

YOUNG PROFESSIONAL MEMBERS BECOME A GROWING STRENGTH OF IAHR

BY MARIAN MUSTE



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More than a decade ago, the IAHR Student Chapters (SC) have been formed following year-long discussions and assiduous efforts of IAHR's senior visionaries Helmut Kobus and Forrest Holly. SCs were created in 2000 with the aim of enabling students to organize locally professional and social group activities and create a network for their future careers. In 2008, the Innovation and Professional Development (IPD) established a Task Force (NextGen TF) to revitalize the SC activities with the long-term goal to encourage students to become full members of IAHR after their graduation. For this purpose, a suite of well-organized congress activities covering a variety of forms (training courses, student forum, SC general meetings, student night, student networking corner) have been systematically prepared starting with the Vancouver World Congress in 2009. The response of the young professionals

to these initiatives was immediate as reflected by the continuous increase of the student participation at the biennial congresses (from 150 participants in Vancouver to 400 in Chengdu).

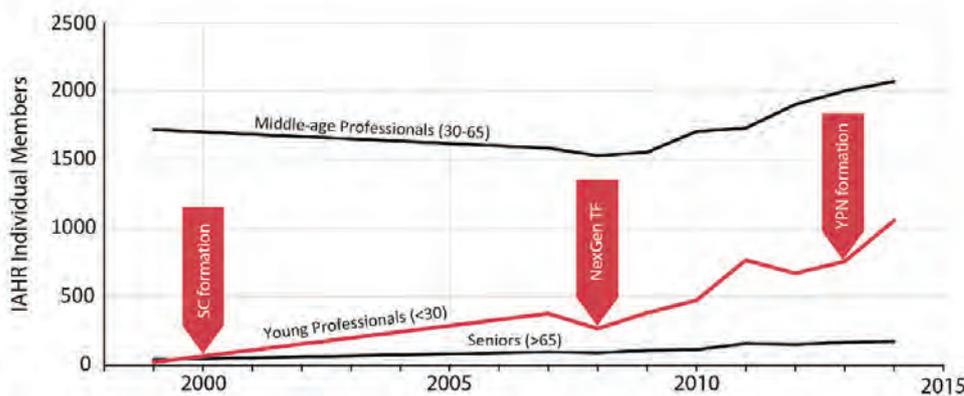
In 2011, the NExGen TF initiated a new effort with the intention to conceptualize a new organizational structure aimed at bridging the gap between students and young graduates. The result of the wide dialogue between NexGen TF and the IAHR leadership led to the creation of the Young Professional Network (YPN) framework in 2013. YPNs assemble students in water-related departments from universities in a region or a country with young professionals (i.e., under the age of 30) from academia, research and practice in that region. An YPN can entail a mix of registered students, postdocs and fresh graduates or just one of these categories whatever fits best the specific conditions. The new framework facilitates interaction between young professionals and the wider IAHR community during the scientific events and "on-the-ground" socio-professional activities geared to young professionals between these events.

The main differences between the single-school structure of the previous SCs and the new YPN structures are that the latter provide increased and more diverse membership in one organization and assemblage of more resources for supporting a wider range of activities. The YPN structure inherently includes aspects of mentoring as the fresh graduates are in direct contact with students making possible the

sharing of professional experiences and peer guidance. Moreover, they newly created YPNs have more opportunities to establish international cooperation in their geographic area, a critically important aspect of a global organization such as IAHR. The new organizational scheme is supported by attractive membership rates and offers discount fees at IAHR events for young professionals who belong to an YPN. For more information about all these aspects visit the YPN website at: <http://www.iahr.org/YPN>

The YPN model took off quickly after the release of the by-laws in 2013. New YPNs have been formed through conversion of previous SCs (Cardiff, Iowa, Baden-Württemberg, Madrid, Delft, and Ecuador). More notably, several new regional or country-wide YPNs have been (or are in the process to be) created after the by-laws release in places where there were no SCs before (Colombia, Paris-East, Portugal, Barcelona, Kuwait, Koblenz-Landau, Peru, Pakistan and Viena). Eventually, all the existing SCs will transition to the YPN structure. The long-term strategy promoted by the IAHR leadership paid off leading to an unprecedented young membership growth. Currently there are 33 YPNs (the newly formed and the transitioning SCs) engaging 1165 individual members. That is a four time increase in young memberships since the creation of the NexGen TF (see enclosed chart).

