Youth Engagement and Young Action for Rivers

Young people as activists and in the decisionmaking process
What is special about our generation?

- Fast, dynamic
- Skilled in social media and communication, networks
- Generation “why” (y)
- Information and knowledge is available at all times

- Pressure on time resources
- Fast-living
- Not asked for opinion, no impact on political decisions – felt impotence
- Generation-specific challenges, i.e. job world
How can we use this to our advantage..?
Lessons Learned from Former Actions

Introducing:

YNRA (youth Network for river Action)  WWF youth network Generation Earth
Rivercamp in Berlin – Youth from all over the world!
Lets get
RIVERWALKING!
Flashmob at EU water conference in Vienna with Manifesto Handover
Excurs: WFD fitness check – Call to action!

- Consultation
- Direct/indirect lobbying

Youth Water Manifesto

Dear participants of the 8th European water conference 2018,

Healthy rivers, lakes and other water bodies are essential for life now and in the future. We are representatives of active young people and youth organisations from across Europe, who care about the current and future health and well-being of our planet and the people who depend on it. We recognise the outstanding importance of high water management for the sake of current and future generations; therefore, we, as youth, have a responsibility to take action to protect and enhance water bodies to preserve these shared, essential goods.

Our Vision

The majority of Europe’s water bodies have been heavily modified and are under immense pressure from human activity. Hydropower projects, river modifications, pollution and climate change have all contributed to many of their poor ecological conditions.

We believe Europe should set a global example for having rivers, lakes and water bodies that have the necessary space to thrive and are free from excessive human intervention and modification that would compromise their integrity. Natural river systems should be treated as vital assets to society, that contribute great ecological services and at the same time offer innumerable benefits of beauty, recreation and retreat.

Our Demands

The preservation of water bodies in their natural state and the restoration of those that have been degraded must be prioritised. This demands a strong, integrated and well-implemented legal foundation. The Water Framework Directive (WFD) must not be weakened nor cut back but reinforced and implemented more effectively at all levels. This includes:

- Compulsory restoration of river and water bodies to a near-natural state, achieving ‘good’ status across Europe;
- Protection of our last remaining ‘wild’ water bodies and natural features;
- Transparency of WFD implementation, allowing national decision makers to be held to account;
- Youth participation on all levels as an integral part of the decision-making process;
- Open and accessible information and education for the public; and
- Strict regulations for hydropower projects.

Only with a robust and comprehensive legal base can we contribute to conserve the world’s natural diversity, maintain a base for sustainable development and the safety of our water supplies. The improved implementation of the Directive has become an intergenerational task, which requires the inclusion of younger generations who will attain the responsibility to carry the WFD forward.

We do not inherit water from our ancestors, we borrow water from future generations.

We are counting on you and your support.

Yours sincerely,

Activists from the Youth Network for River Action and Generation Earth.
Empowerment Approach!
Empowerment Approach!

- Empowered with knowledge and skills (Action Leader Training)
- Self-organised projects with the right amount of support
- Workshops and Get togethers (idea development and partner finding)
- Skillsharing and transfer of knowledge in the group
- Frame and support is provided
Empowerment Approach!

- Create the space (LISTEN)
- True empowerment is key
- TRUST and let go
- Youth know best how to reach other youth
- Be open for new / their ideas
- Be present and authentic
WE decide.
Discussion

• What other ideas /concepts bring us forward and enhance (youth) activism and engagement AND in the decisionmaking process?

• How can we make us heard?

• How can we build an even stronger network?
Thank you!