

**International Conference "Groundwater, key to the Sustainable Development Goals".
Paris, May 18-20th, 2022**

Topic.1.

The point of view of the Youth on Groundwater and SDGs, with students from Universities, Colleges, High Schools...

The future of young sahelian hydrogeologists. Professional trajectories and bypass strategies

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Invisibility of young hydrogeology graduates in the labour market ?

➔ Youth underemployment is particularly high in the Sahel:

- In Burkina Faso (27 % of the workforce)
- In Sénégal (34 %).
- Le Mali (95 % of the unemployed who have been out of work for more than a year).
- 16 % of young university graduates in Senegal are unemployed,
- A figure that is as high as 35% in Burkina (BAD, 2013)

➔ Graduate employment in the Sahel, a challenge not easily met by the SDGs(8)

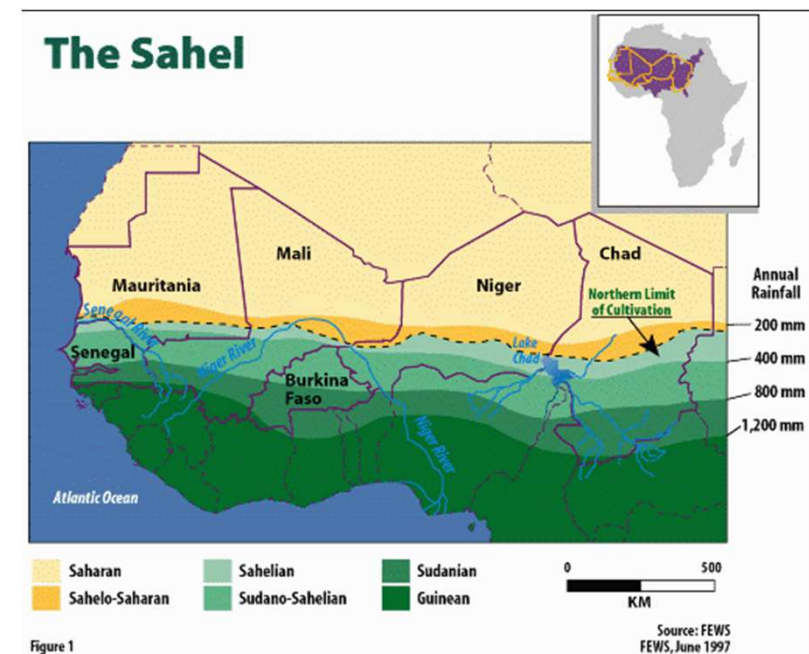
A view of the world of Sahelian hydrogeology

Initial framing of the *Sahel Groundwater initiative* :

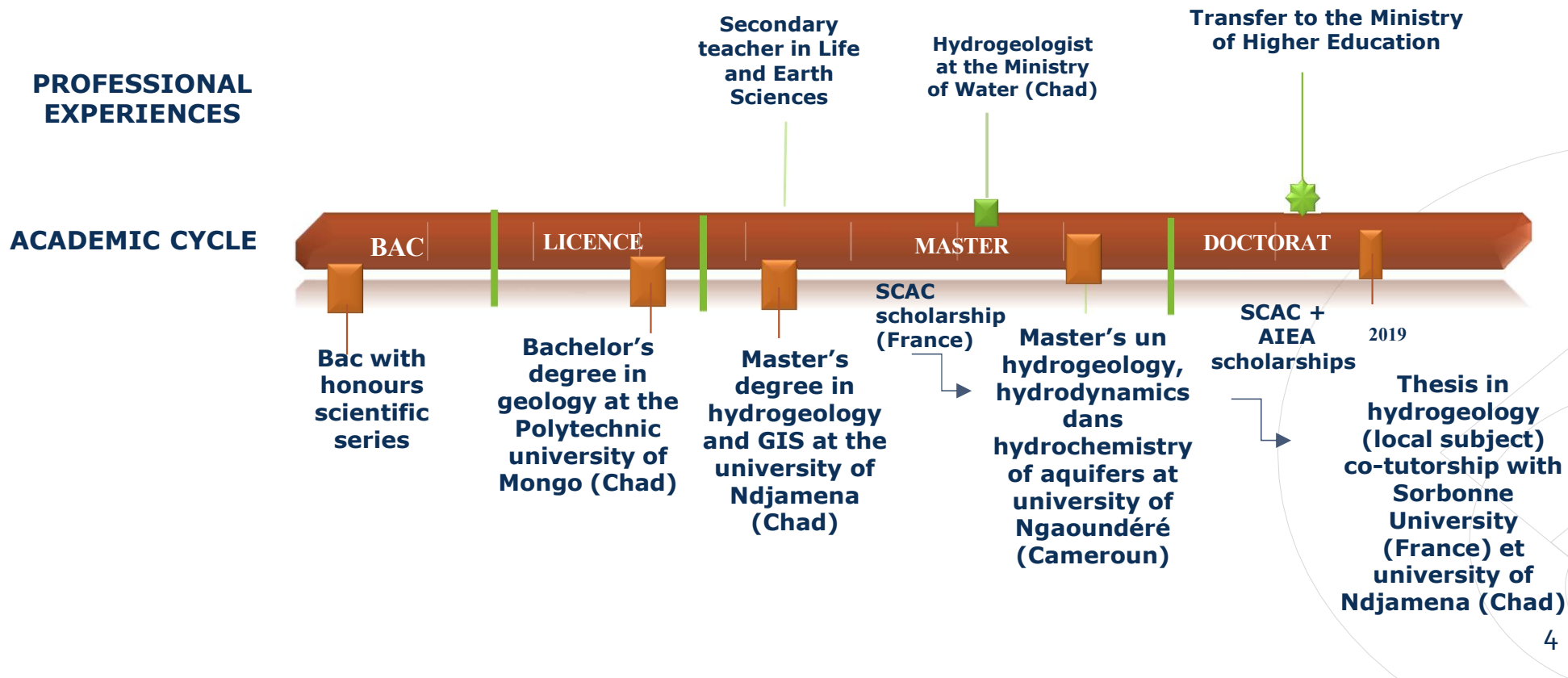
- ◆ Uncertainties and lack of knowledge about groundwater in the Sahel
- ◆ Lack of local experts in hydrogeology
- ◆ Dependence on international expertise
- ◆ problem of adequacy of training with local needs in hydrogeology and the level of national training
- ◆ « Brain drain » (from the Sahel to the North)
- ◆ Underemployment of young hydrogeology graduates in the Sahel

