomashvili is a Gender and Stakeholder Engagement Specialist with a specific focus on integrated water resource management. Her contributions are aimed at shaping inclusive development strategies for sustainable river basin management within the country. Collaborating closely with water resource management officials as well as sectoral experts in Georgia, she has taken part in the formulation of River Basin Management Plans, emphasizing the importance of stakeholder engagement and inclusivity. Currently, her work is particularly focused on the incorporation of gender considerations into policy development processes, promoting more equitable approaches in the water resource management sector and beyond.



Dr. Róisín Burke is an Assistant Professor of Public International Law with the Netherlands Institute of Human Rights. Róisín's present and past work, publications and teaching have cut across the areas of international criminal law, international humanitarian law (IHL), human rights law, women peace, and security (WPS), peace operations, international security law, rule of law programming in conflict-affected states, legal pluralism, and public international law. She is leading an NWO project related to WPS, transboundary water security and environmental peacebuilding in the South Caucasus. She has been a consultant on projects related to gender, human rights, IHL, and peace-building with NGOs, and international and regional bodies. Previously, she was a Senior Law Lecturer (above the bar) at the University of Canterbury and worked as Political Advisor to the Permanent Mission of Ireland to the UN. She holds a doctorate from the Asia Pacific Centre for Military Law, University of Melbourne, a LLB in Law and European Studies (UL), an LLM in International Human Rights Law (Irish Centre for Human Rights) and is admitted as an Attorney in New York State.



Salome Kobalava is a gender equality expert, advocating for gender-responsive climate and environmental governance and inclusive water resources management. Currently, serving as a gender equality and social inclusion specialist at USAID South Caucasus Regional Water Management Program, she has 10+ years of work experience in leading and supporting environmental governance, gender, climate neutrality, green energy, open governance, and social justice advocacy projects across governmental, media, NGO and private sectors in Georgia, the South Caucasus and Central and Eastern Europe. Salome is an experienced social researcher with published work looking at gender and intersectional dimensions of extractivism and access to natural resources, focusing on rural and ethnic communities in Georgia. With Master's degrees in Sociology and Social Anthropology from Central European University (Austria) and in Media and Communication Studies from Lund University (Sweden), her academic interests encompass environmental transformation, gender, low carbon transitions, and more than human sociality.



Dr. Satenik Bakunts is an Associate Professor of Ecology with a PhD in Soil Science, specializing in environmental problems and ecosystem resilience. With over ten years of experience in research and teaching, her work focuses on the intersection of soil health, climate change, and sustainable nature-based solutions. Dr. Bakunts has published over 30 scientific papers and actively collaborates with organizations promoting sustainability among vulnerable groups, while raising awareness on adaptation strategies.



Shahla Ismayil has been working on gender equality and women's rights for over 25 years. She chairs the 22-year-old Women's Association for Rational Development (WARD); she is also an advisor for two US-based grant making women foundations – Global Fund for Women and Urgent Action Fund for Women's Rights, director of the first gender-oriented think-tank "Gender Port". Since 2020 Shahla Ismayil has been the elected country facilitator to coordinate the Azerbaijan National Platform of EaP Civil Society Forum. She is a founding member of WPS Advisory Council and a member of several Dialogue Platforms between Armenian-Azerbaijani experts in support of lasting peace in the South Caucasus. Shahla Ismayil authored and managed over 130 projects and over 170 publications in the fields of human rights, gender equality, civil society. She is the author of the formal versions of the NAP 1325 in Azerbaijan. In addition to gender expertise, Shahla Ismayil is a certified international expert on Human and Institutional Capacity Development (HICD) as well as communication, advocacy, and coaching. In 2018 the UK-based Equal Rights Trust awarded Shahla Ismayil with the Bob Hepple Equality Award for 20 years of work in justice and equality. She received the 2022 National Order of Merit, awarded by French President Emmanuel Macron for merits in the area of gender equality and women's rights in Azerbaijan. In 2023, she received the National Medal "Progress" for 25-years of contribution to the gender equality in Azerbaijan.



