



SESSION 5

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT SERIES

Water for People: Advancing Equitable Access to Water and Sanitation

Session co-lead: International Water Association



AGENDA

- **Welcome & Introductions**
- **Setting the scene: Water for People Interactive Dialogue**
- **Water for People: Expert perspective**
- **Young Water Professional Presentations**
- **Moderated panel discussion**
- **Audience Q&A and interactive discussion**
- **Closing and key messages**

SPEAKERS & MODERATOR



AIDAN CRONIN

Unicef



FIONA GORE

WHO



ROBERT BOS

IWA



MARINA MACEDO

IWA YWP Steering Committee / IWA & Grundfos Youth Action for SDG 6 (1st cohort) / IWA YWP Brazil Chapter



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RANDA ABUBAKR

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SETTING THE SCENE

WATER FOR PEOPLE INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE



AIDAN CRONIN

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WHO



Interactive Dialogue (a) Water for People

the human rights to water and sanitation, including for those in vulnerable situations, for healthy societies and economies

Co-chairs:



Co-conveners:



What is “Water for People”?

This Interactive dialogue focuses on:

- Human rights to water and sanitation
- Universal WASH access as per SDG 6
- WASH services to people in vulnerable situations and humanitarian contexts
- Climate-resilient WASH systems
- Systems strengthening to drive equity and resilience
- The contribution of WASH to healthy societies and economies

The Global Context

- Water, sanitation and hygiene are foundational to health, dignity and development.
- Progress since 2015, but not on track for SDG 6.
- The gaps are widening in a changing world, within and across countries.

Achieving the 2030 targets for ending open defecation and universal access to basic WASH services will require acceleration, and universal coverage of safely managed services is increasingly out of reach

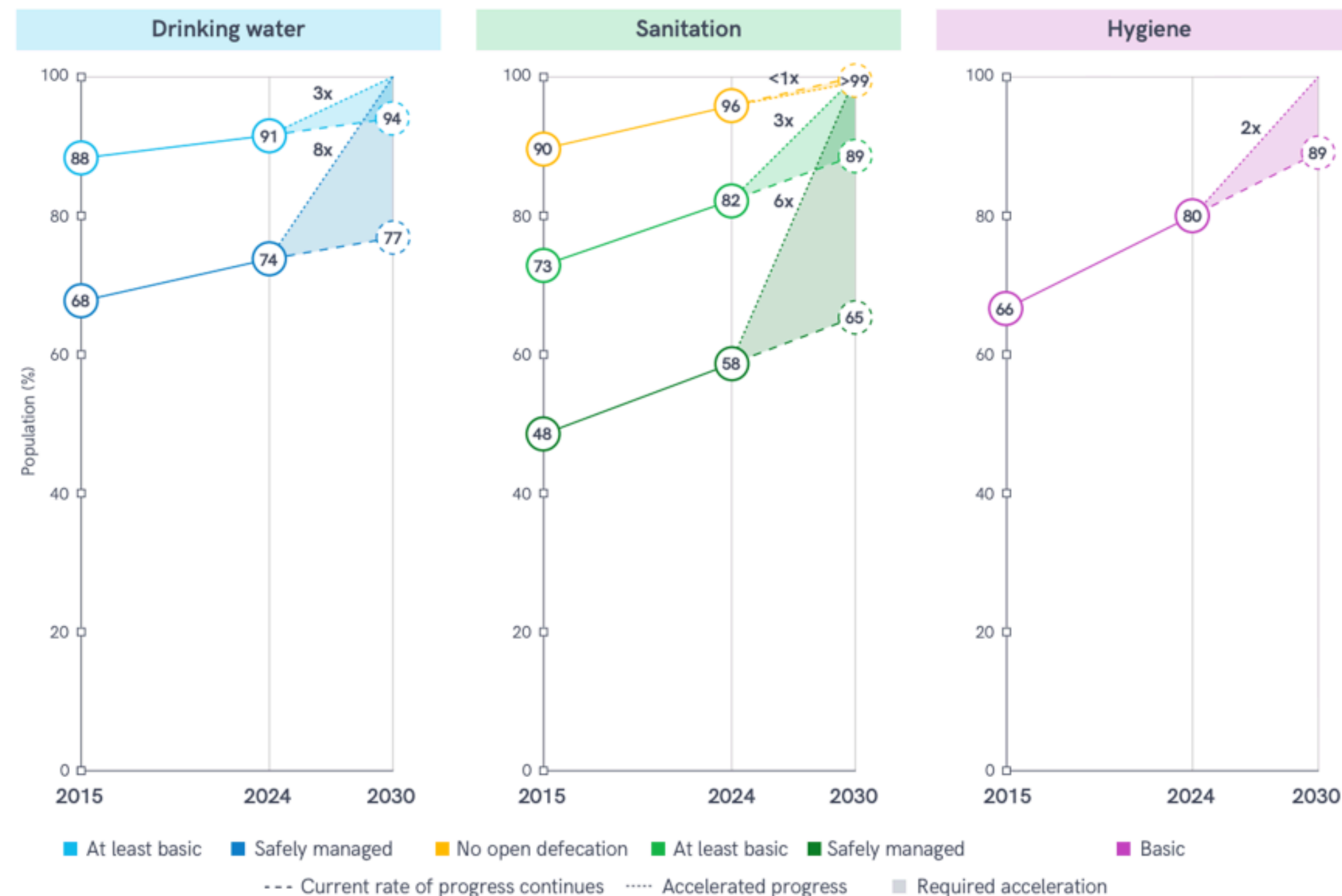


Figure 1

Global coverage of WASH services, 2015–2024 (%), and acceleration required to reach universal coverage (>99%) by 2030

Source: *Progress on household drinking water, sanitation and hygiene 2000–2024: special focus on inequalities*. Geneva: World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF; 2025. Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO.

Inequities in WASH services

- States not fully implementing the human rights to water and sanitation, despite widespread policy commitments.
- Sub-national monitoring and targeted financial measures lag far behind, especially for people living in poverty.
- Fragility, conflict, and climate change impacts increase inequities.
- Opportunity for action by States to move beyond recognition of rights to concrete measures, financing, monitoring and accountability.

Low-income countries are least likely to report having specific measures to target financial resources to people living in poverty.

