“Human-centered design forms a customer orientation, which informs product innovation, which informs scalable sustainable business models. With emphasis on scalable. That theory of change is one we’ve seen borne out extremely effectively in our work in Bangladesh.”
—Conor Riggs, Senior WASH Project Manager, iDE Bangladesh

Our Bangladesh WASH Program

Latrines are commonplace in Bangladesh, but roughly half are poor quality and are likely to spread diarrheal disease. Most poor people can’t afford a typical latrine, which requires skilled labor to produce and install. To address this need, iDE developed the SanBox, a latrine in a box that’s easy to buy and use. The final product is the result of two design collaborations. First, we partnered with American Standard to design the SaTo pan, an improved latrine pan that upgrades a low-quality latrine into a sanitary one. Second, we partnered with RFL, a local plastics manufacturer to turn the SaTo pan into a full latrine midstructure. Mass production with RFL started in 2015. The SanBox will be sold through RFL’s 3,500 dealers, with a presence in every district in Bangladesh. Moving beyond their backyard, RFL has plans to promote it as a mass-producible solution for global application. To date, iDE has facilitated the sale of almost 88,000 latrines, and continues to explore opportunities to reach even more households.

Bangladesh Products:
SaTo Pan
SanBox
4TinBera
RingPaka
FilTo

Partnerships:
RFL
American Standard

Current and Past Funders:
The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
World Bank Water and Sanitation Program
EKN
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
UNICEF

Bangladesh’s Opportunity

According to 2015 WHO data, only 62% Bangladesh’s rural population owns a hygienic latrine. Almost 40 million individuals in rural areas use shared facilities or only have access to unimproved, unhygienic latrines.

“We used to eat less so that we did not have to go out in the day time. Now we can have a full meal without worry.”
—Latrine Purchaser, Bangladesh
“Having a latrine protects the dignity and privacy of the family.”
—Latrine Purchaser, Burkina Faso

Our Burkina Faso WASH Program
Under a pilot project in partnership with Eau Vive and GRET, iDE is developing and marketing an innovative sanitation solution using the local supply chain. We have designed a new latrine to address the lack of affordable latrine options on the market. The latrine is costs less than other latrine models, is easier to install, and offers households the ability to customize their aboveground shelter based on their aspirations and budget. The program has established independent supply chains, engaging and training masons who are interested in becoming latrine entrepreneurs, ensuring the sustainability of sales after the project ends. Successful sales in the project’s communes demonstrate an opportunity to scale through continued design refinements, enterprise engagement, and sales support. To date, iDE has installed over 350 affordable, aspirational latrines for rural households, with plans to reach many more.

Burkina Faso’s Opportunity
WHO/UNICEF data shows that as of 2015, only 7% of Burkina Faso’s rural population owned an improved latrine. Of the remaining rural households, almost 12 million people, 10% share a latrine, 9% use an improved latrine, and the vast majority (75%) still practice open defecation.

Burkina Faso Product:
Pit latrine

Partnership:
Eau Vive
GRET

Current Funder:
European Union
“I get a good return on my hard work.”
—Latrine Installer, Cambodia

Our Cambodia WASH Program

iDE works in Cambodia to design and market affordable, aspirational latrines, shelters, hand washing devices, and ceramic water filters. Rural Cambodians recognize the health benefits of using an improved latrine and owning a water filter, but health benefits alone don’t always motivate people to prioritize these purchases. By understanding the customer’s motivations, iDE develops sales messages that connect to purchasers at an emotional level, moving them to purchase a hygienic latrine or water filter for their family.

Most rural Cambodians would rather defecate in the bush than face the odor, flies, and fear of falling into a traditional hole-in-the-ground latrine. They aspire to own a latrine with a stable pit lining and a water trap to keep flies and smells at bay, but existing latrine options were too expensive. Using human-centered design, iDE developed a latrine that met customers’ desires for comfort, care for elderly, prestige and dignity, while remaining low-cost. iDE works through local concrete entrepreneurs who offer all the components at a single shop, making the purchase experience easy for customers. By training sales agents and linking them with local latrine producers, the program is scaling rapidly, selling over 245,000 latrines since the program began. The program is seeking to reach the unprecedented result of 230,000 households by 2017. iDE Cambodia will improve the lives of 1.15 million rural Cambodians if it meets its target.

The majority of rural households boil their drinking water, but improper boiling leaves disease-causing pathogens behind. Having to boil water also takes women and girls away from other productive activities and exposes them to risks of snakes, robbery, and sexual attacks, since they are responsible for fetching water and gathering wood. Building on households’ desire to own a beautiful consumer product that also makes daily life more convenient, we have sold over 420,000 aspirational water filters to rural customers through our social enterprise, Hydrologic. Our goal is to reach one million households by 2020. iDE’s success in creating a market for ceramic water filters has averted an estimated 2.7 million cases of diarrhea and prevented over a thousand deaths, as well as reducing deforestation by around 18,000 tons per year and saving 41,000 tons of CO2 emissions annually.

