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Making Your Mark Early: Building Influence and Career Pathways

16 JULY 2026

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WEBINAR INFORMATION – HOUSEKEEPING RULES

- This webinar will be **recorded and made available "On-demand"** on the IWA Connect Plus platform with relevant information.
- The **speakers** are responsible for **securing copyright permissions** for any work that they will present of which they are not the legal copyright holder.
- The opinions, hypothesis, conclusions or recommendations contained in the presentations and other materials are the **sole responsibility of the speaker(s)** and do not necessarily reflect IWA opinion.

WEBINAR INFORMATION – HOUSEKEEPING RULES



- **'Chat' box**: please use this for general requests and for interactive activities.
- **'Q&A' box**: please use this to send questions to the panelists. (We will answer these during the discussions)

Please Note: *Attendees' microphones are muted. We cannot respond to 'Raise Hand'.*

AGENDA

- **Introduction to the Webinar, Overview and Housekeeping**
  Chelsea Hayward, IWA SG – Sustainability in the Water Sector, Cambodia

- **Speaker Presentations**
  Monica Ndagire, NWSC, Uganda
  Hadi Toure Guindo, AFR'EAU, Mali
  Katerina Schilling, IAWD, Austria
  Loga Veeraiah, SPAN, Malaysia

- **Panel Discussion and Q&A with the Audience**
  Speakers and Moderated by Chelsea Hayward, IWA SG – Sustainability in the Water Sector, Cambodia

- **Closing Remarks**
  Emily Brenner, Scottish Water, Scotland

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Introduction

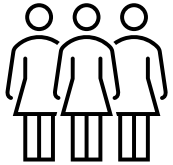
The Women in Water (WiW) programme at the IWA Congress is designed to:

- Re-energise the global Women in Water programme launched in Toronto
- Build a sustained international Women in Water community beyond the four-day Congress
- Deliver a robust and thought-provoking programme of events at Congress
- Ensure women have a positive, supported, and inclusive Congress experience
- Explore the topics of action, resilience, and prosperity - focusing not just on profit but how well designed and inclusive systems can support better sanitation, improved facilities and, therefore, opportunities for women and girls globally

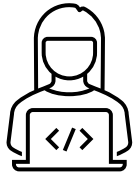
WOMEN IN WATER PROGRAMME

Overview

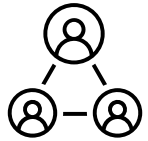
The WiW programme will provide a range of opportunities for people to engage before and during the IWA conference.



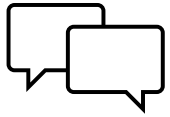
Gender-inclusive Congress



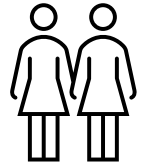
Series of international webinars



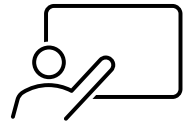
A Connection Hub



Social and networking activities



Buddy/ connection system

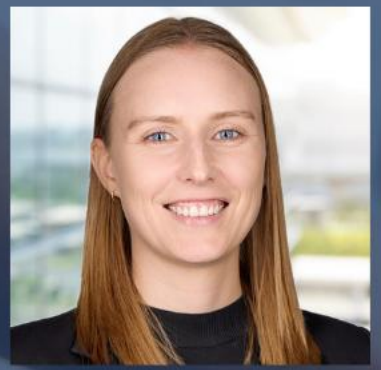


WiW content at IWA Congress

WEBINAR 16 July 2026 11:00 BST

Making Your Mark Early: Building Influence and Career Pathways

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Chelsea Hayward
IWA SG – Sustainability in the Water Sector, Cambodia



Monica Ndagire
NWSC, Uganda



Loga Veeraiah
SPAN, Malaysia



Hadi Toure Guindo
AFR'EAU, Mali



Katerina Schilling
IWAD, Austria



Emily Bremner
Scottish Water, Scotland

Sign-up for free: https://www.iwa-network.org/iwa-learn

Co-organisers

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SUSTAINABILITY IN THE WATER SECTOR

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Making Your Mark Early: Building Influence and Career Pathways

MONICA NDAGIRE
IWA YWP Uganda Chapter
IWA & Grundfos Youth Action For SDG 6 Fellow





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The journey begins before the title