Table 9.1 Measures to extend WASH services to people living in poverty, by World Bank income group

0–39% 40–59% 60–79% 80–100%

	World Bank income group	Number of countries	Governance Policies and plans have specific measures to reach people living in poverty	Monitoring Progress to extend service provision to people living in poverty is tracked and reported	Finance Specific measures to direct financial resources people living in poverty are consistently applied
Sanitation	All responding countries	103	85%	54%	33%
	Low income	19	89%	53%	26%
	Lower-middle income	36	94%	58%	22%
	Upper-middle income	32	84%	56%	44%
	High income	16	63%	44%	44%
Drinking-water	All responding countries	103	87%	56%	40%
	Low income	19	95%	53%	32%
	Lower-middle income	36	94%	64%	36%
	Upper-middle income	32	88%	59%	47%
	High income	16	63%	38%	44%
Hand hygiene	All responding countries	102	70%	37%	27%
	Low income	19	79%	47%	26%
	Lower-middle income	36	89%	42%	19%
	Upper-middle income	32	59%	31%	41%
	High income	15	33%	27%	20%

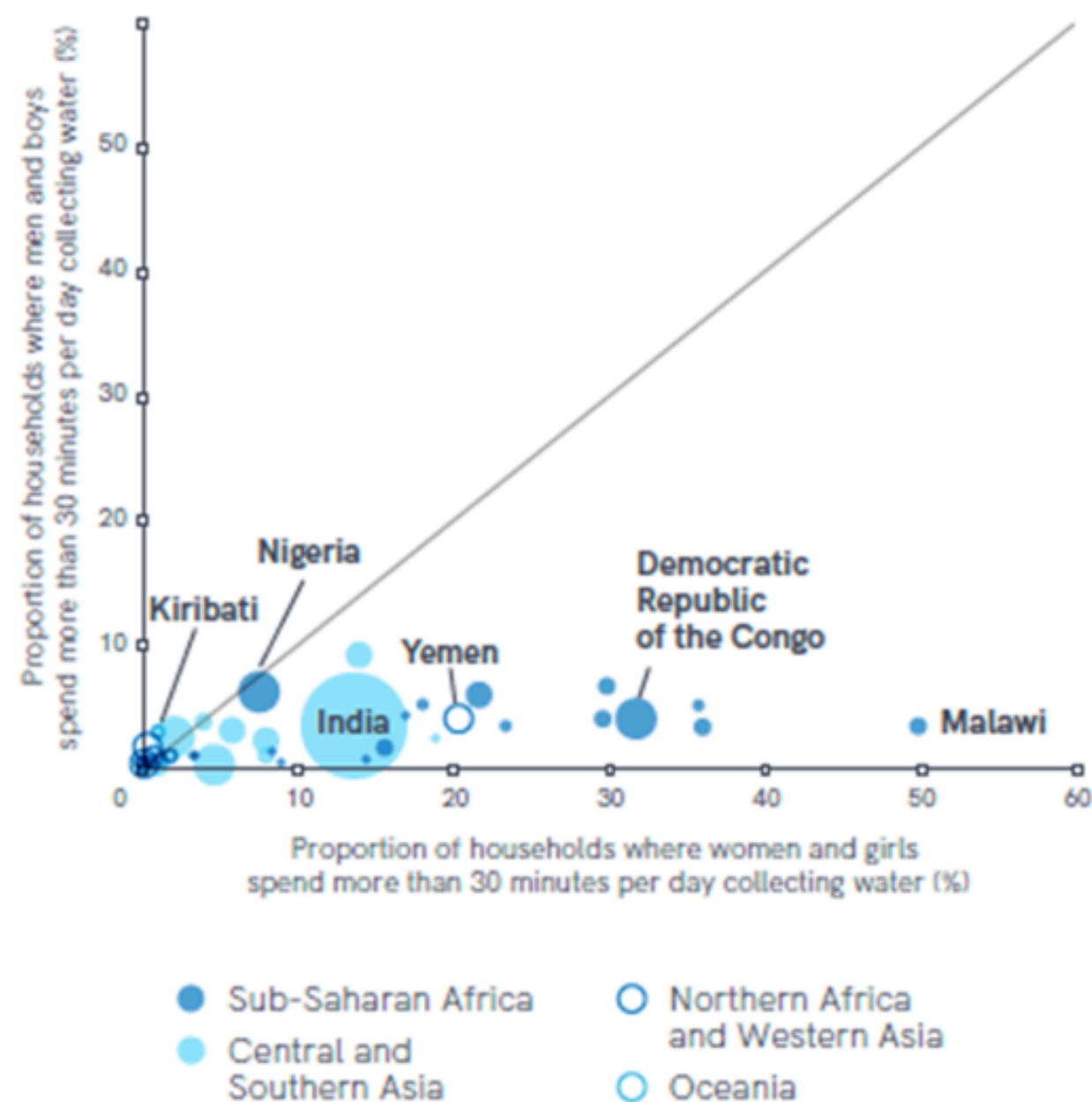
Source: GLAAS 2024/2025 country survey.

Source: *State of systems for drinking-water, sanitation and hygiene: global update 2025*. Geneva: World Health Organization and UNICEF; 2025. Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO.

Who do these inequities impact?

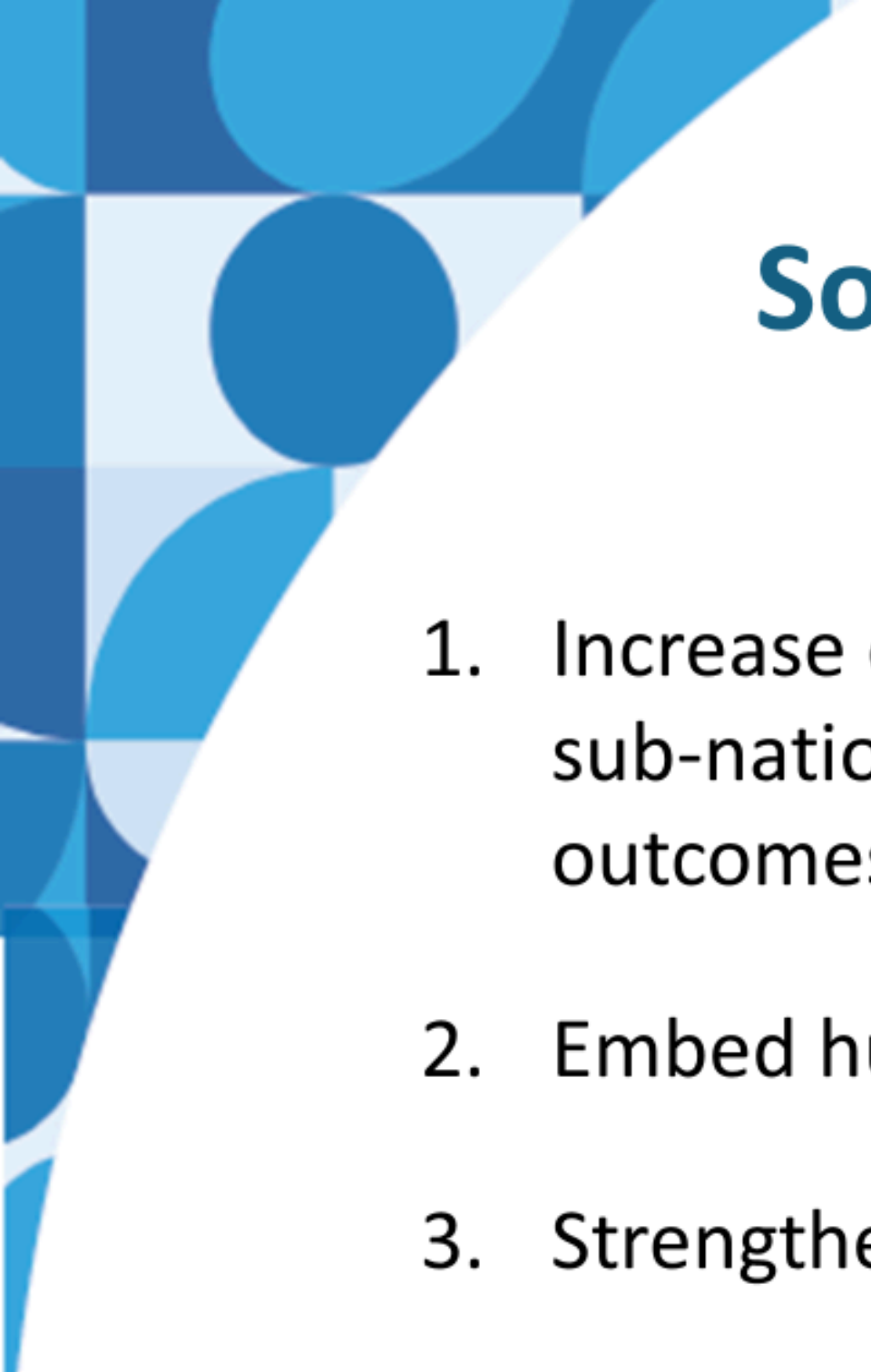
- **> 1 billion people** served by health facilities without basic water.
- **Three-quarters of African women** give birth in health care facilities that lack basic WASH services.
- Nearly **500m children** go to schools without basic drinking water.
- **70% of women, girls** over 15 yrs have primary responsibility for fetching water, with associated risks of gender-based violence, disrupted education, reduced economic participation, and ill-health or injury.
- **137.5 million displaced people** need emergency WASH services.
- Children under 15 yrs living in conflict areas are **3 times more likely to die from diseases linked to unsafe WASH** than from direct violence
- Globally available data are insufficient to quantify number of persons with disabilities, ethnic or religious minorities, Indigenous People, or elderly impacted by unequal access to WASH.