The increase of the IAHR young membership achieved so far is not sustainable if it is not supported by a community-wide effort to provide relevant and appealing set of activities in all IAHR scientific meetings as well as in between them. For this purpose there is a need for initiating new models for continuous local and international collaboration for the young professionals. Relevant templates in this regards are the global events organized for the young professional by various technical committees such as the IAHR International Junior Researcher & Engineer Workshop on Hydraulic Structures, Gerhard Jirka Summer School in Environmental Fluid Mechanics, and the



European Junior Scientists Workshop: Monitoring Urban Drainage Systems, and the well-established Master Classes series initiated by the Fluvial Hydraulics Technical Committee. Equally valuable are the regional events such as the annual IAHR- BW Colloquium series (Stuttgart, Germany) and the Young Persons' Paper Competition organized by the IAHR-UK Chapter. Another highly relevant example is the IAHR European Division Congress series that, taking advantage of the reasonable travel costs for the events, place a high-level priority on offering young professional members ample opportunities for activities during the congresses. All the above proof-tested examples can readily be adopted and multiplied by other IAHR technical committees and regional divisions.

In order to make IAHR a hub of continuous interest for young members, there is a need to create tailored activities between scientific

events. A sound example of such an activity is the Hydroweb online project organized by Frank Molkenhuth between 1999 and 2003. Each year, the online project brought together 70-75 students from 8-10 world universities to work collaboratively on a project for about two-month period. This young professional-focused activity sets apart IAHR among the sister water-related organizations by offering to the participants opportunities to prepare for international careers where problem-solving is made online by teams geographically dispersed. Given the high success and impact of this IAHR-signature initiative, the IPD has successfully solicited Frank to revive the project once more this year. The 2014 Hydroweb was officially launched at the Hydroinformatics Conference (August 2014, New York) with the intention to engage this committee in taking ownership of the technical and logistical aspects of future project deliveries. The 2014 Hydroweb edition is currently

engaging 70 students from 9 universities. This year's project delivery will be closely monitored by Michael Tritthart (IPD committee member) and Sun Gaohu (IAHR Beijing office coordinator) to make inferences of the resources needed for sustainable continuation of this project for the years to come.

The initiators and promoters of young professional-focused activities are hopeful that they will have a positive and long-lasting impact on the organization as a whole. The rapidly-evolving numbers and activities of the young professional members ensure that IAHR has today a solid basis to connect water scientists and engineers of all generations better than ever before. Let's welcome them in the IAHR family and give them the attention and support needed for a long journey in addressing together the challenges of the future!

CHENGDU YOUNG PROFESSIONALS DECLARATION: A CALL FOR ACTION

BY EVA FENRICH, LIU MIN AND SILKE WIEPRECHT

Background

IAHR's commitment to raise the profile and role of the organization's young members has been always a high priority on the leadership agenda. One milestone along this line was the creation of the first IAHR Student Chapters (SC) in Stuttgart and Iowa in 2000. From their tender start, SCs have continuously grown and engaged water-related students in socio-professional activities all over the world. All along

these years, the IAHR's intention to integrate students and young engineers and researchers into the organisation has been going strong. As a result, SC evolved in a new organizational structure the Young Professional Network (YPN) that was officially created in 2013. The purpose of this briefing is to report recent developments of the IAHR students and young professionals to attention of the community and hopefully take them to even higher levels of action.

