



2023 Impact Report

Paving the way



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Across the world there are [2.2 billion people without a source of safe drinking water, 4.2 billion people who lack access to safely managed sanitation services](#), and up to [1 million people die each year due to mismanaged waste](#).

This reality needs to change – we believe all people deserve to live in a clean environment with access to affordable and sustainable water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and solid waste services.



“People in our communities have been suffering from several diseases, like cholera and typhoid, but because of the improved sanitation situation people no longer suffer and their earnings have even increased.”

- Tweheyo Naume, 23-year-old mason in Uganda where over 45% of the sanitation systems facilitated through FINISH Mondial have been constructed by women.

WASTE is a global NGO which exists to create **cleaner, healthier futures for all**

Since 1983 we have been catalysing solutions to some of the world’s most pressing waste, sanitation and water challenges. We drive sustainable system-led change by bringing together stakeholders from across sectors to pilot, upscale and deliver global programmes. In all that we do, we strive for impact that is embedded in the local context by building knowledge and local capacity, sharing interdisciplinary expertise and increasing access to finance.

Note from our Supervisory Board

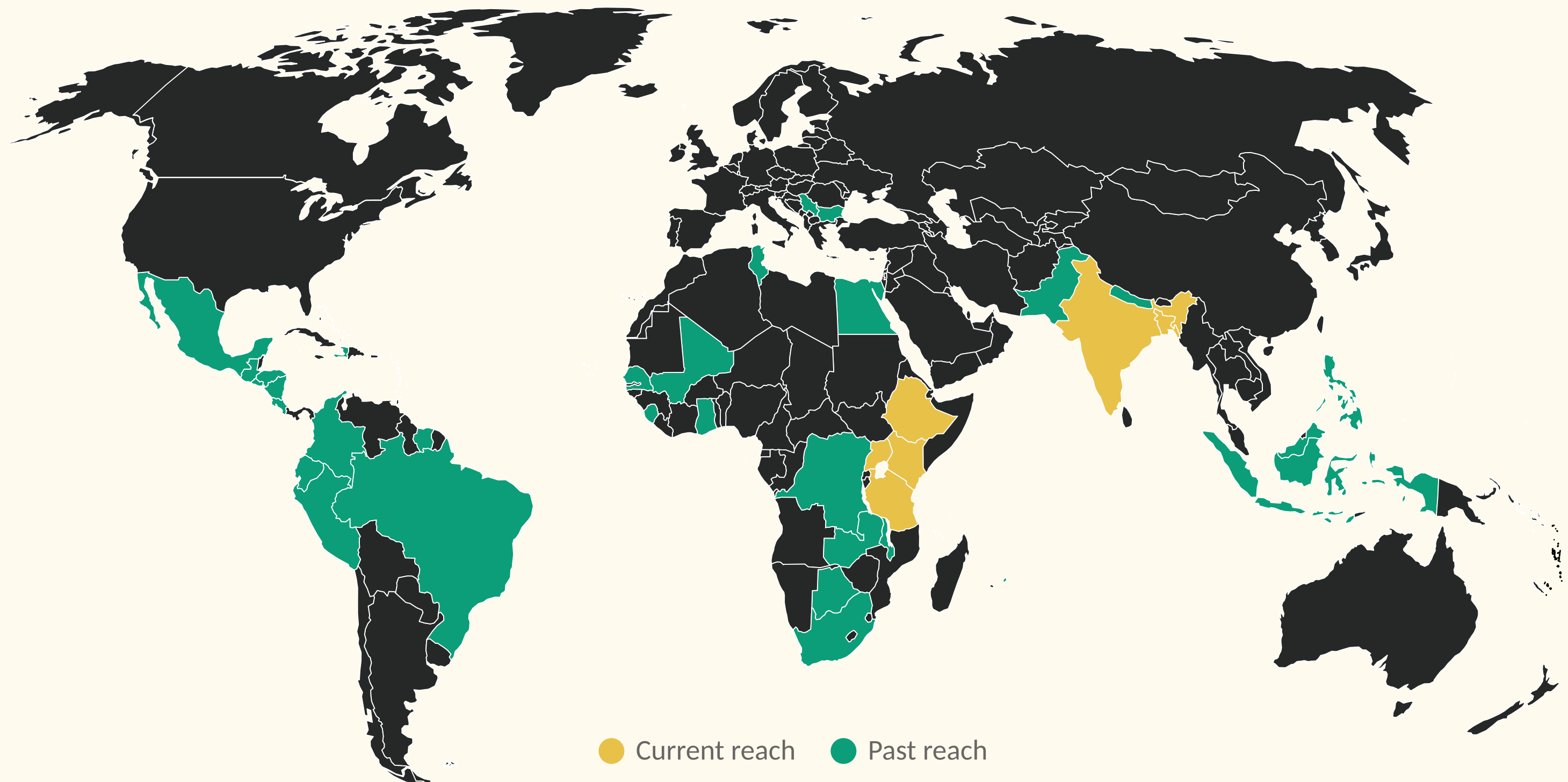
The year 2023 marked an amazing four decades of WASTE working with partners across the globe to develop sustainable and inclusive solutions. As an organisation it was a key point for us to take time to reflect on who we are, what we stand for and how we can pave the way for the next chapter of impact. In the last year we have continued to build on our 40 years of expertise, facilitating access to more WASH and waste management services than ever before, upscaling sustainable solutions and catalysing investments in microfinance and innovative entrepreneurs. For the coming decades, WASTE is committed to continuing its mission to be a leading innovator in scalable and impactful WASH and waste management approaches at the interface of entrepreneurs, local institutions, the financial sector and end users.