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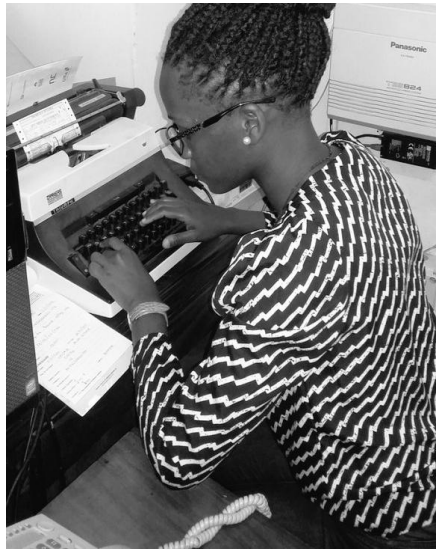
















LEADERSHIP BEGINS BEFORE THE TITLE

- Leadership starts with contribution, not a title.
- Influence is built through initiative, credibility, and solving problems.
- Early-career professionals make their mark by taking ownership and creating value beyond their formal roles.



BUILDING CREDIBILITY THROUGH TECHNICAL EXCELLENCE

- Technical competence is the foundation of credibility and influence.
- Consistent results and evidence-based decisions build trust at every career stage.
- Excellence in your work speaks louder than experience or job title.



EXPANDING IMPACT BEYOND THE WORKPLACE

- Growth happens beyond your job through professional networks, volunteering, and continuous learning.
- Collaborating and serving others strengthens both leadership skills and sector impact.
- Global opportunities, such as the IWA & Grundfos Youth Action for SDG 6 Fellowship, IWA LeaP, and IWA Specialist Groups show that young professionals are already leading solutions today.



FROM LOCAL ACTION TO GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT

- Local excellence can open doors to regional and global leadership opportunities.
- Career growth is driven by curiosity, engagement, and saying yes to new challenges.
- Be open to opportunities. They can take you further than you ever imagined.



IWA & Grundfos Youth Action for SDG 6 Fellows study tour at the London Wetland Centre

THE IMPORTANCE OF VISIBILITY

- Visibility is about sharing knowledge and creating value, not self-promotion.
- Use conferences, professional networks, publications, and LinkedIn to build your professional presence.
- For women, being visible helps increase recognition, open opportunities, and inspire others.



Emerging Water Leaders Forum at IWA WDCE 2025

A CALL TO YOUNG WOMEN IN WATER

- The water sector needs the talent, ideas, and leadership of young women.
- Build your influence through expertise, perseverance, strong networks, and visible contributions.
- Don't wait to feel ready. Lead with service, initiative, and excellence, starting where you are.



THANK YOU.



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Building the Platform I Needed

HADI TOURE GUINDO | CO-FOUNDER & PRESIDENT, AFR'EAU

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THE GAP I EXPERIENCED



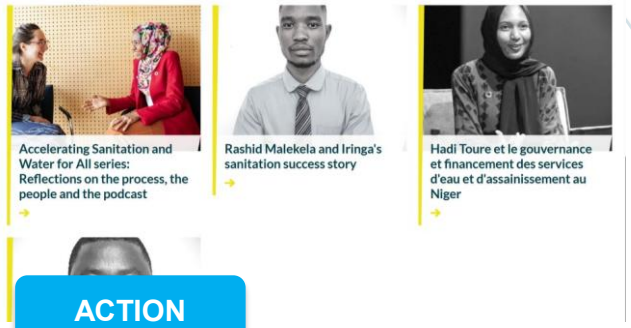
In Mali, I kept seeing the same pattern:

- **Closed circles.** Many opportunities depended on access to established professional networks.
- **Fragmented pathways.** Training and conference invitations did not always lead to responsibility, funding or implementation roles.
- **Token participation.** Youth visibility could be valued more than youth expertise

AFR'EAU: GIVING YOUNG PEOPLE THE PEN

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We created a platform where young professionals could do the work



ACTION

National Symposium on citizen science and active participation in international platforms

Young voices entered professional and policy conversations.



FORMATION

Training students and communities in citizen science and water-quality monitoring.

Trainings also addressed CVs, interviews, LinkedIn and confidence.



RESEARCH

Dji Mansa placed students and communities inside a water-quality project.

Young professionals collected evidence and worked with experienced institutions.

ACTION • FORMATION • RESEARCH

Dji Mansa: credibility was earned in the field



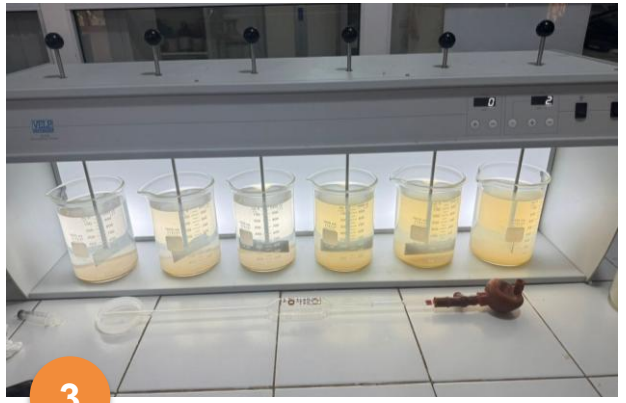
1 **LISTEN**

Focus groups in five Bamako fishing communities and two communities in Niger.



