

# Water YOUTH STRATEGY Generation

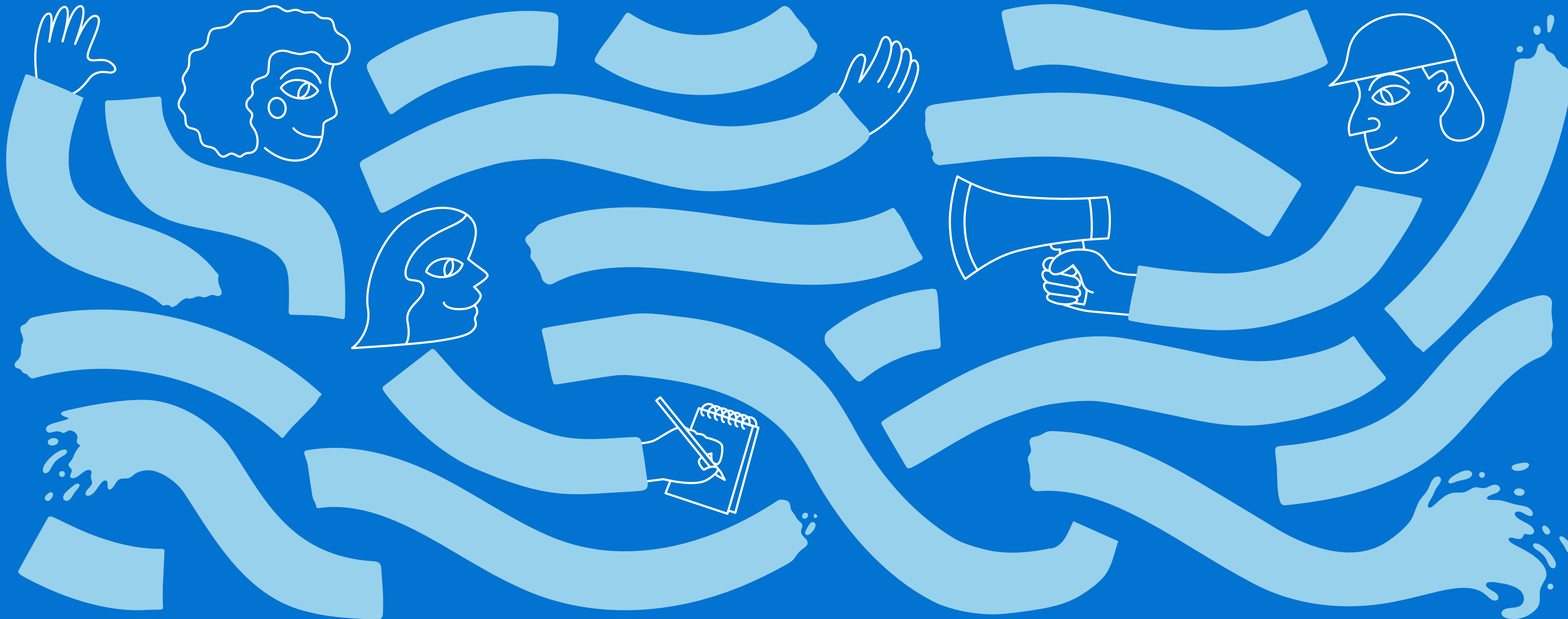
# 2024 2030



INTERNATIONAL  
SECRETARIAT  
FOR WATER



SOLIDARITY  
WATER EUROPE



01 The urgency to act for water

03 Vision 2030

15 2017-2023 – Looking back at our impact

25 Youth and water, an imperative  
for a sustainable future

33 Strategic priorities

45 Our organization

# The urgency to act for water

Convinced of the vital role of water in fostering inclusive development, the International Secretariat for Water – Solidarity Water Europe (ISW-SWE), is a bold and dynamic organisation which drives systemic transformations towards equitable and sustainable water resource management.

The ISW-SWE has always placed civil society at the heart of its action, recognizing its role as catalyst for meaningful change. Aligned with societal and geopolitical shifts, the ISW-SWE works in complementarity and amplification, empowering stakeholders through a collaborative and inclusive “By, For and With” approach.

Recognizing the growing importance of its youth focus, the ISW-SWE introduced, in 2017, a dedicated youth strategy entitled “Water Generation”. The following presents an updated iteration of the Water Generation strategy for the 2024-2030 period.

Acting for water extends beyond resource preservation; it encompasses the promotion of fundamental values, such as human rights, dignity, development and social justice. Empowering and mobilizing changemakers, particularly the new generation, is essential to address these issues in an effective and sustainable way.

1/4

of the global population lack access to safely managed water services.

AROUND

3.5 BILLION

people lack access to safely managed sanitation services.

YOUNG PEOPLE AGED

18 - 35

make up about 26% of the world’s population, or just over 2 billion people.

MORE THAN

40 %

of the world’s population lives in transboundary river and lake basins, which account for nearly 60% of the world’s freshwater flows.

# Vision 2030

A mobilised, engaged and  
influential Water Generation

The ISW-SWE's vision is inspired by the idea of a **Water Generation**, representing a widespread, dynamic and connected mobilization of young people around the world. This generation is rooted in action and influence, amplifying its voice through the active engagement of youth within their communities.

#### VISION 2030

The aim is to acknowledge and actively support the rightful inclusion of young people in addressing environmental and societal water-related challenges, empowering them to participate in decision-making processes and implement impactful solutions.

The Water Generation is a dynamic matrix with multiple poles, each possessing diverse capacities and responsibilities that evolve over time.