Many women and girls but few men and boys in sub-Saharan Africa and Central and Southern Asia spend more than 30 minutes collecting water each day



The global challenges to SDG 6

- Persistent and growing inequalities across regions, countries and sub-national units
- Accelerating climate change and increasing natural disasters and pollution
- Widespread fragility, conflict and public health emergencies
- Declining ODA and changes in multilateral and bilateral landscapes
- Insufficient regulation and compliance across entire WASH system
- Institutional fragmentation and insufficient multisector coordination
- Lack of overall increase to national WASH budgets and weak budget execution and targeting of financing to reduce inequalities
- Insufficient efforts to build human resources and diversify the workforce
- Gaps in monitoring and data for decision-making, especially on sub-national inequalities, wastewater treatment, water quality, and systems strengthening



Solutions

1. Increase effective high-level political action, leadership and partnership at sub-national, national, regional and global levels to improve measurable outcomes for people.
 2. Embed human rights principles in WASH systems.
 3. Strengthen resilient systems to deliver sustainable and equitable services.
- 

Some of the key identified issues

- Systems strengthening
- Monitoring & data for equity
- Finance & budgeting for equity
- Human resources / workforce
- Cross-sectoral integration
- Localisation / decentralization
- Equity
- Resilience to climate / fragility
- Mobilising Private sector / community engagement
- Behaviour change

Summary of Recommendations

A. Increase effective political action, leadership and partnership at all levels to deliver measurable outcomes for people			B. Embed human rights principles in WASH systems			
C. Strengthen resilient systems to deliver sustainable and equitable services						
1. Strengthen political prioritization, coordination and alignment of efforts to drive results	2. Enhance resilience and human rights-based approaches in planning, standards, regulation and implementation	3. Ensure access, protection and service continuity, especially in vulnerable situations	4. Improve financial targeting to close equity gaps and strengthen resilient systems	5. Reinforce, diversify, and protect the WASH workforce	6. Strengthen data, monitoring and review processes for accountability and evidence-based decisions	7. Promote decentralized capacity, resources and accountability for local delivery

