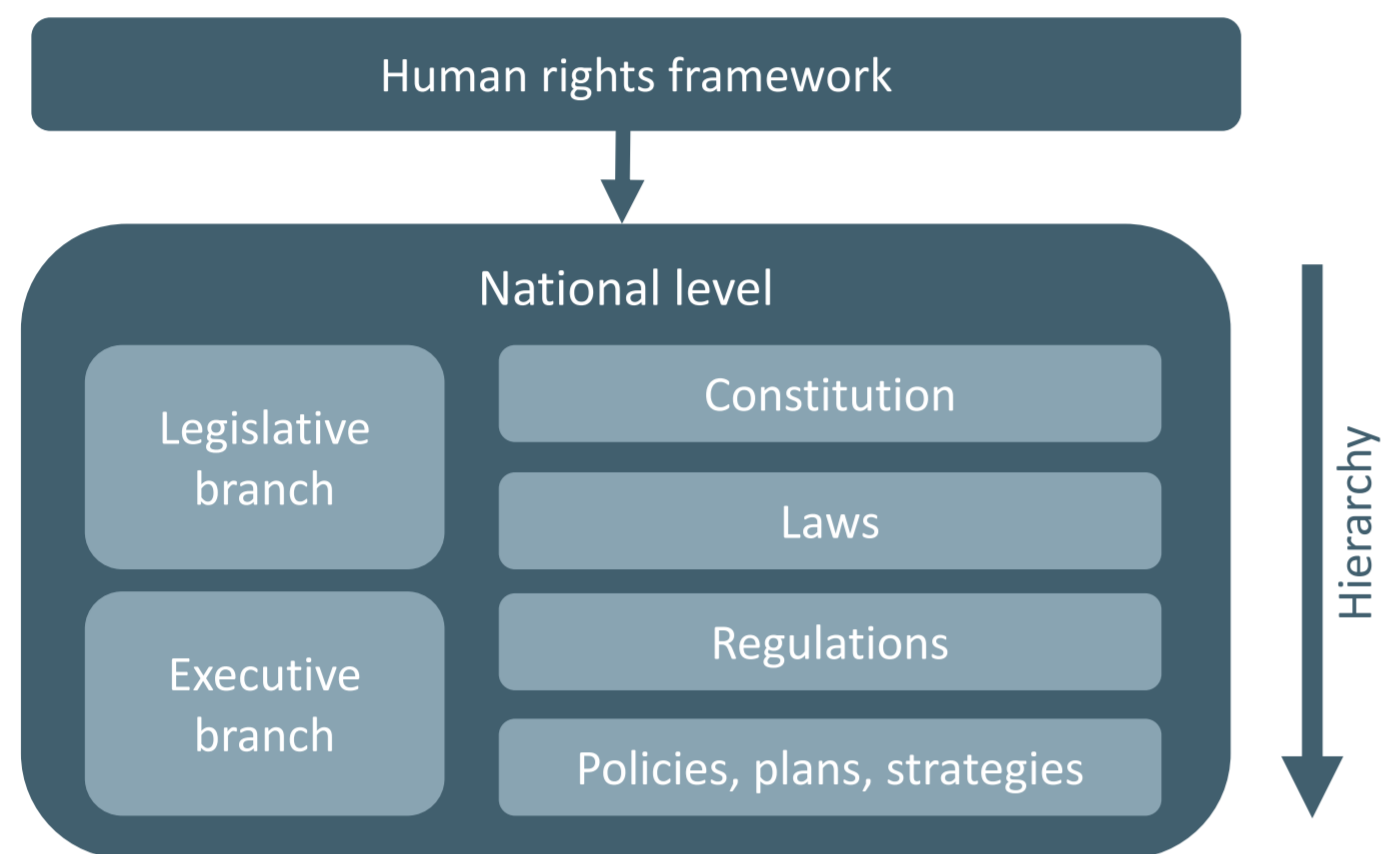


From Would-Be Hero to Super Hero

How human rights can turn local government officials into heroes of water and sanitation services for all

Human rights as government obligations*

- The human rights framework clearly assigns responsibilities: People have the rights to water and sanitation services, and states are duty bound to realise them.
- At the national level, it needs to be specified how this duty flows through the system. Typically, governments assign responsibilities to different state institutions in the executive branch of government (from ministries to the most local level of government). This assignment is done through the laws of the country, which are created by the legislative branch of government.
- In most countries, the responsibility for ensuring water and sanitation services is assigned to the local government level.



What human rights demand*

Human rights demand that states ensure that everyone enjoys their rights to water and sanitation. Since not everything can be achieved today, states must work on the realisation of rights “as fast as possible”, “progressively” and “using the maximum available resources”. As further guidance on what and how to achieve realisation, human rights contain criteria to define what services should look like, and principles that are important to ensure service systems work.