The progression of the Water Generation is essential to enable young people to become catalysts for transformation, peace and innovation in a world grappling with escalating water-related crises and challenges. This progress is also crucial to enhance youth capacities, influence, connectivity and opportunities for action. This is why the ISW-SWE aims to take a leading role in this endeavor.

#### VISION

**A mobilized, skilled, committed and influential Water Generation**

The voice of youth is stronger and more impactful, and their actions are increasingly supported and encouraged. Young people join forces through an ambitious Water Generation capable of influencing decision-makers and acting at various levels. The stakeholders of this generation are interconnected, diverse, and dedicated to forging a sustainable future through a collaborative approach that spans sectors, borders, and generations.

#### MISSION

**Catalyzing the Water Generation**

The ISW-SWE champions the development of young people's skills, empowering them to harness greater influence as catalysts for change. The ISW-SWE unites a growing number of young people and fosters connections amongst them and between youth and other stakeholders in water-related sectors and beyond. In doing so, it facilitates the exchange of new ideas and innovative solutions.

# Mobilize Connect Empower

The role of the ISW-SWE is based on three principles: “mobilize – connect – empower”. The ISW-SWE wishes to leverage its abilities to facilitate the mobilization, connection and support for collective action of young people.

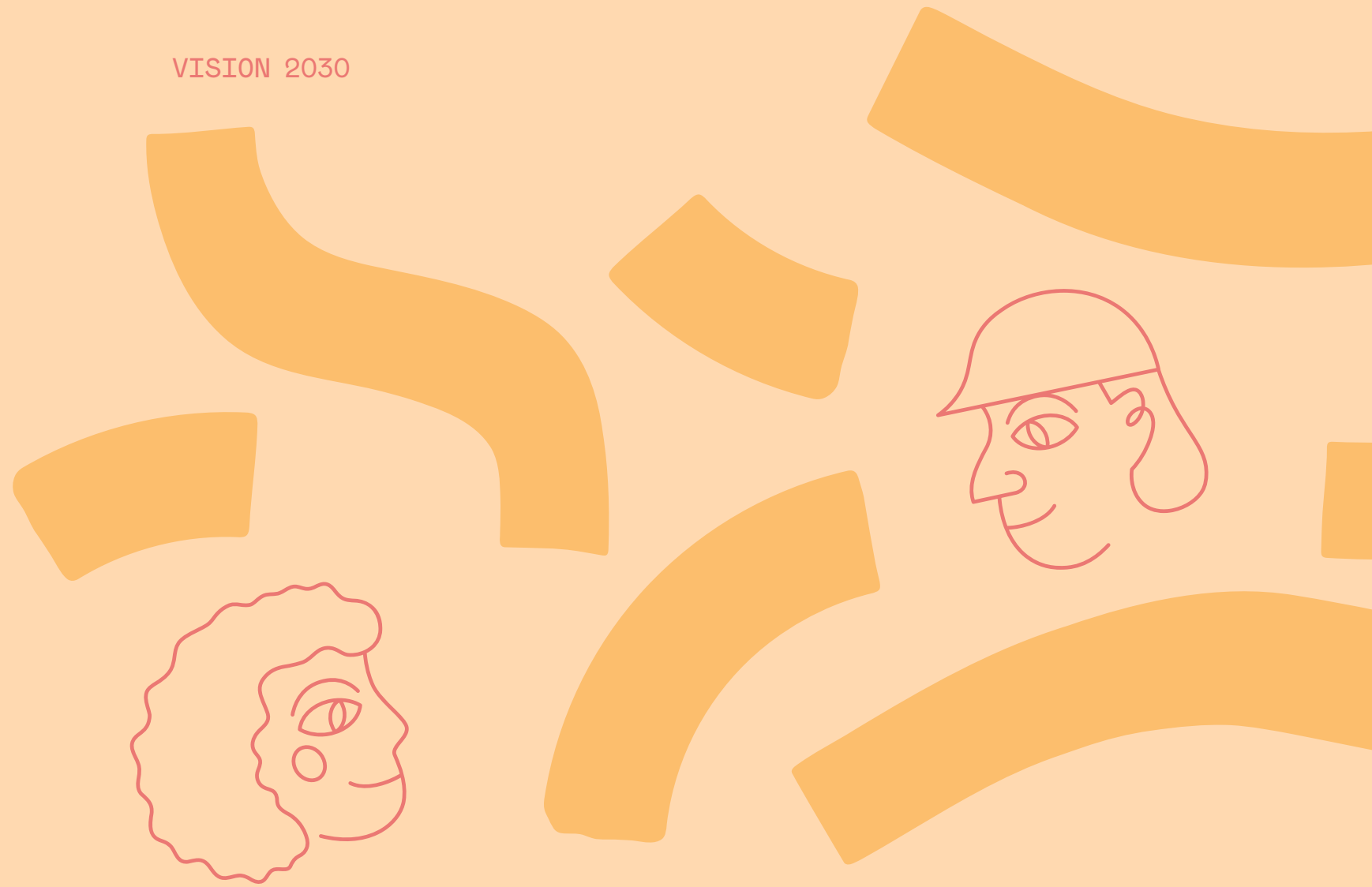
**Water Generation seeks above all to maximize and facilitate the engagement of young people.**

## MOBILIZE

The ISW-SWE has a **significant capacity to mobilize young people** on environmental and societal issues related to water. It is regularly called upon to facilitate the participation of young people in local, cross-border and global processes and initiatives. **The ISW-SWE now has the capacity to mobilize young people for water in more than 85 countries.** What particularly sets it apart is its dynamic approach to youth engagement and its boldness in addressing water-related challenges.

