# Report WWWeek at home 2020

Summary of the sessions with SWP convening

24-27 August 2020

## 1. Background

### 1.1 Stockholm World Water Week

For nearly 30 years, SIWI has organized World Water Week. Today it is the world's most influential movement focused on transforming global water challenges. With 120 sessions on a broad range of topics, the Week offered a valuable opportunity for people from across the world to learn from each other.

World Water Week at Home (WWWeek at home) was initiated after the regular World Water Week 2020 had to be cancelled due to Covid-19. The organizers at SIWI saw a need for an alternative arena for important conversations about how to tackle climate change and other urgent issues. And the week turned out successful. Discussions on communication and behaviour change were prominent in many sessions during the week. Climate change and resilience were also given their expected share of attention.

### 1.2 SWP Sessions

The Swiss Water Partnership (SWP) co-hosting three sessions as part of the WWWeek at home. The webinars shared practices and lessons learned from SWP members and partners. All sessions with a total of 19 conveners attracted around 200 attendees from 28 different countries.

The Swiss Water Partnership (SWP) co-hosted three following sessions:

| Title | Date and time |
|---|---|
| Switzerland: Blessing or Curse for Water in the World? | 27 August 2020, 14:00-14:45 CET |
| Water Data Scarcity – overcoming gaps for decision-making towards climate resilience | 27 August 2020, 15:00-15:45 CET |
| Solving the Water-Climate-Puzzle by connection youth stories and decision-makers | 26 August 2020, 13:00-13:45 CET |
| Stockholm Junior Water Prize Award | 25 August 2020, 14:00-14:45 CET |

The preparation of the sessions had started at the SWP General Assembly 2019. The working group discussed in preparation meetings the topics of the sessions and submitted five proposals in January 2020 of which four got approved. In April 2020, the cancellation of the Stockholm World Water Week was announced and only in June the switch to an online event were communicated. Some of the SWP conveners had already done other plans for the respective week and were not able to participate at the SWP sessions as planned. In the end it was decided to host two webinars with the SWP members and to co-host one youth session with other youth associations/ networks. SWP was also convener of a session with Northern Water Network (NoWNET) but didn't have an active role during the webinar (therefore not listed in this report).

## 1.3 Objectives

The SWP participation at the Stockholm World Water Week generally aims to promote the Swiss knowhow on water internationally, present Swiss high-quality solutions and expertise in an international environment and network with other water stakeholders from all over the world. The collaboration amongst SWP members and to working together on specific topics are additional positive outcomes.

# 2. Report

## 2.1 Switzerland: Blessing or Curse for the Water in the World?

Sustainable water use in the face of increasing climate risks is the responsibility of all stakeholders linked through global supply chains. In this session, Swiss water sector players shared their experiences and viewpoints on Switzerland's key role in water stewardship around the globe from four angles, actively engaging participants.

Switzerland is often portrayed as one of the leaders in responsible water management and WASH innovation. While certainly contributing to improved water management and governance around the globe, it has at the same time a significant water footprint: A remarkable 82% results from imported goods and services, often from water-scarce regions affected by climate change. The influence of the tiny alpine nation reaches far beyond its borders, not only due to multinational corporations with seats in Switzerland but also as the world's biggest offshore banking and financial marketplace, and as seat of 65 of the world's largest shipping companies controlling 22% of the global maritime trade.

The session demonstrated four angles of Switzerland's role in responsible water use and stewardship in relation to climate resilience around the globe:

1. Experience with the use of innovative technology for measuring water use for climate-resilient agriculture at local level.
2. Cases of Swiss international development support to small-scale producers to optimize climate-smart water use in agricultural value chains.
3. Progress and challenges on Swiss policy on virtual water trade.
4. Ways forward to reduce the water and carbon footprint through consumption decisions of Swiss consumers and retailers.

The key messages of the session were:

1. Swiss actors and their partners are **actively contributing solutions to SDG 6.4** on water.
2. It is **not only about optimising water use**. Often the use of inputs and **other resources** can be optimised, for greater local incomes and environmental sustainability. These **multiple dimensions** of water use need to be increasingly considered**.**
3. **Stakeholders**, linked through global supply chains, have different **roles and responsibilities** in sustainable water and resource use, through their decisions.

This session can be watched here.

## 2.2 Water Data Scarcity – overcoming gaps for decision-making towards climate resilience

Water data scarcity highly impacts decision-making in water resource policy and management. This session provides insights into current developments and cost-effective solutions to overcome water data scarcity for making informed decisions towards climate resilience. It enables the participants to learn and share their best practices in addressing water data gaps.

When water policy is not based on facts, it becomes jeopardized by individual aims and biases, losing sight of clear goals in view of society's benefit. Water data scarcity is therefore a major cause for reduced effectivity of water policies as well as for the incapability of communities to take informed decisions towards climate-resilient water management.