Sociologist's position : questioning perspectives

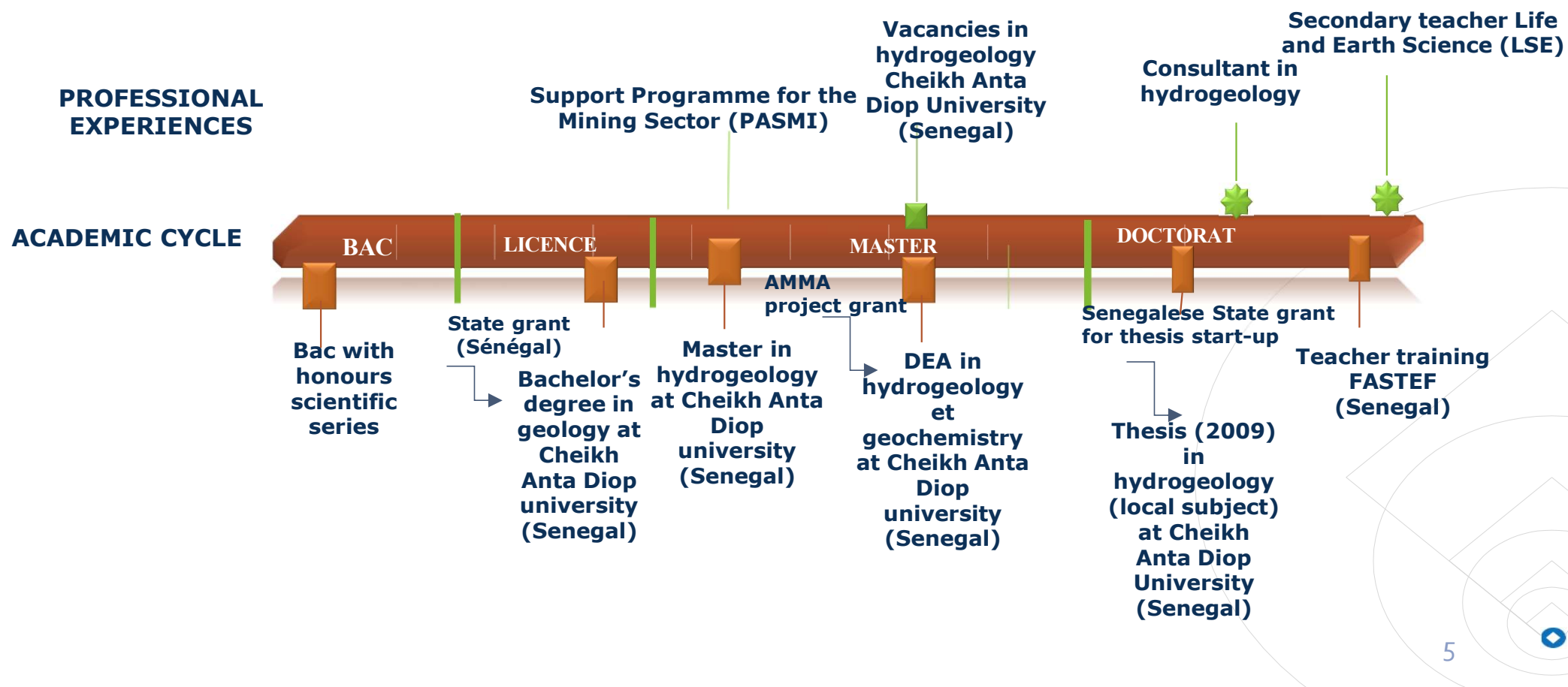
- ESP Analysis's of young peoples academic trajectories
- ESP Coping strategies for underemployment



