

## FEATURE: PRIORITY ACTION ON GENDER AND YOUTH

GWP expresses its unique value in its efforts to “ensure the ‘voices of water’ influence local, national, regional, and global development priorities”. This means fully integrating gender and youth aspects in the overall work programme in line with the cross-cutting nature of these issues in the context of water resources management.



### Gender inclusion in water resources management

GWP’s activities on gender inclusion are guided by the Action Piece: [Gender Equality](#)

and [Inclusion in Water Resources Management](#), developed in 2017. In 2020, successful resource mobilisation efforts allowed a major project to commence in Africa (see box). In Ecuador, funding from the NDC Partnership helped GWP to support the Ministry of Environment and Water in generating technical inputs for the identification, selection, and prioritisation of information, indicators, and criteria for carrying out climate risk analysis focusing on priority groups and gender considerations.

A baseline analysis for SDG indicator 6.5.1, conducted in 2020, showed that countries have different levels of understanding on gender inclusion, with gaps in the availability of gender-disaggregated data. GWP therefore prepared specific guidelines to improve the reporting process, enhance common understanding, transfer knowledge and experiences, and replicate examples of good practice.

GWP Caucasus and Central Asia began a subregional initiative to strengthen the capacity of women in non-governmental organisations concerning natural resource management and climate change adaptation through training and knowledge sharing. GWP and the Geneva Water Hub jointly prepared a comparative study, [Empowering Women in Water Diplomacy in the Middle East and North Africa](#). This led to the launch of a related initiative aiming to strengthen the role of women in water diplomacy and transboundary water cooperation in the region (see Mediterranean regional stories).

In South Asia, GWP Country Water Partnerships participated in a consultation meeting on how to best support gender transformation at the national level. In Southern Africa, GWP helped to develop a gender action plan for the Limpopo Watercourse Commission as part of its support to mobilise funding from the Global Environment Facility.

### Addressing gender inequality in Africa

African women have traditionally shouldered the burden of providing water for their families, but their views are still largely ignored in decision-making on water resources management. Gender equality is essential for ensuring food and water security, and for building climate resilience, so action is needed to ensure a more gender-sensitive approach to investment and institution building on water and climate change across the continent.

GWP is working with the African Union Development Agency and other high-level African institutions to implement the Continental Africa Water Investment Programme (AIP). A key focus of AIP is to address gender inequality, and the programme encompasses a specific gender-focused component. The AIP Support Programme on water, climate, development, and gender aims to trigger the long-term change required to ensure the preparation, development, governance, and management of climate-resilient water investments address gender equality at all levels. Activities take a holistic approach, addressing the social barriers that prevent women from fully participating in all aspects of the water and climate sector.

In 2020, the project team conducted initial gender studies in Benin, Cameroon, Tunisia, Uganda, and Zambia. They reviewed existing systems, gaps, and drivers, which helped them to identify opportunities and prioritise interventions that would contribute to a gender-transformative approach to strengthening water security and climate resilience.



African women sell fresh fish on the street market, Zambia



## Water solutions for youth engagement

GWP's portfolio of youth engagement projects continues to expand, with activities based on sharing lessons and amplifying impacts. Activities include supporting youth-led initiatives and organisations, building technical capacity and leadership skills, and facilitating youth participation in water management processes and GWP governing bodies.

In 2020, despite COVID-19 restrictions, GWP facilitated youth participation in global events, including dedicated online sessions at Stockholm Water Week and continuing preparations for the 9th World Water Forum to be held in 2022. Youth webinars provided another opportunity for engagement around the impacts of the pandemic. The year also saw GWP Central Africa, Central America, and Southern Africa include youth representatives in the country workshops organised for monitoring SDG indicator 6.5.1.

GWP South America launched a competition to encourage youth participation, which was won by VITALIS, a GWP Partner from Venezuela. VITALIS was awarded funding for a specific project to mobilise youth and support their role as agents of change in promoting more integrated and sustainable management of water resources.

Capacity-building support is a key thread within GWP youth activities. In 2020, GWP Central and Eastern Europe secured funding from the European Union to boost youth employment and build capacity for accessing project funding. In South America, GWP launched a new training initiative specifically for young professionals on integrated water management and how to mobilise resources. In West Africa, funding was secured for a second phase of the [#tonfuturtonclimat](#) (Your Future Your Climate) project, which is increasing the capacity of young people to become agents of change for water and climate resilience (see West Africa regional stories).



## Promoting green entrepreneurship in Tunisia

The Ghar El Melh is a Ramsar wetland, recognised for its ecological and cultural

heritage. Sustainable development and integrated management of this important water resource are vital to preserve its status into the future. The Conservation and Sustainable Development of Coastal Wetlands with High Ecological Value (GEMWET) project, supported by the MAVA Foundation, aims to assist economic, sociocultural, and ecological development, including boosting green job opportunities for the youth living in the greater wetlands area of

Ghar El Melh. Continuing its activities despite the COVID-19 pandemic, GWP Mediterranean organised a series of webinars for local participants aged 25–35 on opportunities for green entrepreneurship. The youth put forward their business plans for developing sustainable organic agriculture, processing of local fisheries products, waste recycling, ecotourism, and distillation of aromatic and medicinal plants. Several of these business ideas employ smart technologies to tackle environmental challenges and turn them into job opportunities. The webinars were followed by one-to-one coaching and mentoring for a selected group of 13 young people, helping them to develop their ideas further.



Tunisian youth participate in training for green entrepreneurship skills, organized by GWP Mediterranean