Relevant data on water resources and its policies must be reliably collected, trustworthy managed, and comprehensively presented to decision-makers. Trust can only evolve, if the data acquisition, aggregation and transfer to policy-making is handled transparently and conclusions are reproducible.

Progress in recent technology has opened new opportunities for collecting, aggregating, storing as well as communicating data. Nowadays beneficiaries can be involved easily and thus can develop ownership. At the same time, the validation of data can become more challenging.

The key messages of the session were:

1. Reliable, open data is needed and it has to be defined which institution is in charge.
2. With low-cost data collection with inclusion of the local communities we can increase awareness and get more reliable data.
3. For policy reforms concerning climate change, long-time series need to be collected, starting now to see trends and to know where we are heading to.

This session can be watched here.

## 2.3 Solving the Water-Climate-Puzzle by connecting youth stories and decision-makers

This session explored ways to solve and make connections that build into the Water-Climate-Puzzle by using youth stories as a dynamic narrative and to connect them with decision-makers to bridge the gap between science, policy and generations.

The impacts of climate change manifests itself most visibly through water and the future generations are at risk! Showcasing real stories from across the globe, we opened a dialogue with decision-makers on how policies affect the life of young people and how young leaders provide concrete, tangible answers to climate and water challenges and aim to influence decision-making. The session tried to answer the following question: How can policy makers effectively incorporate insights and lessons from youth-led initiatives in the water-climate nexus? The format of the webinar was dedicated breakout sessions allowing deepdive discussions on research, advocacy and from the field, bringing together young leaders and decision makers. The session was cartoon live and streamed online.

The key messages of this session were:


More than mere beneficiaries, youth are central actors and stakeholders in the achievement of the sustainable development goals related to the water and climate nexus. Worldwide, young women and men are proposing and implementing concrete solutions in the fields of research, advocacy and on the field. To be successful the youth needs to be perseverant. *"Dare to be bold! Make sure you are heard! Please realise your knowledge is at the forefront of what is available in the sector, please share it. Don't be discouraged by the slowness of the sector to embrace new things!*" said Mr Pim van der Male. If young leaders have the responsibility to be Strong-willed, they should not have to handle the burden of changing water policy-making on their own. We have a common responsibility. The importance of dialogue is thus reaffirmed. In order for young people and decision-makers to work together, we must multiply the spaces for dialogue and the development of a common vision.

This session can be watched here.

## 2.4 Stockholm Junior Water Prize

One of World Water Week at Home's highlights took place on 25 August when HRH Crown Princess Victoria of Sweden held everyone in suspense before she announced the winners of Stockholm Junior Water Prize. The international competition has been

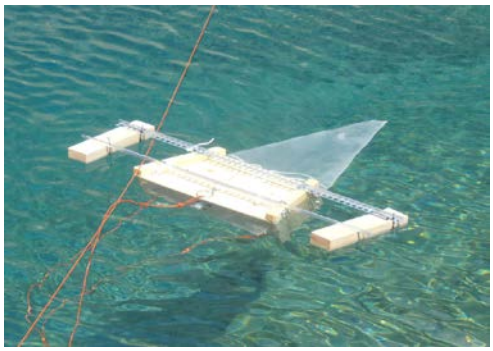
arranged by SIWI every year since 1997, with Xylem as Founding Sponsor, to encourage water innovation. Many thousands of students aged 15 to 20 compete with projects that could solve major global water challenges.

Competitions are normally held in 38 participating countries, with the respective winners eventually vying for the international title, but this year only 29 countries managed to hold their national contests. Still, this was certainly an achievement, given Covid-19, and Ania Andersch from SIWI thanked the Jury and the national organizers for going to great length to hold competitions. She also expressed how she this year was impressed not only by the creative projects competing, “this year, I am even more humbled by the fact that many of these projects were developed under the most challenging of circumstances. Many students have had to endure lockdowns, closed schools, economic uncertainty and worries about the safety of loved ones. Still, they have kept working on their projects, on solutions that will contribute to a better tomorrow not only for themselves but for many people in their communities and across the world,” she said.

In a filmed statement HRH Crown Princess Victoria of Sweden, Official Patron of the Prize said that she was not surprised that many ideas that started as Stockholm Junior Water Prize projects have proved to be important innovations changing many people’s lives for the better. Turning directly to the finalists, she encouraged them to continue to be role models who inspire boys and girls all over the world to pursue their dreams. Hiroki Matsuhashi and Takuma Miyaki win the 2020 Stockholm Junior Water Prize. The Japanese team greatly impressed the Jury with their innovative approach to soil erosion.