The ISW-SWE wishes to promote and **support the emergence of new groups of young people eager to act for water.** The demand for youth mobilization for water continues to grow and a collective approach is needed to respond adequately. The ISW-SWE also acknowledges that young people are diverse and plural. This diversity must be considered in our efforts to reach beyond the circle of the already convinced.

## VISION 2030



## CONNECT

The strengthening of the Water Generation results in better connectivity between its different components. The ISW-SWE plays a crucial role as a **connector** between young people, alumni of the youth water movement, youth organisations, decision-makers and actors involved in the field of water. The ISW-SWE also aims to connect individuals and organisations across sectors, borders and generations.

## EMPOWER

To increase the impact and influence of actions led by and for young people, the ISW-SWE offers young changemakers a **technical and financial support**, as well as specific capacity-building programme and assistance in building partnerships and developing a strong network. The ISW-SWE also aims to support the ecosystem that revolves around **the Water Generation** including organizations, institutions, foundations and companies that offer their support at the financial, technical and political levels.

# 18 - 35

**The ISW-SWE' Water Generation strategy targets young people between the ages of 18 and 35.**

ISW-SWE's approach is to establish a long-term collaboration with young people. One way of achieving this is by valuing the experiences and expertise of alumni of the youth movement for water. Young people get involved with the ISW-SWE not only as activists but also as part of their personal and professional development journey. ISW-SWE wishes to engage and support youth with diverse aspirations and interests.

**Mobilizing and strengthening the capacities of young people, with a particular focus on young women, in regions of the world most affected by water-related issues, is at the heart of the ISW-SWE approach. Young women are often the most committed and mobilized while being the ones most affected by water-related issues.**

This target serves as a guideline. The career path of young people does not begin at a fixed age, nor does it evolve at the same pace for everyone. Certain circumstances, such as fostering the engagement of marginalized groups like young women and indigenous communities or aligning with cultural references in specific regions, necessitate a flexible approach regarding the age target.

The ISW-SWE recognizes and values the diversity of the youth water movement, which includes thousands of individuals with diverse cultures, languages, socio-economic backgrounds, values, and expertise, sharing a common vision and desire: to become agents of change.

# A partnership with young people

## Openness

We value diversity and interdisciplinarity. We promote respect for singularity and otherness. We facilitate concerted actions and are guided by a desire to collaborate within the framework of common and unifying objectives. We work to encourage the emergence of new players within the Water Generation.

## Complementarity

We support youth-led action (BY), placing ourselves at the service of young people (FOR), and collaborate with them in a spirit of complementarity and amplified influence (WITH). We catalyze collaborations between actors with diverse geographical backgrounds, varied experiences, different approaches and a range of thematic focuses. We give young people tools to implement their project ideas and leverage opportunities to amplify their impact. We want to facilitate the engagement of young people without imposing a given direction.

In addition, gender equality and cooperation between generations and sectors are cross-cutting values of our action. Choosing these values means establishing them as ethical principles and respecting them daily throughout the implementation of all our programmes and initiatives.

## Audacity

Creativity and innovation are at the core of our action. Based on a foundation of innovative ideas that have shaped its work over the past years, the ISW-SWE consistently strives to make unique contributions. With the support of young people, the organization wishes to continue to be an innovative player that is not afraid to think outside the box.

## Commitment

We act with conviction and determination and are fully committed to the transparent and effective implementation of our mission. We want to be a catalyst and a source of inspiration for young people.



# Partnerships at the heart of Water Generation

The ISW-SWE Water Generation youth strategy is based on **strong and diversified partnerships, the number and quality of which have progressed considerably between 2017 and 2023**. During the 2024-2030 period, the ISW-SWE will continue to increase its collaborations with youth actors in the water space, including youth-led organisations, organisations that support youth and those seeking their involvement.

The platforms and networks launched and managed by the ISW-SWE will continue to be at the heart of its strategy. These include the Youth Parliaments for Water – such as the World Youth Parliament for Water (WYPW / ISW-Montreal) and the European Youth Parliament for Water (EYPW / SWE- Strasbourg), the Global Youth Movement for Water, the Central Asia Youth for Water Network and Butterfly Effect Network, alongside its +140 civil society members.

While synergies have begun to emerge between the Butterfly Effect Coalition and the Global Youth Movement for Water, it is imperative to consolidate collaboration between youth organizations and other networks within civil society. This inclusive approach

will enhance the impact and outreach of the Water Generation.

The ISW-SWE aims to strengthen its ties with its current programmatic partners, including the Geneva Water Hub, the International Network of Basin Organizations (INBO), various watershed management organizations, the Global Water Partnership (GWP) and its regional and national entities, as well as Sanitation and Water for All.

The same applies to major donors, including the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), the French government, particularly through its Water Agencies (such as the Artois-Picardy Water Agency),



the European Union, the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC – North America), the governments of Quebec and Canada. For the 2024-2030 period, the ISW-SWE will double its efforts to ensure a greater diversity in its sources of funding.

The ISW-SWE also plans to increase the number of collaborative projects (e.g. in the form of a consortium) with partners from various sectors - civil society, private sector, academic - with an emphasis on the search for complementarity.

The ISW-SWE's capacity for action will thus be amplified in part by the desire to place partnerships at the heart of the **Water Generation** strategy, especially

since the approach of the ISW-SWE is not to act «alone», but rather to mobilise the necessary skills to reach its objectives. This also means that human resources and financial means will be pooled with other organisations to increase the impact of the ISW-SWE and that of the partners involved.