2 **MEASURE**

Eleven field campaigns across six Bamako sites, with students and community participation.



3 **TEST & COMPARE**

Local treatment practices (alum, moringa) were brought into technical discussion and laboratory tests.

"Projects come and go, but this was the first time a team returned to share the results with us in our own camp."

The AFR'EAU community

- Regional relays connecting river basins
- Field teams collecting data and engaging communities
- Young professionals gaining practical project experience
- An expert pool contributing technical knowledge and consultancy
- Members moving from participants to facilitators, researchers and project leads









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The AFR'EAU community is our way of building something that allows others to hold the pen, write their own contribution and eventually shape the future of the water sector



THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!



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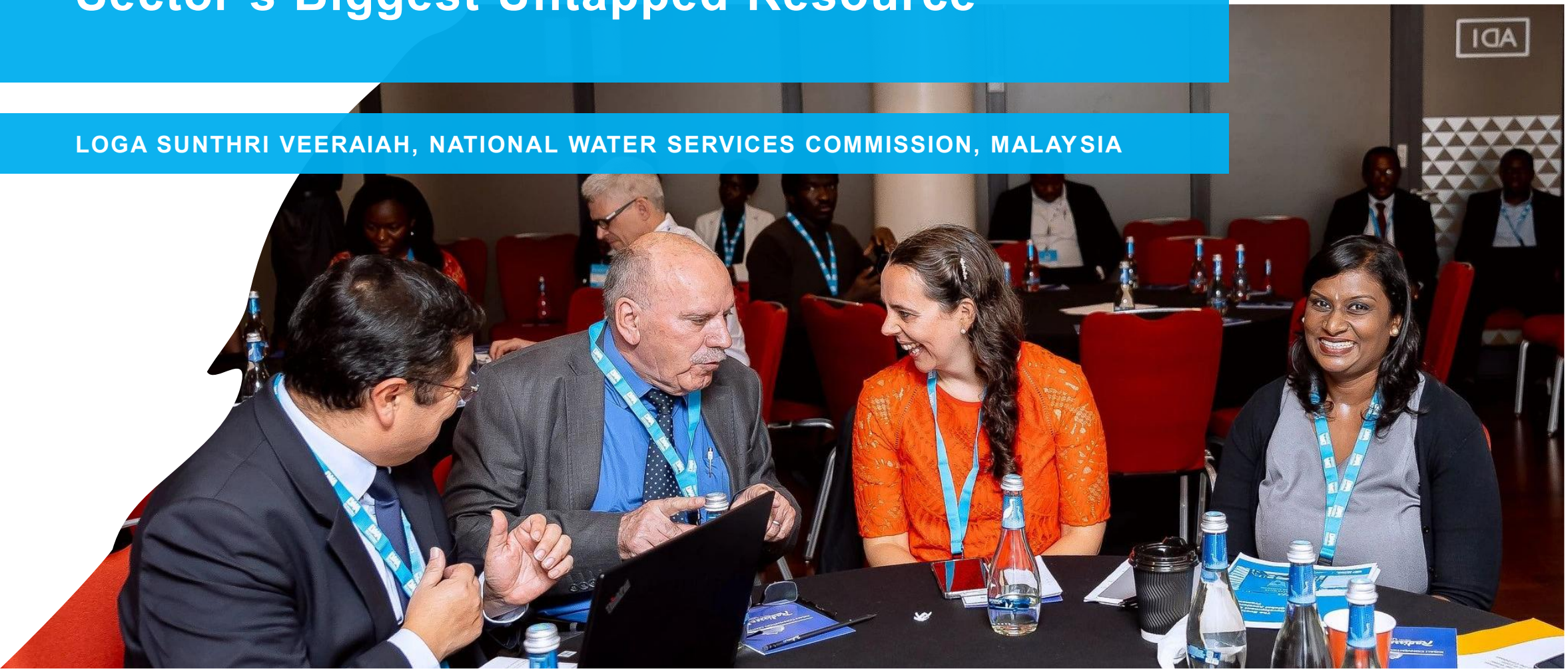
Professional Engagement Beyond Formal Roles

KATERINA SCHILLING

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Gender-Inclusive Innovation is the Water Sector's Biggest Untapped Resource

LOGA SUNTHRI VEERAIAH, NATIONAL WATER SERVICES COMMISSION, MALAYSIA



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SPAN
Suruhanjaya Perkhidmatan Air Negara



NATIONAL WATER SERVICES COMMISSION (SPAN) MALAYSIA

SPAN is a regulatory body which governs the **economic, social and technical** aspects of water supply and sewerage services in Peninsular Malaysia and the Federal Territory of Labuan.



