Case Example

The Procter & Gamble Company: Making Drinking Water Safer from Bangladesh to Zimbabwe

The Procter and Gamble Company (P&G) estimates that nearly 85 percent of its product sales are associated in some way with household water use. To focus its product research and development efforts on this issue, P&G has established a fundamental water sustainability guideline for its product development team: "As you improve current products, or develop new-to-the-world products and services, think about how you could apply our technologies to use less water, use water differently, or use no water at all."

Procter & Gamble's PuR® water purifier product is helping relief agencies and developing countries to use water differently...and making it safer to drink.

PuR uses the same ingredients as those used in municipal water systems acting as a mini-water treatment plant in a sachet. A small sachet of powdered product visually clarifies water and reduces pathogenic bacteria, viruses, and parasites to result in drinking water that meets World Health Organization guidelines.

The packaging of the product in small sachets that will treat ten liters of water is a valuable innovation because they are convenient to transport and store. PuR can also be bought in bulk for use in emergency disasters or miniature treatment plants. P&G has provided, at cost, PuR Purifier of Water to global relief agencies, including UNICEF, the Red Cross, the International Rescue Committee, and AmeriCares so they can provide drinking water in emergencies.

PuR has been used in Bangladesh, Botswana, Chad, Iran, Malawi, Liberia, Sudan, and Zimbabwe. Fifteen million sachets (150 million liters of safe drinking water have also been provided by P&G to relief agencies working in tsunami affected areas of southeast Asia.

PUR is also being tested in several markets to learn how it can be provided on a sustainable basis in the developing world. The P&G Health Sciences Institute has joined the U.S. Agency for International Development, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health/Center for Communication Programs, CARE, and Population Services International to create the Safe Drinking Water Alliance and help make drinking water safe in three separate countries.