Furthermore, ISW-SWE will enhance its commitment to supporting organizations interested in engaging with young people. We will provide these organizations with capacity building, facilitate communication and connections with youth organizations, and foster the exploitation of complementarities and synergies.

# 2017-2023

## Looking back at our impact

Since 2017, the ISW-SWE has relied heavily on the vision and framework of the **Water Generation** strategy to develop and implement ambitious youth actions for water. At the heart of this strategy, the ISW-SWE has set its mission of facilitating the development of the youth movement for water.



↓  
Between 2017 and 2023, a series of cross-border dialogues were organized by the ISW and its partners in Central Asia. Focused on water sharing and transboundary cooperation, these dialogues brought together engaged youth, professionals, and experts in watershed management.





## Daniel Koto Dagnon

BENIN

PRESIDENT,  
BENIN YOUTH PARLIAMENT FOR WATER

Through the Your Future Your Climate project, I was able to deepen my knowledge of the needs of communities regarding sustainable water resource management, especially for the most vulnerable populations. As a young francophone, I had the exceptional opportunity to benefit from a multilingual and multi-skilled working environment, collaborating with young people from diverse and varied backgrounds.

## Tekaherha Logan Lazore

MOHAWK NATION

ENVIRONMENTAL FIELD TECHNICIAN,  
MOHAWK COUNCIL OF AKWESASNE

Youth from Indigenous communities benefit from working with ISW as clean water security is a major struggle for Indigenous communities all across turtle island. They are able to be part of the movement for clean accessible water and feel pride for their people and land who are dependent on the new generations.

## Carolina Tornesi MacKinnon

UNITED-STATES/ARGENTINA

PRESIDENT,  
WORLD YOUTH PARLIAMENT FOR WATER  
(2021-2024)

The World Youth Parliament for Water (WYPW), driven by volunteers and the unwavering support of ISW, has managed to become a known and trusted youth organization in the global water ecosystem. Its core value of inclusivity has allowed the WYPW to fluidly represent our parliamentarians various areas of interests, from the local to global levels, and allow these young leaders to act and talk about water problems and solutions that they are passionate about.

## Hasmik Barseghyan

ARMENIA

PRESIDENT,  
EUROPEAN YOUTH PARLIAMENT FOR WATER  
(2019-2024)

My experience as President of the European Youth Parliament for Water has broadened my horizons to act on a global scale and has opened new perspectives on environmental management. Meetings with distinguished professionals, global decision-makers, as well as young activists, have brought me hope and determination that together we can advance great causes.

From 2017 to 2023, the ISW-SWE empowered thousands of young individuals, enhancing their ability to act as catalysts for positive change. It has firmly established itself as a global and regional hub for youth mobilization and empowerment, while also providing unwavering support for the implementation of grassroots initiatives by young changemakers.

**+30**

local projects led by youth organisations receive financial support through the Youth Platform for Water and Climate.

**+500 000**

young people mobilized for water through the implementation of initiatives and processes such as the World Youth Parliament for Water, the European Youth Parliament for Water, the Global Youth Movement for Water, the 1 Million Youth Action Challenge and the Youth for Water and Climate Platform.

**+55**

Youth Parliaments for Water led by young people at national, watershed and regional levels, under the umbrella of the World Youth Parliament for Water.

**370**

youth-led organizations and allies mobilized through the Global Youth Movement for Water aimed at federating the voice of youth for water on a global scale.

**25**

decision-making processes are influenced by youth, including the World Water Forums and the March 2023 United Nations Water Conference where the ISW-SWE acted as an umbrella youth organization.

**200**

workshops organised by the ISW-SWE and associated partners of its youth networks to support the capacity of young people for water-related action and innovation.

## IMPACT

Today, there are over 55 youth parliaments around the world under the umbrella of the World Youth Parliament for Water. These parliaments are carrying actions and solutions and have expanded to fragile areas such as Lebanon, Central Asia, Mali, Togo, Burkina Faso and Sudan. The creation of these parliaments in some regions of the world most affected by water-related issues, demonstrates that the ISW-SWE approach, based on the empowerment of actors, is an approach that responds adequately to a particularly tense and polarized global social context.

During this period, the ISW-SWE has shown its ability to bring together young people from all walks of life in sometimes implausible contexts. The ISW-SWE has often achieved what no one thought possible in terms of youth participation, whether in Central Asia along the Syr Darya, bringing together Tajiks, Uzbeks, Kyrgyz and Kazakhs or by establishing a first space dedicated to youth in a World Water Forum, in Dakar in 2022.

The ISW-SWE supported youth action by providing technical and financial support to 30 youth-led projects in communities that are particularly vulnerable to water issues. The 1 Million Youth Action Challenge has also mobilized concrete action by young people, with over **80,000 actions submitted** to date. In Togo, Benin and Burkina Faso, the Ton Futur Ton Climat project has enabled more than 1086 young people and women to develop key skills related to agroecology and ecosystem restoration.

In Canada, in partnership with the **Mohawk community of Akwesasne**, trainings, intergenerational dialogues and initiatives to enhance ancestral knowledge and promote the protection of wetlands have been supported and organized directly by, for and with Akwesasronon youth.

With the Youth for Water and Climate programme, the ISW-SWE has developed new resources and workshops for young water professionals. The ISW-SWE also supported youth on priority nexuses such as water and peace. Thanks to numerous initiatives including the “Voices of the River, Voices of Peace” project in partnership with the Geneva Water Hub, as well as the development of the Blue Peace Youth Index, in collaboration with the Economist Intelligence Unit, meaningful and transformative youth engagement on this key issue has progressed significantly and will continue to be a priority for the coming period.