Holistic – Transparent – Sustainal

MY JOURNEY WITH IWA

- **9th IWA Young Water Professional Conference in Newcastle University in April 2008**
- International Young Water Professional Conference 2019 – Speaker & Programme Committee
- 6th Water Regulators Forum 2021, July 2021 – Speaker of the Closing Plenary & Programme Committee
- 7th Water Regulators Forum 2022 – Program Committee
- 8th International Water Regulators Forum, Kigali, Rwanda – Dec 2023
- 9th International Water Development Conference – Toronto, Canada – August 2024
- 10th WRF – Chair of Programme Committee – Dec 2025



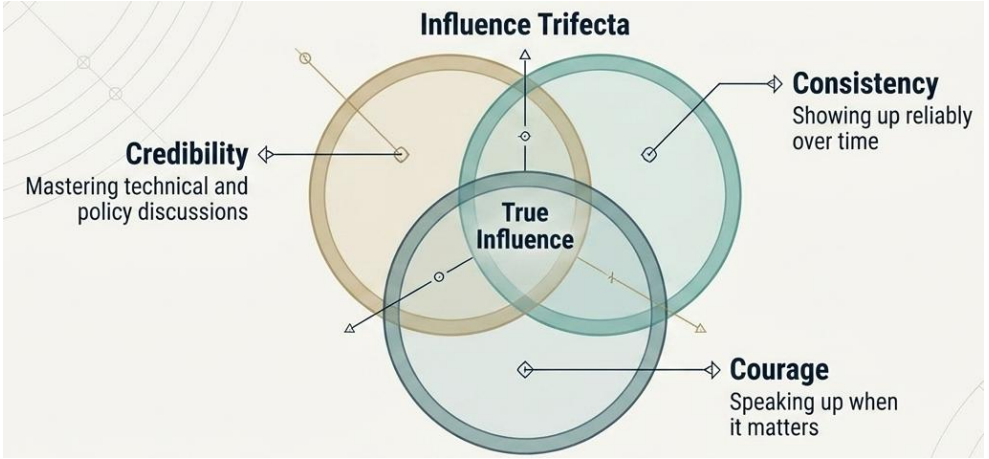


TRUE LEADERSHIP TRANSCENDS FORMAL HIERARCHY

Scaling your impact requires abandoning conventional conventional career assumptions.

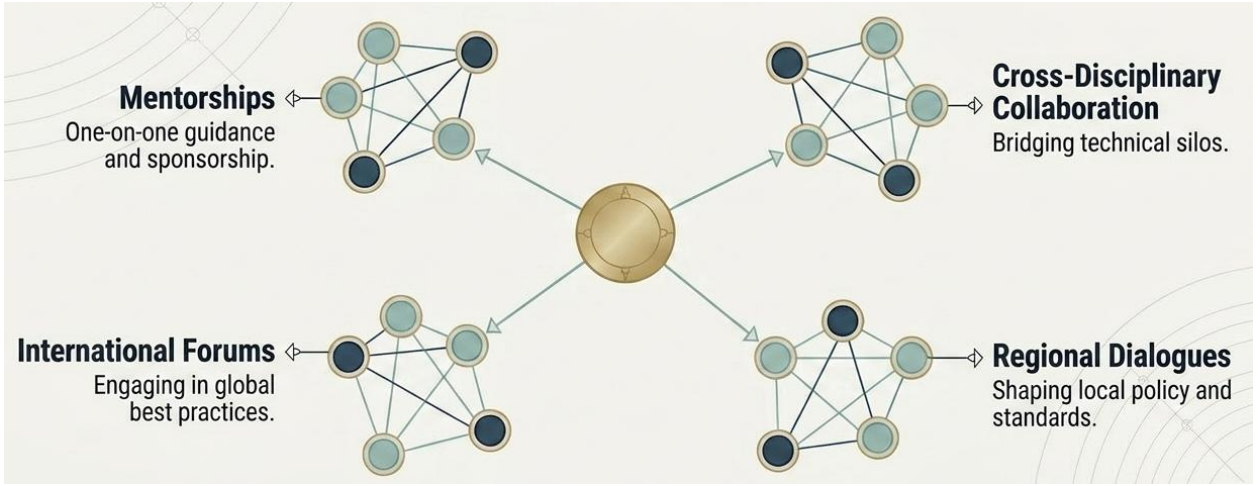
	The Conventional Path	The Influence Path
Authority	Granted eventually by formal titles and hierarchy.	**Earned early** via credibility, consistency, and the courage to speak up.
Career Capital	Relying purely on isolated technical expertise.	**Treating** relationships, mentorship, and cross-disciplinary collaboration as equal to technical skills.
Response to Change	Passive compliance with new regulations and frameworks.	**Proactively** turning evolving frameworks (GRI, ISSB, NSRF) into platforms for visibility and voice.
Scale of Impact	Localised success restricted to a single market (Malaysia).	**Driving systemic change** through regional and global platforms (ASEAN dialogues, AsiaWater).

