



**Linda Mežule**  
Leading Researcher  
of "RTU Water  
Research Scientific  
Laboratory"



"RTU Water Research Scientific Laboratory" (Laboratory) plays an important, yet little visible role in the daily life of people in Latvia. It works on technical solutions to improve the quality of drinkable water and to make the methods more accessible, on the methods of waste water treatment and environmentally friendly treatment methods. Researchers of the Laboratory find time to visit schools and to prepare educating materials for young people in order to disguise myths, to speak about saving water resources and to deliver specific news. A few students also have all the possibilities to develop practical parts of their research papers in the laboratory. Being a part of RTU [Riga Technical University], the Laboratory is an educational establishment for students and closely cooperates with the Department of Water Engineering Technologies, and is responsible for these issues within the University.

Linda has been working in the Laboratory for ten years. She started when she was still a Bachelor student not long after foundation of the Laboratory when the team consisted of 4 researchers. Over years the team changed and expanded, however, Linda still focuses on the research work, in particular, the biological content, quality and security of water, microbiological organisms and finding them. Linda refers to herself as a "biologist among engineers" and adds that also a couple of chemists can be found at the Laboratory. Also geographers from other universities who have selected the Laboratory as the place for working on their Doctoral Thesis come to the Laboratory. Linda points out that involvement

<http://wrl.rtu.lv/>, <https://www.facebook.com/UdensPelniecibasLaboratorija>



**"Water is available to us and its quality is very good, it is even hard to compare this situation with other places in the world, however, there are many who don't understand this."**

of people from various specialities is definitely good because it expands the scope of the work related to water done by the Laboratory.

Waste water and its treatment is the most topical issue now. Linda works on ideas for creating methods of using efficiently everything that is filtered from waste water. Sludge accounts for the biggest share of filtered material, and it is harmful because it contains also everything else that we have delivered to waste water. Considering the fact that a big quantity of this sludge is filtered over time, the question about its safe disposal or, even better, utilisation becomes important. Linda refers to bombardment with accelerated particles as one of

the potential ways of treatment. This is a method used by CERN institute in attempting to answer the puzzle of creation of the space. Linda admits that this technology is not as difficult as it looks, however, the possibilities of using it for waste water sludge are unclear as yet. It is important to be able to adapt to new and unexpected matters. Linda refers to the ability of surviving and continuing the work for the benefit of the society and science with the available budget as a major achievement by the Laboratory. The Laboratory has managed to maintain its team and to engage in social responsibility activities.

Linda emphasises the necessity to disguise various myths created as an opportunity to earn profit. She also sees biotechnological, waste management and resource sourcing processes as important in education of young people. Linda points out that this is not an absolute necessity, however, it makes life and awareness of the topic much easier. "The quality of water in Latvia is very good and we are very lucky," – says Linda speaking about water resources in Latvia. Most people do not understand this, however, awareness of the importance of not wasting this resources is clearly improving. Linda shares that she would be most satisfied with the achievements that create benefit for the society and are used and are visible also in the daily life.

**6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION**