The implementation of the Water Generation strategy has enabled the ISW-SWE to position itself as the global youth hub for water and the actions of thousands of young people have been strengthened through training, coaching, mentoring and funding. The ISW-SWE continues to play a pivotal role as a catalyst and connector for young individuals dedicated to water, exemplifying meaningful and transformative engagement.

## 2017-2023 – LOOKING BACK AT OUR IMPACT

### IMPACT STORY

## Youth for Water and Peace

At the United Nations Water Conference – the first in nearly 50 years – held in New York in March 2023, Lyazzat Syrlybayeva of Central Asia Youth for Water and Lynn Porta of the North American Youth Parliament for Water shared youth priorities in the interactive dialogue on «Water Cooperation». In the summary presented by co-chair Serigne Mbate Thiam, the need to ensure the representation of young people in water decision-making bodies by 2030 was highlighted, setting the stage for better youth representation in transboundary governance issues, particularly at the watershed level.

“Transboundary water cooperation is an underutilized tool for peace and resilience, and it is key for sustainable water management. We all are aware that the cost of non-cooperation is high. Taking into consideration – the costs of inaction versus the benefits of action – we should be mindful of indirect economic costs, as well as social, environmental, and political costs. I would like to stress that as a cross-cutting issue, water cooperation demands attention at all levels and across sectors.”

*Lyazzat Syrlybayeva, Kazakhstan,  
CAY4W Network*



Young people, like water, are drivers of peace and cooperation. Youth play an essential role in the Blue Peace movement by using their voices to advocate for water and peace at all levels, from local communities to the global stage.

The background features a series of overlapping, wavy, brushstroke-like shapes in shades of red and orange, creating a dynamic and textured effect. The shapes vary in size and orientation, some appearing as thick, curved bands while others are more irregular, organic forms. The overall composition is abstract and modern.

Youth and  
water, an  
imperative for  
a sustainable  
future

**Our societies are currently undergoing profound transformations, in a context of uncertainty and environmental, political and social upheavals. Faced with the weak responsiveness of governments to environmental and societal crises, civil society – especially young people – must speak up and act.**

### INCREASING UPHEAVALS

Crises and conflicts on a global scale are multiplying, generating uncertainty, polarization and withdrawal. This can lead to a fragmentation of society and an increased difficulty in finding consensus. It can also result in stronger borders, a rise in nationalism, and a reduction in international cooperation. Young people can play a vital and positive role in countering this trend by promoting a culture of dialogue and peace.

Civic space continues to shrink. More and more countries are seeking to control (or even repress) civil society. However, in many parts of the world, more and more youth movements are opposing authoritarian regimes. Youth leadership is crucial to advocating for the importance of civic space.

A new feeling is emerging on a global scale, particularly amongst young people: **eco-anxiety**. Water is at the heart of this eco-anxiety, due to droughts, floods, pollution. Out of the 10,000 young people who took part in a recent study published by Hickman et al. (2021), more than 62% feel anxious about

climate change and the degradation of our environment. Young people with eco-anxiety are all the more inclined to engage with the youth movement for water.

Disinformation is also a strategy of many actors, and access to verified, high-quality information is all the more crucial. Comprehensive and nuanced information helps to avoid distortions and misunderstandings. A diversity of information from different sources is essential to have a more complete and accurate view of reality. Young people can be a force against the rise of misinformation.

### NECESSARY CHANGES

In the face of increasingly pressing challenges, the coming years will require rapid change, with youth playing a central role. In this context, the ISW-SWE remains convinced in its ability to contribute to building a sustainable and equitable future, placing civil society – especially young people – at the heart of its action, and working across generations, borders and sectors.



# A transformative participation

Young people aged 18 to 35 represent approximately 26% of the global population, totaling just over 2 billion individuals, and are directly confronted with the escalating environmental, social, and health crises. Young people are pivotal agents of change, making significant contributions to efforts aimed at safeguarding our water resources, whether within the framework of social institutions and norms or at the individual and community levels.

The urge to drive change has been vividly demonstrated and reinforced by the substantial growth of the Water Generation over the past 7 years. Many youth organizations have been created while new Youth Parliaments for Water have actively led and engaged in local and national initiatives. Many actors have also added youth to their targets and programs.

Despite this progress, the Water Generation has not yet reached its full potential and faces several challenges in fully harnessing its impact.

In recent years, the involvement of young people has gradually become at the heart of a trend welcomed by all international organizations, where young people are identified as the vectors of change and invited to take part in different processes. Paradoxically, youth remain marginalized from several important decision-making processes, often overlooked

for active contributions due to a lack of access to the necessary tools and support (Bachikh, 2018). In addition, the lack of systematic and structured resources to support youth participation means that it is often the most privileged young people who can afford to participate in multilateral forums (United Nations, Policy Brief 3 Meaningful Youth Engagement in Policy and Decision-making Processes, 2023). As a result, the ISW-SWE commits to supporting skill development and empowering youth-led advocacy to ensure impactful and transformative youth participation. Furthermore, the ISW-SWE strives to engage with youth from various walks of life and carefully ensures that youth mobilize through its programmes and initiatives fully reflect this diversity. The strength of the Water Generation lies in its diversity, and special attention must be paid to reducing barriers to action for all youth.

The participation scale (Basco-Carrera et al., 2017) serves as a valuable tool to identify the pathway to fully and properly integrate young people. To foster transformative youth participation, the ISW-SWE works to create an enabling environment for youth action, provides support for personal empowerment, and facilitates the acquisition of skills and knowledge. The ISW-SWE actively involves young people in all its initiatives, fostering close partnership and collaborative development.