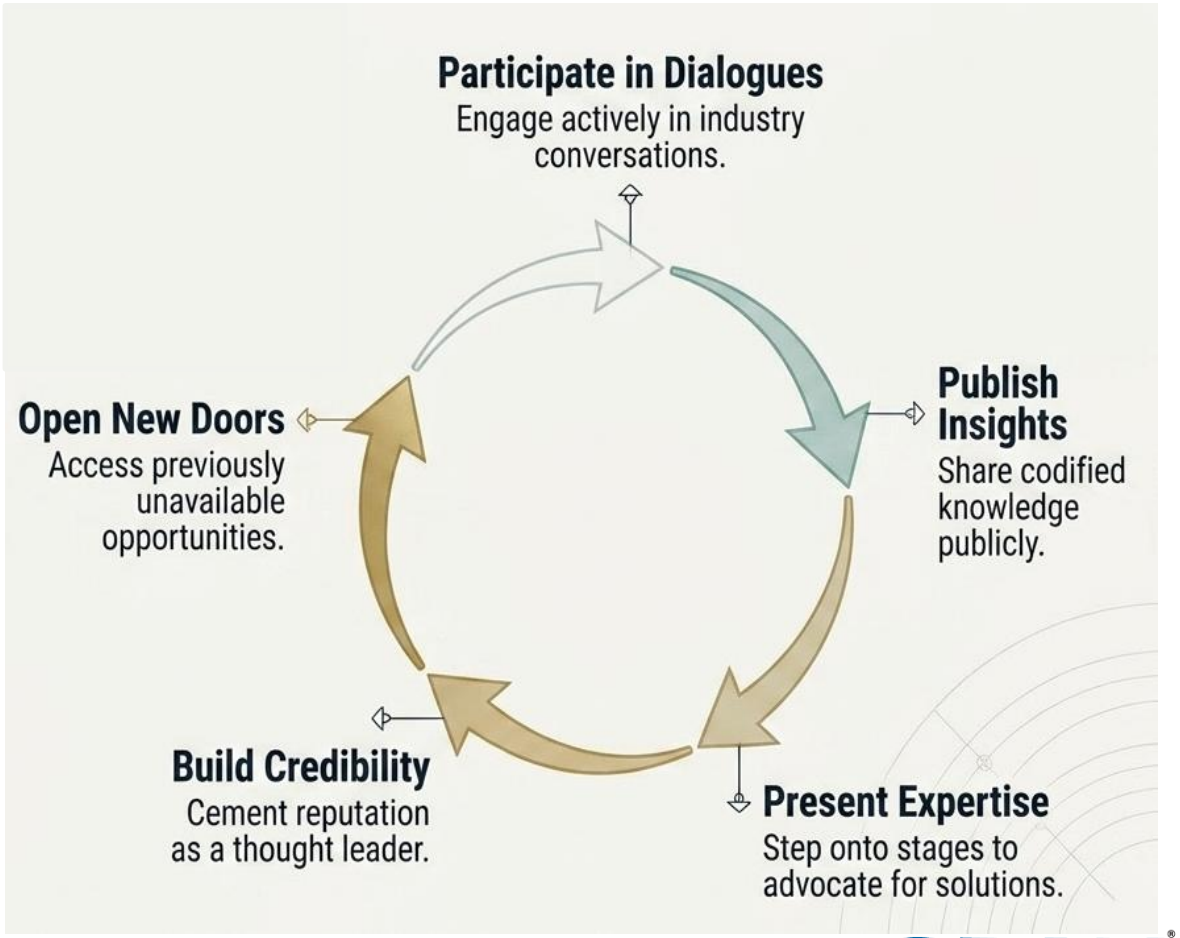
Early influence does not come from waiting for permission, it comes from actively occupying the intersection of credibility, consistency and courage