Dr. Shahnaz Amanova received a Ph.D. degree in Physical Geography, biogeography, soil geography, geophysics, and geochemistry of landscapes in 2018. Currently, she is about to defend her doctorate in geographical sciences. She is an Azerbaijan program associate at the Environmental Health and Pollution Management Institute. She is the computer developer of the geography atlas for secondary schools, 1:600,000 scale physical and political wall maps of Azerbaijan, physical and political wall maps of the world. She conducts research in the direction of Geographical Information Systems and Remote Sensing, monitoring vegetation and environment by processing satellite images. She has analyzed and mapped renewable energy sources in the western part of Azerbaijan, especially the potential of solar energy, based on modern methods. She is the author of more than 60 scientific works.



Sofik Minasyan is the president of the Arpi (NGO). She is a dedicated psychologist with over thirty years of experience working with children, women, and families, providing psychological support and humanitarian aid across Armenia. In addition to her humanitarian efforts, she is actively involved in ecological projects aimed at promoting environmental sustainability in Armenia.



Tamar Lobjanidze has been working with UN Women since 2018 serving as the Women, Peace, and Security Portfolio Manager. Ms. Lobjanidze has an extensive academic background and over a decade of hands-on experience in conflict prevention, transformation, resolution, and peacebuilding, with a specific focus on gender, peace, and security. Prior to joining UN Women, Ms. Lobjanidze has made substantial contributions to conflict management and peacebuilding in her role as a Protection Field Officer at the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Tbilisi, Georgia. In her current position as the Women, Peace, and Security Portfolio Manager, Ms. Lobjanidze is dedicated to advancing the meaningful participation of women in peace and security initiatives. Her responsibilities encompass program development, technical assistance, capacity building, monitoring, and reporting, and resource mobilization, all aimed at fostering a more just, equitable, and peaceful societies. Ms. Lobjanidze holds an MSc. in Women, Peace, and Security from the London School of Economics and Political Science



(LSE), UK, and an M.A. degree in Modern and Contemporary History from Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University. Additionally, she has also been an International Relations fellow at the Uniwersytet Wrocławski in Poland.

Tarana Jafarova is a gender specialist, researcher, and sociologist with proven experience in development, gender, women and social issues, assessment and capacity building of government and civil society organizations. Currently, as a Gender Specialist, Tarana provides technical support with practical tools and knowledge on how to integrate gender perspectives and dimensions into policies, policy interventions, projects, state statistics and climate change adaptation strategies and priority sectors of the country such as energy, agriculture, health, and coastal zone. As a Gender Researcher, she conducts gender analysis and developed a Gender Action Plan (GAP) along with gender targets and indicators and prepared GAP Implementation Plan and oversaw the implementation of the GAP in projects such as land degradation neutrality, biodiversity conservation and sustainable management of natural resources, fisheries and aquaculture implemented by the UN FAO in partnership with relevant ministries of Azerbaijan. Currently, she is supporting the Asian Development Bank, as national gender expert undertaking Azerbaijan's Country Gender Assessment. In addition, as a gender expert hired by UNDP, she prepares and conducts training for decision makers on how to effectively mainstream gender dimensions into sectors that represent priority areas in Azerbaijan such as energy, agriculture, water, and health and prepare the training materials for the Climate Change Adaptation course within the Master's program. Tarana prepared a Practical Guide on Mainstreaming Gender in projects, budgets, and state statistics, which was also posted online on the website of the State Committee for Women and Family Affairs of Azerbaijan. Tarana is a strong professional researcher, gender specialist, trainer, and coach on women's leadership with a solid academic background from the State University of New York, USA, and the Center for International Education at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, and Adler International Coaching Federation. Tarana has published her research and articles on gender issues in various international journals.