The ISW-SWE Youth Strategy 2024-2030 addresses several factors that significantly influence youth engagement in the water sector (Vojno & al., 2022.), including:

- 1 THE NEED TO PROVIDE TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO YOUTH-LED ORGANIZATIONS AND INITIATIVES;
- 2 INSTITUTIONAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RECOGNITION OF YOUTH VOICES;
- 3 SUSTAINABLE SUPPORT FOR THE PRACTICAL INTEGRATION OF YOUTH INSTITUTIONS INTO LOCAL, CROSS-BORDER AND GLOBAL DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES;
- 4 INCREASING SYNERGIES AND MOBILIZATION BETWEEN THE DIFFERENT YOUTH INITIATIVES TO ENSURE GENERATIONAL CONTINUITY, EFFECTIVE COORDINATION AND GOOD PROMOTION OF THE ACTIONS CARRIED OUT;
- 5 THE DEVELOPMENT OF CAPACITIES AND SKILLS, AS WELL AS THE CREATION OF A NETWORK FOR SHARING EXPERIENCES.

In light of the positive outcomes of the 2017-2023 strategy and the evolving context, the ISW-SWE has chosen to update its Water Generation strategy through a participatory approach, combining assessments and prospective reflections. The update of Water Generation is based on a thorough review and analysis of actions led by the organization over the past 7 years, amidst shifting contexts and emerging challenges. The process encompassed various activities, including a workshop with youth, partners and the ISW-SWE team, specifically addressing the impact of young people on international processes; a workshop to take stock of the implementation of the strategy in the previous phase; and several discussions on the evolution of the context.

→  
Marieme Soda NDIAYE, the youngest member of the National Assembly of Senegal (2019-2022), delivers the opening remarks at the Youth Space of the 9th World Water Forum in Dakar, Senegal.



PROJECT

**Youth Space of the 9th World Water Forum: By, For and With Youth**

Presented for the very first time as part of a World Water Forum, the Youth Space has helped catalyze a youth movement for water. Led by the Executive Secretariat of the 9th World Water Forum, the International Secretariat for Water, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), the World Youth Parliament for Water and the Association of Young Water and Sanitation Professionals of Senegal, the Youth Space was entirely created and supported by young people from all over the world, especially young Senegalese, from the design of the physical space, to the creation of the program and the facilitation of the workshops.

Through the 23 thematic sessions carried out by, for and with young people, networking sessions, intergenerational dialogues with government representatives, the private sector and various organizations, the Youth Space has helped catalyze actions for youth engagement in sustainable and inclusive water resources management.

PROJECT

**Youth Influence Institutions in Nigeria for Women’s Rights**

The initiative Wash solutions for improving access to basic obstetrics services for pregnant women in rural communities in Imo state led in Nigeria by the youth organization Women Act Solution in 2022, and supported by the ISW-SWE, is a concrete example of the positive influence of youth at the community level. Through the mobilization of many community groups, this team of young women was able to influence the government to renovate 306 primary health centres, enabling more women to access quality basic obstetric services.

**“Your messages have been heard. Your voice is being listened to attentively. You can rest assured that the messages conveyed today will hold a privileged place among those the President of the Republic will deliver on behalf of all of Africa at the grand global conference of the United Nations in 2023. We will ensure that he knows the youth of the world wish to stand by his side to represent the voice of the youth in 2023. In Dakar, the youth have initiated a water movement. You have shown us the way. We are convinced that water resources, which are essential, which are vital, are more threatened today than ever before. We expect you to urge the global community to create a global water movement.”**

MR. ABDOULAYE SENE, SENEGAL  
EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT OF THE 9TH

# Strategic priorities

The ISW-SWE implements several programmes and initiatives “by, for and with young people for water”, based on the following four main strategic priorities.

# 1



## Mobilizing actors of the Water Generation

The mobilization of youth for water by the ISW-SWE is framed within a perspective that is both local, cross-border, and international.

### This mobilization is achieved through:

Coordination and scaling up of **communication campaigns and awareness-raising actions** on water-related issues;

Mobilization of young people for water at **local, regional and global events** (Assemblies of Youth Parliaments for Water, transboundary dialogues, etc.);

Promoting and supporting the development of youth-led **organizations** in the water sector.

Special emphasis will be placed on raising awareness and mobilizing young people on critical issues such as peace, climate change, biodiversity, health, and inequality. To effectively contribute to the emergence of a sustainable society, it's imperative establish connections and build bridges between water and other significant challenges.

### STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

#### IMPACT 2024-2030

The youth movement for water is increasingly dense and connected.

#### PROJECT

### #FillUpTheGlass

From March 22nd to 24th 2023, the first United Nations conference on water was held in nearly 50 years in New York. Seizing this unique opportunity to advocate for the advancement of water and sanitation issues, the ISW-SWE played a critical role in mobilizing, catalyzing, and sustaining the voices of changemakers most affected by water-related issues.

The ISW-SWE has worked collectively with the hundreds of organizations of the Global Youth Movement for Water to maximize the influence and impact of young people on the outcomes of the process and to develop common advocacy objectives, presented in the #FillUpTheGlass campaign.

Recognized for its unique role as a catalyst of youth for water, the ISW-SWE was invited by the United Nations to be the umbrella organization for youth engagement and mobilization.



# 2



## Strengthening the influence of youth

The ISW-SWE aims to empower youth actors to develop a collective vision of a water-secure future, rooted in common values, principles and goals.