STRATEGIC RELATIONSHIP & VISIBILITY ARE ENGINES OF OPPORTUNITY

- Visibility is strategic requirement that build credibility and continuously generates new avenues for impact
- Relationships are as valuable as technical expertise

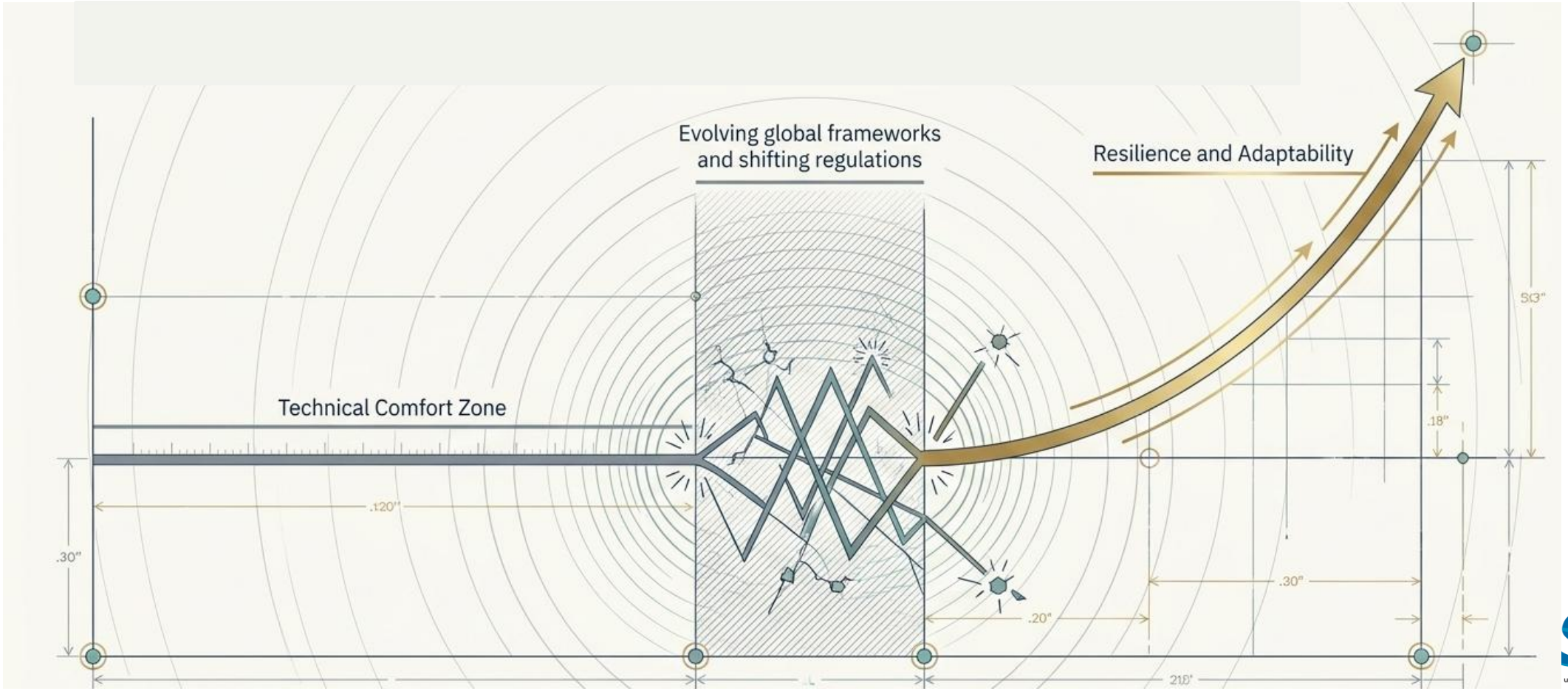




STRUCTURAL DISRUPTION IS A CATALYST FOR LEADERSHIP

