

## Application for IWA-Grundfos “Youth Action for SDG6” Fellowship

### 1- Fellowship aims and objectives

“ The International Water Association (IWA) and Grundfos Youth Action for SDG6 Fellowship will mobilise **twelve Young Water Professionals (YWPs)** from around the globe to actively participate in the [UN 2023 Water Conference](#), in New York, USA. After the conference, the selected YWPs will work together with Grundfos staff and IWA to co-develop a publication that provides insights into the critical role that young people have in the implementation of the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goal Agenda. The publication will focus on how the water sector can maximise the benefits of integrating young professionals to achieve sustainable development.”

**Proposal author:** Rita Noelle Moussa, Hydro Nation Scholar PhD Candidate

### 2- Page writing sample about the water topic the candidate wants to contribute to the publication and cover during the UN water conference in New York 2023

**Title:** We are as flexible as water; nothing can resist us

Inspired by Laozi proverbs, we, as human beings, can face and overcome any challenge.

Around the world, more youth are showing an increased interest in global warming challenges and water scarcity threats. However, despite their efforts to actively address environmental and water challenges, they are often perceived as a risk factor and a “bulge” in water cooperation and conflict (Vojno et al., 2022)<sup>1</sup>. Indeed, young people have continuously proved that they have the skills, ambition, and motivation needed to be a driving force in water peacebuilding and conflict transformation. Meanwhile, a reciprocal mistrust between decision-makers and young people keeps on growing (Ajama K., 2019)<sup>2</sup>. How can we fortify this intergenerational trust to efficiently engage young professionals in the water sector? In the following paragraphs, an interdisciplinary youth integration approach is proposed to build local, regional, and global bridges in the water sector. This approach aims to reduce vulnerability, increase resilience, and invest in improved inter-sectoral communication.

The UN 2030 Agenda aspires to “a world of universal respect for human rights and human dignity, the rule of law, justice, equality and non-discrimination” (UNSDG 2030 Agenda, 2022)<sup>3</sup>. In fact, everyone is invited to embrace interconnectedness to ensure more equitable, peaceful, and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all (SDG6). Based on the UN 2030 Agenda goals, accepting a new integrated transboundary approach for water resources management has been considered a significant step towards sustainable development of the water sector. However, the progress in achieving SDG6 at global, regional, and local levels is too slow. This is partly due to the enormous lack of human and institutional capacity and the ability to apply research through policy and practice, which is affecting decision-making (Ortigara et al.,

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<sup>1</sup> Vojno, N., et al., 2022. Beyond barriers: the fluid roles young people adopt in water conflict and cooperation, *Water International* 47(3), 480-505.

<sup>2</sup> Ajarma, K. (2019). Youth Water Cooperation in the Mediterranean: Challenges and the Way Forward. *EuroMesco Policy Brief*, 103, 31.

<sup>3</sup> [UNSDG | 2030 Agenda - Universal Values](#)

2018)<sup>4</sup>. Accordingly, if these youth are given the chance to fill in the gaps, be involved in the decisions as “active partners”, well-remunerated, and empowered by experienced professionals; they won’t be missing on the opportunity to be more engaged in supporting the water sector (Water Secure and Water Resilient Asia and Pacific, 2022; Youth Employment Index, 2022)<sup>5,6</sup>. In addition to financial difficulties, many countries legally restrict youth active engagement in the economic, financial, social, and political spheres which are essential components for efficient contribution in the water sector among other sectors (Youth Social Entrepreneurship and the 2030 Agenda, 2020)<sup>7</sup>.

Today, there is a continuously growing communication gap between science, industry, policymakers, government, communities, and individuals. More importantly, sustainable water sector development requires the efficient integration of young professionals. It also demands a sustainable intersectoral collaboration to provide an equal distribution of water resources and improve water allocation. The latter requires improved delivery systems and water reallocations from agriculture to other sectors while ensuring food security (SDG2) and responding to global warming challenges (World Bank, 2022)<sup>8</sup>. Hence, a new dimension of work needs to be established to redefine the intersectoral and interdisciplinary engagements with the youth, researchers, and policymakers. Following the research methodology developed in the project proposal, the publication will focus on how the young professionals' implication has become crucial in building bridges between all concerned bodies of the water sector and why those bridges are urgently needed to increase resilience and reduce the water sector's vulnerability to achieve SDG6.

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<sup>4</sup> Ortigara, A. R., *et al.*, 2018. A Review of the SDG 6 Synthesis Report 2018 from an Education, Training, and Research Perspective, Water 10(10).

<sup>5</sup> [Strategy 2030 - Water Sector Directional Guide \(adb.org\)](#)

<sup>6</sup> [Youth Employment Index 2022: Building a resilient workforce for the future \(pwc.co.uk\)](#)

<sup>7</sup> [World Youth Report: Youth Social Entrepreneurship and the 2030 Agenda, 2020](#)

<sup>8</sup> [Water in Agriculture \(worldbank.org\)](#)

### 3- Proposal about the candidate's contribution to the publication

Title: "If you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together" (African proverb).

Inspired by the African proverb, this project proposal is developed in the aim to build on the collective engagement of youth to the sustainable development of the water sector.

#### 1- Title:

Investigate the interdisciplinary youth integration to achieve sustainable development in the water sector.

#### 2- Brief description:

There is a continuously growing communication gap between science, industry, policy makers, government, communities, and individuals. It is affecting the sustainable development of the water sector. The project focuses on the efficient interdisciplinary integration of young water professionals to reduce the gap among all concerned bodies and contribute to mitigating the effects of global warming on the water sector.

#### 3- Objectives:

- Identify the barriers that limit the interdisciplinary engagement between young professionals and the opportunities that fortify their integration in the water sector.
- Identify the strengths of dynamic interdisciplinary young professionals' engagements and highlight youth leadership patterns.
- Capitalise on the findings to recommend innovative integration strategies in the water sector.

#### 4- Methodology:

- Online survey to identify the barriers and opportunities of young professionals' engagement, distributed through chosen social media channels and targeted emails from academic to institutional networks.
- Three focus groups organised to identify youth leadership patterns and entrepreneurship behaviors in-between and across borders. The groups will bring together young professionals working in different fields in the water sector. The first group includes young professionals from developing countries only, the second group from developing and developed countries, and the third group from developed countries only.
- Workshop entitled "Youth in Motion" providing a multiple-case study to emphasise on the importance of the multi-cultural interdisciplinary young water professionals' engagement in reaching a positive change in the water sector. The workshop will bring together people from different disciplines (academia, policy makers, industry, community engagement) with young professionals to maximize the benefits of the findings and create communication bridges between different bodies working towards better and equal distribution of the water resources.

The data collected from the online survey and the focus groups will be compared with the existing literature review and combined with the publication authors' own expertise and the workshop. Afterwards, they will be combined in a publication providing insights on the critical role that young people have in the implementation of the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goal Agenda.

5- Scope:

The online survey will be prepared and distributed to IWA members and targeted individuals. The members of the focus groups and the workshop will be chosen from IWA members following a gender and geographical balance. The meetings will be organised through an online media platform.

**The candidate was shortlisted for the interview and was not selected for the fellowship.**