

Young People as Agents of Change in the Water Sector

Young Water Fellowship Programme



Region
Global

Partners
Young Water Solutions

Background information
The YWF Programme builds capacities of young water entrepreneurs, and provides technical as well as financial support to implement their ideas. It also engages with stakeholders and decision-makers to exchange knowledge and create an enabling environment for young people in the water sector.

Project objectives
Young people are empowered and largely recognized as agents of change in the water sector, contributing to sustainable water resources management and universal access to safe and affordable water and sanitation services in vulnerable communities.

Beneficiaries
Young people (age 18-30) from low- and middle-income countries. Marginalised and poor in communities that benefit from improved services provided by the start-ups

Budget
CHF 650,000

Duration
05.2018 – 04.2021

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Young people represent around half of the world's population, living mostly in developing countries. Their aspirations and achievements will obviously shape the future. Whereas young people are often primary victims of water-related challenges, they are not yet an integral part of efforts to develop adequate solutions. The Young Water Fellowship (YWF) Programme aims to tap into the innovative and disruptive potential of young people in order to address the most pressing water, sanitation and water resources management challenges in vulnerable communities.

Structural barriers in the water sector such as donors' and policy-makers distrust, cultural bias and administrative procedures generate constraints and lock the potential of many young people to develop adequate responses to water-related challenges and drive change within their communities and countries. However, it is essential to involve all stakeholders, including young people, to find equitable ways to share limited water resources among many competing demands. Considering the untapped innovative potential of young people and the large youth unemployment rate in developing countries, SDC supports the YWF Programme implemented by the international non-governmental organization Young Water Solutions. This programme aims to attract young people to the water sector, builds their capacities to develop context-specific start-ups, which respond to the local water-related challenges, and provides seed-funding for the initial stages of their businesses.

Through an annual global and one regional 4-week training programme, young people from low- and middle-income countries (LAMICs) will have the possibility to increase their knowledge about challenges and potential solutions in the areas of Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM), Water, Sanitation & Hygiene (WASH) as well as the Human Rights to Water and Sanitation. They also acquire specific skills in business development and management. Once the business idea has been developed, the young entrepreneurs receive continuous coaching from experts to implement their start-ups and gain access to funding. The long-term objective of this programme is to generate employment opportunities for young people in LAMICs, reduce poverty and improve the water and sanitation conditions in vulnerable communities. The



lessons learned and concrete results obtained from the start-ups are used for knowledge exchange with relevant stakeholders engaged in the water sector and the social entrepreneurship ecosystem and nourish the policy dialogue at various levels, aiming to unlock the multiple barriers that young people face in the water sector.

Key outputs of the planned phase

- Global awareness campaign and call for applications for entrepreneurial water and sanitation initiatives that attract young people to the water sector;
- Provision of trainings and capacity building measures for young entrepreneurs in social business, IWRM, WASH and HRWS;
- Establishment of a seed-funding mechanism for financing start-ups;
- Ongoing coaching and mentorship mechanism for young entrepreneurs;
- Creation of synergies and knowledge exchange with organizations of the entrepreneurial ecosystem and other stakeholders in the water sector;
- Improved policies and programmes for young people in the water sector;
- Increased participation of young leadership in decision-making processes.

Additional information:
www.youngwatersolutions.org
<https://cewas.org/start-up-programme/start-up-prog/>