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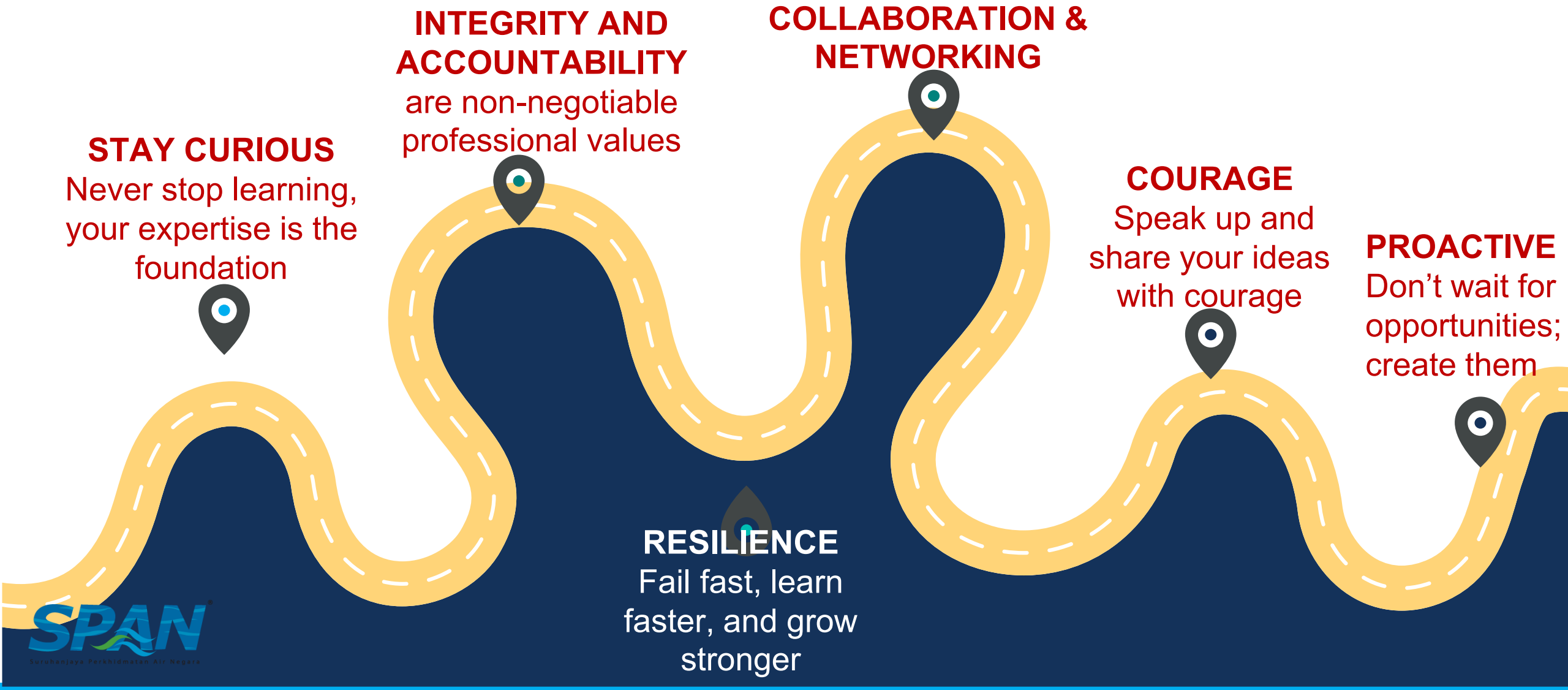
The ability to adapt to micro-level changes makes technical / operational staff to visionary leaders, challenge are oppurtunities for leadership in disguise.



SPAN
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KEY TAKEAWAYS : CONSISTENCY IS THE KEY

