



Bridge-builders:

Gender perspectives of bridging the inter-generational gap in the water sector

Collaborative workshop with the **Young Water Professionals** and the **Water Youth Network** during the *Gender, Water and Development conference*.

5th November 2014

Time: 14h00-16h00

Venue: International Conference Centre, East London,
South Africa

Young people have a key role to play in addressing current and future water challenges whilst working hand in hand with senior water practitioners.

Water challenges

- Water quantity, quality and access challenges
- Eastern Cape:
 - Ailing infrastructure
 - Large population without access to water
 - Lack of technical skills

“mind the gap”



Water users

Water practitioners

New generation of water users

- Broader expectation of value
- Value:
 - *Responsiveness*
 - *Ease of contact*
 - *Sustainability*
- Opportunities for technology

New generation of water practitioners

- **Technical:** *critical skills for the water sector*
- **Strategic vision:** *ability to provide guidance through an unpredictable and challenging environment*



- **Skills gap:** *twin shortages of technical and engineering skills on the one hand, and soft skills on the other*

New generation of water practitioners

“Baby Boomers”

Seek job stability

Respect authority, expect to earn rewards

Technology learned as adults

Work 9-5

Generation gap



“Millenials”/Generation Y

Comfortable with changes

Question authority, need immediate payoff and constant feedback

Technologically savvy

Technology allows 24/7 work

“The extensive knowledge of the experienced water professional, in combination with the open-mindedness and fresh ideas of the younger generations, can create possibilities and new insights.”

New opportunities for women

- **Flexibility:** *allows for more work-life balance*
- More opportunities for women to “**stay in the game**”
- Steady increase in women filling **strategic and skill gaps**

Where we fit in...



Networking

Skills development

Outreach



Education

Crossing boundaries

Innovation

- *The role of women and men as bridge-builders in addressing the inter-generational gap*
 - **Ms Eiman Karar** (Water Research Commission)
- *Who really builds bridges: examples of gendered dimensions in the water sector and how they can be tackled through inter-generational cooperation*
 - *In water supply and sanitation:* **Paul Msoma & Sakhile Khaweka** (WaterAid)
 - *In IWRM:* **Moa Cortobius** (Programme Officer and Research Assistant for the UNDP Water Governance Facility (SIWI))
- QUESTIONS
- DISCUSSION

The role of the youth as bridge-builders

- 1. What is the role of the youth as bridge-builders in the water and sanitation sector?*
- 2. What are the challenges faced in this regard?*
- 3. What are the tools and the enabling environment to help bridge this gap?*