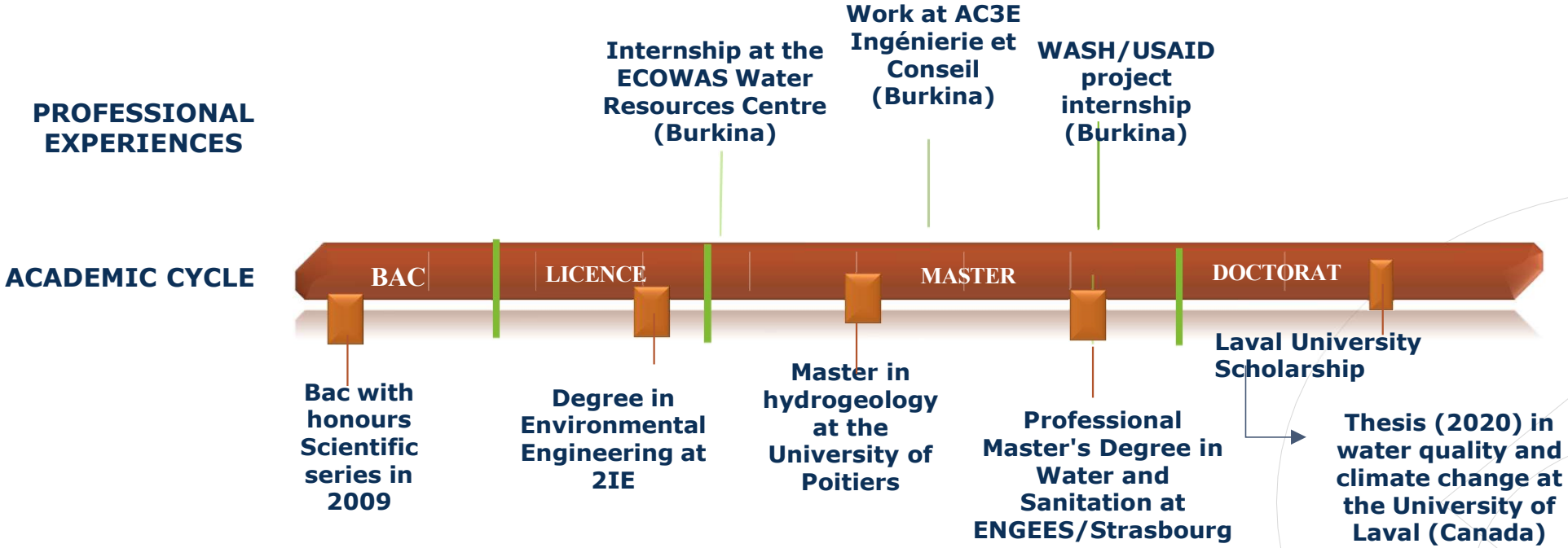
Pathway 1 : A hydrogeologist with one foot in the country



Pathway 2 : From hydrogeologist to teacher-consultant



Pathway 2 : From hydrogeologist to water science



Structural and organisational difficulties in accessing employment...



- ⇒ Difficult access to the labour market (internship, experience, salary and "pistons")
 - Long and repetitive internships
 - Fixed-term contracts and low pay
 - Orientation towards other sectors
- ⇒ Competition from other disciplines: hydrology, geochemistry, geographer, etc.
- ⇒ Intergenerational conflicts of hydrogeologists (senior and young)

...Built-in opportunities

«In France, to get a financed thesis, it's really very complicated. So [I turned to] another course, to give myself time to do a thesis in hydrogeology or in the field of water in general ».

- ➡ Increase training in addition to hydrogeology → first job opportunities
- ➡ Be open to international job offers while keeping the desire to return home
- ➡ Open to any offer of a PhD scholarship in hydrogeology
- ➡ Thesis subject outside HG → risk of thematic leakage to another discipline, often hydrology or hydraulics

Strategies to circumvent underemployment in the Sahel



→ Teaching

- Assignments in the Ministry of Education
- Secondary education

→ Consultance

- Hydrogeological expertise (drilling)
- Geochemical expertise

→ Entrepreneuriat

- Creation of a quality control company
- Partnership with NGOs and consultancies



**THANK YOU FOR
YOUR ATTENTION**