

PRESS RELEASE

MULTI-SKILLED TEAMS EXCELLED IN PLUMBING AND SANITATION SOLUTIONS AT INAUGURAL WATER INNOVATION CHALLENGE 2014, SINGAPORE

Multi-skilled teams from USA and Australia excelled in designing and producing innovative plumbing and sanitation solutions for the communities in Nepal and Bangladesh who have been suffering from ongoing health issues caused by poor sanitation conditions at the inaugural Water Innovation Challenge 3-5 June 2014, Singapore. After competing neck and neck on the first Challenge Day, both teams were improving very fast in various tasks designed according to the actual conditions in the countries concerned. It was Team USA who emerged on top and scooped the first Water Innovation Challenge title.

The Water Innovation Challenge was led and organized by WorldSkills Foundation, Healthabitat, World Plumbing Council, RMIT University, and the Institute of Technical Education Singapore (ITE) to pioneer and demonstrate how young professionals with different skill sets – in this case, Plumbing, Engineering, and Graphic Design Technology – can be integrated and work together to generate real plumbing and sanitation solutions with the potential to make significant impact on public health in the targeted communities.

Team Australia consisted of Babbar Ali Suleman - a third year Bachelor of Environmental Engineering student in RMIT University, David Duddy - an Apprentice Plumber and Gas Fitter in the fourth year of his course in RMIT University, Sean Mundy - a third year of his Plumbing Apprenticeship and is studying in RMIT University, Nurul Driver- a second year student in the Bachelor of Sustainable Systems Engineering (Honours). For competing at the Challenge onsite, Team USA brought together Nicholas Michalenko – a veteran of WorldSkills Competition 2013 in Leipzig, Germany and has obtained a Massachusetts Journeyman plumber license in 2013, Timothy Murphy – an Apprentice Plumber with Boulanger's Plumbing & Heating, Sarah Parker – an Advertising & Design student at Appalachian State University, North Carolina and also a veteran of WorldSkills Competition 2013 in Leipzig, Germany, Judith Torres – a Graduate Mechanical Engineer and currently works with Progressive AE in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Both teams had spent many hours before and during the event developing their project concepts. A body of work was created through this event, covering construction, planning, logistics, budgets, project management, and skills/knowledge transfer, which will be carried forward by the project partner Healthabitat into their Sanitation Studio programmes in these communities and will be jointly implemented by the team participants. Project documents will also be freely shared via WorldSkills Foundation. For more information about the project and backgrounds of participating teams, please visit www.worldskillsfoundation.org

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The WorldSkills Foundation (created in 2011) is dedicated to improving our world with the power of skills through research, education and advocacy objectives. As part of the WorldSkills movement, they brings youth, industries, and educators together to give youth the chance to experience and learn how to become the best in their skill of choice.