



Press Release, 15 December 2010

Clean drinking water for 24 million people in Bangladesh thanks to Dutch Initiative

A unique water purification project from the EMF incubator

In Bangladesh over 10 million people drink highly toxic water every day. Since hand pumps were installed to supply the population with drinking water, some 77 million have been exposed to contaminated groundwater. The problem has commanded increasing attention in recent years. An initiative has been launched to build a water treatment plant using proven techniques to remove arsenic from water and provide the local population with safe drinking water.

Bell ceremony



A consortium consisting of representatives of the Dutch Ecological Management Foundation (EMF), the Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM), Voltea - a venture of Unilever, the Proportion Foundation, Micro Water Facility and Akvo, has been awarded a substantial grant by the Dutch government to start this ambitious project. To mark the start of this promising project Mr Allerd Stikker, founder and former director of EMF and initiator of this project, sounded the

opening gong bell at Amsterdam Stock Exchange on Wednesday 15 December.

The project

Voltea in Leiden developed the effective technique that purifies groundwater contaminated with arsenic and turns it into safe drinking water, while ridding it of its salty taste. Since the problem in Bangladesh is both widespread and urgent, the first project is scheduled to commence in the near future. This project focuses not only on testing the Voltea technology in the field, but also aims to set up small-scale water purification factories which will eventually be able to function without foreign support. The project is thus entirely in keeping with the new style development aid, as proposed by the present Dutch government.

Organizations involved

The collaborating organizations also make this project unique. EMF and MWF are social enterprises that scale up small water technologies into social undertakings with a high impact. DAM is a leading, not-for-profit organization in Bangladesh and has a very strong water and sanitation program. A social IT venture, Akvo has developed an open source web platform which makes water projects 'visible' and permits them to communicate and share knowledge. Finally, Proportion is a social venture specialized in social business development through co-creation processes.

EMF: Ecological Management Foundation (www.emf.nl)
MWF: Micro Water Facility (www.microwaterfacility.org)
DAM: Dhaka Ahsania Mission (www.ahsaniamission.org.bd)
Akvo: Akvo (www.akvo.org)
Proportion: Proportion Foundation (www.proportionfoundation.org)
Voltea: Voltea (www.voltea.com)

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