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Finding solutions when the unthinkable starts becoming a reality

It's getting hotter. Or, depending on where you live, wetter.

The planetary climate is changing and the impacts, [writes the UN](#), are global in scope, unprecedented in scale and the defining issue of our time.

Shifting weather patterns caused by global warming pose a major threat to agriculture and our supply of food. Those shifts have already made the last five years (2014 - 2018) the [warmest years](#) ever recorded according to NASA.

And are already sparking problems such as unpredictable or reduced supplies of fresh water.

With a quarter of the planet's 7.6 billion citizens daily wondering where their next drink will come from, it is a climate change reality the 3300 delegates from 130 countries debating global water challenges at the 2019 World Water Week in Stockholm, the Swedish capital, at the end of August, must have top of mind as they rehydrate with plentiful glasses of clean Swedish tap water.

For many of us it is unimaginable that over 1.5 billion people happen to live in one of the 17 countries suffering from extreme water stress sparked by depleting and deteriorating water resources. But the news gets worse. The citizens of another 44 countries from Europe to America and Australia need also to urgently tackle what the [World Resource Institute](#) (WRI) describes as 'high' levels of water stress because they are withdrawing on average more than 40% of available water supply every year.

India is currently suffering its worst drought in decades with half the nation's 1.3 billion citizens exposed to blisteringly hot conditions and lack of fresh water. Last year South Africa's Cape Town came close to having their water shut off. And in 2017 Rome narrowly averted the need to ration water after a prolonged drought.

With UN-endorsed projections saying global demand for fresh water will exceed supply by 40% in 2030, other cities around the world face a similar water scarcity predicament, including Sao Paulo, Beijing, Cairo, Moscow, Mexico City, London and Miami. The only logical conclusion is that the unthinkable is fast becoming the reality.

This is the scope of the global water crisis that the second annual Imagine H2O Urban Water Challenge, co-founded by Sweden's global water tech innovator Bluewater and US-based 11th Hour Racing, seek to help address by identifying and jumpstarting innovative deployments of scalable water solutions. Designed by San Francisco-based Imagine H2O, a nonprofit organization that empowers people to deploy and develop innovation to solve water challenges globally, the driving mindset behind the Urban Water Challenge Award is that human ingenuity can be harnessed for the good of the planet and all life living on it.

Einstein was right when he said we cannot solve problems by using the same kind of thinking that we used when we created them. We need to explore new ideas to create better solutions to the challenges we now face.

So, during Stockholm World Water Week, the winners of the 2019 Imagine H2O Urban Water Challenge will receive recognition and financial support from Bluewater and 11th Hour Racing for their innovative approaches that touch upon drinking water, water reuse, recycling infrastructure and systems to improve ecosystem health to creating water resilience for megacities in an age when the unthinkable is fast becoming a reality.

The latest Urban Water Challenge received over 225 applications from 38 countries, all boldly reimagining solutions to meet the needs of fast-growing cities and communities globally. Unleashing new solutions that balance the needs of individuals and of society, and tackle the global challenges being posed by climate change and water scarcity, the goal of the Urban Water Challenge is not just to show what is possible, but also to unlock the financial and human-power resources needed to jumpstart entrepreneurial approaches for a water-secure future.

(This blog was written by Anders Jacobson, co-founder and CEO of Blue, the impact-led investment company that owns Bluewater and has strategic stakes in several other water-related businesses. Blue's mission is to find, engage with, invest in and support entrepreneurs, innovators and businesses driven by the desire to deliver tangible, sustainable solutions that can benefit human wellbeing and planetary health.www.blueab.se)

About Blue

Headquartered in Stockholm, Sweden, Blue is an investment company that serves as a catalyst for innovations that can solve some of the major challenges facing our planet and all living on it. Blue's mission is to find, engage with, invest in and support entrepreneurs, innovators and businesses driven by the desire to deliver tangible, sustainable solutions that can benefit human wellbeing and planetary health.www.blueab.se

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