The ISW-SWE will also focus on fostering spaces for intergenerational co-creation. The ISW-SWE aims to go beyond mere participation to ensure a real influence of youth in political processes at national, cross-border and international levels. Within the framework of this priority, an emphasis will be placed on enhancing the participation and influence of youth in watershed management bodies, in the governance of transboundary waters and on the accountability and implementation of commitments made by actors within the international community.

The ISW-SWE will support young people and youth groups in crafting strategic and credible advocacy efforts, tailored to specific processes, leveraging inno-

vative communication channels such as social media, traditional media and communication through art.

For the ISW-SWE, it is essential to also support awareness-raising amongst individuals who do not identify themselves as youth actors. This is especially pertinent as the space for civil society diminishes in many countries. Promoting awareness among diverse stakeholders about the significance of meaningfully including youth voices is vital to cultivate an enabling context for this transformative inclusion.

### STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

#### IMPACT 2024-2030

The youth water movement influences action and ambitious policies, through the **adoption of collective positions;**

The **presence and influence** of young people in institutional structures of water governance, particularly in watershed management bodies, are strengthened,

Young people are recognized as credible actors and bearers of solutions.

The policy demands and solutions proposed by young people for the water sector are more **specific, precise and strategic.**

#### PROJECT

### Central Asia Youth for Water Network

The ISW-SWE supports the development of a dense, connected and active youth movement for water in Central Asia, as part of the support provided to the Central Asia Youth 4 Water (CAY4W) network. This work aims to build the capacity of young people in the region, provide opportunities and establish an intergenerational dialogue for the exchange of knowledge and experiences; all with a view to promoting a culture of peace based on the sharing of resources.

In 2022, a second cross-border dialogue for youth in the Syr Darya River Basin was organised by the ISW and its partners in the context of the 2nd High-level International Conference on the International Decade for “Action Water for Sustainable Development” held in Dushanbe, Tajikistan. Built around the themes of water for peace and diplomacy, this dialogue brought together more than 30 participants over 3 days on the Nurek dam.

# 3

## Training and capacity building



The ISW-SWE is dedicated to enhancing the capacities of young people of the Water Generation, empowering them to effectively tackle water-related challenges.

In an era where disinformation is used as a strategy by many actors, it is all the more crucial to equip these young change makers with robust knowledge and transversal skills such as leadership and influence.

Within the ISW-SWE, youth participate in programs that provide them with comprehensive knowledge on water-related issues and key skills that will help them unlock their full potential as agents of change. The sharing of experiences between alumni and emerging young leaders fosters peer-to-peer learning, ensuring continuity in the youth movement for water.

To achieve these objectives, a comprehensive capacity-building framework is developed and implemented, including training, mentoring and coaching. This framework aims to accompany young people throughout their journey, by providing them with the

tools and support necessary to succeed in the development and implementation of their water-related initiatives.

The support provided by the ISW-SWE encompasses a range of services, including training, access to project funding, advisory assistance in organization setup and management, dissemination of project templates, and provision of materials for conducting awareness-raising activities.

In addition, partner organizations involved in youth for water will also benefit from support to strengthen their commitment and impact in this field. This support includes implementing best practices in their engagement with young people, exchanging ideas and innovations on involving youth in the water sector, and fostering collaboration among stakeholders committed to engaging with youth for water initiatives.

### STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

#### IMPACT 2024-2030

Young people have the transversal and specific knowledge and capacities on water-related issues that enable them to unlock their full potential as agents of change;

Youth allies for Water are fully equipped to support young people in a meaningful and transformative way.

#### PROJECT

### Youth for Water and Climate Program

The Youth for Water and Climate (YWC) Program aims to prepare young people to become leaders and entrepreneurs to address the challenges of sustainable water resources management, build climate resilience, and contribute to the achievement of the SDGs.

In 2022-2023, 20 young professionals aged 18 to 30 from France, Sweden, Slovakia, Hungary and Belgium participated in the 8-month program, which combined in-person workshops, a mentorship opportunity, support to find an internship, a community of practice and an online curriculum.

The young professionals have acquired transversal and specific skills to develop projects or access job opportunities. As a result of the program, 100% of the participants are now studying or working in the field of water and climate.

“Being part of this truly committed, professional network of young people and experienced professionals has open so many doors for me.”

*Luca Jendrek, Hungary  
Participant of the YWC Program  
(2022-2023)*

# 4



## Supporting Youth Action and Innovation

The ISW-SWE supports the emergence of creative and innovative solutions by youth, rooted in the local realities of populations most affected by water-related issues.

Several barriers hinder young people from accessing funding, be it due to insufficient experience or financial needs that fall below the thresholds of most donors. The ISW-SWE will provide technical and financial support for youth-led action, through a flexible funding mechanism. This approach aims to foster the implementation of a greater number of tangible actions by young leaders, to finance local projects launched by young people and to facilitate the expansion of their activities through workshops

dedicated to dissemination and peer-to-peer exchanges. Additionally, the ISW-SWE connects the young leaders with a strong and diverse network of partners (NGOs, governments, development banks, companies, etc.) with the aim of offering opportunities for upscaling. The ISW-SWE also aims to increase sector-wide funding allocated to projects initiated by young people, as well as to promote the generation of knowledge about the financing ecosystem of organizations and youth movements for water.

### STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

#### IMPACT 2024-2030

Concrete actions are being taken and scaled up by youth for a sustainable and inclusive future;

Young people are drivers of change and innovation.

#### PROJET

### 1 Million Youth Actions (1MYAC)

Initiated by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and implemented in collaboration with the ISW-SWE, this initiative aims to mobilize young people to implement concrete actions for a sustainable future. The goal is to reach 1,000,000 youth-led actions related to water management, responsible consumption and production, climate action, and biodiversity.