The winner of the Swiss Junior Water Prize, Anna Sidonia Marugg had sent her project to the competition and made an attractive presentation of her project “First Evidence of Microplastics in the Waters of the Upper Engadine in Switzerland”. Environmental pollution from microplastic (i.e. plastic pieces from 1 µm to 5 mm) in marine and limnic water systems has become an increasingly important focus of scientific research within the last few years. It is estimated that 86 million tonnes of plastic are in the world’s oceans, and around 10 million tonnes are added annually. However, only incomplete studies have been carried out for Switzerland’s surface waters, and for the Engadine such research is non-existent, possibly also because this region still seems to be unaffected and pristine. The objective of this study was to find out whether microplastic particles

can be found in the Upper Engadine, by sampling at 8 different measuring locations with different distances to the source of the river Inn at Lake Lunghin, different population densities, as well as different types of usage, for example for events or sport-activities.



For sampling, a wooden self-constructed LADI-trawl was built. The aim was to have a low-cost, light and easily transportable construction. 60 representative fragments were analysed by means of FT-IR spectroscopy, of which 51 were assigned to 22 different types of plastics. Larger particles, so-called microplastic, were found at 2 locations. Thus, plastic residues were detected at all measuring sites, which shows that even seemingly remote regions and sparsely populated areas are affected by the pollution of microplastic. The findings of this research are of key importance for alpine regions, as evidence of plastic was found at over 2400 meters above sea level near the source of the river Inn, a remote location in a major European watershed.

A video about Anna's project can be seen watched here.

## 2.5 Attendees and Visibility

All sessions with a total of 19 conveners attracted around 200 attendees from 28 different countries. In the following tables all the conveners, the attendees from each session and the additional visibility are listed:

| Session | Conveners | Attendees | Countries | Youtube/ Facebook views (by 24.09.2020) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Switzerland: Blessing or Curse for the Water in the World? | • SWP<br>• Aqua4D<br>• HELVETAS (Pakistan)<br>• Skat<br>• Swiss Toilet Organization<br>• Cewas<br>• HEKS<br>• Public Eye | 47 | 21 countries:<br>Austria, Brazil, Egypt, Germany, Guatemala, India, Italy, Kazakhstan, Mexico, Nepal, Netherlands, Pakistan, Romania, Russia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, USA, Uruguay, Venezuela | 16 views |
| Water Data Scarcity – overcoming gaps for decision-making towards climate resilience | • SWP<br>• Hycon<br>• Photrack<br>• Nile Basin Discourse (Tanzania) | 67 | 25 countries: Australia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Egypt, Georgia, Germany, Guatemala, India, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Lebanon, Mexico, Netherlands, Nigeria, Romania, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, Trinidad and Tobago, | 10 views |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Tunisia, United Kingdom, USA, Venezuela, Zimbabwe | |
| Solving the Water-Climate-Puzzle by connecting youth stories and decision-makers | • SWP Youth<br>• International Secretariat for Water<br>• Global Water Partnership<br>• Central Asia Youth 4 Water<br>• Netherlands Water Partnership<br>• Stockholm International Water Institute<br>• World Youth Parliament for Water | 88 | 2% South America, 9% North America, 7% Africa, 47% Europe, 35% Asia | 797 views |

## 2.6 Evaluation and lessons learned

The webinars gave the SWP members the opportunity to create visibility of Swiss water solutions internationally and to promote the SWP members' knowhow. The possibilities to network were reduced due to the change to an online format. On the other hand, the online event created a broader visibility with participants from many countries who usually might not be able to travel to Stockholm to the event. The number of attendees was substantial, and the positive effect of the recorded online sessions is the possibility to watch it again.

The preparation of the sessions with the SWP members was a positive experience. Even though some members had other assignments after the late announcement of the online version of the event, the number of participating members was satisfying.

The session of SWP Youth was built on a very creative format with breakout sessions and the collection of all comments on the "Miro-board". The participation of a cartoonist created an impressive outcome of the session. This format and also the involvement of a cartoonist can be applied again in other webinars or even at a live event.

To organize online webinars for the first time was a challenging exercise for the SWP secretariat and additional technical knowhow had to be learned. Another challenge was the restriction of the sessions of 45 minutes. The pre-recording of the presentations and a very exact planning of the session parts helped to keep the time limit. The pre-recording helps to keep time but on the other hand puts a barrier with the audience and is less interactive. This aspect should be considered for future webinars.

The winner of the Swiss Junior Water Prize presented a very promising project and generated through her video additional visibility for Switzerland. Even though she couldn't travel to Stockholm this year, other possibilities to present her project have been organized.

## 2.7 Conclusion

Overall, the objectives to promote Swiss knowhow and present Swiss high-quality solutions and expertise in an international environment have been reached. Additional technical and organizational knowledge was generated to hold online webinars. The networking with other (international) water stakeholders was limited due to the missing personal contact with partners. The focus on innovation, dynamism and branding which was set as a goal after the World Water Week 2019 was successful, while the exploration for sponsorship opportunities was difficult due to the circumstances. The collaboration amongst the SWP members was very constructive and motivating for the preparation of next years' event. Especially the new session of SWP Youth in collaboration with other youth networks attracted a big audience and has generated a broad visibility. The goal for next years' World Water Week should be to prepare again a variety of proposals with different partners to position the Swiss brand and create visibility.