WATER FOR PEOPLE

EXPERT PERSPECTIVE



ROBERT BOS

IWA

THE HUMAN RIGHTS TO SAFE DRINKING WATER AND SANITATION FROM 2010 TO 2030

2010 UNGA RECOGNITION HUMAN RIGHT TO SAFE DRINKING WATER AND SANITATION (HRWS)

2015 SDGS “LEAVE NO-ONE BEHIND”

2015 RECOGNITION OF TWO DISTINCT HUMAN RIGHTS:
SAFELY MANAGED DRINKING WATER & SAFELY MANAGED SANITATION

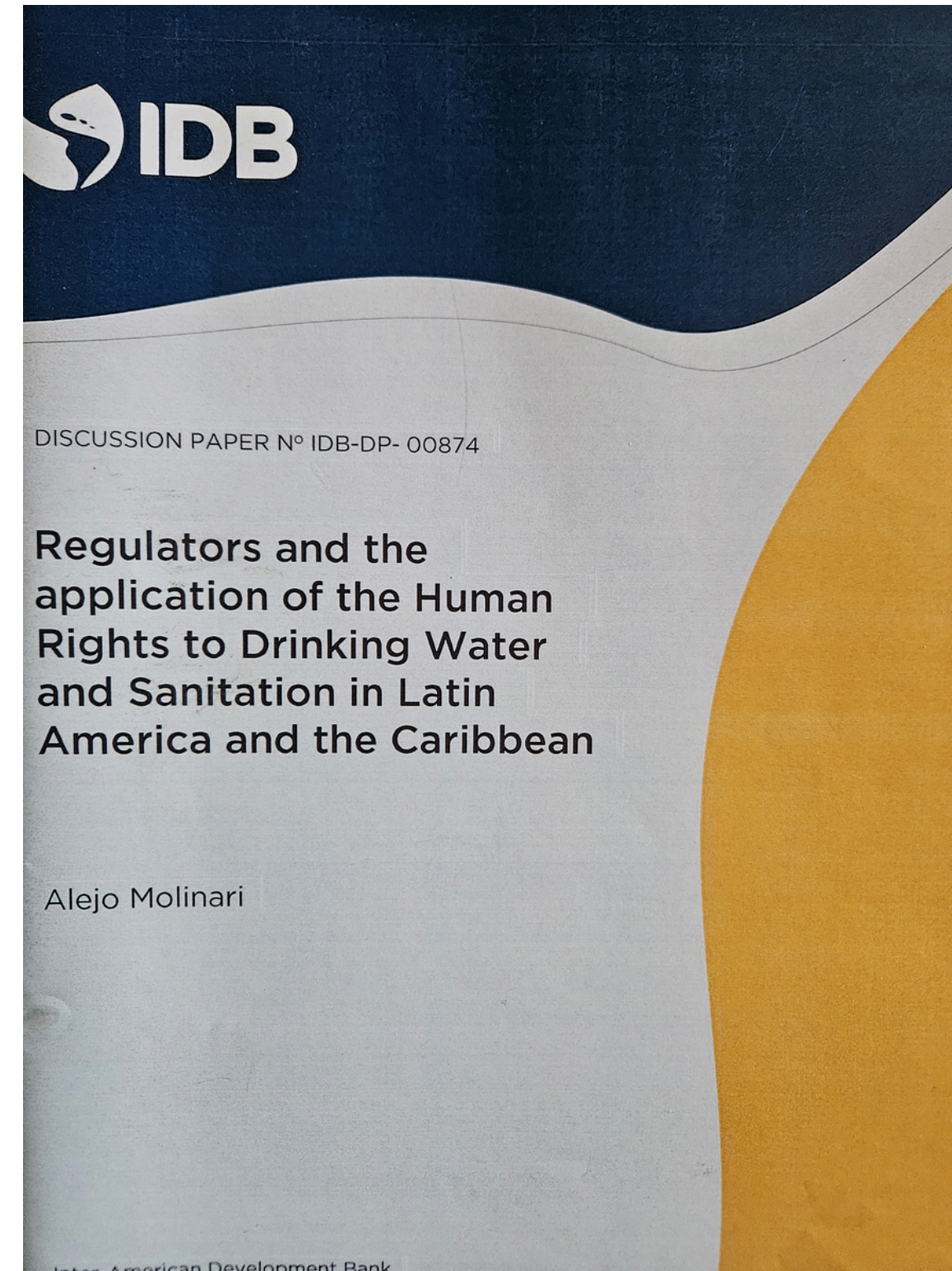
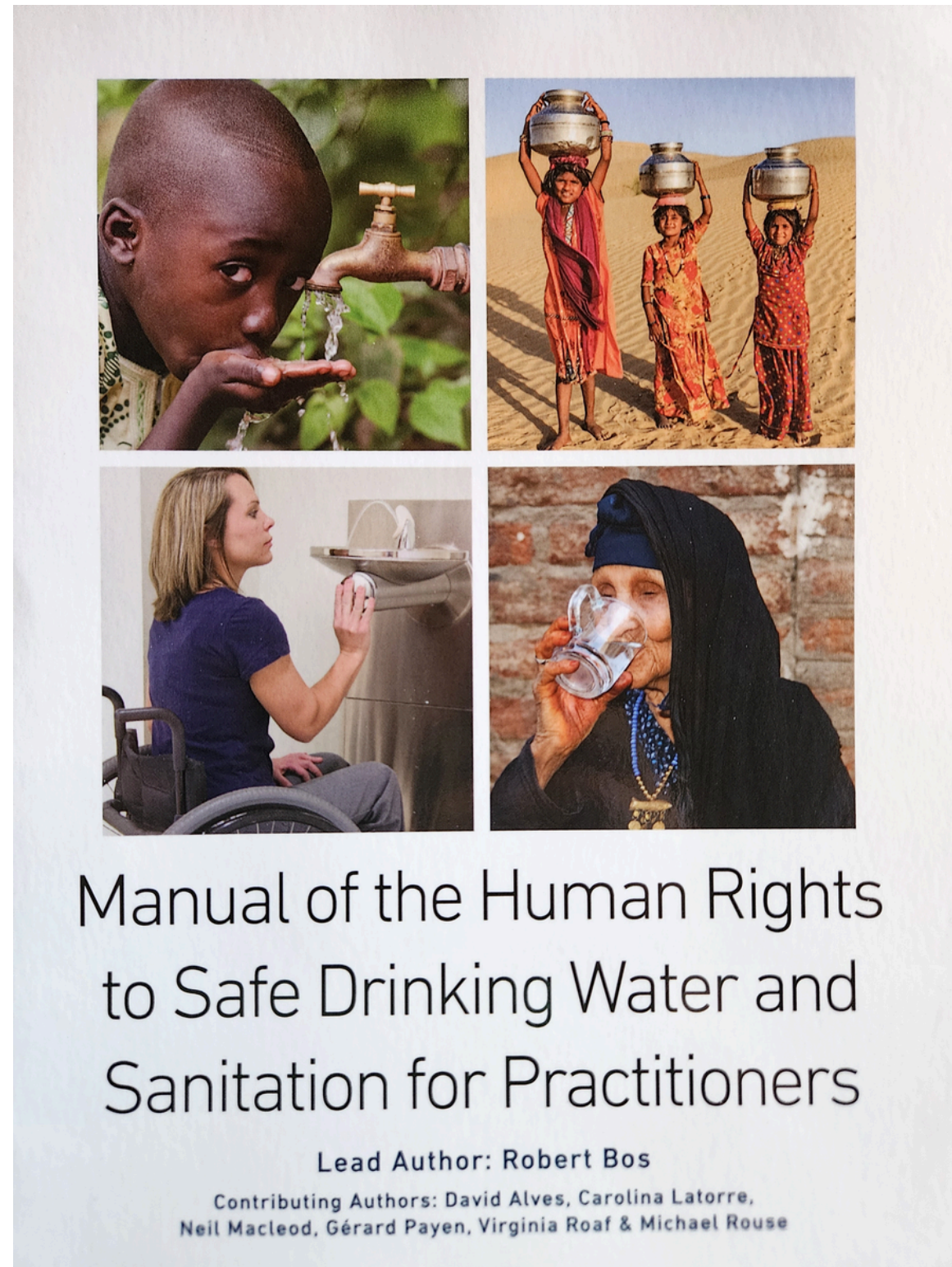
.... THE HUMAN RIGHTS PRINCIPLES

THE CRITERIA FOR THE HRWS

THE DUTY BEARERS RESPECT, PROTECT, FULFILL



TWO RELEVANT IWA PUBLICATIONS



THE ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

- POLICY FRAMEWORK
- INSTITUTIONS AND INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS
- LEGISLATION
- EDUCATION AND TRAINING CAPACITY
- FINANCIAL RESOURCES
- HUMAN RESOURCES
-