In 2023, 6 ambassadors from Cameroon, Uganda, Paraguay, Indonesia and Benin were selected to receive microfinance for the implementation of their initiatives.



## How can we ensure adequate financial support for youth organizations?

The ISW-SWE has made significant progress between 2017 and 2023 in its objective of making funding available to young people to implement their projects. Several calls for projects have been launched on the Youth for Water and Climate Platform (YWC):

- 3 GLOBAL CALL FOR PROJECTS, INCLUDING ONE CONDUCTED DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.
- CALL FOR PROJECTS IN NORTH AMERICA AS PART OF OUR WORK WITH THE MOHAWK COMMUNITY OF AKWESASNE.
- CALL FOR PROJECT IN THE SENEGAL RIVER BASIN AS PART OF THE VOICES OF THE RIVER, PATHWAYS TO PEACE INITIATIVE
- FINANCING OF TARGETED PROJECTS OF WYPW MEMBERS BY THE ARTOIS PICARDIE WATER AGENCY
- EUROPEAN YOUTH PARLIAMENT CALL FOR PROJECTS (PEJE 2016, BURIER AND PEJE 2019, RUSSIA)
- THESE CALLS FOR PROJECTS HAVE GENERATED SIGNIFICANT ENTHUSIASM WITH MORE THAN 1000 PROJECTS PROPOSED ON THE YWC PLATFORM, WHICH SHOWS THE NEED FOR SUCH A SYSTEM.
- CALL FOR PROJECTS IN CENTRAL ASIA IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE CAY4WATER PROJECT

In the next phase, the ISW-SWE will aim to build on these achievements to scale up the funding platform. The ISW-SWE will aim to address the lack of access to funding available to youth movements and organisations for water. Presenting a concrete solution adapted to the needs and reality of youth organizations will fill to the gap that exists between traditional donors and these youth organizations. These microgrants must be accompanied by capacity-building programmes based on peer-to-peer learning and mentoring.

→ The EAU'SYTECH project, implemented by the youth organization Thiary, has improved access to clean water for over 300 households in the Behitsy fokontany in Madagascar, through the training of 19 young disseminator agents.





# Our organization

The ISW-SWE is an organization that amplifies its impact through its network, relying on complementarity with its partners to significantly influence positive change.



# An agile and connected team

The Youth Sector of ISW-SWE is in charge for the operational implementation of this youth strategy. The entire organisation will continue to make progress in the integration of its different pillars, reinforcing the sense of unity amongst the team, being one of the objectives of the ISW-SWE institutional strategy.

To achieve better integration, ISW-SWE will ensure greater coherence, enabling it to become a more effective and influential actor. To implement this strategy, the team will further develop key skills in communication, advocacy, network management, and more.

In terms of communication, ISW-SWE will enhance its presence on social media platforms, aligning with initiatives outlined in this strategy, and ensure dissemination through storytelling.

For the period 2024-2030, securing new funding will be essential to bolster resources, enabling the ISW-SWE to fulfill its role as a connector and mobilizer of the Water Generation. The ISW-SWE will continue to amplify its impact through its network, leveraging complementarity with its partners.



During the 6th General Assembly of the World Youth Parliament for Water and the 10th World Water Forum, youth from over 45 countries actively participated in a mangrove cleanup in Bali, Indonesia, as part of the 1 Million Youth Action Challenge initiative.





# Measuring our impact

## Monitoring and evaluation system

The ISW-SWE will establish a monitoring group to support strategy implementation and make necessary adjustments. At the midterm, a comprehensive consultation with young people and partners will be led, gathering their feedback on the strategy and soliciting suggestions for improvement and new ideas. This process ensures strategy relevance and gradual objective adjustments, enabling ongoing youth influence.

The ISW-SWE's monitoring and evaluation process will analyze the theory of change, its assumptions, direct and indirect effects, and change processes resulting from ISW-SWE actions. It will also disseminate lessons learned.



← The Beninese Parliament for Water brings together 65 Water, Hygiene, and Sanitation parliamentarians spread across the 12 departments of Benin. The President of the organization, Daniel Koto Dagnon, shares the priorities of Beninese youth within the framework of an initiative presented during the opening ceremony of the 2023 United Nations Water Conference.

## Lessons Learned 2017-2023: Measuring the Impact of the ISW-SWE on the Water Generation

For more than three decades, the ISW-SWE has been a dedicated ally of youth for water, positively influencing the journey of hundreds of thousands of young people around the world. Many of the youth who have participated in ISW-SWE programs and initiatives are now in leadership positions in organizations that are in turn leading ambitious initiatives to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Today, these young people are community leaders, engineers, diplomats, managers, politicians, scientists, researchers and more, working by, for and with some of the most vulnerable and marginalized communities.

Although the impact of the ISW-SWE on the journey of young people may sometimes difficult to quantify, these testimonials of change clearly illustrate the extent of the ISW-SWE's influence. To fully appreciate this impact, the ISW-SWE plans to collect and analyze available data to assess the actions implemented over the years.



### International Secretariat for Water

911 JEAN-TALON E, SUITE 205  
MONTRÉAL, QUÉBEC, CANADA H2R 1V5

T +1 514 849 4262  
F +1 514 849 2822

[info@sie-isw.org](mailto:info@sie-isw.org)

### Solidarity Water Europe

273 AVENUE DE COLMAR  
67100 STRASBOURG, FRANCE

T +33 (0)3 88 84 93 14  
F +33 (0)3 88 84 99 19

[info@see-swe.org](mailto:info@see-swe.org)