ISWA Young Professionals

Mentorship Programme
The YPG mentorship programme was initiated and conceptualised in the beginning of 2015 and fully launched at the ISWA World Congress that year in Antwerp.

The idea behind this initiative is to connect Young Professionals with ISWA’s senior experts and leaders, i.e. those serving on the Board and the Scientific and Technical Committee of ISWA.

This connection should enable the Young Professionals to seek advice from their mentors in their career development as well as in technical content of their work or studies.

**INTRODUCTION**

**WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT?**

For both sides – mentors and mentees – the YPG mentorship programme can be an inspiring interaction between young professionals and experienced waste management professionals.

The way how this programme can be for the mentorship pairs is entirely up to their agreement prior to the start of the programme and their further communication.

However, the following experiences from the last year can provide you with a rough idea what you could expect from the programme:

**Topics of Discussion**

In the past the main issues raised in the mentorship programme were career advice and technical information or feedback from the mentors. In addition, networking and various other requests, e.g. review of an application have been part of the portfolio of requests to the mentors.

According to the feedback of last year, the mentors might expect to invest a total of around 3-15 hours of time into the programme during the year.

**Mode & Frequency of Discussion**

The modes of communication are up to the pairs of mentors & mentees and may include (online) meetings, phone calls or email exchanges. A good idea is to schedule in-person meetings during major ISWA events like the world congress or IFAT. In your first meeting you should communicate your preferred mode of future communication.

The frequency and number of meetings/exchanges between the mentees and mentors can largely vary between the pairs. Most have exchanges every 2 months but some mentees also cultivate a very close and frequent relationship with their mentors while others just connected every couple of months.

**YPG Numbers**

82 members
40 countries
And growing...
PROCEDURE

Creating a Pool of Mentors

As a first step, the ISWA General Secretariat will ask experienced waste managers of the ISWA network for their availability to the mentorship programme.

The mentors will be mainly – but not exclusively – be recruited from ISWA’s working groups and other institutions like the Board and the Scientific Technical Committee. They will be grouped according to different topics so they can easily be matched with the interests of the mentees. These topics include:

- Bio-waste treatment
- Climate Change and Waste Management
- Collection and Transportation Technology
- Communication issues
- Energy Recovery
- Social issues / Informal Sector
- Governance & Legal Issues
- Hazardous Waste / E-Waste / Healthcare Waste
- Landfilling
- Recycling and Waste Minimisation
- Entrepreneurship

Application of mentees

At the same time, young professionals have the possibility to apply for the mentorship programme, filling in the respective form and attaching their CV. This form will ask for their background, their plans for the upcoming year and their expectations from the mentorship programme and has to be sent to ypg-mentors@iswa.org.

There will be a cap on mentees accepted, based on the number of mentors available (ratio: 2 to 1). When the number of mentees exceeds the cap, a lottery will decide who can join the programme.

Matching of the mentors & mentees

Once the pool of mentors and mentees is ready, the mentees will be asked to choose their top-3 mentors from the list. With the support of the ISWA General Secretariat, the members of the YPG mentorship programme management team will contact the respective mentors and finalize the matching.

Initial meeting of the mentee & mentor

Once the matching is finalized, a first (online) meeting between the mentor and the mentee will be scheduled. This first meeting is key for a successful mentorship programme for both sides as it a) determines the individual structure of the programme, and b) aligns the expectations. During this initial meeting the mentor and the mentee should agree on:

- What topics are most important to the mentee and what will be most likely the major requests
- The mode of communication
- The frequency of exchanges: E.g. Regular meeting every 2 months and email-exchanges for urgent matters.
- The mentor should tell the mentee with what number/frequency/topic of requests he feels comfortable with.

To ensure a smooth first meeting, the management team of the mentorship programme will facilitate it.

During the Programme

Please keep in mind that you as the mentee will be the one that has to take the initiative in this mentorship programme. It is up to you to initiate calls if you need some support, as most mentors will not regularly reach out to you by themselves.
If you have any problems or questions regarding the programme, you can contact the management team of the Mentorship programme. They will be happy to support and mediate between the mentees and mentors. The management team will be actively asking for feedback after the first three months to ensure that every mentorship pair is working smoothly.

TESTIMONIALS FROM THE FIRST YEAR

Rüdiger Siechau, ISWA Board Member, Germany

ISWA YPG is a great platform for a mutual exchange of experiences. The contact between the professionals and the newcomers offers the opportunity of supporting career management and approaching different generations, customs and implementations. The first career event with young professionals and experts at IFAT Munich 2016 was a complete success and I support this network.

Andrea Winterstetter, YPG Vice Chair, Austria

I particularly liked the flexibility and openness of the mentorship programme, which left lots of space for personal initiatives. Together with my great mentor Prof. Rüdiger Siechau we set up the first local YPG in Hamburg. At the career event, which we organized together at IFAT Munich, I was offered a new job in Antwerp.

Vivek Agrawal, Chair of ISWA’s Working Group on Collection and Transportation Technology:

It was a wonderful experience to share something with the next generation. Through this programme and interaction, I could guide my mentee about different circumstances and solutions in Collection and Transportation. On the other hand, she also updated me with new research in the field.
The YPG Mentorship programme has helped me enormously to progress in my career. My Mentor, Dr Jane Gilbert, was always available whenever I needed her advice throughout my PhD research journey and job hunting process. Thanks to her nomination, I also received an award from the UK Chartered Institution of Waste Management.

Ramy Salemdeeb, Gaza/UK

I really enjoyed the personal connection with young people and discussing with them their intentions and problems. It was a pleasure helping young people see the waste industry with a non-technical perspective, i.e. through the eyes of its economy. They were fun and enthusiastic.

David Newman, Former ISWA President

This has been the most beneficial program for me at ISWA. David Newman has been extremely inspirational and has mentored and guided me to strengthen my career and develop expertise over the past one and half years.

Vidyaranya Vishwas, India/Germany

MORE INFORMATION

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