THE ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

LEGISLATION

CONSTITUTION

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

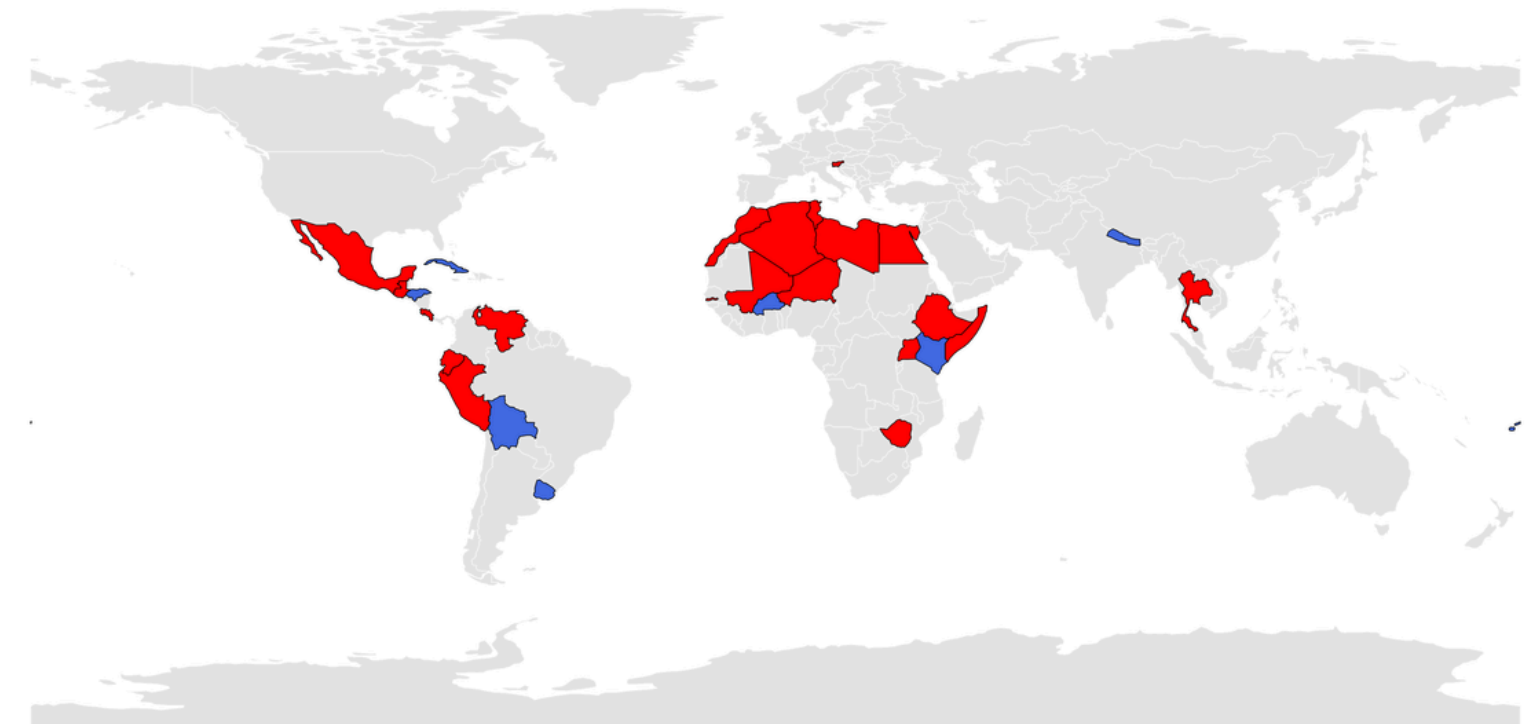
- DIFFERENT SECTORS
- DIFFERENT LEVELS

REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

NATIONAL CONSTITUTIONS: 8 COUNTRIES INCLUDE THE HRWS, 31 COUNTRIES INCLUDE ONLY THE HUMAN RIGHT TO SAFE DRINKING WATER

Countries with constitutional recognition of rights/entitlements to water and sanitation

Constitutional recognition of the human right to water — 31-country review



Working definition: explicit constitutional provision covering both water and sanitation. Maldives is included because Article 23 guarantees clean water and requires an adequate sewage system.

Red: constitutional water right/recognition only in the published 31-country review. Blue: water plus explicit constitutional sanitation right/entitlement.

LEGISLATION

FRAGMENTATION SETS IN:

LAWS GOVERNING THE DELIVERY OF SAFE DRINKING WATER WILL RESORT UNDER DIFFERENT MINISTRIES: INFRASTRUCTURE, HEALTH, LOCAL GOVERNMENT, NATURAL RESOURCES

LAWS GOVERNING SANITATION SERVICES AND WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT WILL ALSO RESORT UNDER DIFFERENT MINISTRIES: ENVIRONMENT, HEALTH, LOCAL GOVERNMENT

THERE WILL ALSO BE LEGAL FRAMEWORKS AT DIFFERENT LEVELS: NATIONAL, PROVINCIAL, DISTRICT OR MUNICIPAL

THE ONE COMMON POINT OF ALL LEGISLATION IS ITS ORIGIN: THE LAWMAKERS IN PARLIAMENT

REGULATION

REGULATION IS THE ENGINE THAT SETS LEGISLATION IN MOTION

FOR THE PROGRESSIVE REALIZATION OF THE HRWS,

- THE HUMAN RIGHTS PRINCIPLES AND HRWS CRITERIA NEED TO BE TRANSLATED INTO OPERATIONABLE STANDARDS AND NORMS
- AN INDEPENDENT REGULATORY BODY MUST ESTABLISHED BY THE GOVERNMENT

THE 2019 SURVEY IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN SHOWED THAT WHILE MAYBE IMPLICIT IN MOST REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS, THE NUMBER OF EXPLICITLY INCLUDING HUMAN RIGHTS PRINCIPLES AND CRITERIA WAS LIMITED. INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS, RURAL AREAS, PUBLIC SPACES, MIGFRANT COMMUNITIES AND HOMELESS PEOPLE ARE USUALLY NOT COVERED

GUIDING QUESTIONS

HOW CAN STATES MORE EFFECTIVELY TRANSLATE THE HRWS INTO LAWS?

HOW CAN CITIES AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES TRANSLATE COMMITMENTS INTO
EQUITABLE AND SUSTAINABLE WASH OUTCOMES?

HOW CAN POLICY OBJECTIVES ON EQUITY AND RESILIENCE BE LINKED TO
MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION?

YOUNG WATER PROFESSIONAL

PRESENTATIONS



MARINA MACEDO

IWA YWP Steering Committee / IWA & Grundfos Youth Action for SDG 6 (1st cohort) / IWA YWP Brazil Chapter



PATIENCE WEMA

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RESILIENT AND EQUITABLE WASH SYSTEMS IN A CHANGING CLIMATE



MARINA MACEDO

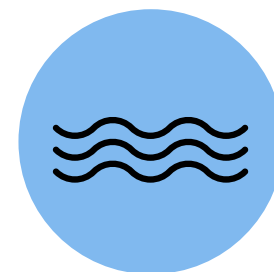
**IWA YWP Steering Committee / IWA &
Grundfos Youth Action for SDG 6 (1st
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When climate extremes become a WASH and public health crisis



Extreme rainfall

More frequent and intense events



Urban flooding

Damage to infrastructure and services



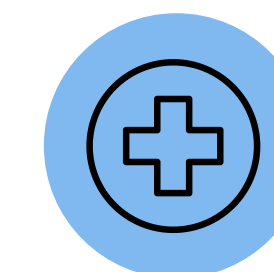
WASH disruption and contamination

Sewage overflow, water quality deterioration, service interruption



Human exposure

Contact with contaminated water and environments



Public health impacts

Infectious diseases and other health risks

In Brazil, climate change is already impacting water, sanitation and people's health - and the effects are not equally distributed