Adriaan Mels
WASTE supervisory board chair

A global outlook

WASTE develops and manages innovative, multi-stakeholder programmes in low- and middle-income countries across the world striving for impact that is locally relevant and continues long after we are gone. Over our 40-year history this work has spanned many countries, a number of which we are still active in today.



**To catalyse sustainable change,
we believe all stakeholders must work together**

This lies at the heart of our multi-stakeholder [Diamond approach](#) and [Integrated Sustainable Waste Management \(ISWM\) model](#). Together they offer a comprehensive approach that enables key stakeholders to work together for sustainable development and strengthen local systems.

2023 IN NUMBERS

2.1 million people leading healthier lives

425,784

safely managed sanitation systems
constructed through programme
facilitation

31,966

additional tonnes of solid waste
collected and recycled through
programme facilitation

\$1.75M

invested in small and growing
businesses in the WASH and solid
waste sectors

3,042

tonnes of human waste safely
disposed of and converted to
co-compost

3,184

informal waste workers' livelihoods
improved

€157M

leveraged in WASH and solid waste
investments

Made possible through

Generating **3.5 million** employment days in the sanitation sector and **80 dignified solid waste jobs**
Providing **145,392 people** with capacity building
Supporting **1,991 local businesses**
Creating more than **85 new partnerships**



“The FINILOOP team has given us a vision of being collective and succeeding through a self-help group. We have now started saving money.”

- Sugna Nash, an informal waste worker in Udaipur and member of a FINILOOP self-help group where IWWs are empowered to share their ideas and given training on how to improve their work opportunities and access financing.

Relaying the foundations

As an organisation we recognise the importance of remaining agile in the midst of a changing global context. Entering our 40th year was a pivotal moment for the organisation in 2023. It was a good moment to reflect on our values and contribution, refine our organisational structure and strategy, and relay our foundations.

All to ensure WASTE continues to create impact and contributes to a more sustainable future.

As part of this process, we came together as a whole staff team to map out our core values which underpin everything we do:



Innovation



**Scaling
for impact**



**Working
in partnership**



Sustainability



Paving the way for innovation



Driving innovation in India

The FINILOOP Plastic Lab (FPL) is a unique part of our plastic waste management programme, FINILOOP, designed to support and scale up start-ups who are finding innovative solutions to plastic waste challenges. The FPL was launched in March 2023 with 17 start-ups taking part in a 14-month incubation & mentorship initiative. Innovative start-ups like Dharaksha EcoSolutions who is pioneering a new alternative to plastic by utilising a bio-engineered form of fungi to produce biodegradable packaging material. [Find out more about their solutions here.](#)



Pioneering new technologies

Many low- and middle-income communities rely on manual human waste emptying services – an incredibly unsafe job, and inefficient process. In response to this, a new breakthrough technology has been developed by partner organisation the Practica Foundation – the PuPu (Push&Pull) Pump. An innovative design which eliminates the need for a traditional vacuum tanker by replacing it with a high-pressure suction vacuum for off-site treatment of faecal waste. Technology which WASTE is now piloting in Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania, alongside looking for ways to scale and produce the PuPu pump locally. All combining to bring a sustainable solution to unsafe faecal waste collection and disposal, creating a cleaner environment for all and safer livelihood opportunities.



