Zutari co-creates a lasting impact at 2023 WISA Young Water Professionals conference

**11 January 2024:** Leading consulting engineering and infrastructure advisory firm [Zutari](http://www.zutari.com) not only had an independently adjudicated best oral and poster presentation at the 7th WISA Young Water Professionals (YWP) conference that took place from 8 to 10 November in Stellenbosch, it also had a significant involvement in organising the event itself.

“Many countries are grappling with problems that are highly complex and interdependent, such as water crises and youth unemployment,” comments **Anya Eilers** from Zutari, National Chair of the South African YWP forum. YWP is the youth empowerment platform of the Water Institute of Southern Africa (WISA).

“As our world becomes increasingly global, our decisions create ripple effects that span space, time, and disciplines. Never has the need for interdisciplinary collaboration being stronger. This need inspired the theme of ‘Breaking Silos’ for the 2023 Southern African Young Water Professionals conference,” says Eilers.

“As young water professionals in Southern Africa, we have a pivotal role to play in supporting our continent to address these global challenges. The women and men of WISA-YWP come from a range of institutions and academic backgrounds in the sector, and every day I am inspired by the diversity of thought and passion for what we do. They do not just represent the traditional engineers and natural scientists, but also include social scientists, economists, entrepreneurs, political leaders, writers, and many other disciplines. By combining our skills and breaking down the silos that have perpetuated in our industry, I believe we are one step closer to achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals,” says Eilers.

Commenting on the theme ‘Breaking Silos’, Eilers highlights: “There is often limited cross-collaboration between social scientists, natural scientists, engineers and other disciplines, but there was ample engagement at the 2023 conference, which was exciting. We addressed the importance of breaking silos and challenging the status quo, such as through multi-disciplinary sessions on stakeholder community engagement. The latter is significant as water and wastewater engineering represents a complex intersection of social, political, and economic factors.

Conference Chair **Eugene Fotso Simo** from Zutari says the need for collaboration and partnership in the industry drove the #BreakingSilos theme. “In various sectors within the water space, we have observed a lack of integration among diverse individuals who seldom collaborate as much as we envision. It is possible that our focus on this issue has influenced our perspective. However, witnessing a similar lack of integration beyond the water sector underscores the urgency for intervention.

“By actively supporting and mentoring the youth, who represent the future leaders in the water space, we aim to instil a sense of collaboration from the outset. Our goal is to ensure that the youth comprehend the significance of breaking down silos and actively participating in a cohesive movement. Through initiatives like the YWP Conference, we strive to make them understand the intricacies of fostering collaboration and the impact it can have in the years to come,” says Simo.

Commenting on the conference's outcome, **Mohamed Gulamhussein**, Scientific Programme Committee Lead from Zutari, says the quality of engagement and presentations was uniformly excellent, including welcome representation from a government level. Over 130 delegates attended the 2023 conference, which was planned and organised in just over six months, taking place at a critical juncture in terms of South Africa’s infrastructure deficit in the water sector in particular.

Eilers urged her fellow young water professionals to seize this moment. “Let us step out of our comfort zones, build bridges between our fields of expertise, and collaborate as never before. The world is watching, and it is waiting for us to lead the way. Together we can make a lasting impact, and the time for action is now. Let us turn our collective vision into a reality, as we stand united in our mission to break silos, drive change, and leave a mark on the course of history.”

Zutari was further represented by the following staff members at the 7th WISA Young Water Professionals (YWP) conference:

* **Frankie A' Bear**: Winner of Best Oral Presentation
* **Jaco Luus**: Winner of Best Poster Presentation
* **Jana Du Rant**: Poster Presentation
* **Christian Le Prince Polorigni**: Oral Presentation
* **Danielle Simpathee Goho**: Poster Presentation
* **Anya Eilers**: Opening Plenary Oral Presentation
* **Eugene Fotso Simo:** Opening Plenary
* **Timothy Carolus**: Oral Presentation
* **Dan Petrie**: Conducted a Workshop

***Ends***

**Notes to the Editor**To download hi-res images for this news article, please visit <http://media.ngage.co.za> and click the Zutari link to view the company’s press office.

**About Zutari**

As an infrastructure engineering and advisory practice, we believe infrastructure has unparalleled potential to create enduring impact. Never more relevant, this potential can be realised only if we plan, design, deliver, and manage infrastructure in ways that maximise its value. Our work in water, transport, energy, resources, and built-environment infrastructure does just this – helping to nurture thriving communities, growing economies, and healthy environments. At Zutari, we understand that radical impact does not just happen; it requires more of us to connect differently, work smarter, and stay rooted.

**We connect differently**. Our broad collective of in-house experts connects across traditional disciplines to provide integrated results. We collaborate with clients, partners, and end-users, leaning into diverse perspectives to create superior solutions - together.

**We work smarter**. Our people lead the industry. We draw from deep technical skills, accrued over decades, and embrace the transformative power of digital technology to find simpler, better, and more innovative ways to deliver value.

**We stay rooted**. Few can rival our local capacity and understanding. Building on solid foundations, now 90 years in the making, we are trusted to shape locally relevant solutions through our extensive footprint in Africa and the Middle East.

At Zutari our people connect differently, work smarter, and stay rooted. Working in this way, we reliably deliver impact through infrastructure, making the world a better place – one project at a time.

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