Increase of 30% in gastroenteritis diseases after the event

São Sebastião (2023)



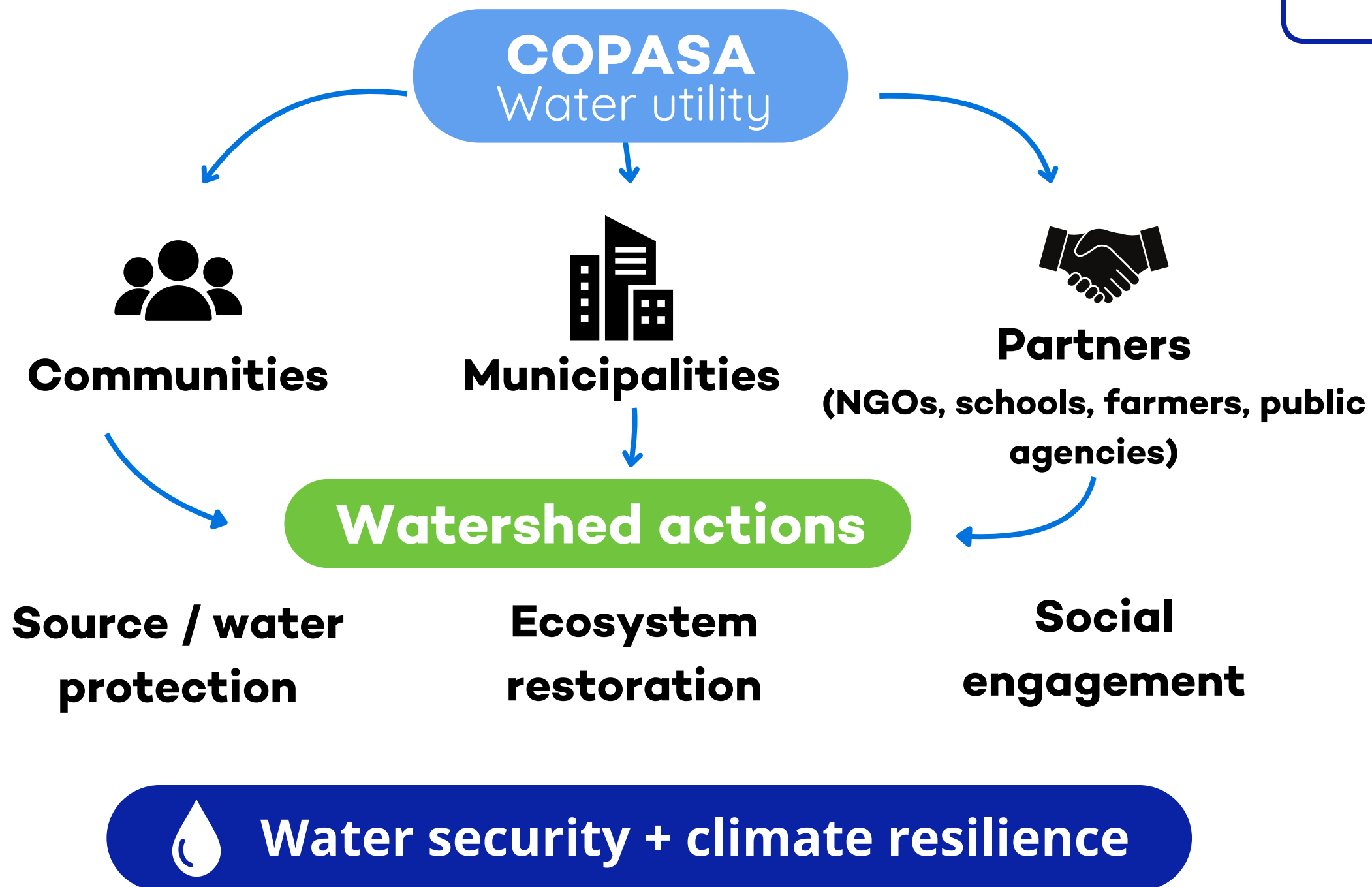
Rio Grande do Sul (2024)

> 1mi people without access to tap water, across 64 municipalities and 8 cities with the system completely disrupted

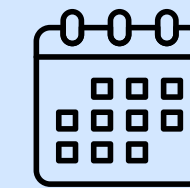
1,007 confirmed leptospirosis cases vs. 117 in the same period of 2023

Building WASH resilience beyond the utility

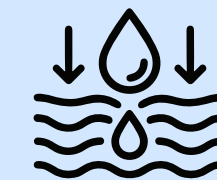
The Pró-Mananciais programme, by COPASA, show how partnership and locally led actions can protect watersheds and strengthen water security in the face of climate change