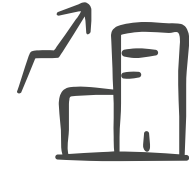
Innovation in greywater recycling

To harness creativity and develop technologies for a more sustainable future, applications for the fourth annual FINISH Mondial (FM) Sanitation Technology Hackathon opened in 2023. The theme was focused on tackling the challenges of greywater recycling for sustainable agriculture and kitchen gardening. Greywater, which typically includes wastewater from sinks, baths and laundry, can be a valuable when properly treated and repurposed – a vital area to spark technological innovation and solutions in!



Investing in WASH and waste

Currently, very few investors are looking at investing in small and growing businesses (SGBs) in the WASH and waste sectors, given the high transaction costs and risks involved. But these companies are vital in helping us to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. In recognition of this, our innovative financing initiative, Take-a-Stake (TAS), has been conducting a pilot programme proving the investment case for SGBs in these sectors, and mobilising finance for sustainable growth. In 2023, TAS brought an additional 30 companies onto the first step of this journey, providing them with capacity building to enable them to become investment ready.



Paving the way to scale



Expansion of FINILOOP into Jaipur

Building on the success of the last year, in December we were pleased to announce the expansion of FINILOOP into a third city in India – the famed ‘pink city’ of Jaipur, which has a total population of 2.3 million people and is the capital of the state of Rajasthan. Currently there are three active material recovery facilities and over 800 existing plastic waste enterprises in the city, a selection of which FINILOOP will be working with to strengthen and connect, alongside other key stakeholders.



Generating employment and resources

In 2023, FINISH Mondial (FM) demonstrated its capability to act as a catalyst for scale in the sanitation sector. In India, the programme achieved 111% of the target set for safe sanitation systems, resulting in generating more employment days than targeted. Furthermore, the team in India helped exceed the funds leveraged target by 163%, reflecting FM’s catalytic role in mobilising resources for sanitation projects.



Clean water for all in Africa

With the help of investment mobilised through TAS, [Spouts of Water](#) – a small and growing business in Uganda providing water filters to local communities – was able to expand into Rwanda. In response to lack of clean water access, Spouts develops and distributes ceramic water filters which are locally and sustainably made. They have grown to become one of the largest ceramic water filter manufacturers in Africa reaching 1.1 million people with clean water and with expansion into Rwanda they will be able to facilitate the provision of clean water to a further 2 million people.

[Read their full story](#) →



Paving the way in partnership



Creating **cleaning communities** together

In response to the growing problem of overflowing septic tanks polluting the condominium residential area of Shashemene, in Central Ethiopia, WASTE successfully developed [a nature-based solution; the construction of wetlands to effectively treat community wastewater](#). This was done in partnership under the [SDG WASH](#) project bringing together the expertise of local partner BBBC and Dutch consultancy company, Ecofy. As a result, the local community now has access to a cleaner environment and safely treated wastewater that can also be utilised in the dry season.



Working in partnership with cities

At the heart of all our programmes is a multi-stakeholder approach, we do not create new infrastructure but instead identify, assemble and engage all stakeholders within the settings we work to increase effectiveness, local ownership and sustainability. To kick start our newest programme, FINILOOP, and foster mutual understanding, two Memorandum of Understandings (MOU) were signed with the Municipal Corporations of Amritsar and Jaipur. These partnerships recognise the pivotal role played by local governments in creating an enabling environment for the effective functioning and strengthening of the plastic waste value chain.



Shining a light on **social businesses**

The increase of plastic waste volumes, and the consequence this has on the planet and people's health have become alarming issues. Social businesses around the world are developing innovative approaches to plastic recycling whilst at the same time supporting marginalised communities. However, social businesses cannot tackle plastic waste alone, they need cross-sector partnerships to help them scale their solutions. In 2023 WASTE, in collaboration with Yunus Social Business, put together the [Social Procurement Sector Spotlight Report on Plastic Waste](#) to shine a light on the opportunity for corporations to partner with social businesses in solving plastic waste through social procurement.



Paving the way sustainably



Climate resilience in WASH

Research plays a key role in expanding our understanding of complex WASH and climate connections, ultimately leading to better design, sustainability and rationale for much needed climate financing for sanitation and water. In 2023, [two interns delved into this issue with WASTE](#) as part of their MA in Water and Sustainable Development. With the help of research insights, we are continuing to develop and advocate for more inclusive climate-resilient sanitation solutions, for example flood-proof toilets.



Commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Our core work focuses on the UN's SDGs 11 (sustainable cities), 8 (decent work and economic growth), and 6 (clean water and sanitation). We have focused on developing interventions which have cross-sectoral impact, linking to multiple SDGs beyond these, to achieve greater impact and ensure sustainability by strengthening whole 'systems' or markets.



