

Amsterdam International Water Week: UNU partners honoured

Friday 17 November, 2017

Young entrepreneurs from 'Finish Society India' and 'Sidian Bank Kenya' were honoured in this year's 'Sarphati Sanitation Awards', presented at the opening ceremony of Amsterdam International Water Week on 30 October 2017.

Shortlisted for the Award were (i) Mr Abhijit Banerji of Finish Society India, (ii) Ms Catherine Kisamwa of Sidian Bank Kenya and (iii) Andrew Foote of Sanivation Kenya. Mr Abhijit Banerji won the category prize of €25,000. Sidian Bank Kenya is a close partner in the FINISH INK programme that recently achieved more than €2.5 million in sanitation loans. Ms Catherine Kisamwa's nomination is the first ever financial institution shortlisted for the Sarphati Award.

As part of the Amsterdam conference, Catherine Kisamwa and Abhijit Banerji were invited to give keynote speeches during the 'Sarphati Sanitation Solutions Seminar' on 31 October, which included experiences from Haiti, India and Kenya as well as speakers from the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and UN-HABITAT.

Catherine Kisamwa explained how sanitation loans help her bank to ensure payment of other loans. Put simply, healthy people are more likely to repay loans – a virtuous circle underpinned by decent sanitation services. For the rest, delegates agreed that construction of toilets can be a profitable business, but that governments still need to remove barriers for the sale or reuse of products made from toilet waste.

Note to editors

The 'Financial Inclusion Improves Sanitation and Health' ([FINISH](#)) Society is an NGO working in India and Kenya under the auspices of UNU-MERIT, WASTE, ACTIAM and Take-a-Stake Fund. Financial Inclusion Improves Sanitation and Health in Kenya ([FINISH INK](#)) is a public-private partnership working in Kenya that also includes Amref Health Africa, Ministry of Health, Sidian and Family Bank.

The 'Sarphati Sanitation Award' was inspired by Dr. Samuel Sarphati, a doctor who contributed to the cholera-free status of the City of Amsterdam as far back as the end of the nineteenth century. He achieved this by initiating a business to collect and transport human excreta out of town and use it as fertiliser to grow crops, thus improving the health status of the fast growing population of Amsterdam.

World Waternet, Netherlands Water Partnership and Aqua for All initiated the biennial Sarphati Sanitation Award in 2013 to honour the outstanding contribution of individuals or organisations to the global sanitation and public health challenge through entrepreneurship. The Sarphati Sanitation Awards Jury consists of Her Excellency Ms Lidi Remmelzwaal (Chairperson), Dr Arno Rosemarin, Dr Claire Furlong, Prof Dr Ir Sybe Schaap and Dr Graham Alabaster

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