Cambodia’s Opportunity

In Cambodia, untreated water and poor sanitation cause an estimated 10 million cases of diarrhea and 10,000 deaths each year, mostly in rural areas among children under the age of five. According to WHO/UNICEF data from 2015, only 30% of rural Cambodians own an improved latrine, and just over twice as many (69%) have access to an improved water source.
“We can invite our relatives from cities because we have a nice toilet.”

—Latrine Purchaser, Ethiopia

Our Ethiopia WASH Program

During our deep dive, Ethiopians told us of their desire to be modern. Their circumstances, however, require them to build things on their own without hired help. In response to these insights, we designed a latrine that is simple and practical for a first time buyer, selling over 2,400 so far. When we began our pilot, the supply chain for concrete products was minimal and even nonexistent in many places. But iDE’s ongoing training, coaching, and networking is steadily increasing the private sector’s capacity to provide quality latrines to a demanding customer base. The Ethiopian government is a trusted source among people, making it a highly valuable partner in spreading access to sanitation. Ethiopia’s 99 million people represent a vast opportunity for sanitation. In fact, the sales test in this country was the most successful of any in iDE history. iDE Ethiopia is currently looking for funding to refine the product design and bring the business model to scale.

Ethiopia’s Opportunity

UNICEF/WHO data from 2015 showed that 28% of the rural population in Ethiopia was using improved sources of sanitation. Of the remaining 57 million rural Ethiopians without their own improved latrine, 8% shared a latrine with another family, 30% used sub-standard facilities and 34% had no access to a toilet of any kind.

Ethiopia Products:
- Pit Latrine
- Hand Pumps
- Manual Well Drilling

Partnership:
- inCompass Lab
- Whitten & Roy Partnership

Current Funders:
- Headley Trust
- UNICEF
- USAID
- Vitol Foundation
- Waterloo Foundation
“With women folk no longer needing to go out, the family honor is safe.”
—Latrine Purchaser, Nepal

Our Nepal WASH Program

Social norms in Nepal sometimes work as barriers to latrine uptake. For example, open defecation is widely viewed as an acceptable part of daily life. To challenge this norm, IDE encourages villagers to talk about the negative aspects of living without a latrine. It turns out that women have a lot to say on this topic. In fact, when a young woman gets married, she often requests a latrine before moving in with her new husband. In addition to increasing demand, IDE also trains producers to increase latrine supply. Fortunately, Nepali concrete ring producers typically have skills and experience that provide a healthy foundation to enter the latrine business. IDE Nepal strengthens their capacity and connects them with sales agents and customers. IDE also helps recruit and train latrine sales agents, called Community Business Facilitators. This salesforce acts as the primary connection between community members and latrine producers. All of this work is done in partnership with local government and local NGOs, bringing affordable, hygienic latrine to nearly 32,000 households.

Nepal’s Opportunity

WHO/UNICEF estimates from 2015 indicate that 43% of Nepal’s rural population has access to improved sources of sanitation. The remainder, over 13 million individuals, use unhygienic or shared facilities, or have no access to a latrine at all.
“It’s so inconvenient to not have a latrine close to the house, especially when it rains at night.”

—Latrine Purchaser, Vietnam

Our Vietnam WASH Program

iDE Vietnam was a trailblazer in bringing market-based approaches to the WASH sector. It all began in 1995 with a hand pump project, which eventually expanded to include latrines. As the first to develop the practice of building markets for sanitation, it’s appropriate that we wrote the first Sanitation Marketing manual. IDE still works closely with the Vietnam government including training staff to implement programs directly. To date, IDE has facilitated the sale of latrines to over 33,000 rural households.

From our first efforts in WASH, IDE has taken a user-centered approach. User insights are critical to understanding how to motivate people to invest in latrines. We provide the following advice to the sales agents who sell latrines to farmers: focus on their dreams and avoid educating on the health benefits until after the purchase. Also key to our success is training masons to run a profitable business. With support, they can learn to build quality latrines and provide quality services to customers.

Vietnam’s Opportunity

UNICEF/WHO data from 2015 showed that 30% of rural families in Vietnam, almost 18 million people, do not have access to improved sanitation facilities.

Vietnam Products:
- 4 Government Approved Latrines
- Hand Pumps

Partnership:
- Vietnam Health Environment Management Agency
- Ministry of Health
- Centers for Preventive Medicine
- Women’s Union

Current Funders:
- ICCO
- Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
- DANIDA
- Oxfam
- CODESPA
- Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development
- USAID
- Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
OUTSMARTING WATER-RELATED DISEASE

iDE is an international non-profit organization dedicated to creating income and livelihood opportunities for the rural poor. Over 30 years ago, iDE pioneered market-based development while working with smallholder farmers. Today, this approach is recognized as a sustainable, scaleable, cost-effective approach to alleviate poverty. Building on worldwide programs in agriculture, iDE implements programs in Africa and Asia in the water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) sector. iDE’s WASH programs focus on creating markets around aspirational and effective WASH products and services that reduce diarrheal disease among poor households. iDE has impacted over 20 million people globally to date through its WASH and agriculture interventions.

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GLOBAL WASH INITIATIVE
CORE CAPABILITIES
Diagnosing Markets
Research & Development
Human-Centered Design
Commercializing Technology
Business Model Generation
Catalyzing Markets
Social Marketing Campaigns
Human-centered Sales
Monitoring & Evaluation