Shrewsbury based charity Village Water wins prestigious technology award for reducing water borne disease in Africa.

Tuesday 8 November, 2016

Village Water have been recognised by The International Society for Neglected Tropical Diseases (ISNTD) at their recent Water Awards. This was presented to Village Water's Monitoring & Evaluation Officer Ian Stone at the ISNTD Water Conference held at the Institute of Child Health in London on 1st November 2016.

Village Water won the Award for Data in recognition of its outstanding innovation and achievement in water, sanitation and hygiene, with significant impact on Neglected Tropical Diseases and diseases of poverty. ISNTD commended Village Water for its innovative Village Information Monitoring (VIM) system for data collection and the commitment to monitoring both WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) and health targets.

Village Water aims to reduce the number of cases of waterborne diseases, specifically diarrhoea, eye infection and skin infection, through an integrated approach of hygiene education, sanitation and the installation of safe water points. Village Water works in rural Zambia and Mozambique where less than half of the population has access to safe drinking water and even fewer people have sanitation facilities. Water borne illnesses such as diarrhoea are common, and sometimes fatal with thousands of children dying every year.

Village Water has put the goal of measuring the impact and effectiveness of its programme in rural sub-Saharan Africa as a top priority, and is pioneering the use of technology to monitor reductions in waterborne diseases. VIM is a mobile 'phone to web data collection system: field staff collect data on pump functionality, sanitation facilities and most importantly, household health in every community they support. The information is gathered before, during and after a water point is installed allowing Village Water to track health over time for individual communities and cumulatively for the whole programme.

In 2015 results for the 45 villages the charity supported in Zambia's Western Province showed a 91% drop in cases of diarrhoea and 86% drop in cases of eye infections.

Village Water Director Clare said, '*I'm thrilled that our huge commitment to demonstrating the lasting benefits of safe water and sanitation has been recognised by ISNTD. We can prove our impact and this sets us apart from others.'*

Village Water Monitoring & Evaluation Officer Ian Stone said, *'VIM allows us to see the changes in every community, school and health centre we support and to build a picture of the benefits over time. Because of this we see long lasting improvements and can also target communities where extra support is needed, helping us plan strategically for the future.'*

Village Water's corporate partner Bank of America Merrill Lynch was instrumental in developing the system, supporting the charity with funding, equipment and expertise. The system has revolutionised the way Village Water work allowing them to demonstrate their impact and identify gaps, while local partners use the data to work out which villages and schools to prioritise and where they need to plan additional activities.

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