

# *Drops of the Future*

Youth Workshop Series  
Water-Food-Energy Nexus

# A DECLARATION FOR SHAPING THE FUTURE APPROACH TO WATER, ENERGY AND FOOD ACROSS CENTRAL ASIA

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We, young people from across Central Asia, gathered with the belief that water, as the source of life, has the power to connect people across regions, professions and generations and strengthen the social fabric.

As the foundation of the future society and agents of change, we are determined to use this unifying power to overcome challenges and to contribute to a more sustainable future, for ourselves and future generations. In a period in which climate change jeopardizes fresh water supply and the connections to food and energy, we are prepared to mobilise our energy, creativity, and new perspectives to actively shape our future.

We want to transform habits and mindsets around the way we use, value and connect with water, putting the planet and future generations first while pursuing co-operative and negotiated approaches inclusively, through conversation and dialogue - even when silence would be easier.

Change begins with each one of us.

We will lead by example, raising our voices on behalf of those who share our vision and particularly those whose voices are marginalised and deserve more attention in the public debate and narrative, bridging the divide between rural and urban communities.

By collaborating with other stakeholders, we want to empower every community to act with purpose and confidence.

Together, we will pave the way for a sustainable and equitable future.

A future where every voice is heard and every need is met.

Join us in this journey, as we shape the future, one drop at a time.



# Creating the Conditions for Change: the Role of Cooperation, Policy and Education

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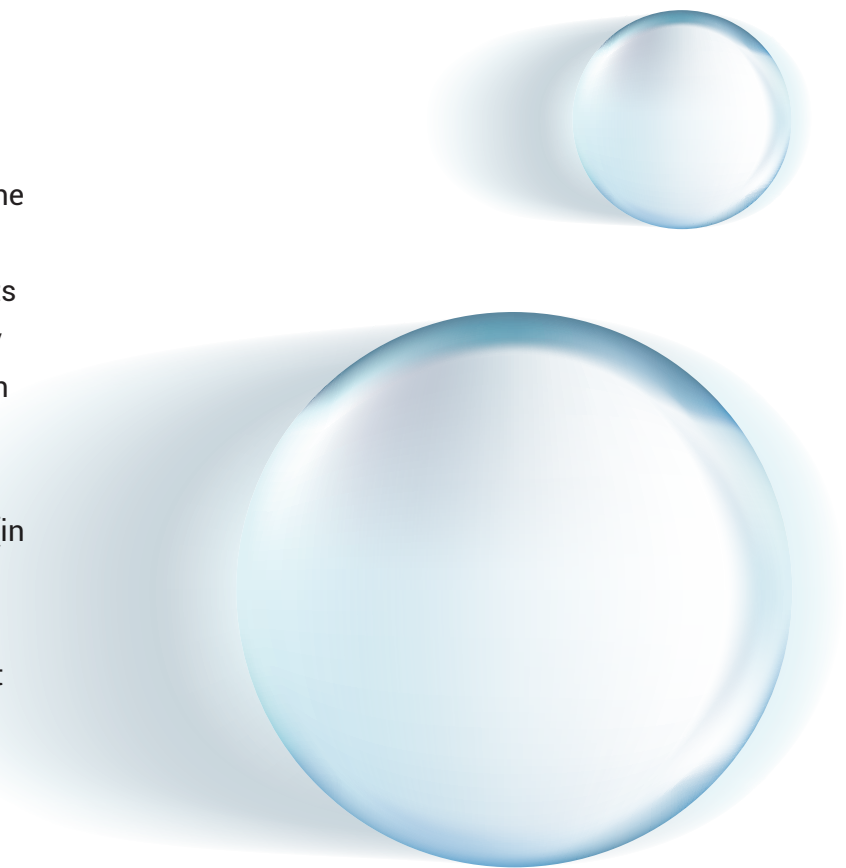
We believe in the transformative power of cooperation among countries, communities, young professionals, civil society and other stakeholders. By embracing a multidisciplinary approach and considering the needs of many different actors, we can reach a more sustainable management of water resources, ensuring security for energy and food. This requires a safe space to sit together, to talk, to negotiate and to reach mutually agreeable solutions. We are convinced that political progress starts with a safe, protected space, with trust and by avoiding imposed ideas. This safe space paves the way for establishing new agreements, modernizing existing protocols and fostering a unified global effort.

## How?

We champion the critical role of raising awareness within rural communities about the intrinsic relation between water, energy and food. We are convinced of the necessity for a comprehensive campaign of environmental education that reaches all segments of society and people of all ages. Incorporating youth perspectives and meaningfully involving young professionals in the decision-making process is equally important in ensuring intergenerational cooperation and equitable policies and practices.

Assigning a true value to water and drawing the attention to the true costs of water (in the sense of a precious and finite resource), energy and food encourages change.

A comprehensive set of measures, including incentives and rules tailored to different user groups has the potential to foster sustainable utility management and ensures equitable access to vital resources.



# Shaping the Future: Narratives for Societal Change

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We can see the need for change across society, sectors and borders and we are convinced that our collective efforts, if carefully coordinated, can be impactful. We know that the capacity to influence change lies within each of us and we intend to use this knowledge to make a difference. Our narrative proclaims shared responsibility and the power of co-operation, where each person recognizes their ability to shape a sustainable future.