Pró-Mananciais Minas Gerais



Since 2017



347 watersheds



~9.7 milion people impacted

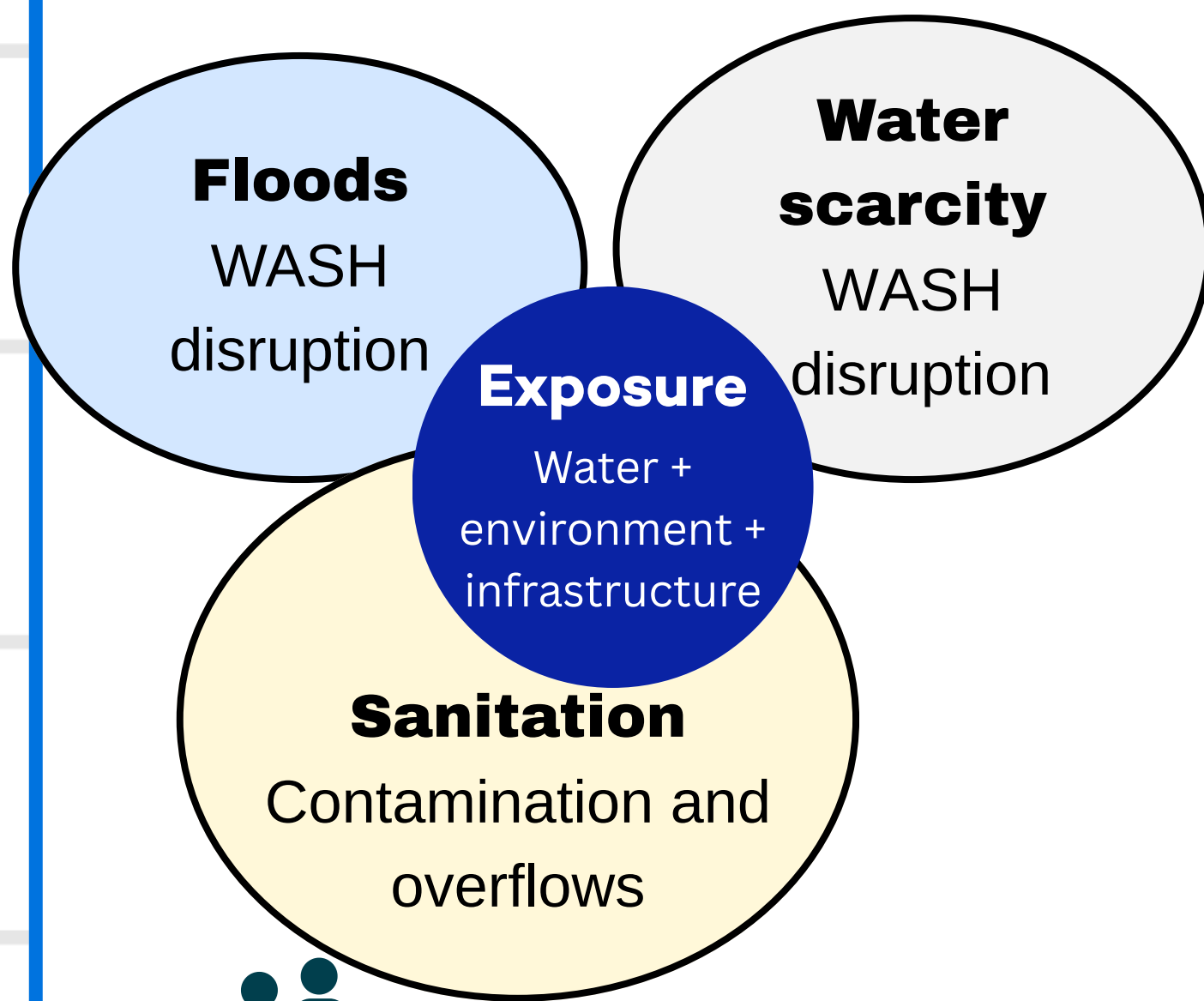


~R\$ 210 million invested

From resilient WASH services to resilient and equitable territories

Climate Change

Extreme rainfall / drought



Unequal impacts

Across communities and territories

Brazil has begun to institutionalize this integrated perspective. ANA Reference Standard 8/2024 links WASH expansion with territorial planning, drainage and risk mapping.

Not only keeping infrastructure running, but preventing, planning and preparing.

What does this mean for WASH?

1

Anticipate

Climate + hydrological + infrastructure risks

2

Connect

WASH + drainage + health + emergency management

3

Prioritize

People and communities facing higher exposure and lower capacity to recover

4

Co-produce

Utilities + governments + communities + health sector + academia

PARTNERSHIPS AND LOCALLY LED APPROACHES FOR EQUITABLE AND SUSTAINABLE WASH SERVICES



PATIENCE WEMA

**IWA & Grundfos Youth Action
for SDG 6 (2nd cohort)**



DURABLE SERVICES GROW FROM LOCAL ROOTS & SHARED OWNERSHIP



Local grounding

Designed for communities — around their context, needs and norms.



Real partnerships

Multiple actors sharing goals, resources, risk and accountability.



Accountable local actors

Local institutions with the skills, means and mandate to deliver.

government can
only provide 25%
of what's needed
to provide global
safe water access

redistribute



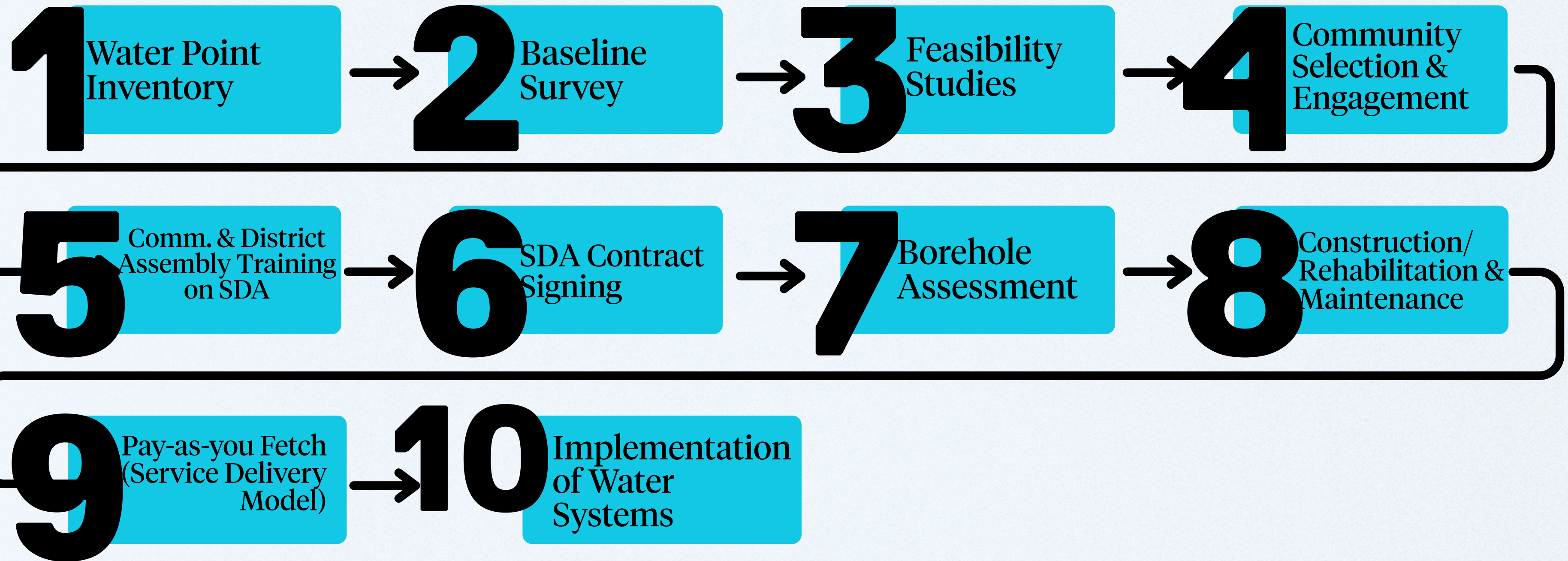
75% gap are
sourced from other
generative forces

