



Fund for Innovation
and Transformation
Fonds pour l'innovation
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Canadian-Led Project to be Featured at UN Water Conference

Ontario's Waterlution Empowers Girls to Craft Water and Sanitation Solutions

CANADA – A Canadian-led solution to water and sanitation challenges will be presented to an international audience during the upcoming UN Water Conference March 22-24, 2023, in New York.

This innovative solution, which empowers girls in Mozambique to address water challenges through a gender lens, was led by the Canadian-based, globally active organization Waterlution and funded by the Winnipeg-based Fund for Innovation and Transformation (FIT). In testing this innovative approach, Waterlution partnered with Mozambique's Girl Move Academy to ensure the project was locally driven. The project is titled 'Adolescent Girl Empowerment through Capacity Building and Water Innovation in Northern Mozambique.'

Taking place during the International Decade for Action on Water for Sustainable Development (2018-2028), the first-ever UN Water Conference is the most important water event in a generation.

"We are thrilled to see that Waterlution's innovation will be in the spotlight at this year's UN Water Conference. Their project is unique in that it empowers those most affected by water and sanitation challenges to craft the solutions," said Christina Maclsaac, FIT's Director of Innovation. "Women and girls are disproportionately affected and are sometimes forced to miss or drop out of school when proper sanitation is not available. Empowering them and their communities to address these issues allows them to manage their own needs in a sustainable way."

As part of their innovation, Waterlution implemented capacity building and water innovation workshops to embolden and empower adolescent girls in Mozambique, ages 12-15, to design WASH (water sanitation and hygiene) permaculture solutions that address challenges in school settings - increasing dignity, safety and attendance. The aim of the innovation was not to change infrastructure in schools, but rather to empower the girls to better assess and manage their own needs through knowledge and capacity building.

Girls who participated in this innovation demonstrated a significant increase in their understanding of personal hygiene and reported an increase in their hygiene needs being met at school. Over 98% indicated they would attend school the next year and would feel comfortable doing so. The most significant impact was increased confidence and empowerment. One girl participant exclaimed to another in a workshop "Show me that idea again! I want to go to the mayor and say to the mayor that I want this in my school!"

Waterlution's team says they are grateful for the initial investment from FIT, which continues to deepen and deliver local impact while inspiring communities. According to Dawn Fleming, Innovation Lead, what is especially remarkable about this innovation has been the meaningfully local, women-led approach.

“In Mozambique, where only 2 % of women go to university, we chose our trainers from that specific post-secondary demographic. What a privilege it has been to work together with some of these engaging women as they inspire young women and girls to pursue their rights and dreams. To now be in our 20th year as a Canadian-based, globally active innovator among the organizations accredited to present our results at this first-ever conference is an absolute thrill and honour.”

Waterlution will share insights about their innovative solution with several audiences within United Nations Headquarters in New York during the conference. This includes co-facilitating an [event on Wednesday, March 22 from 14:00 – 15:15 EST](#) exploring global water security with a lens on youth-centred partnership and a focus on diversity and gender equality.

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[About the Fund for Innovation and Transformation](#)

The Fund for Innovation and Transformation (FIT) is a 5-year, \$16.5 M initiative of the Inter-Council Network of Provincial and Regional Councils, funded by Global Affairs Canada and administered by the Manitoba Council for International Cooperation (MCIC). FIT is designed to support Canadian small and medium-sized organizations (SMOs) testing innovative solutions that advance gender equality in the Global South. The program is open to civil society organizations, social enterprises, post-secondary institutions and the private sector.

[About Waterlution](#)

Waterlution- a federally registered Canadian non-profit – has successfully established itself as an internationally recognized water-focused organization offering distinctive capacity building, leadership and facilitation training to spark and mentor innovators and aspiring entrepreneurs in the water and climate change space. While engaging communities through place-based workshops and activities that together evolve our collective relationship to, understanding of, and innovative responses toward, solving complex water challenges, Waterlution intentionally works with underrepresented peoples, particularly women and Indigenous peoples. [Details about Waterlution’s innovation testing](#) are available on the Fund for Innovation and Transformation website.