Sharing knowledge and providing capacity building

"I used to work as a labourer, toiling away, stacking bricks one upon another. Even now, I am engaged in the same work, but with a mindset focused on safe sanitation... I consider myself both an engineer of safe sanitation and a doctor of hygiene."

– Lakshmina Devi, female artisan in our sanitation programme.

Sharing knowledge and providing capacity building to local communities is a core part of our approach to ensure sustainability long after we have gone. Through gaining valuable insights from capacity building sessions Lakshmina has journeyed from a challenging life as a daily wage labourer with limited income to becoming a skilled mason.

In 2023 we avoided an estimated 8843 tonnes of CO2 equivalent greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions through solid waste and faecal sludge treatment and reuse.

Programme snapshot

Following is a snapshot of our three main programmes showcasing the highlights and learnings from the last year.



Shaping the resilient plastic waste-free cities of tomorrow



FINILOOP is our city-level plastic waste management programme which connects and strengthens actors along the entire waste value and service chain to ensure cleaner environments for all and a more inclusive and transparent circular plastic economy.

This is made possible by working together with local partners to help strengthen and scale local enterprises including start-ups, create safer and more dignified job opportunities for informal waste workers (IWWs), empower communities and attract additional funds into the waste value chain. In 2023 FINILOOP reached its first-year milestone, successfully laying the foundations of the programme and working in partnership with local organisations, Trust of People (TOP) and AspireLabs. The programme expanded to a third city (Jaipur) and the preparation for expansion to new countries such as Kenya and Bangladesh are on its way.

2023 HIGHLIGHTS

What we've **achieved together**

993

additional tonnes of plastic waste were collected, and 667 were recycled

867

informal waste workers' livelihoods improved through better access to documentation and social security benefits, children able to access to education, financial literacy training and solid waste management jobs

63,397

households reached with increased awareness and separation at source

Programme learnings

A core component of the FINILOOP programme is strengthening businesses within the plastic waste management system. A lack of business development capacity at the local level was identified and to bridge this gap WASTE hired a local business development expert to take ownership of this component.

In the first year of the programme it was vital to align all partners around the shared FINILOOP objectives and strengthen communication. As a result, a range of additional indicators to measure the impact of the programme were generated (for example, access to ID cards as part of the improvement livelihoods of informal waste workers objective) to help collectively monitor and evaluate the programme more effectively.

Improving livelihoods and recycling

Ridhi Sidhi Plastic Waste Enterprises, a father and son enterprise in Udaipur, has been working with plastic waste for over 35 years and employs 40-50 workers. On an average day they buy 6-7 tonnes of waste from informal waste workers (IWWs) across Udaipur and sell this on to the next step in the plastic waste chain, recyclers. As community awareness raising helps households to improve their separation at source and IWWs are supported to improve their collection practices, higher quality plastic waste in increased quantities is funneled into the waste value chain and the hands of plastic waste enterprises. Through this sustained practice, and business development support from FINILOOP, Ridhi Sidhi estimates they will be able to double their revenue and in turn provide increased income to the IWWs they buy plastic waste from.

“We can buy higher quality and more plastic waste than we ever have before.”

- Nitesh Ahuja, owner of Ridhi Sidhi Plastic Waste Enterprises



Transforming the everyday through **investing in small and growing businesses**



Small and Growing Businesses (SGBs) too often fall into the ‘missing middle’ of investments – whereby they are too big for microfinance and yet too small for banks and commercial investment funds. They, however, have the potential to help fill the huge global investment gap which lies in the way of progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals.

TAS aims to strengthen the supply side of the WASH and solid waste, and linked sectors, by providing impact investments to SGBs in low and middle-income countries. TAS is currently in a pilot stage, working to prove that investments in SGBs are viable and scalable, and create a track record for these businesses in order to mobilise substantial private investments. Capacity building activities are now going beyond investees to enable smaller companies to become investment ready. In 2023 TAS identified several companies in the pipeline that require hand-holding support to reach the size investment programmes like TAS can engage with. This included, for example, support on development of business models, strategy and financial modelling.

2023 HIGHLIGHTS

What we've **achieved together**

\$1.75M

invested across four small and growing businesses in the WASH and waste sectors

25

small businesses selected to receive capacity building, as part of TAS now going beyond SGB investees to enable smaller companies to become investment ready.

\$1.7M

in the pipeline for upcoming investments to be disbursed in 2024.

Programme learnings

There is still a long way to go in bridging the funding gap for SGBs in the WASH and waste sectors. It is vital we continue to work with urgency and increase confidence among investors.

