A GUIDE TO MOBILIZING YOUR COMMUNITY FOR WATER ACTION
Do you want to participate in mobilising youth and other stakeholders around water-related issues at your own scale but are not sure where to start?

This guide aims to give you the tools you need to mobilize your community, decision-makers and peers for water action. This guide will give you the tools to stand up for what is important to you.

A great way to reach and activate your community is to host an event, a gathering, a dialogue or any form of activity which inspires you. In this guide, you will find seven steps that will guide you through the process.

This guide is for any young person who wants to join the #FillUpTheGlass campaign and contribute to a global youth movement for water.
The first step is to identify what is the objective of your event, which will help you pick a format. Do you want young people around you to simply have a space to gather and exchange ideas or solutions? Do you want to have a dialogue with decision-makers? Do you want to bring a large group of people together to send a message to the larger public, through a #WaterWalk for example?

Do you want to voice concerns, hope, solutions through art, with a performance or an exhibition? There are many possibilities when it comes to format and what matters is to pick the one that will best fit your context, your community and the goals you are trying to reach. Be creative!
You can organise an event alone, but the scale and impact of your mobilisation will be bigger if you work alongside other organisations or youth-led groups with similar goals. Identify potential partners in your network and reach out to them so they can join in. Working with one or two other organisations is usually ideal! By working with other groups you can also increase your network and ability to mobilise resources.

Once you have your team of “organisers”, all of you should work on finding other partners that will support your event. You can think of organisations, institutions and companies in your region who work in the water sector or support youth projects and youth participation. Prepare a short concept note presenting your project and reach out to as many potential supports as you can. If they show interest, continue the conversation on how they can best support you and ask for what you need. Some may be able to offer funds (see next section), some may offer to help promote your event, or to provide material.
The first step in finding funding is to establish a budget. List all the elements you will need and estimate how much each will cost, in as much detail as possible. This will give you an idea of how much support you need to find. Next, think about what your organisation or your co-organisers can offer (funds, venue, material). This might already cover some of your planned expenses.

Once you know how much external support you need to find, reach out to potential donors or answer calls for projects that fit your event. You will often need your concept note and budget to do so. In parallel, it is often useful to consider in kind contributions. Some partners will not give you funds but will be willing to lend you a space, offer material or food, etc. To find a venue, you can reach out to your city, a school, a community centre, as they are often open to offering spaces for free for youth-led activities.

But remember, there are so many different types of events and gatherings that you can organise even with little to no budget.
Depending on the type of mobilisation you are organising, you can have different options as to where to host it. Some will require physical presence, but some might be held online or in a hybrid format. Here are a few things to consider when picking the “location” of your event:

**In-person**
An in-person event is usually the best way to engage participants, as nothing beats physical interaction. This can also be a great way to gather media attention from local and global outlets. However, this requires a venue or a space to gather, and can lead to additional costs to get participants on site, host them and feed them. It also limits the reach and inclusivity of your event, as only people who are able to join physically will attend. If you are targeting only members of your community who live nearby, this can be ideal.

Tips and tools: for your in-person event, we invite you to print t-shirt of the #FillUpTheGlass campaign and share your pictures on social media. Tell the world what you are doing to #FillUpTheGlass. Be creative and join a global movement of youth for water.
Online

Hosting your event online is a great way to reduce costs and to increase the inclusivity of your event, as people will be able to join from wherever they are. The challenge is then to design it in an engaging and interactive way. You can also use some tools for online interaction during the event. For example, mural, miro or jamboard offer some great options for remote collaboration. Make sure you pick the right platform and the right plan for your needs (e.g. if you choose Zoom, you can make sure your plan includes enough participants, break out rooms).

When organising your virtual event, you can download this Zoom background of the #FillUpTheGlass campaign and invite all your speakers to use them.

Hybrid

If you are organising an in-person event, it might be a great option to make it hybrid to allow for other people to join online without being there physically. In that case, make sure that your virtual participants can see and hear properly. If your event is on a bigger scale, it might be worth it to invest in good material to broadcast sound and video. You can also think of tools for audience participation, like slido or mentimeter.
To make your event successful and allow as many people as possible to join, make sure you communicate about it beforehand through various channels. You can use social media, traditional media, flyers or posters in your community and you can ask your partners to promote your events through their channels.

When you communicate about your event, please remember to always use the #FillUpTheGlass and the logo of the campaign.

If you are receiving funds or any other contribution from your partners, make sure you discuss with them what they require in terms of visibility (logos on your communications, banners during the event, tags on social media, etc.).

During the event, make sure to take good quality pictures, videos and recordings so you have some material to be used after. You can also use other ways to create a visual “outcome” from the event, like a co-created drawing or poster with the #FillUpTheGlass logo.
Before your event, decide what you want the outcome of your event to be. Will you write a declaration, a statement that will be shared with decision-makers? Will you put together a series of pictures and videos that will be shown to the public? Will the art displayed in your event be promoted through another channel? Using the momentum created by your mobilisation to promote further action is the best way to create a lasting impact!

Make sure to share the key outcomes of your event on social media, using the #FillUpTheGlass.

It is also important to plan a report, some images and some feedback to share with your partners who have supported you for this project. Feel free to also send your report to the #FillUpTheGlass team. We will do our very best to amplify and share the results of your events.

If you need further resources, you will find some in the links below and you can always ask for help or advice to other organisations who have organised successful mobilisations in the past.
Thousands of youth have mobilised for water in the lead up to the United Nations 2023 Water Conference and beyond. These events were organised with the support and collaboration of the International Secretariat for Water, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and the Netherlands Government.

Learn more about these youth-led events and get inspired.

Brazil - Aguas Resilientes

Águas Resilientes organised a hybrid event for the youth of Brazil and South America, gathering their aspirations and inputs on the five themes of the UN Water Conference. An advocacy document was created and will be brought to the UN Water Conference and presented locally to the decision-makers to influence investment in improving water, sanitation, and hygiene. This event mobilised and informed young people and decision-makers about the importance of projects improving the quality and quantity of water.
West Africa - Femmes pour l'Eau le Climat et l'Environnement

Women for Water Climate and Environment, in collaboration with the Land and Health Association, will organize a regional event for West Africa, that will bring together youth and all relevant stakeholders to assess challenges, water related opportunities and innovations in the region. The objective is to formulate a Water Action Agenda roadmap for accelerating the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, to be brought to decision makers and to the UN2023 Water Conference.
North America: North American Youth Parliament for Water

The North American Youth Parliament for Water (NAYPW) created multiple synchronized Youth Forums for the Columbia River. These Youth Forums were critical opportunities for youth in the basin to collect, organize, and empower themselves as water stakeholders during the current renegotiation period of the Columbia River Treaty governing the basin. The Forums were co-organized with local partners and institutions, gathering youth and young professionals from multiple areas and communities of the Columbia River Basin in Canada and the United States. The final outcome of these Forums’ proposal will be a report describing concerns, vision, and action commitments of youth for the basin: the “Youth Vision and Actions for the Future of the Columbia River”.

For more resources:

Civicus - Resourcing Youth-led Groups and Movements
UNICEF - Youth Advocacy Guide
The Practice Space - Community Change Idea: Youth-Led, Youth Voice Events

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Join the youth for water

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