

## **Experience with the Mentoring Programme at the Vienna World Water Congress and one year later**

By

Christian Loderer

The idea of a mentoring programme to bring together experts from the water and wastewater sector and young people who will be working as the next generation in that field is great. My motivation to take part in the mentoring programme was to get the chance to discuss with experts the environmental global problems, find together maybe possible and realizable solutions and get a more widespread overview of the field I am working in. Another motivation for me was to get as young water professional the possibility to meet interesting people from Industries, Universities and from RTD centres. It must be said that it is not easy as young water professional to find contacts in the science community who may be at conferences and therefore having a mentor who is guiding you through is very helpful. For some young people it is easier because of their personality and their open-mindedness but for others it takes quite an effort talking to people and forming their networks. For Mr. Glen Daigger the motivation was twofold. One was to see how the YWP programme was progressing and to contribute to its success. The other was to have the pleasure to interact with and learn from a young professional – an activity which Mr. Glen Daigger sincerely enjoys!

I also hoped to find a mentor who could guide him through the “jungle” of the water sector if needed, motivate him by having discussions to be creative in finding solutions and in seeing the problems in a global way and he should make him maybe more interested in the water sector to have fun in that what he does. I feel that, like in sports the mentor should be a person in your working field to whom you can relate to, who is one of your personal ideal, you could emulate in your personal way. Having a person who shows you what you can reach it is easier to reach your goals as well. Mr. Glen Daigger appreciates these sentiments as he has been so fortunate to have some excellent mentors himself who have provided this two him. His personal philosophy is that the only way he can recognize the efforts of his mentors is to “pass it on” by similarly mentoring the next generation.

The interaction between me and Mr. Glen Daigger worked very well at the Congress and has worked well since. At the IWA World Water Congress in Vienna we got to know each other face to face and we met every day during the conference talking about actual topics but also personal things what I think is also very important to get a better understanding for each other. I joined the sessions Mr. Glen Daigger chaired to get to know him better and to learn from him and Mr. Glen Daigger joined the session where I had my oral presentation and gave me feedback afterwards.

Nearly one year later we have maintained in contact by writing e-mails I has asked Mr. Glen Daigger questions on different topics and obtained necessary information from him concerning his work and future possibilities. I also keep him up to date about my scientific way (for example: like how my research work is going on, what happens in Austria concerning the YWP,...). But the contact gets less. The raisons therefore are simple, on one hand it is not easy for a busy man, like Mr. Glen Daigger is one, to answer so often because the normal business goes ahead and on the other hand there is the problem of distance. It will be great if there are more chances and possibilities for that people who take part of the mentoring program and who are still interested in keeping up the contact to met their mentors more often face to face (for example at special event or to invite the mentees to work for one

or two month at the companies or universities like junior researches to get the surrounding of the mentors working place better known).

It has been and continues to be a great experience for both of us to take part in the mentoring programme. I am glad to be one of the first young water professions to participate, along with the other nearly 30 young people who had the chance to be pioneers in that new programme. We both hope the programme will continue and more and more mentors and mentees will have the opportunity to have their own unique experience and can take advantage of the programme. Both me and Mr. Glen Daigger want to express appreciation to each other for their participation in the relationship.