Regulatory changes in India have affected both the set-up of the institutional infrastructure of the TAS Fund and the potential to scale up. To overcome this, it is vital we remain adaptive and partner with experts to ensure we keep up to date with regulatory changes and are ready to scale.

Licences and registration were obtained to invest in India, but this took longer than first anticipated due to lengthy regulatory processes and decision making. The obtaining of these is a significant step as this allows TAS to operate the pilot, complete the set-up and disburse funding. Learnings from this can also be passed onto other organisations going through a similar process.

Transforming e-waste in Kenya

E-waste is one of the fastest growing solid waste streams in the world with millions of electronic items being discarded and left to pollute the environment due to inadequate waste disposal. One inspiring social business is stepping up to this challenge by turning waste into wealth and preventing thousands of tonnes of e-waste from ending up in landfill – the WEEE centre. To date the WEEE centre has ensured the safe disposal of more than 11,000 tonnes of e-waste, created hundreds of green jobs for women and youth and now has a presence in 18 African countries. TAS helped to fuel this growth by leveraging an investment of \$500,000 and providing capacity building.

[Find out more about their story here](#) →

“The investment from TAS has given us credibility from an investor perspective as we are able to show that we’ve got this kind of funding and that brings comfort to other investors.”

– Boniface Mbithi, WEEE centre’s CEO and founder



FINISH MONDIAL (FM)

Safely managed sanitation and financial inclusion for all



FM envisions a world where everyone is financially included and has access to safely managed sanitation. The initiative is a collaborative effort between WASTE and Amref Flying Doctors, aimed at expanding safe sanitation by enhancing local sanitation markets.

Currently, the programme operates in six countries: Bangladesh, Ethiopia, India, Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda. FM has grown rapidly, and its impact is increasing in many different directions. To further this development and growth, the consortium, spearheaded by WASTE, took FM from a programme to a separate organisation in 2023: the FINISH Mondial Foundation (FMF). The FMF will be officially launched in 2024 and will enable increased impact, partnerships, relevance, fund mobilisation and innovation.

2023 HIGHLIGHTS

What we've **achieved** together

425,784

toilets constructed through
FM facilitation

3.5M+

employment days created for local
masons and sanitation
entrepreneurs

€151M

leveraged in investments in
sanitation and financing for
households

Programme learnings

Despite challenges like political unrest and delays, the programme adjusted strategies swiftly, achieving 95% of its planned activities on schedule.

Ethiopia faced challenges in achieving its funding targets for 2023, due to various factors, for example, inflationary pressures on building materials which affected the cost-efficiency of projects and a lack of awareness about sanitation loans. To address this gap and improve fund mobilisation, the team has initiated community awareness programmes and is engaging with micro-finance institutions to expand their portfolio to include sanitation products.

To overcome data collection struggles in Kenya, the team developed a reporting channel to ensure enhanced coordination and integration of data.



Ann's unimproved toilet



Ann's safely managed toilet

Reshaping communities through safe sanitation

Meet Ann Kamau from Nakuru, Kenya, whose journey showcases the transformative power of investing in women and the vital intersection of financial inclusion, gender equity, and sanitation initiatives. A journey which wasn't without its challenges, but with the support of local FM initiatives, Ann was able to navigate through securing a loan through a women's saving group to upgrade her toilet to a safe sanitation system. A decision, which not only enhanced her family's living conditions but also played a role in altering perceptions about sanitation in her community and elevated the status of her family.

[More about Ann's journey to safe sanitation](#) →

“The people in my community see me as dignified because I have a modern toilet. Often people in my community take the state of the toilet as the face of the family”

– Ann Kamau

Paving the way for the next chapter of impact

In order to maximise WASTE’s contributions to the ambitious Sustainable Development Goals, we recognise the need to substantially scale our programmes and intensify collaboration with our implementing partners. To pave the way for our next chapter of impact, we will build on the following WASTE strengths over the coming year.



Strengthening and upscaling current programmes



Building complementary partnerships



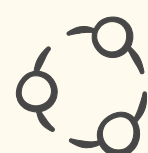
Increasing capacity building



Sharing knowledge and resources



Extending WASTE’s strategy and scope



Strengthening internal systems



Ending the year with a committed team in place

WASTE underwent a number of staff changes in 2023 including at management level with an interim director. The year, however, ended with a solid Management Team (MT) in place who oversee the organisational activities, as well as all programmes. The MT is also supported by a dedicated Supervisory Board (SB) who supervise the policy and strategy of the management and the general course of affairs at WASTE. In addition, the SB acts as an advisory body to the MT.





A big **thank you** to all our partners and those who have made this all possible!

Join us as we pave the way for the next chapter of impact.



visit us on waste.nl