Human rights principles

- **Equality & non-discrimination** to ensure people with least services receive support and nobody experiences discrimination.
- **Access to information** to ensure people have information about services and plans for any changes.
- **Participation** to ensure people take part in decisions on services so that their needs are considered.
- **Accountability** to ensure people can report problems and these will be addressed.
- **Sustainability** to ensure progress is maintained and to avoid slippages and retrogression.

Human rights criteria

- **Availability:** Sufficient water for personal and domestic use. Enough sanitation facilities for everyone. Excreta is collected, transported, treated and disposed properly.
- **Affordability:** Service costs don't limit people's capacity to buy other basic goods and services.
- **Accessibility:** Facilities are located and built so that they are accessible for all, including for people who face specific barriers.
- **Safety:** Water is safe for human consumption. Sanitation facilities are safe to use, protect the health of users and the environment.
- **Acceptability:** Facilities meet the social or cultural standards of the people they serve.



The Making Rights Real Initiative

Breaking down the concepts of human rights so they become practical, useful & relevant to local government officials

Using marketing techniques to understand the audience

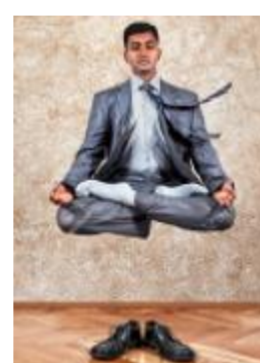
- We interviewed local government officials to find out about their motivations, concerns and the challenges they face in their work. We used these interviews to develop ‘personas’. The personas help us understand what information about human rights is most relevant for the audience.
- We decided to target our materials towards the would-be heroes. The analysis defined this audience segment as a large group of people working in local government, who feel personally committed to providing services to local people, but are constrained and thwarted by lack of resources and political support.
- We believe that would-be heroes can become super-heroes with the right kind of support. If they are empowered they can really help progress to improve services. Champions within institutions can have huge impact.
- People are now using the idea of personas to identify champions they can work with in institutions to bring about change.



Super hero: “I can make things better”

This highly motivated person is aware of his/her role, is dedicated to positive change and open to new ideas, even if s/he is not a decider.

- “... I want to help my community”
- “... I want to get things done”
- “... I want to be seen as a good person”



Would-be hero: “I want to see first that it works out”

This person needs leadership and guidance to take action. S/he would like to do the right thing, but is scared of doing something wrong.

- Human rights seem abstract.
- “... I want to report success”
- “... I want to please everyone”
- “... doing nothing is safe than acting”



Laggard: “I am not responsible”

This person doesn't feel responsible for any change and wants to keep things as they are. External factors are easily holding him/her back, especially a far away concept like human rights.

- “... I only follow rules”
- “... I don't want any trouble”



Persistent objector: “I don't want any change”

This person does not want any change and simply refuses to act. S/he takes advantage of power by doing nothing. It seems pointless to be dealing with him/her.

- “... I want to have a pleasant time”
- “... My rules, my priorities”

Helping duty-bearers and rights-holders work together

- The Making Rights Real materials use key questions and tips to help local government heroes. Key questions are based on human rights. If local institutions use them to guide their planning, implementation and monitoring, they can help achieve services for all as fast as possible, even with limited resources.
- By acknowledging that the task is challenging and encouraging the heroes to do ‘as much as possible’, the materials help to create a dialogue between rights holders and local government on how to tackle the most systemic problems.
- For example, in India a grassroots organisation used the materials to create a dialogue about accessibility of household sanitation for people with disabilities. Local government officials had not been aware of problems. They will now analyse the problem and find solutions, with the help of the grassroots organisation.

Who is missing out and how can I support them?

How can I best give and get information so my planning will be solid, people will trust me, and I can monitor the services?

How can I involve people so I understand their needs and they can tell me when things don't work?

How can I make sure there are enough resources to keep services running?

TIP 1: ENGAGE PEOPLE WITH INFLUENCE

Community organisers, health workers, doctors, journalists, religious and political leaders can all help by talking to their communities about your plans. Talk to people. Invite them to your office to see what you are doing.

TIP 2: BUILD THE RIGHT TEAM

Your team is the most vital driver of the whole process. Look for allies: People who want to make a difference and will support your efforts. Create a network of people committed to making sure everyone has good services.

How you can get involved



Use the materials!

The materials have been used so far in: Burkina Faso | Ethiopia | Ghana | India. They are available in: English | French | Oriya | Portuguese | Spanish. Coming soon: Hindi | Oromifa
Download link: www.righttowater.info/making-rights-real

Translate the materials to another language!

Please contact Louisa Gosling (louisagosling@wateraid.org) or Hannah Neumeyer (hannah.neumeyer@wash-united.org).

Our next step as the Making Rights Real Initiative

Enabling partners to adjust the materials to their context.