## About Narratives

Acknowledging the inadequacies of our status quo, we intend to chart a new course and draft our own narratives. We are willing to say goodbye to the delusion that water is infinite and our resources are boundless. The same goes for the equation of wealth with excessive consumption and the conviction that sustainability is a privilege reserved for the fortunate.

We also challenge the belief that traditional lifestyles are inherently green.

We understand that significant change must be reflective of our entire society, and this means providing space and opportunity for marginalized voices including women, young professionals, and traditional perspectives to feed into decision-making processes in both technical and political arenas.

We are convinced that the narratives related to the future we want are composed of some core elements. Green is Cool: The future is one where consuming less and consuming holistically is the practice. Achieving this won't be easy; it will stem from collective, intergenerational effort, engagement, and compromise. Shared Responsibility is a second component: change starts with each one of us. Every sector, and indeed, every stakeholder must recognize their role and their duty to save the planet. At the core of our future is also Gender Equality: we believe in the close relation between young people, in particular young women and water. Equal representation at all levels in the decision-making processes is crucial.



## Making more by combining diversity

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We view diversity as a recognition of differences and a sign of resilience - each of us should be ready to listen, be heard mutually and respected by our communities, other end users and our decision-makers.

We believe in the power of diversity and inclusion to drive sustainable progress. We want to unite and take into consideration all stakeholders and the interests of the water, food and energy dimensions throughout cooperation processes. We approach this by trying to understand underlying historical, socio-political, technological and economical-financial aspects and local realities in our communities and countries.

To ensure that environmental welfare is observed and enough space is allocated for environmental restoration, environment-related decisions (at all levels) must account for the diversity of water and biodiversity cycles. To ensure this, we value the long-term impacts over short-term benefits, regarding the soil and water-use on human life and on the overall ecosystems, and take action accordingly, focusing on nature-positive solutions that are beneficial to ecology and humanity. The diversity of crops, including the rich pool of traditional varieties is key in adapting to the impact of climate change in Central Asia.

### How?

We commit to engaging diverse local communities- within and amongst countries; across sectors and social strata. We see the need for connectivity and seek to take advantage of both modern and traditional communication tools and platforms to broaden the conversation around water, food and energy. This includes the promotion of science, sustainable cultural practices and new technologies. Through embracing inclusion and diversity, we are confident that our shared challenges will be met with shared and sustainable solutions to water, food and energy management in Central Asia. Central Asia is home to a wealth of different fields, disciplines and professions across the water, food, energy nexus. Central Asia excels and may be considered a world leader in many areas but there remain gaps and the coordination amongst public and private sectors could be improved to maximize efficiency. Public-private partnerships across the nexus in Central Asia would provide new opportunities to overcome cross cutting challenges, better incorporate a diversity of experiences and amplify our strengths. Providing opportunities for shared experiences (volunteering, multidisciplinary education, practice) should be supported and funded by state, international, and private entities. We are committed to a pluralistic approach that values the voices of everyone, highlighting also the potential of experiences from minorities. By embracing a plurality of approaches, we can create a more inclusive and sustainable future for all.



## Referring to traditions, while empowering Youth

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We call for a new perception of youth as active contributors to sustainable development, dialogue at community, state, basin and regional levels, across sectors and within and between urban and rural contexts. Young people's perspectives and energy are a vital contribution to driving meaningful change.

### How?

We call for the revitalization and strengthening of peer-to-peer learning and knowledge exchange: by creating transparent and inclusive platforms for intergenerational dialogue, we will foster a renewed spirit of community service and active engagement.

We believe in the value and power of deep-rooted knowledge transmitted through human and other-than human interaction. We acknowledge the crucial role of involving a wide variety of cultural traditions in shaping our vision.

By involving religious or spiritual leaders, elders (aksakals), local experts, and community authorities, we want to make sure that joint intergenerational gains and valuable knowledge can be shared.

We advocate for the promotion and implementation dialogue at all levels: through these conversations, we are committed to developing collaborative solutions encapsulating the power of traditions to promptly respond to the challenges faced by our societies.young women and water.

Equal representation at all levels in the decision-making processes is crucial.



# Digitalizing the Nexus Approach: Smart Solutions for Water, Energy and Food



Digitalization – the transformation of all knowledge, both formal and informal, into accessible digital formats – is a key accelerator in our vision. By making cutting edge knowledge more accessible, we aim for creating a shared understanding of our natural resources and crafting a modern approach to managing them. Through the power of digitalization, we can transform how Central Asia's water energy and food resources are managed. By bringing together and modernizing our collective knowledge, encouraging innovation, and safeguarding our invaluable natural heritage, we will build a future that is not only sustainable but prosperous for all. Together, we can harness this opportunity and create a lasting impact for generations to come.

## How do we achieve this?

We are convinced of a stepwise approach that respects the pace, the potential and the social fabric that intergenerational awareness can create.

Due attention should be given to harmonizing the benefits of modern technology with the traditional ways of decision making, particularly across sectors, in Central Asia.

We see a range of ingredients that are essential, whereas some of them are intertwined. We are convinced that an integral approach is beneficial in relation to aspects such as: Awareness and Education / Preserving and Digitalizing Local Knowledge / Accuracy and correct information / Building a Digital Data Infrastructure, and investing therein / Establishing a Centralized Database (but not for profit!) / Spreading and Sharing Knowledge, facilitating its exchange / Incorporating Cutting-Edge Technology / Nurturing Future Experts / Reviving Platforms for Knowledge Sharing / Improving the Efficiency of Initiatives / Securing Financing for the Future