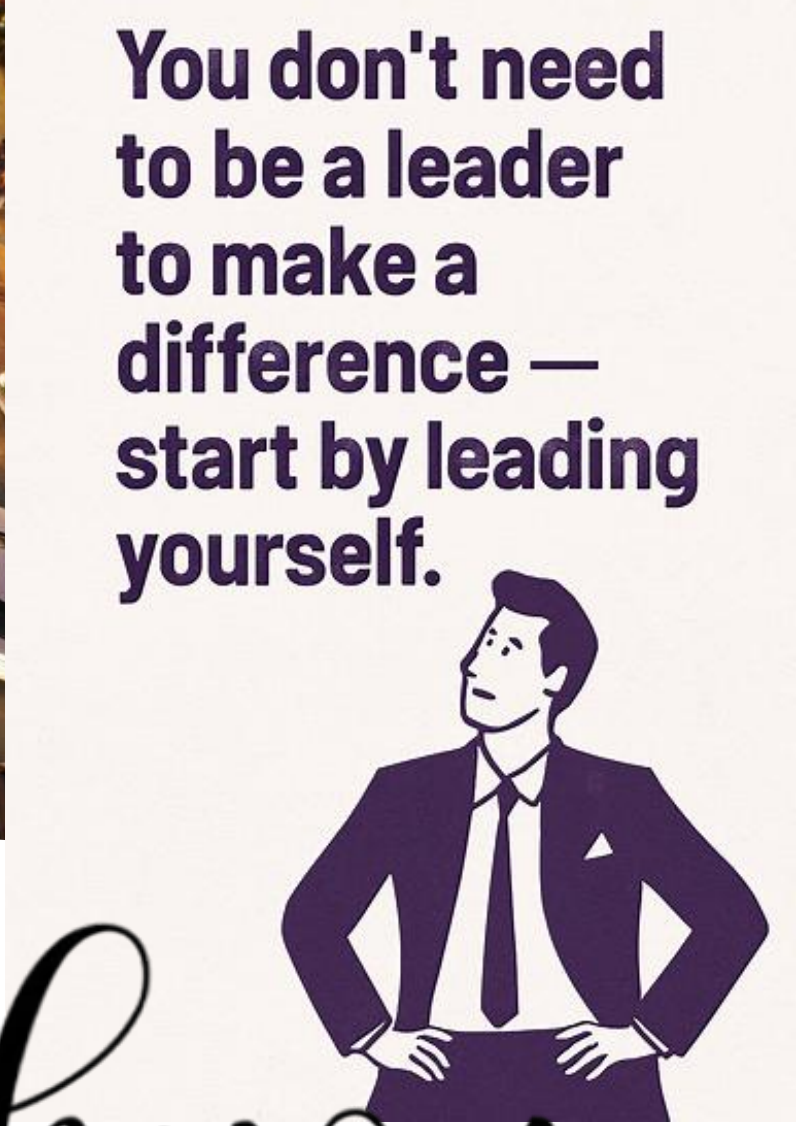
These are some of the lessons I learned along the years!





Women Power the Future of Water





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thankyou

Q&A



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IWA World Water Congress & Exhibition

EMILY BREMNER – SCOTTISH WATER



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GLASGOW 2026

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CONGRESS OVERVIEW

- Organisation and country Pavilions
- **Operations Challenge** and **Early Career Immersion Day**

THE UK PAVILION



- Made up of workshops, presentations, and technical submissions from across the globe.
- Delegates pass needed to access full conference programme.

- UK Cultural Event
- Scottish Water-led Fringe Programme to engage local community

- 11 technical tours have been approved by IWA and more information on these can be found on the IWA website.
- Flagship tour: ride on Steamship Sir Walter Scott at Loch Katrine.

- 4 UK-led Forums based on overarching Congress themes
- Registration is on a first-come, first served basis

- Aim is to discuss practical case studies to achieve goals outlined in paper ahead of UN Water Conference in December.

Congress Opportunities for YWPs

Exhibition Space: Free to attend by registering online at the IWA website. Great opportunity to chat with local and global supply chain partners and create connections across multiple industries.

UK Pavilion: Will sit in the heart of the Exhibition space at the Congress and represents all 16 water companies within the UK along with sponsorship from supply chain partners. Organisation of this year's UK Pavilion has been led by 4 YWPs from the UK water industry.

Early Career Immersion Days: Taking place within the UK Pavilion and Exhibition space, the Early Career Immersion Days are designed to inspire the next generation of Young Water Professionals by giving them the opportunity to step into the global water arena.

Operations Challenge: Taking place within Exhibition Space, teams of 3 can register to participate in a crisis simulation. Unlike previous traditional drilling and tapping competitions, this year's Operations Challenge requires the use of digital skills to mitigate the situation.

Emerging Water Leaders Forum: An open platform for young water professionals to connect with their peers from around the world. The Forum is a place to share professional experiences and highlight the critical responsibility of YWPs working on solutions for the future of water.

World Water Camp: More info on the IWA YWP LinkedIn page https://www.linkedin.com/company/iwa-uk-ywp/posts/?feedView=all

Thank you for Listening!

Useful Links:

IWA Congress website: https://worldwatercongress.org/

UK Pavilion website: https://www.theukpavilion.co.uk/

Please use the **Q&A chat** if you have any further questions



UPCOMING WiW WEBINARS

- 19 August, 8 A.M. BST – ‘Indigenous Women: Guardians of Water’
- 2 September, 1 P.M. BST – ‘Women in Water Programme’

Learn more at
https://worldwatercongress.org/

UPCOMING IWA WEBINARS & EVENTS



Learn more at

https://www.iwa-network.org/learn/strategic-trenchless-rehabilitation-technologies-for-water-loss-reduction

UPCOMING IWA WEBINARS & EVENTS



Learn more at

https://www.iwa-network.org/learn/iwa-ywp-regional-call-from-vision-to-impact-young-water-leaders-across-europe

UPCOMING IWA WEBINARS & EVENTS



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