





WaterSHED co-founder Tom Outlaw, MBA (left), provides a USAID staff member with a tour of the hydrologic water filter factory, located on the outskirts of Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

USAID is working with ... the private sector to open a ceramic water filter factory in Cambodia. With ceramic filters, people no longer need to boil water to make it safe to drink, so they don't need to burn as much wood or charcoal, which in turn reduces greenhouse gases.

– U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, on World Water Day, March 22, 2011, in reference to WaterSHED

It also partners with a wide range of groups and individuals, from public officials and entrepreneurs in Southeast Asia to non-governmental organizations, foundations and other aid groups.

The project began in 2007 as one of the School's first Gillings Innovation Labs, developing into WaterSHED in 2009. Since then, the organization estimates 250,000 to 300,000 lives have been improved through

the use of ceramic water purification filters (more than 250,000 people) and latrines (more than 50,000).

Tom Outlaw, MBA, WaterSHED's chief of party in Southeast Asia until March 2011, envisioned the project while he was a master's student at UNC's business school a few years ago. Intrigued by the ceramic filter's simplicity, the former USAID employee recalls, "I realized that if we could sell locally made water filters, using local materials and local labor, we'd have a great social enterprise business model."

Now, WaterSHED is proving it.

– Susan Shackelford