Since 2008, the Innovation and Professional Development Division of IAHR has been searching for means to revitalize the young member participation and engagement in the life of our organization (see the companion paper on YPN). The efforts along these lines culminated during the Chengdu IAHR Congress with a major overhaul of the structure and activities targeting the younger colleagues. Pioneered by the Vice President Marian Muste with the strong backing from the Executive Committee, the Council has recently approved the establishment of Young Professional Network. YPNs are self-led IAHR structures organized locally (at one university or water-related institution) or regionally to include IAHR members under 30-year old from academia, research, and practice. Currently, existing SCs are transitioned to YPNs to enforce the idea that the new structure focuses on a closer relation not only between the research and teaching institutions but also with some recent graduates working in industry and firms.



The prototype for IAHR YPN has been tested by young members in South-West Germany universities since 2010. A pilot activity was then started to broaden the Stuttgart University SC into a more regional group. The expanded SC brought together students from five different universities in the German state of Baden-Württemberg (BW) including Karlsruhe Institute of Technology and three regional universities of applied sciences. YPN-BW has an already established tradition of combining scientific and technical activities with social events to strengthen the networking aspect of their local organization. On the technical side, a very successful event is the Annual Colloquium series that brings together young professionals and students as well as experienced senior experts (<http://www.iahr-bw.org/>). The event is also an opportunity for members of other YPNs to come for a visit. Furthermore, BW-YPN organizes every year a football tournament with students and young professionals from the universities as well as from companies that gives a chance to get to meet each other in an informal environment. Other successful activities of different YPNs are short technical and soft skills (including language) courses, seminars and excursions as well as informal outings and get-togethers.

Declaration

The most recent major event for the IAHR's global community of students and young professional was the IAHR World Congress in Chengdu (September 8-13, 2014, China). This congress benefitted from the presence of over 400 students, a record breaking number of registered students for our congresses. The students, under the thoughtful and resourceful assistance of the Local Organizing Committee, planned a series of special activities organised by the student leaders themselves (<http://www.iahr2013.org/student.html>). During the Congress, the current IAHR young member leadership brainstormed along with their colleagues on ideas for the future. These ideas were encapsulated in the strategic document called "Chengdu Young Professionals Declaration" supported by signatures of the representatives of attending SCs. This is a visionary document that not only proves the growth in strength of the young IAHR generation but also their desire to play a

more active role in the life of our organization. The main ideas put forth by the young professionals in their Declaration are: 1) representation in the IAHR Council; 2) funding for professional activities; 3) creation of an online networking platform; 4) creation of a mentoring system.

The Chengdu Declaration was placed on the agenda of the IAHR Council in the spring of 2014. The Council approved the addition of an YPN delegate as an observer in the Council meetings. This will help to facilitate communication between the leadership of IAHR and the young professionals. This move also supports the training of younger members to take leading roles on all levels of our organisation. Currently, several of the Chengdu Declaration ideas are working items on the Council's agendas. Among those ideas are: a) creation of a sustainable mechanism to fund excellent YPN activities; b) launching an yearly competition for the best YPN projects; c) finding activities to connect the IAHR YPN network throughout the year with online activities delivered via the Internet. There is strong hope that the implementation of these initiatives will catalyse greater collaboration between IAHR young members in academia, research, and practice and encourage graduating students to stay within our community.

Future

It is expected that the Chengdu Young Professionals Declaration spirit will be continued in the 2015 IAHR World Congress in



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The Hague and Delft. In anticipation of this major opportunity to continue the inter-generational dialogue and spur more action, the young IAHR members from water institutes in Delft region have created their own YPN. They plan to organize a week of courses and fun specifically aimed at the younger generation, and, the welcome students from developing countries without congress participation fee. See you there!

For more information on the new YPN structure visit our website or contact Elsa Incio in the IAHR Madrid office at membership@iahr.org.

For more information on recent YPN Network News go to People and Places at page 126