partnerships





Locally Led Approach



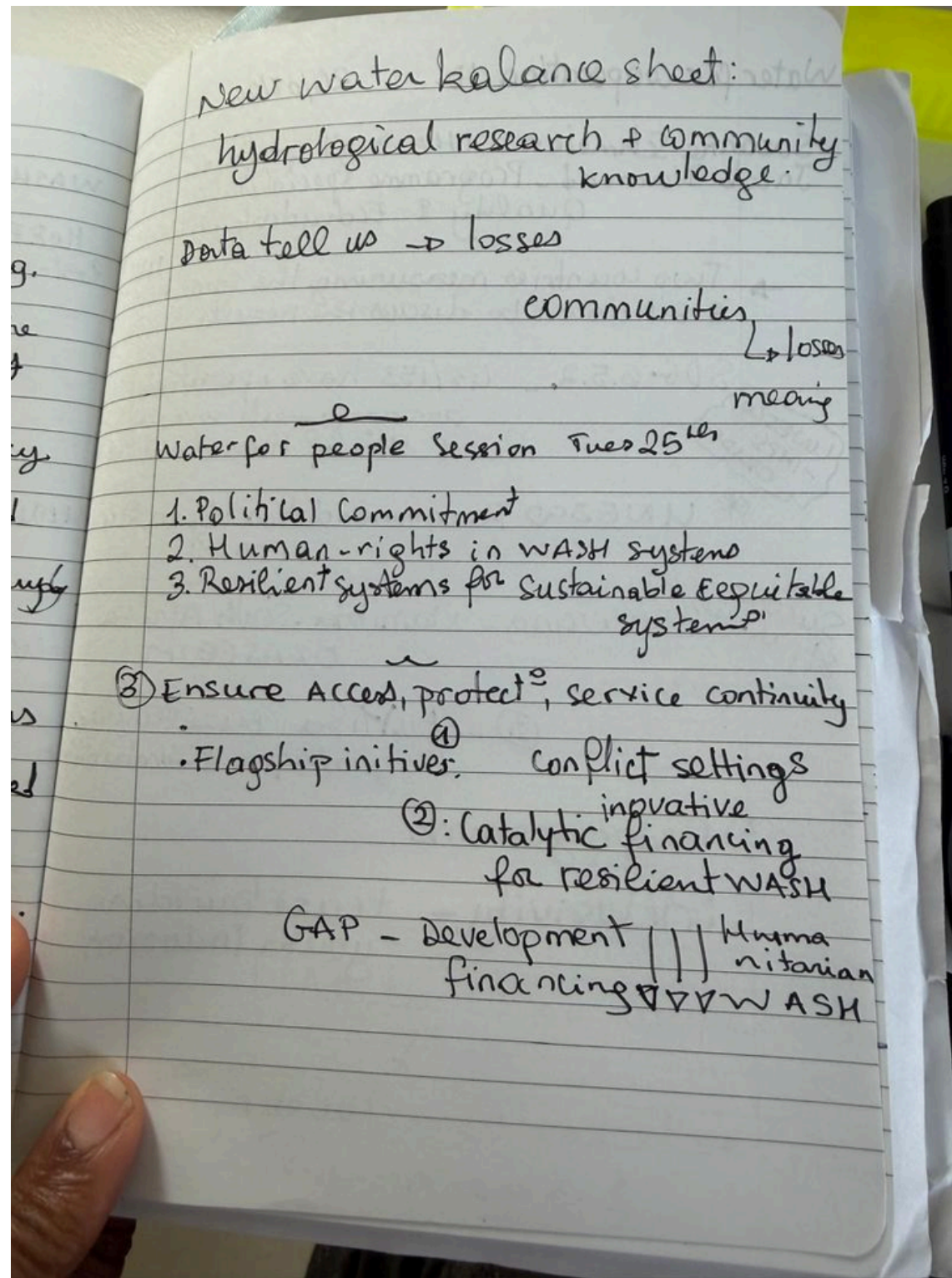
THREE THINGS TO STOP CONFUSING ON THE ROAD TO ABU DHABI



HADI TOURE GUINDO

Cofounder AFR'EAU

ACCESS $\neq$ SERVICE

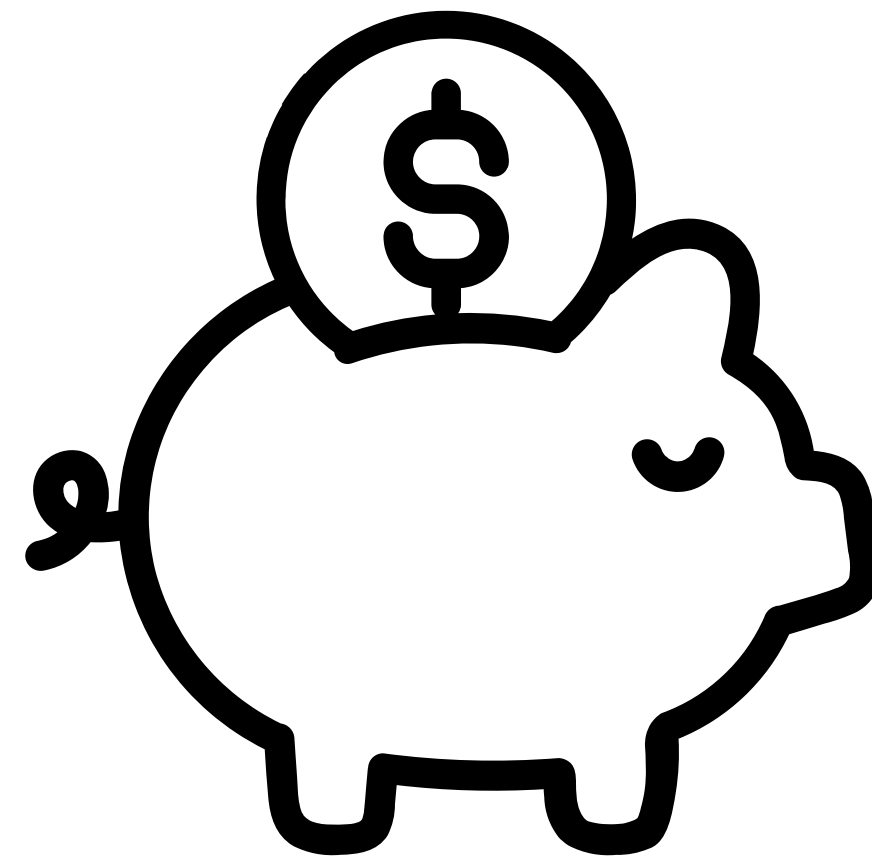


INNOVATION

≠ TECHNOLOGY

FINANCE

≠ MONEY



PARTICIPATION $\neq$ PRESENCE



**PARTICIPATION MEANS PEOPLE
SHAPE EVIDENCE, DECISIONS AND
RESPONSES.**



PANEL DISCUSSION & Q&A



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CLOSING REFLECTIONS AND KEY MESSAGES



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THANK YOU !

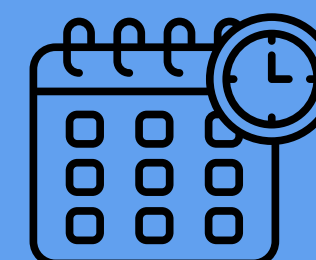
CONTINUE YOUR LEARNING JOURNEY

NEXT WEBINAR

SESSION 6 : WATER FOR COOPERATION

Co-lead : UNESCO-IHP + AFR'EAU

REGISTRATION:



OCTOBER 2026

Time TBC

WANT TO REACH OUT ?



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