


PROVIDING ACCESS TO CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION IS THE FIRST STEP TO ACHIEVE ANY FORM OF SOCIAL CHANGE, BECAUSE IN ORDER TO PROMOTE ACTION, PEOPLE MUST BE HEALTHY AND LIVING UNDER SAFE CONDITIONS.



JULIANA MULLER, 17

WINNER OF THE 2ND HUMAN RIGHTS YOUTH CHALLENGE ORGANISED BY THE SPECIAL RAPporteur ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS TO WATER AND SANITATION, LÉO HELLER

ABOUT JULIANA



Juliana Muller is a seventeen-year-old Brazilian that believes youth is a major factor in social change. She is the co-founder of 'Beyond The Wall', a young leaders project to raise awareness, promote dialogue and develop actions on issues related to human rights. Juliana also creates accessible educational content through digital art and writes in Youth for Human Rights Brazil's blog. She currently lives in Israel and attends Eastern Mediterranean International School.

WINNING SUBMISSION



Juliana Muller's video, "[RIGHTLESS](#)" allows you to walk a mile in the shoes of a young girl in rural Brazil who understands the consequences of being left behind first hand. Her creative, virtual reality-inspired submission centres on the human experiences that highlights the importance of the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation. She demonstrates an excellent understanding of rights, and a sensitivity for personal stories and experiences that are at the core of human rights advocacy.



ELIMINATING INEQUALITY



PHOTO CREDIT: TCHOUPOMOTING

Juliana joined the Special Rapporteur to present at a side-event on the human rights to water and sanitation in public spaces. Alongside a panel of experts and NGO representatives, she spoke about the need to eliminate inequalities in the work towards ensuring universal respect of the human rights to water and sanitation.

The gaps in provision of water and sanitation services between urban and rural communities, she argued, only widen the gaps between the rich and the poor.

"We are failing the poorest and the most vulnerable and their children and families," Juliana said. "Even though significant improvement was made in the last ten years to ensure adequate supply, the public sphere is still neglected. It is a place of work for many people and not providing access is denying their human rights."

HEAR FROM JULIANA



Why did you choose to enter the Youth Challenge ?

I have always been very interested in Human Rights, and the idea of using creativity to raise awareness about such an important topic really attracted me. Providing people their most basic rights is the first action necessary in order to make my change, so the opportunity of educating myself and other young people about the issue was very appealing.

What are you doing to continue your work in learning about, and promoting the human rights to water and sanitation?

Learning in-depth about the right to water and sanitation actually brought me much closer to the issue of education. I could understand how the barrier is imposed much before a student steps at the school, and the need to educate youth about their own rights, so they know their value as individual and advocate for systematic changes within their communities, evolving the private and governmental levels. Currently, I am working on a project to empower youth by bringing young activists from unprivileged backgrounds in Brazil to speak up about their stories and actions promoted on their communities - since developing technologies to improve the quality of the water, to providing youth with leadership skills.

What has been your lived experience of the human rights to water and sanitation?

I have always been very privileged. I have clean water to drink, bathe, wash my hands and brush my teeth; sewage disposal and trash collection. However, the general lack of sanitation infrastructure in my city, Macaé, in Rio de Janeiro, provokes serious damages to the population. Every raining season we have terrible floods, because the drains clog with residues improperly disposed on the streets and domestic waste. Therefore, people get exposed to hazardous viruses and bacteria, escalating to epidemics, mainly of dengue. Besides the impact in public health, during the floods periods, we can not attend school, public transportation is unable to work and houses are devastated.

What would you like to see the human rights community do in the next few years?

The community must facilitate the approach to people in vulnerable conditions, educating them about their own rights and empowering local activists, like the amazing Asniya, giving voice to their particular causes and protecting their zone of action. It was an honor to meet her, the winner of the past competition, and heavily inspired me to continue my work.

How can your fellow youth get more involved in promoting the human rights to water and sanitation?

By becoming more engaged in local politics, demanding changes from leaders and organizations, but most importantly, raising awareness and attention to Human Rights violations.

If you could sum up your message in one sentence, what would it be?

Providing access to clean water and sanitation is the first step to achieve any form of social change, because in order to promote action, people must be healthy and living under safe conditions.

MORE ABOUT THE YOUTH CHALLENGE

The first Human Rights Youth Challenge which took place on the occasion of International Youth Day in August 2018 aimed to raise awareness among the youth population on the human rights to water and sanitation, encouraging youth to demonstrate knowledge of the human rights to water and sanitation and express what these rights mean to them by submitting original contribution via social media channels.

The second Human Rights Youth Challenge focused on the theme 'Leave no one behind'. The goal of the challenge was to draw attention to people who lack of access to safe drinking water and sanitation in spheres of life beyond the household.

The third Human Rights Youth Challenge, on privatization and the human rights to water and sanitation is currently underway.